

AROUNDTOWN

Warped Tour rocks hard to impress audience

W Hillary Lindwall
News/Wire Editor

Arriving at the Vans Warped Tour, it is hard to know what to expect. For those attending the annual, all-day concert for the first time the crowds and the huge venue can be overwhelming. However, at Aug. 2's show at the First Midwest Bank Amphitheater in Tinley Park, organizers were able to put together an entertaining and laid back music festival. Despite the fact that the venue was large, it was easy to navigate.

Featuring well-known bands such as The Academy Is..., All Time Low, Motion City Soundtrack, Mayday Parade and Shwayze, the show also introduced more obscure groups, including HorrorPops, Pierce the Veil, Every Avenue, Cobra Starship and Dr. Manhattan.

Attending the Warped Tour can be very beneficial for those interested in expanding

their musical horizons because the large number of bands and numerous stages make it easy to discover new music. In addition, each band has a tent that sells discounted CDs and other paraphernalia. Furthermore, the members of less-well-known bands often sit in their merchandise tents, which keeps them closer to fans.

The first band that this reviewer saw, Cobra Starship, was the perfect opening for the tour. Band members interacted with the audience and got the crowd excited for the rest of the day's festivities. The lead singer of the band, Gabe Saporta, immediately grabbed the crowd's attention by talking to specific fans located near the front of the stage. Since they are not a very well known band, most of Cobra Starship's songs were not very recognizable. The clear crowd favorite, however, was the last song that they played. "Guilty Pleasure," off of their latest album, ¡Viva La Cobra!, was catchy, which got the crowd excited and ready to experience other

bands.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Pierce the Veil, a less prominent band, played a show that was utterly forgettable. The songs that they played were not catchy whatsoever, and their attempts at getting the crowd excited failed time after time. Their enthusiasm for their music, however, was very evident. They seemed to enjoy what they were doing, even though they may not have been one of the most successful bands on the tour. Many of the underground bands had similar performances.

Although Warped Tour provided concertgoers with a vast choice of bands to see, it is difficult to attend each concert. The stages are far apart, and simultaneous band performances make it difficult to see every band.

One major criticism of Warped is the expense. In addition to ticket

prices, a water bottle at Warped tour costs about \$5, and a single slice of pizza can cost \$8, facts that made this reviewer appreciate the "comped" tickets all the more.

While the cost, sprawling venue and nearly 90-degree heat put a slight damper on the day, the combination of a great band list and constantly changing surroundings helped to make the 2008 Vans Warped Tour successful.



Forever the Sickest Kids perform at Warped Tour. Photo by Hillary Lindwall

Rock the Bells proves hip-hop popularity in great atmosphere

W Christine Mahoney
Copy Editor

For anyone who has questioned the liveliness of the current state of Hip-Hop, Rock the Bells (RTB) 2008 at the First Midwest Bank amphitheatre proved that Hip-Hop is alive and kicking. There in support of Hip-Hop and its vitality stood a mob of culturally conscious Hip-Hop backpackers, youthful and yearning to revive their definition of what Hip-Hop should be. Together they unite, colorfully clad, sporting gaudy gold chains, special edition A.D.I.D.A.S and T-shirts that declared the powerful message felt through the festival: Rap=Lies=Hip-Hop.

Over the duration of the 12-hour concert, Hip-hop rookies could have definitely received a lesson in Hip-Hop 101. Performances embodied the various facets in the genre's 30 year existence: Old school; native tongues movement; new York city '90s street rap; '90s eclecticism; and the latest movement

of old-school-inflicted beats and rhymes. Legendary names such as A Tribe Called Quest, Rakim, Nas, Immortal Technique and members of Wu-tang Clan—Redman and Method Man—rocked the stage performing new hits as well as some classics.

RTB was even able to make history



Rock the Bells Logo flashes at First Midwest Bank Ampitheatre. Photo by Christine Mahoney

by uniting Hip-Hop group The Pharcyde after an 11-year hiatus. Sparked by their theme song

"Pharcyde," the funky beat accompanied the roll call of MCs: Imani, Bootie Brown, Fatlip and Skinkid Tre. The group's victorious, jazz-influenced set boosted the mercury on the already sizzling-summer-Saturday-night—Especially when performing their nonchalantly raunchy party classic "Yo' mama.

While most performances were nostalgic and lively, not all suited the fancy of the crowd. Mos Def's performance could easily be considered the worst of the entire festival bringing the wild roar of the crowd down to a deafening lull. The performance consisted of singing, mumbling, random rambling and walking off the stage. Finally, when the crowd summoned him back, he performed a powerfully heartfelt rendition of "Umi Said." The crowd echoed with pumping fists throughout the amphitheatre as Mos Def rapped, "My Umi said shine your light on the world, shine your light on the world to see..." as Mos Def left the stage.

