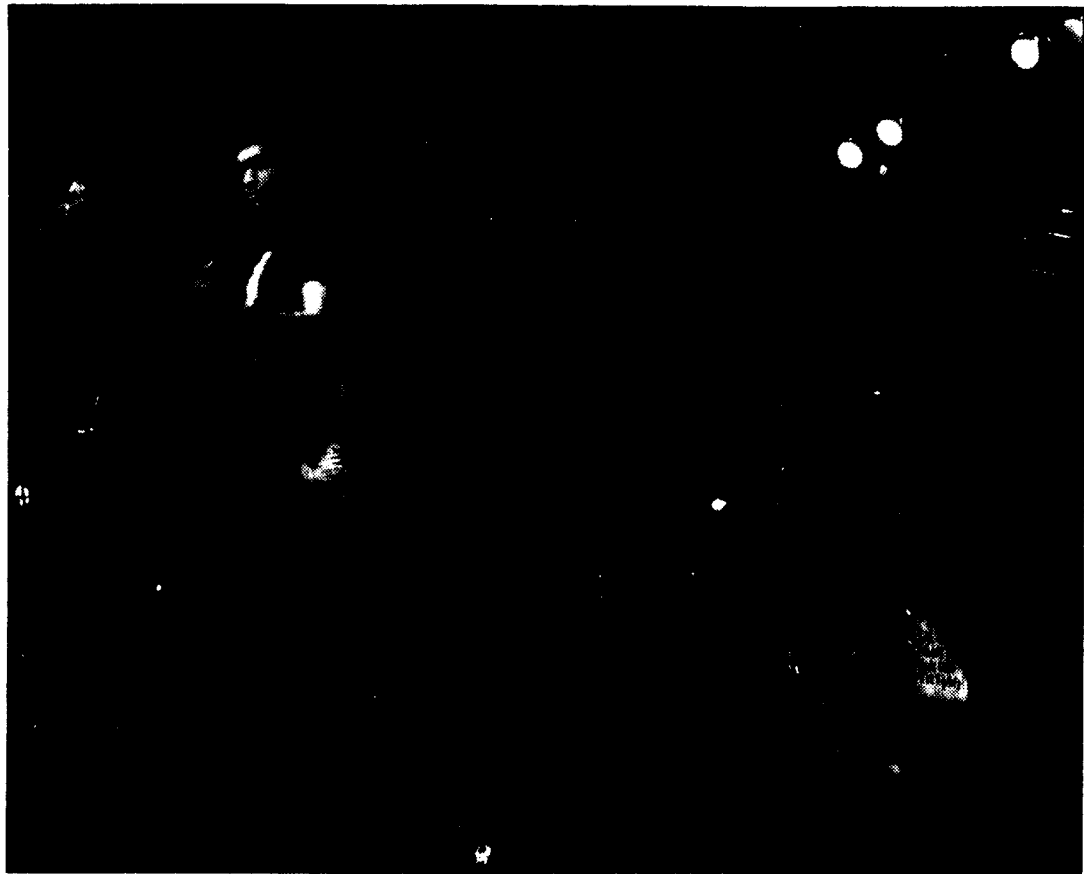


STUDENT LIFE

Battle of the Bands strikes a chord



Janet Niedenberger/THE BEHREND BEACON

Drive-Thru Records band I Am The Avalanche performed at this year's Battle of the Bands.

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From the ecstatic stage presence of Tommy Magik and The Wonderfulls to the unique sound of Tricycle Bicycle Cycle, Battle of the Bands '06 at Penn State Behrend was an exciting event. Several students and music fans checked out the event throughout the day, but Erie Hall was most packed when Tommy Magik and the Wonderfulls took the stage. Early on in the day, the small crowd was more into the free hot dogs and hamburgers than the music. Mas Nova opened up the event with a small but loyal hometown crowd in Erie Hall. The band played impressively and set a standard of professionalism for the more experienced bands to follow.

Kevin Jackson, who worked security for the event, stated that the competition "started as a slow event, but picked up as the night went on."

There's Always Tomorrow was scheduled to perform at 3:30 p.m., but ended up not making it. It turns out they had their final show as a band the night before at a local venue called The Hangout in Edinboro, Pa.

Next up was the psychedelic sounds of Tricycle Bicycle Cycle. They are a Pittsburgh-area band who recently played at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pa. They only recently formed, though they say that they "all go way back."

Not as traditional as other rock bands, they implement other instruments such as the tambourine and the cow bell. Their lyrics stray from normal rock topics into "songs about Mexican wrestlers, mescaline, and monkeys."

Led by the on stage acrobatics of Dave Trusso and Eric Speeth, Everything Ends brought a high level of energy

and more fans into Erie Hall. Their brand of post-hardcore and punk rock made them stand out. This Jamestown crew plans to release a new EP entitled "Chasing the Ever After" today.

Playing fourth, Dust 'n Ashes not only brought along a great sound, but also a tighter crowd than previously seen throughout the battle. David Dubowski, a Behrend student and talented local musician said, "They performed well and showed to me that they have been performing together for quite a while. They definitely had their act together. The bass player (Matt Green) picked up his role in the band quite well and really held down the low end. He also kept the rock style that they were looking for going strong."

Dubowski's statement proved correct when the three judges awarded Dust 'n Ashes first place in the Battle of the Bands for their spiritual performance.

