

Christian music rocks the Tom Festival

Joel P. Shempert
Staff Writer

The second annual TOM Festival, sponsored by Portland's Push Productions, kicked off Thursday, Aug. 29, at the fairgrounds in Stevenson, WA.

The four-day event was unique, featuring approximately 120 bands or artists, most with an alternative or "new rock" sound and all with a Christian perspective.

This was not surprising to many festivalgoers, however, for The Push, a Portland club, has been featuring this kind of talent for several years. The Push is the brainchild of TOM Organizer Mikee Bridges, who saw a need in Portland's Christian music scene when he moved here from California.

As for describing the TOM Fest itself, mere words fall short of adequacy. While it was nearly impossible to view all 120 performances, one could have attended even a fraction of the concerts and not have felt cheated. And the incredible variety, from the acoustic stylings of the Five O'clock People to the punk sound of MXPX or Ghoti Hook, assured that no musical taste would be left unsated.

The highlights of the festival are too numerous to mention in full, but some special mentions are definitely in order. Alternative luminaries Plankey played a fast, tight and entertaining set, and the quirky Some Few Oracles were a quality act that provided much amusement and enjoyment. Grammatrain, renowned grunge rockers, absolutely smoked with a powerful and passionate presen-

tation, as did hard rock group Stavesacre.

Ska groups Five Iron Frenzy and The Supertones were both energetic, unrelenting and jovial. For those who crave acoustic bliss, the intimate, intricate sound of the Five O' Clock People and the peculiar, hilarious stylings of Canadian singer Paula Spur were two of the brightest gems. Funk rock was alive and well in the persons of Jireh Funk'n'junk, fan favorite Soulfood, and bizarre "power funk" darlings Twin Sister.

Twin Sister, the band which was publicly known as Boba Phett prior to a lengthy conversation with George Lucas' happy little legal family, is a story in itself. The group comes onstage dressed in Star Wars costumes, sings songs all based on a Star Wars theme, is greeted by such comments as "bow to the Empire," and still manages to mingle a strong Christian message and atmosphere amid all the fun and tomfoolery. In singer Todd "Vader" Fadel's words to the audience, "We're Twin Sister and we are a total joke, but that's okay because God made humor and we all serve Him."

Lest Christian skeptics begin to have misgivings about the religious significance of the TOM Fest proceedings, it should be noted that these musicians are for the most part indeed *Christian* bands, and not just "bands who happen to be Christian." There were many spiritual moments throughout the festival that were truly memorable and amazing.

For instance, Allan Aguirre, formerly of Scaterd Few, and

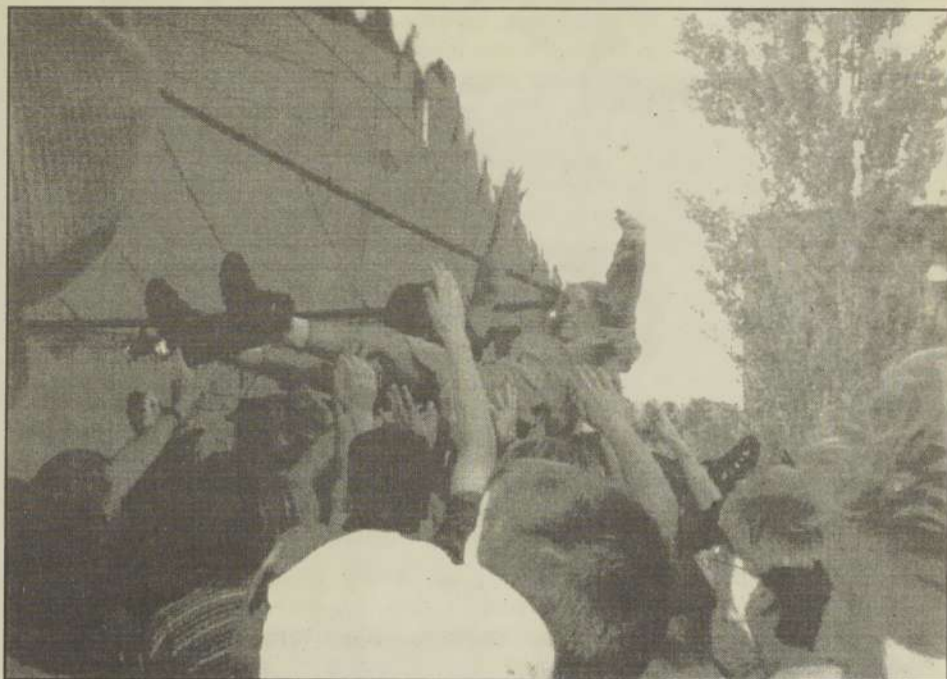


Photo by Joel P. Shempert

Crowd surfers enjoy Mikee Bridges' band *Sometime Sunday's* farewell performance.

members of his new group, Spyglass Blue, played a worship service of praise choruses on Sunday morning which was awe-inspiring to all present, including the musicians themselves. Also, the Supertones "interrupted" their show for a Psalm reading, sermonette and prayer, leaving no doubt as to their central motives as Christian musicians.