While the concert was generally amazing, annoyances got through security. Security was tight, and as expected no

food or drinks from outside were allowed into the venue with the exception of bottled water, however security was strict about removing the caps that could be used as weapons if an uprising occurred. Ironically, one concertgoer bragged that she was able to get a box cutter in, but security was too busy looking for bottle caps and looked past the sharp object in her purse. Many with lawn seating brought lawn chairs only to find that lawn chairs taller than one's mid-calf were also considered a safety hazard and not allowed. Fortunately, security was not strict about seating in the upper deck of the pavilion but some were still subjected to 12 hours of torturous standing in order to see the stage. Although this group proved to be a politically and socially thoughtful bunch none were opposed to rump shaking as the bone-rattling beats burst through the speakers ultimately drowning out most of what the performers were saying, nonetheless, their presence was felt.

Overall the experience was a powerful reminder that the spirit of Hip-Hop has never died. Most performers evoked energy from the crowd as felt circa 1994. Highlights of the show were performances by Redman and Method man who sent the crowd into frenzy as they stood atop fans' hands. As forecasted, the bells were certainly rocked.

Snoop Dogg and 311 unite to give outstanding performance

W Bridget Van Der Bosch
Staff Writer

On July 8, the Unity Tour came to First Midwest Bank Amphitheatre. Snoop Dogg, the infamous Rap/Hip-hop artist, paired with 311, an Alternative Rock-Funk group from California, to put on a blazing show. Snoop kicked off the show with "Next Episode," which proved to be a perfect opener. As soon as the first beats started playing, the whole crowd was on their feet.

After spelling out D-O double-G to his hearts content, he went into "Hell Yeah," backed by his live band. A live band would be the last thing someone would expect Snoop Dogg to have behind him. The band's rock/rap riffs kept the crowd going throughout his entire set list. "Gin and Juice" was definitely a crowd favorite. Everyone was singing along with the classic Snoop Dogg tune. Snoop was unstoppable, connecting with the crowd and spitting flawless rhymes and even doing a cover of the 80's hit "Jump Around." At the end of the song, he explained that it was good the crowd is jumping around, but that they should really be dropping it like it's hot. With that, he went into "Drop it Like It's Hot," another crowd favorite. After a few more songs,

he concluded and left the stage open to 311.

After a set change and pouring rain, 311 came in strong playing a song, "Down," off their self-titled album. Many fans, who were sitting on the lawn, had either left or moved into the pavilion to prevent becoming more drenched from the downpour. Though the amount of people present was lacking because of the storm, 311 still played fantastically and enthusiastically. Tim Mahoney, lead guitarist whom some say is in comparison to Jimi Hendrix in style and difficulty, was flawless. Commanding attention, vocalists SA Martinez and Nick Hexum mesmerized the crowd, bouncing off of one another's energy and moving around the stage every second the music played. Chad Sexton on the drums kept the rhythm going, while P-Nut's faultless bass added funk to 311's Alternative sound.

Crowd pleasers 311 delighted the audience with the variety of genres they covered. They played "Amber," a reggae chart-topping hit from 2001 off the album *From Chaos*, along with another reggae inspired song off of "Sound System," "Come Original." Hyped from 311's reggae hits, all fans were out of their seats for the rap/rock songs Martinez and Hexum delivered perfectly. Though they did not speak directly to the audience as often as Snoop Dogg did, there was still a strong connection between the musicians and the crowd. The overwhelming

variety of the songs and lyrics spoke the words that 311 did not. "Beautiful Disaster" from their album *Transistor* caught the fans attention, everyone was captivated by the extreme difficulty of the guitar solos and the attention grabbing lyrics. Ending the night with "Creatures" off of "Evolver," 311 definitely topped off the evening.

The only downside of the concert was the venue. First Midwest Bank Amphitheater is not known for their sound quality, and this show was no exception. There was a lot of echoing and the volume leveled needed to be turned up a few notches. For Snoop Dogg and 311 fans, the louder the music is the better. Also, the whole show was running over a half hour behind schedule. The rain was not pleasant for the fans on the lawn. A light drizzle quickly turned into a torrential downpour in between sets, creating everyone on the lawn to move into the pavilion or leave.

The Unity tour itself lived up to its name. Two unlikely musical artists came together to create something fantastic. Though it rained on their Chicago parade, 311 and Snoop Dogg proved that one of rap's finest and the funkified alternative rock can be fused together. Snoop Dogg's final words after his last song were "Peace, love, and soul." Snoop Dogg and 311 instilled nothing but peace, love, and soul into the evening.