Bringing the rowdiest crowd of the night, Tommy Magik and the Wonderfulls were on stage during the first ejection of the night. Kevin Jackson, who earlier said, "Everybody was behaving well..." was proven wrong during their performance.

A herd of their drunken fans gathered and started crowd surfing, which led to the dismissal of one of the fans. Ben Winfield, who joined the Pittsburgh-based band in December of '05, said, "The arrangement for the show was a little different than other similar events I have been to. We had ten minutes to set up with only about twenty minutes to actually play our set afterward. We had to wait the whole ten minute setup time before we could begin instead of just playing when we were ready which was a little different."

Their progressive rock sound and Behrend campus ties made them a crowd favorite of the night. Winfield

also said that the band is currently writing and recording a new CD that will be released before the end of the year.

As Tommy Magik and the Wonderfulls exited with the majority of the crowd, the next band, the Sandlot Heroes, took the stage. They still have four shows still to play in April, beginning with a show at the Hawk's Nest, which is located at the University of Hartford. They then will travel between New Jersey and Pennsylvania for the rest of May.

Next to perform was another Pittsburgh band called California After College, also known as "Cali AC." The pop punk licks of their song "Tracing Chalk Lines" caught the judges attention but was overshadowed by their tight rhythm section. Cali AC's next stop is at the Nativity Church/School in South Park, Pa.

Next on the stage was Phantasm. This Jamestown-based group boasts a packed tour schedule throughout the Northeastern United States this coming Spring. They have scheduled stops in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio. They also performed at Bruno's Café last night.

Finally, Audio Imagery took the stage to close out the battle portion of the evening. This hip hop/rap/rock group brought their unique, crowd-pleasing unique sound to the stage. They are a very experienced band who have played with artists such as Rusted Root, Ill Nino, Fall Out Boy, Oleander, Sponge, The X-Ecutioners, Freeway (Rock-a-Fella), Bowling for Soup and Black Thought (The Roots) just to name a few. Other Penn State students will have a chance to enjoy their music when they play at The Crowbar in State College on April 24. Overall, the professionalism of the bands and the quality of their performances made for a successful event.

Homelessness prevalent in Erie

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You see them everywhere. They push their belongings in shopping carts. On cold nights, they huddle around various heating vents throughout the city of Erie. They sit on street corners, clutching their Styrofoam cups, waiting. Waiting for generous donations. Waiting for simple kindness from passersby. These are the faces of the common homeless man or woman who can easily be found throughout the city.

They could be your uncle, your brother or your co-worker. Even though they are homeless, many of them possess the same qualities as other people. These are the invisible attributes of homeless people that describe the epidemic that has greatly affected the country. The issue that most people in the Erie area fail to realize is that the problem is much deeper than what is visible.

According to Chuck Knox, the Director of Development for the Erie City Mission, there are over 2,000 homeless people that live in the city of Erie, even though the state's representation of the number is approximately 60. Knox said that homelessness is an "invisible" problem in the city because many people are unaware of the epidemic. While many people have images of homeless people finding shelter by street heating vents and on park benches, Knox claims that homeless people find their shelter in abandoned houses and in homeless shelters such as the City Mission.

In addition to these living conditions, homeless people in Erie also form several small communities throughout the city. Clusters of homeless people gather by the former International Paper building, near the Bayfront Highway, and along State Street. Even though groups of homeless people live in such close proximity, they each maintain an independent identity, completely separate from people within their community.

Through his work with the City Mission, Knox has dealt with many different types of homeless people. He said that the main issue with the homeless people that live in Erie is that they are dual diagnosed. Many of the men that enter the City Mission arrive with an addiction to drugs or alcohol and a mental disorder that affects their everyday lives. Many who remain at the shelter for a

lengthy period of time struggle to overcome their drug addiction and are unable to function in the workplace. Due to this problem, the City Mission offers drug and alcohol rehabilitation and classes that adhere to the needs of the homeless men.

A major goal for the Erie City Mission is to help serve the homeless people throughout the city. According to recent statistics, there is an 80-bed shelter that houses only men at an estimated 450 men per year. In addition to the shelter, the Mission serves approximately 4,500 families per year with roughly 140,000 meals served to people.

A recent program that has seen much success is the "New Life Program," which consists of programs such as Anger and Rage Management classes, Spiritual Life Development, Drug and Alcohol Addictions Recovery, Vocational Activities, Financial Planning, and various other programs. Many men throughout Erie have benefited from this program. "We now have five or six men from the New Life Program who are now in college, doing exceptionally well," Knox said.

While the Samaritan Housing program houses only men, there are other programs that benefit families, including women and children. The City Mission provides a Family Care Ministry that provides food and clothing, and the homeless can find the supplies they need. It also has a Spiritual Support Counseling Program, which aids in spiritual recovery for the people.

As the City Mission works to aid the homeless people in Erie, it releases an annual budget that they must comply with. For the 2006 year, there is an estimated \$2.7 million budget with more than half of the budget coming from cash donations from residents and citizens. The Mission depends on donations of cash, food and clothing to support the many people that frequent the establishment. People from all over Erie County donate their goods for a good cause.

From the seemingly nomadic wanderers that panhandle their way throughout the city to the homeless men and women that struggle with full-time jobs and a family, the problem with homelessness in Erie is practically invisible to the citizens but felt by many. With organizations such as the City Mission and other groups, the problem will not be eliminated, but made better to those who are affected.

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