

Audiences make, break two dates on Warped Tour

By PAT MINER
Music Critic

To enjoy terrific bands, it is best to go where fans aren't warped in the head.

The Vans Warped Tour, an event running throughout the month of July, is an exhibition featuring several top notch bands from coast-to-coast as well as some of the better skateboarders, in-line skaters and mountain bikers around performing on a half-pipe.

The first Warped Tour show I went to was July 3 in Los Angeles at the Olympic Velodrome. The stadium has stages on opposite sides, and between main stage acts, the crowd would run back and forth to gain their spots.

The side stages were on the outside of the Velodrome, and the performing athletes were in the middle of the field. This setup was ideal for the bands, because people could stand wherever they wished and get a good, unobstructed view.

The act that definitely stole the show in Los Angeles was Pennywise. Hailing from Hermosa Beach, Calif.,

just a few miles from the Velodrome, Pennywise fans came out in full support of their hometown band. With guitarist Fletcher Dragg egging on the crowd to songs such as "Stand By Me," "Perfect People," "Pennywise" and "Final Day," the audience formed what had to have been the biggest mosh pit I have ever seen. The brother of the late bassist Jason Thirsk came on at the end of the set for an extremely inspired version of "Bro Hymn," and the crowd exited the day with well more than their money's worth.

The Mighty Mighty Bosstones, Descendants, Social Distortion and Reel Big Fish also put on incredible shows. The Bosstones played not only new songs but also several tracks from "Devil's Night Out" and "Don't Know How to Party." The Descendants, also from Hermosa Beach, got the crowd roaring with "Loser" and also played such songs as "Hope," "I'm the One" and "Everything Sucks."

Social Distortion took the stage after the Bosstones and showed everyone what old school punk is all about, as they played one of the longest sets of the day, lasting around 45 minutes.

Reel Big Fish's set was somewhat disappointing for those who are used to longer sets, but they still played "S.R.," "Snoop Dogg, Baby" and "241" in front of an overly enthused audience.

The Vandals were a slight disappointment, as most of their play list consisted of new songs and little of the old. But they were joined on stage by the vocalist from the Dance Hall Crashers for a tremendous version of "Summer Lovin'."

Hepcat and Royal Crown Revue added a completely different sound, incorporating a lot of jazz and swing into a show that was mostly punk. Sugar Ray added some flavor on the second stage, but a lot of fans were surprised to hear that no other songs sounded like their buzz hit "Fly."

Limp Bizkit played an even different sound. They came on stage with a really bad version of Korn, if anyone can even imagine such a travesty.

However, Limp Bizkit was the only truly bad band, with several smaller bands stealing the show. A lot of people woke up to bands like 22 Jacks, Millencolin and Blink 182, and these bands could be headlining the Warped

tour in future years.

The Los Angeles show was a tremendous success. It's a little depressing that the same thing can't be said for the July 15 stop in Lawrence, Kan. Many of the same bands played the Lawrence show, although Social Distortion had the day off and Buck-O-Nine was now a new headliner.

First of all, Burcham Park may have been the worst possible place to have the show, with trees all around to annoy the crowd. The stages looked like they were put up at random, and concession stands took up most of the space.

However, by far the worst part of the Lawrence show was the crowd. The crowd at the Los Angeles show was completely excitable, dancing or moshing to every band and having a great time.

The Lawrence crowd only moved during the Bosstones songs "The Impression That I Get" and "Someday I Suppose." Basically, if there hadn't been MTV or the movie "Clueless," there wouldn't have been any movement at the entire show.

Pennywise, who decided to play

even on its day off, had to bring out its version of "Fight For Your Right" to get things going, but even that couldn't work. Halfway through the set, a guy faceplanted from a speaker and onto the stage, but that did nothing either. They finished their set with a weak response to "Bro Hymn," and left the stage.

22 Jacks closed out the Lawrence show's main stage acts, and Buck-O-Nine blended their version of punk and ska to send the people home. The bands were again tremendous at Burcham Park; they just drew a really weak response from the crowd.

The Warped Tour was definitely one of the best shows you could catch for \$19, however a lot of people are going to have to do some serious driving next year, as I wouldn't expect it to go back to Lawrence any time soon. It's a very good thing Social Distortion had the day off, because lead man Mike Ness would have really gone crazy. Hopefully, Westfair can make an effort to bring the show to Council Bluffs, so the tour doesn't bypass this part of the country altogether.

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