

MONSTER ROCK

Plan 9 from outer space: The music festivals that ate the summer of '94

By Kristopher Weiss, *The Lantern*, Ohio State U.



The Beastie Boys, rhyming and stealing at Lollapalooza '94.

"Let's face it," Robert Santelli wrote in 1980 in his book *Aquarius Rising*. "Rock festivals perished along with other by-products of the '60s in the maturing process of the Woodstock generation."

Right. Good call, Rob.

The summer of 1994 will be the busiest ever for the booming rock festival phenomenon — no fewer than three juggernaut shows are scheduled to tour nationally

The Kids Are All Right

It's Lollapalooza '94, and Perry Farrell's brain child is coming of age.

In heat that climbed to the 110-degree mark, America's brave new Alternative Nation has gathered in Las Vegas, of all places, to kick off the fourth annual twisted carnival that is Lollapalooza. Besides live entertainment on three separate stages, the event features video walls, poetry slams, visual dating, fanzines, a virtual reality ride, tattoo artists and Reverend Mudd's Revival Tent. Buffed-out boys in black patent Docs. And beatnik chicks just wearing their smocks.

(Lollapalooza, WOMAD and HORDE). Not to mention two competing Woodstock revivals and countless local and regional mega-shows.

Last year the United States got its first taste of the World of Music, Arts and Dance (WOMAD) festival. Founded in 1982 by headliner/citizen-of-the-world Peter Gabriel, WOMAD will give six U.S. performances this year.

In addition to full sets on the main stage by popular artists like Gabriel, Midnight Oil and Arrested Development, WOMAD's second stage will feature South Africa's Lucky Dube, China's Guo Brothers and Zimbabwe's Stella Chiweshe.

Ohio State U. senior Trevor Burke says the lesser-known acts were the best part of last year's show.

"Gabriel put on a great show, as usual, but the second stage was the highlight," Burke says. "The headliners draw people in, but the world music is the best."

Despite being a grunge (read "accessible") show, Perry Farrell's

Lollapalooza festival is enjoying its fourth year as the most heralded "alternative" culture event around. (See story, below) But it is the very success of the festival that has enabled other such tours to exist.

This year's Lollapalooza lineup includes the Beastie Boys, Smashing Pumpkins, L7, A Tribe Called Quest and George Clinton and the P-Funk All Stars.

While the ever-expanding Lolla' stirs excitement in

some, others wax nostalgic for vintage 'Looza.

"I doubt they'll be able to top the first tour... The idea was fresh and new," says Indiana U. senior Gina McIntyre. "I'm only going to see L7 and Nick Cave."

Music buffs who are feeling burned out on the 'Looza might want to opt for the third annual Horizons Of Rock Developing Everywhere (HORDE) Festival '94.

Somewhere between the mainline thrills of Lollapalooza and the cosmopolitan élan of WOMAD, HORDE specializes in that groovy, hipped-out vibe most often associated with a certain herbal no-no. As a rock festival, HORDE is perhaps most loyal to the original Woodstock flag, featuring headliners Big Head Todd and the Monsters, Blues Traveler and The Allman Brothers Band.

For those who find none of the above true to the '60s rock-fest ethic, there's always the sheer rush of unapologetic revival nostalgia as two Woodstock anniversary concerts are planned.

The larger of the celebrations, Woodstock '94, will be held on Winston Farm in Saugerties, N.Y. The show will feature sets by Woodstock alumni Crosby, Stills and Nash (and possibly Young), Santana and Joe Cocker — as well as bands who were in diapers in 1969, including Cypress Hill and the Spin Doctors.

The second commemorative festival will take place at the original site of the first Woodstock — Max Yasgur's famed farm in Bethel, N.Y. Although details remain sketchy, the Bethel '94 show is rumored to include Richie Havens (who opened the first Woodstock), Fleetwood Mac and Judy Collins.

At this rate, we're likely to have roughly 7,000 touring rock shows by the summer of 1999. It's proof positive of that old, wise adage:

"Rock festivals never die. They just add some more dates to the Midwest and Southeast legs of the tour." **U**

The decision to launch the tour in Las Vegas is a sly one. Vegas — with its fat burlesque of dropping coins and flashing lights — represents the old-school American Dream degraded to its lowest common denominator. Can these gamblers, with their profound conviction that they deserve to be fabulously wealthy, handle the fact that their sons and daughters are a few miles south, moshing to The Breeders and contemplating a tattoo?

Like Vegas' hip kid brother, Lollapalooza has blossomed into a genuine cultural phenomenon. It has become bigger, better, faster — and a whole lot smarter than you might think.

Now keep your pants on — of course it's a business. It has an agenda, a profit motive, taxes and everything. But that's why it can afford to tour the nation.

Like it or not, Lollapalooza is now among the best articulated expressions of American youth culture. Those overly obsessed with their punk rock identities will whine till Tuesday about all that is wrong with the festival, but the facts remain: Lollapalooza promotes new bands, advances important issues and generally provides plenty of bang for your buck. It's the last square deal in the country.

Most importantly, Lollapalooza is still loud — and that's what really matters. When the Beasties take the stage and rock the sure shot, all this useless jabbering about buying in or selling out will become mere background noise.

Rock on.

■ Glenn McDonald, *Assistant Editor*