

AND METAL FOR ALL

Eugene Metal Celebration creates a niche for local and regional metal music

Five years ago Pantheon frontman Skyeler Williams saw an opportunity where others might have merely seen cause for complaint. He perceived what he calls “a consistent exclusion of heavy music at community events.” Luckily for Eugene’s metal scene, the hardcore vocalist is not the type to take things lying down. As the music booker and sound engineer at downtown bar The Black Forest, Williams decided to take advantage of the tools available to him and set out to change things.

“In response to the [2011] Eugene Celebration, we decided to throw our own celebration for metal musicians and fans to come together and bang their heads all weekend long,” Williams says with a smile. The goal, he



PHOTO COURTESY ANTAL ULLMAN

says, was to showcase as much local and regional metal as possible in two nights.

That first Eugene Metal Celebration (EMC) included music from myriad local favorites (New World Sinner, Only Nightmares and more) and familiar downtown faces, as well as a heavy helping of through-traffic from the currently defunct Eugene Celebration. It was clear from EMC’s popularity that Williams was on to something.

Over the next few years EMC found support among bar regulars as much as metalheads. The weekend slowly turned into an event that not only championed the scene, bands and fans, but The Black Forest itself, as the venue

steadily grew into one of the primary homes for metal in Eugene.

Now in its fifth year, the event is seen as feeding the scene in addition to celebrating it.

“When I moved here in 2009 it seemed like the metal scene was pretty dead, but over the years we’ve seen it flourish into the monster that it should be. EMC keeps that alive and kicking,” says John Kurzejeski of local band Cruciation. He’s

played the event several times and, like the fans, eagerly awaits Eugene’s most brutal of weekends.

In addition to Kurzejeski and Williams’ respective bands, this year the Eugene Metal Celebration will include eight other bands spanning the wide realm of metal, from metalcore to technical death metal to black metal and more. Regardless of the subgenres that might typically cause division, at EMC all metal is united. ■

California metalheads A Morbid Curiosity and Etched in Stone join local heavies Pantheon, Fallen Theory and Psithurism at 9 pm Friday, Aug. 21, at Black Forest; free. 21-plus. Tacoma shredders Deathbed Confessions and locals The Athiarchists, Wade Graham, Cruciation and Malformed Abomination perform 9 pm Saturday, Aug. 22, at Black Forest; free. 21-plus.

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