

Queer women speak OUT/LOUD

The sixth annual music festival offered a safe space for artists within the LGBTQA community to perform

BY MATT CHABAN
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

"I'm a big homo and so are all my friends," sophomore Steph Hyde said with a nonchalance that could be found in the "safe space" of an event such as OUT/LOUD, a queer women's music festival held Friday and Saturday night at the WOW Hall.

In its sixth year, the festival was formerly known as Lesbopalooza, but "we wanted to make the event more inclusive for performers and the audience," University senior and festival producer and organizer Stacy Borke said.

Comfort and safety is what OUT/LOUD is all about. In an often threatening and homophobic world, a safe place for silenced voices becomes imperative, many festival participants said.

"It's important to have an event focusing on queer performers," junior Sam Merrill said. "It's not common and we need to highlight that. Typically, women performers are left out of the media."

In fact, OUT/LOUD is one of the only queer women's music festivals in the country, and many at the ASUO Women's Center, which sponsored the event along with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Alliance, contend it is one of a kind.

This fact has gained the festival some notoriety. High school student Laura Marie said she planned her visit to the University to coincide with the festival.

This year's festival is especially important in light of recent politics, ASUO Women's Center Interim Director Erin O'Brien said.

"Measure 36 directly attacked our community, which only increases

the viability of events like this," O'Brien said. "It shows that legislation that claims our non-existence can't stop us."

Friday night opened with spoken word poetry by Jes Painter and Cassie Sorensen, whom Painter called her "pseudo girlfriend" in between recitations. "We eat sushi and watch DVDs, just no sex. It's the best of both worlds," she said.

University senior Leslie Frye read two short stories and a poem she said she guiltily wrote while working in vain on her senior thesis. Afterward, she expressed concern for the current state of the University.

"With all the attacks going on

right now, campus is a hostile place for students of color, queer students, and multicultural students," she said. "It's important for students to be able to create their art. We need a chance to celebrate."

The next performer was Chris Pureka, whose world-weary singing belies her 23-year-old soft-spoken demeanor. Pureka said she loves being a queer musician but struggles sometimes with the constraints her sexuality can have on a musical career. Still, she looks to success stories like Melissa Etheridge's for inspiration.

Pamela Means followed with her explosive guitar playing matched only by her buoyant afro. Her frequent anti-Bush comments were met with thunderous cheers from the audience.

The final act of the night, Alix Olson, a renowned artist within the LGBTQA community, performed her

trademark folk poetry. All the performances were accompanied by sign language interpreters.

Saturday opened with a drag king show put on by local performers, many of them University students. Lipstick Conspiracy, a hard-hitting transgender power pop band from San Francisco played next. In 2004, the San Francisco Bay Guardian voted the group best all-girl band.

The final act of the weekend was rapper JenRO. She said she is often confronted with the difficulty of performing queer art within a hostile rap community.

After a standing ovation, the smiling crowd hugged for the last time.

"It's a really good way to end the year," Borke said. "It's one of our final events and we went out with a bang."

Apple: Each honored for various traits

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crystal apple to Kintz, the 2005 recipient of the Thomas F. Herman Faculty Achievement for Distinguished Teaching. The award is granted to faculty members who have "demonstrated long-standing excellence in teaching at the University," according to a press release.

Kintz received the award based on her "her ability to translate to (her students) her dedication, her enthusiasm, her devotion to first-rate scholarly work and her commitment to service," Frohnmayer said in a press release.

— Moriah Balingit

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