

MCs to battle Saturday at WOW Hall

Musicians from the area compete in the Better Than You Battle for an \$800 prize

By Ryan Murphey
Freelance Reporter

MCs from all over the Pacific Northwest will compete in the Better Than You Battle on Saturday for a prize package worth more than \$800. Local promoters Strange Folks Presents have hand-picked a group of 16 competitors from Eugene, Portland, Vancouver, Wash., and other parts of the Pacific Northwest.

Competitors include Sleep (of Old Dominion), Illmaculate (winner of Portland's Hip-Hop tonight battles) and local artists such as Furious, Sapi-ent, DZO and Philosophy.

Until now, only a few smaller and less organized battles have emerged from Eugene.

"We thought it was about time to let Northwest artists strut their stuff in Eugene," said Phil Bauer, of Strange Folks Presents.

MC battles pit two lyricists against each another in a freestyle competition and test their ability to come up with clever rhymes off the top of their head. Winning requires quick thinking, solid rhythm and an aptitude for improvisation.

Such competitions once took place between two rappers in a park or on the street, but as their popularity has

grown, the battles have transitioned to the stage in what is best described as a combination between a concert and a sporting event.

The 16 contestants will try to hold their own through four rounds of one-on-one matches. The combatants will be paired up at random and given two chances each to impress both the judges and the audience. The winners of each match will then face each other in the following rounds until a winner is decided. During the first three rounds, competitors will have 30 seconds per chance. During the final round, the turns will last 45 seconds.

But Hanif Panni, one of the three judges at the Better Than You Battle and a former DJ at KWVA, said it will take more than jokes to win this competition.

"This is based on skills and not jokes," Panni said. "Punchlines are good, but I want to hear something fresh."

Both Panni and Bauer emphasize the importance of audience participation.

"If somebody hits a line that's just sick, I want the crowd to get crazy, but if someone's not bringing the heat, I expect the crowd to boo them just as loud," Bauer said. "When the performers can see that the crowd is reacting, they get amped."

Between a booing crowd and competitors hurling insults at each other on stage, the contest could easily be mistaken for a hostile environment, but



Courtesy

The Better Than You Battle will feature MCs rap-battling in 30- to 45-second rounds for an \$800 prize at WOW Hall this Saturday.

contestant James Baker, also known as Furious, stresses that the event is all about fun.

"On the mic, we'll be saying some of the meanest things possible (to each other), but later we'll be downstairs having a beer," he said.

Baker said some of the MCs have been battling each other for a long time, and most are good friends.

Still, Panni is sure the battles will be wholesome, cutthroat entertainment.

"If you like seeing people make fun of each other, this is the place to be," he said.

In addition to the battle, Portland hip-hop crew sandpeoples will be performing throughout the night, and giveaways provided by sponsors will be available.

The Better Than You Battle will take place this Saturday at WOW Hall (located at 291 W. Eighth Ave). Tickets cost \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door and are available for purchase at WOW Hall, the EMU Ticket Office and most local music stores.

Ryan Murphey is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

CRIME WATCH

Theft and recoveries

The Department of Public Safety received one report of burglary, two found property reports and one report of a bike impound from the EMU. DPS also received 11 reports of larceny and five reports of bike theft: one from Carson Hall, one from Hamilton Complex, one from Lawrence Hall, one from Bean Complex and one from the EMU.

Disorderly conduct

DPS received three reports of

disorderly conduct, five reports of a suspicious condition, one report of skateboard stunting, two reports of an arrest, six reports of a suspicious subject and 15 reports of vandalism: one from Villard Hall, one from the Lillis Business Complex, three from the Music Building, one from Gilbert Hall, one from Cascade Hall, one from Riley Hall, one from the Bean Complex, one from the Hamilton Complex, one from the Carson Complex, one from Lawrence Hall, one from 11th Avenue, one from Autzen Stadium and one from H.P. Barnhart Hall.

Sunday, May 23, 3:50 p.m.: DPS received a report of a water balloon breaking a car's sunroof outside of H.P. Barnhart Hall.

Alcohol and drugs

DPS received two reports of a drug law violation and 11 reports of a liquor law violation.

Miscellaneous

DPS received eight emergency call reports, one report of urinating in public, one report of arson, three reports of unlawful entry of a motor vehicle and two

alarm reports. DPS also received two reports of criminal trespass, two reports of a bomb threat and 10 tow requests: two from the University Annex parking lot, one from the visitor's parking lot, one from the Pacific Hall parking lot, one from the Johnson Hall parking lot, two from the large Prince Lucien Campbell parking lot, one from the Alder Street parking lot, one from the Straub Hall parking lot and one from the Bean Complex parking lot.

Wednesday, May 19, 8:55 p.m.: DPS received a report of a trash can on fire at the Knight Library.

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