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Crowd pleasers

This battle of the bands is 'win-win for everybody'

by **Andy Graham**
The Scene
 November 30, 2006

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One of six local bands will earn studio time, and everybody else also wins in this nice example of town-and-gown cooperation.

"The Rock Show Snowdown" set for 8 p.m. Friday at Rhino's Youth Center and All-Ages Music Club benefits all concerned:

- Each band — The Romance, Forever in Effigy, Broken Stone, Busman's Holiday, Sentinel and Trio in Stereo — has received free publicity in recent weeks generated by Mark Deuze's T451 telecommunications class at IU.
- Deuze's 19 students have gotten some hands-on experience in promoting bands and staging a concert.
- The show proceeds, from ticket sales at \$5 apiece, directly benefit Rhino's — which is hoping to purchase some sound panels to improve the venue's acoustics.
- And Friday's audience is in for a multi-faceted musical treat.

The bands will play sets of approximately 25 minutes each, and the band that brings in the most fans wins recording time at an as-yet-unnamed local recording studio. Color-coded tickets and a sign-up sheet at the door will determine the winner.

Rhino's manager Brad Wilhelm likes that arrangement better than the usual setup for "bBattle of the bands" shindigs.

"The winner is who brings in the most people, not the one which pleases a panel of judges or something," Wilhelm said last week. "Judging is subjective, a matter of personal taste, and some hard feelings inevitably result.

"The way we're determining this result is not a judgment call or something political. And all the bands win, given the publicity they've all gotten out of it and the chance to play before what is, hopefully, a packed house."

Holly Renshaw, one of Deuze's students helping to promote The Romance, agreed that a big crowd for the show is the real goal. "It's a competition, but as long as we can pack Rhino's, I'll be happy, whether my band wins or not," Renshaw said.



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Shiny, happy people rocking out: Such is what IU students and Rhino's are hoping for this Friday. File photo

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Renshaw and classmates listened to 30-second samples of the six Rock Show Snowdown bands and chose which band they'd prefer to promote for the event.

"It worked out to a very even split, too," Deuze said. "So the division of labor came naturally, and we didn't have to assign anybody to a band."

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The participating bands were selected by Rhino's booking agent Bob Nugent and some Rhino's regulars. "They came up with these six, and all six jumped at the chance," Wilhelm said. "We wanted bands who not only draw well, now, but who also need to take that next step."

Deuze avoided giving step-by-step instructions to his students regarding how to promote their chosen bands.

"I purposefully made the assignment very broad and very vague," Deuze recalled. "I just said, 'We've got six bands and a concert date, and it's up to you to make it work. As long as it's done ethically, create a buzz.' I told them to use traditional media, new media, word-of-mouth, whatever."

"We wanted to address how media is changing in the context of the Internet—with MySpace, Facebook, the social advertising coming on — and bridge with the local community and local bands. A lot of the bands also contain IU students now. And the students wish to do creative work during class time. It all fit together well."

Deuze's students spent a class session at Rhino's to learn about sound, lighting and the technical elements of staging a show.

Derek Barylski, one of the students promoting Trio in Stereo, also does work for the IU student TV show "Amplified," which will tape the Rock Show Snowdown and will air it on campus Channel 3 and off-campus Channel 2 on its network in early 2007.



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Students also have produced their own CD featuring all the bands, and began distributing it following Thanksgiving break.

Renshaw noted her band, The Romance, seems to attract a younger audience, so much of her group's promotional effort has been focused on local high schools.

IU students interacting with local high school students was part of the whole idea. Deuze's faculty fellowship from IU's Community Outreach and Partnerships in Service Learning department spurred the effort, and Nicole Schoenemann of that department made the first contact with Rhino's.

"Doing more stuff with IU is great for us, but also enhances our mission in serving local youth," Wilhelm said. "College students are youths in our community, too, and we give those under 21 a place to come hear and play music. It's win-win for everybody."

Rock Show Snowdown

WHAT: Benefit show featuring local bands The Romance, Forever in Effigy, Broken Stone, Busman's Holiday, Sentinel and Trio in Stereo.

WHERE: Rhino's All-Ages Music Club, 325 S. Walnut St.

WHEN: 8 p.m. Friday

WHY: To benefit Rhino's, to provide promotion experience for students in Mark Deuze's T451 telecommunications class at IU, and to forward the bands' careers, including sending one of them into the studio.

HOW MUCH: \$5 cover

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