



When former Jane's Addiction frontman Perry Farrell announced the creation last year of something called Lollapalooza, the music world responded with overwhelming indifference. Having already been Live Aided and Farm Aided to death, fans, groups and critics met the proposal with deaf ears. Enough, already, with the rock festivals.

But then the rag-tag carnival of misfit bands and counter-cultural causes started kicking, and Lollapalooza unearthed its niche.

By promoting universal awareness and progressive attitudes, this rolling, raving festival of alternative rock managed to bring together a generation not easily united. The disenfranchised had found a franchise.

So it was with great expectations that the alternative community geared up for the sequel this year, Lollapalooza '92.

As with most sequels, we were told this one would be bigger, better and badder. Shows sold out in 45 minutes. Deadheads began making new travel itineraries.

And when the faithful straggled into San Francisco's 20,000-capacity Shore Ampitheatre July 18 for the opening day of the two-month tour, they actually found a show that lived up to the hype.

With a bill featuring Ministry, Pearl Jam, Lush, Ice Cube, The Jesus and Mary Chain, Soundgarden and The Red Hot Chili Peppers, a second stage for local acts, booths displaying crafts and ethnic food and activists espousing social-political information and all-around mayhem, Lollapalooza this year is a real mouthful.

"I liked it better this year," says Chris Larson, a senior at the U. of California, Davis. "It seemed like a real cross-section of counter cultures of youth today — a little bit of everything, but none of it was for the mainstream. It's not very often you see Crips and a bunch of gothics in the same stadium."

But there they were, a generational smorgasbord in an atmosphere accepting all and rejecting none.

"It was cool to see all the strange people from around California," says John Larson, a sophomore from UC, Davis. "The atmosphere was relaxed, people were just kind of hanging out listening to new and interesting types of music."

As listeners spend the day at Lollapalooza, the experience is much greater than its parts. For the straight-haircut crowd, Lollapalooza allows them to mingle with post-punk nihilists — and vice versa.

"[I saw] one girl walking around in leather underwear, with all that belly piercing and everything else pierced, and a dog collar and chain with a guy in a normal T-shirt and jeans hauling her around," says Lyn Boyle, a senior at UC, Davis. "It was a very strange combination."

But the festival can expand the political minds of concert goers, as well. Groups such as the Cannabis Action Network, which works to legalize hemp, the ACLU, Handgun Control, Inc., People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and the National Coalition for the Homeless distribute information, sell political paraphernalia and solicit support.

Michael Dolan from Rock the Vote was adamant about shaking some apathetic heads. "You can't always get what you want, but if you vote you can sometimes get what you need," he shouted at the revelers.

Eugene Porter, who is working with Greenpeace throughout the tour, says he hopes to tap environmental awareness and is working, as is everyone on the whole Lollapalooza tour, to "change the world, you know."

But the show wasn't all brain strain. Some bands showed, too. Lush began the Frisco show in a flurry of fuzzy, yet heavy guitar and bass-driven alternative music, led by the high-pitched, yet indiscernible voice of Miki Berenyi. Playing for about 40 minutes, Lush gave the mildly interested audience a solid dose of densely-packed, cutting-edge British rock.

Pearl Jam, definitely a crowd favorite, then tore through a set of material mainly from their commercial success *Ten* album. A cloud of dust rising from the grass seating signaled the start of a healthy mosh pit. And Pearl Jam's hard-hitting, musically and intellectually outstanding material was accented by singer Eddie Vedder, who says Lollapalooza is testament to the fact that "you don't have to be asleep to dream."

Underground legends The Jesus and Mary Chain sauntered on next. And although they aren't known for their excellent live shows, they gave a solid show of material from their latest album *Honey's Dead*, as well as dishing out old favorites like "Kill Surf City" and "Head On." With a decidedly British flair, their music is an experience in dark guitar and feedback.

Seattle soundmeisters Soundgarden came out next, displaying its no-frills, no-holds-barred assault. "We just plug in our instruments and play," says Kim Thayil of Soundgarden, and with little pomp and a lot of guts, the band shook Lollapalooza. Thayil describes its music as "heavy and trippy... with a visceral element" which allows you to do anything from bang your head to stare out a window while

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listening to it. Of course there were no windows from which to stare, but there definitely was some head banging going on.

Ice-T was next on stage. Yes, the ever-controversial Ice-T — he showed up to introduce the last three bands and hang out with Ice Cube during his set. Cube and the Lenchmob broadcast an earth-shaking set which prompted one of the unique and welcome sights of the festival — a bunch of white people grooving to rap. Ice-T's set at Lollapalooza last year, was the last time that happened.

As the sun set, Ice-T sarcastically introduced "the quietest act on this tour — Ministry." Complete with a set of skull, skeletons and microphone stands draped with bones, Ministry blasted the hell out of Lollapalooza. The band's blend of hard-core industrial and speed metal blew the socks off the crowd who shook, slammed and screamed through the 50-minute set.

As darkness settled in, the audience became anxious and the midway exhibits began closing down. But with only one act left, the festival was far from over.

The Red Hot Chili Peppers, the big ticket draw, new guitarist and all, took the crowd to a truly funky world. The Peppers stormed the stage, drew a frenzied reaction from the crowd and never let the energy ebb for more than two hours.

Ice Cube, Ice-T, the Lenchmob and other guests of the rappers joined the Peppers midway through their set to jam, rap and carry on. After this unlikely combo left the stage, singer Anthony Kiedis said they jammed in the middle, rather than at the end of the show like usual because "our desire here is to avoid the obvious."

And in general, Lollapalooza '92 does. Of course, cynics will still scoff that this alternative rock festival is far from "alternative." The Nirvana phenomenon changed all that, and now the smell of corporate dollars is stinking up the underground.

As Paul Barker, Ministry's bassist, says the "corporate hand that has engulfed the whole thing... It's one big marketing ploy." He says Ministry is feeling a bit turned off by the tour which, for them, "is like playing to a football crowd... A big fucking show, and we're not really into those."

And, yes, there are actually people who stand to make money off the whole thing. Albums will be sold, many of these touring bands will be engulfed into the mainstream, and in the end everyone will feel just a little bit used.

All the more reason to check out Lollapalooza while it's still cool.

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