

Alberta rock fests getting ready to roll

Boonstock, Sled Island scheduled for same dates in June

BY SANDRA SPEROUNES, THE EDMONTON JOURNAL MARCH 17, 2009



Fans enjoying the music and the hot weather at last year's Boonstock Music Festival.

Photograph by: Jimmy Jeong, Edmonton Journal

Two of Alberta's smaller music festivals are gearing up for their third editions this summer.

Boonstock, a two-day camp-out near Gibbons, is set for June 26 and 27. Festival founder Colin Kobza says he's still confirming artists, but hopes to throw one or two U.S. bands on the bill.

In its first year, Boonstock booked local and smaller regional acts. Last year, major Canadian artists such as Three Days Grace and Alexisonfire were the headliners.

Early-bird tickets are now on sale -- \$99 for a weekend pass, \$149 for two -- through boonstock.ca.

Cowtown's Sled Island, which is geared towards indie acts, is also a go -- for June 24 to 27.

Organizers are holding a pre-festival fundraiser on April 11 at the Royal Canadian Legion in downtown Calgary.

"Last year was super-expensive, especially with the main site at Mewata Field," says media co-ordinator Drew Marshall. "We have also had a really tough time getting any kind of government grant funding for hosting this festival."

Last year's Sled Island featured some of the world's most illustrious indie acts, including Mogwai, Broken Social Scene, Grizzly Bear and Blitzen Tripper.

Marshall is cagey when it comes to numbers. He won't say how much Sled Island wants to raise -- only "enough to ensure we can continue to present the best in independent music, art, comedy and film at Sled Island for this year, and many years to come."

Log on to sledisland.com for more info.

The Bear 100.3 FM was named rock station of the year, in a major market, at the Canadian Music and Broadcast Industry Awards in Toronto. The station's Ryan Zimmerman won program director of the year.

CISN 103.9 FM picked up the prize for best country station, while World 101.7 FM won best multicultural station.

The awards were presented Thursday in conjunction with Canadian Music Week.

Speaking of CMW, Kiss bassist Gene Simmons duked it out with notorious crank Bob Lefsetz at the four-day festival and conference in T.O.

Simmons was one of the keynote speakers and used his time to plug his new record label, which is looking for up 'n' coming Canadian acts to sign. (Edmonton's Turn It Up! is one of the candidates.)

Music industry expert (and windbag) Lefsetz was far from impressed with the speech.

"Hey Gene, you were a star once, can you let it go?" he wrote in one of his daily e-mail newsletters.

"Can you stop trying to convince us that not only is your music great, but that Kiss is the biggest act in the world?"

Naturally, Simmons had to respond -- via e-mail. "THIS IS A SMALL PERSON, WHO'S NEVER

DONE ANYTHING, NEVER BEEN IN A BAND AND DOESN'T KNOW HOW THE RECORD INDUSTRY WORKS," the rocker wrote (or YELLED).

This might just get uglier than Wayne Coyne's recent highschoolish feud with Arcade Fire's Win Butler.

As of late Friday afternoon, Simmons and Lefsetz were planning to debate each other at CMW.

For the latest, check out www.lefsetz.com/wordpress.

Hip-hop mogul Sean Combs/Diddy is pimping his latest venture -- ptwitty tv live.

It's a web channel available on mogulus.com. His first broadcast -- from a dark record studio somewhere in America -- was plagued with technical issues. (Namely, an echo ... echo ... echo ...)

While Diddy pontificated for about an hour or so, "ladies" were encouraged to send their phone numbers via Twitter.

He also played some new tunes, invited questions from fans on ptwitty tv's chat room, and talked about his quiet teen years, his love for the ladies and his pending comeback.

"Where you entertained???? Where you not entertained???????" he later misspelled on www.twitter.com/iamdiddy.

"Thank yall for believing and tunnin in!!! What do yall think I can do better for next time?????"

Metric will release their fourth dance-rock album, *Fantasies*, earlier than planned -- March 31 on iTunes, April 7 in stores.

The disc, which was due April 14, was leaked last week. Listen to a stream of it at stereogum.com.

Nine Inch Nails frontman Trent Reznor isn't a fan of Chris Cornell's new album, *Scream*, produced by hip-hop producer Timbaland.

"You know that feeling you get when somebody embarrasses themselves so badly YOU feel uncomfortable?" Reznor wrote on his Twitter page. "Heard Chris Cornell's record? Jesus." This is why I love Twitter.

Bedouin Soundclash is teaming up with the David Suzuki Foundation to green the planet. The band's new video, *Hearts in the Night*, is now posted on DSF's site, where fans are encouraged to sign up for a nature challenge.

Hearts in the Night was directed by Edmonton's Michael Maxxis. It's his second video for Bedouin Soundclash. He also helmed *Until We Burn in the Sun*.

Maxxis is also about to screen his first short film, *Steak and Milk*, at various film festivals around the world. It debuted Saturday at the European Independent Film Festival in Paris.

Read my blog *Plugged In* at edmontonjournal.com/entertainment

ssperounes@thejournal.canwest.com

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