The finest event of the festival, and one of the most spiritually distinctive, came at 3 p.m. on Saturday morning. Alternative group Poor Old Lu, their arrival delayed several hours, played their "almost farewell" concert. The group is breaking up, and their last show will be played in November at their hometown of

Seattle.

Poor Old Lu played an unforgettable set, and those who stayed up late enough to watch them had no regrets. The musical excellence and intensity fans have come to expect from a Poor Old Lu show were there in full force, despite singer Scott Hunter's complaints of a failing voice. The band played for two hours, allowing them to play a wide variety of songs from nearly all their releases. Fans sang along with the band and lost themselves in the music as the performance built to a rising crescendo.

The real moment came when Hunter paused to share some things about himself, and where he was in his life. He, eventually,

with tears in his eyes, ended up unburdening himself regarding his shortcomings and failings. An audience member spontaneously elected to pray for Hunter, a much appreciated gesture, and one of the most intimate and special events of the festival was witnessed.

The TOM bands are always a treat to see, whether individually or all at once in a festival. TOM Fest serves a valuable function and is not to be missed. Rock fans need to be reminded that not all the killer rock music in the world is non-Christian, and Christians need to be similarly notified that there is more to the Christian Music scene than Kathy Traccoli.

Four new officers bring PTK into focus

Cindy Hines Kurfman
Copy Editor

Alpha Xi Zeta, the college's chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society, has four new officers for the 96-97 school year.

President Meriwether Mersereau is a second-year student, majoring in chemistry. She hopes to transfer to the medical program at Reed College. Previously, she attended PCC and PSU, and then stayed home for 14 years to raise a family.

Mersereau's goals for Alpha Xi Zeta are "to maintain the level of excellence that has been achieved by the chapter already and to expand the fellowship."

The chapter vice president is Tanya Leikam. Leikam, 22, graduated from Redmond (WA) High School in 1992 and previously attended Bellevue Community College, where she was inducted in Phi Theta Kappa. She is working on a Business Administration Transfer Degree to PSU.

In addition to working as a



Photo by Kacey Wright

Laney Fouse, secretary for PTK.



Photo by Cindy Hines Kurfman

Tonya Leikam, vice president for PTK.



Photo by Laney Fouse

Meriwether Mersereau, PTK president.



Photo by Joel Coreson

Doug Tesch, PTK treasurer.

vice president for Alpha Xi Zeta, Leikam is involved in the Student Connection Club.

Her goals for the honor society include "keeping up the five-star status and making it more fun this year." Five-star status is the highest level of excellency a chapter can obtain.

Laney Fouse, 43, is secretary for the second year and is also the reelected president of the Native American Club, which she started last year. In addition, she is the editor-in-chief of *The Clackamas Print*.

Currently, she is in her final year of study for a Communications Transfer Degree. She is considering going to Marylhurst next

year.

In the early seventies, she attended Humboldt State and received a general education degree.

Fouse's goal for Alpha Xi Zeta is "improved communication within the membership." She hopes to incorporate the use of e-mail, which is available to students through the computer lab, in order to accomplish this goal.

Treasurer Doug Tesch, 25, is back at Clackamas after five years of absence. He is picking up second-year German with the intention of traveling to Germany. He has a bachelor's degree in economics from PSU and is work-

ing as a mortgage banker. As an Alpha Xi Zeta member, he is interested in promoting AIDS awareness.

In addition to promoting AIDS awareness, Phi Theta Kappa is emphasizing the arts. Some of the highlights planned by the officers include a series of films and an art show.

Last week Alpha Xi Zeta sponsored a successful depression screening; approximately 30 people attended.

Today, the group is sponsoring a debate watch at 6 p.m. in the Gregory Forum.

For more information about the honors society, contact Advisor Dave Arter at ext. 2210.

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ANSWERS

1. Warren Beatty
2. Robert Englund
3. Cancer
4. Tri-Lambdas (1984: Lambdas)
5. Cole Trickle (1990)
6. Portland, Oregon
7. Unit, Core, God, Country
8. "We're on a mission from God."
9. Cleveland Indians
10. University of Oregon
11. White Men Can't Jump (1992)