

# Film, music run CMJ marathon

NEW YORK (AP) — If an athletic marathon is 26 miles long, what exactly is a music marathon?

Spread over four days, the College Music Journal's annual Music Marathon presented more than 1,000 bands performing live, 17 film premieres and 93 panel discussions. All of it was attended by more than 8,000 registrants representing all sectors of the music industry and college radio.

From rookie program directors at small schools to veteran record label executives, almost everyone found something useful — and that's not just free CDs and magazines.

The panels covered everything from on-the-road touring horror stories to new promotional strategies for major and independent labels, to genre-specific discussions on the state of heavy metal, hip-hop and electronic dance music.

At night, attendees packed clubs around the city to check out established acts, overseas curiosities from Japan, Holland and Sweden, and dozens of unsigned bands eager to land a record deal.

The scope of the conference represented the eclectic world of college music, which has expanded since the days of guitar-centric bands like U2, R.E.M. and The Police.

Since the multiplatinum success of Nirvana, major labels have looked to the college charts as a barometer of

new tastes and trends and as a testing ground for younger bands.

At the same time, hundreds of independent labels rely on the college airwaves as a crucial outlet for their acts, with commercial radio stations increasingly limiting their playlists to guaranteed hits.

Today's college radio stations are a patchwork of specialty music shows and styles. In this crowded marketplace, getting bands heard is a challenge, but translating radio spins to sales can be even tougher.

Several panels advocated using the Internet as a way to get around traditional marketplace structures.

"Retail is dead," said Paul Stark from Minneapolis' Twin/Tone records. "There's no reason to spend thousands on pumping the retail market."

Stark sees digital distribution of music over the Internet as a necessary means of survival for smaller labels that can no longer afford the costs inherent in manufacturing CDs and cassettes. Plus, larger retail chains will no longer stock low-selling artists, Stark said.

Digital distribution has the potential to put music directly into the consumer's hand without having to go to a store.

Stark is pairing with California-based Liquid Audio, a company focused on distributing CD-quality

music over the Internet, which was one of many high-tech outfits at CMJ.

Two Web sites, <http://CDnow.com> and <http://Amazon.com>, offered their services to smaller bands hoping to sell their CDs on the Internet.

Billboard magazine advertised its Billboard Talent Net Web site, an online showcase for new artists that promotes their music to industry professionals and music enthusiasts.

Technology's influence on music was apparent in many of the nighttime shows during the Nov. 4-7 conference. The opening night party focused more on DJ performances than live bands, with some acts blurring the lines between both.

British producers Coldcut performed from two laptop computers with their music synchronized to video clips. One nightclub offered four floors of DJs representing techno, drum and bass, house, big beat and other genres of the international electronic dance scene.

However, the Music Marathon's meat and potatoes was based on live bands, and rock fans had hundreds of gigs they could attend. The Cardigans, Afghan Whigs, Morphine and Sunny Day Real Estate were some of the better-known bands. Also performing: The Donnas, a quartet of female rockers from California, and the Hellacopters, a hard-rock metal group from Sweden.

## 'Pterodactyls' to descend on Community Playhouse

Don't be afraid, Barney hasn't grown wings.

"Night of the Pterodactyls," which opened Thursday at the Lincoln Community Playhouse, is the most



## Dropped Notes

recent production of the Playhouse series, Children's Theatre.

The whimsical title refers to the active imagination of Carly, the new girl in town whose creativity and intelligence attract the attention of 12-year-old Walt.

As their friendship grows, Walt has trouble explaining to his group of male friends, a k a GAS (Gross Associates), his fondness for the strange girl.

The play addresses childhood and adolescent issues of peer pressure, individuality and honesty.

The Children's Theatre describes its goal as "to entertain and educate our youth always questioning the choices each 'character' makes."

The play is appropriate for children ages 5 and up.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$9 for students and children. Show times for this weekend and Nov. 18-22 are Thursday at 7 p.m., Friday at 7 p.m., Saturday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

## Japan's 'demon drummers' to possess Omaha's Orpheum

Tonight, Nebraskans will be given a pounding lesson in Japanese culture.

The Omaha Symphony is bringing Japan's famed "demon drummers," Ondekoza, for a night of Japanese folk music at 8 p.m. in Omaha's Orpheum Theater, 409 S. 16th St.

Ondekoza is a group of 11 members who use bamboo flutes, string instruments and drums ranging in size from a finger tom-tom to a 700 pound O-daiko carved from a tree trunk.

For 29 years the group has been performing its unique brand of intense Japanese folk music around the world. The shows demand such rigorous physical work that the members of Ondekoza live in a commune-like setting, focusing on physical discipline and mental training, when not on tour.

While on tour, the group continues to exercise, sometimes by running from city to city. On its three-year tour, starting in 1990, the group ran 13,000 miles around the United States, performing 300 concerts throughout its trek, which began and ended with performances at New York's Carnegie Hall.

Tickets for the performance range from \$11 to \$25 and can be purchased from the Omaha Symphony box office, (402) 342-3560.

# Marijuana benefit hungry for donations

BY BRET SCHULTE  
Senior editor

The local chapter of a national advocacy group is looking for a way to ease the pain of those who suffer from glaucoma, AIDS and multiple sclerosis.

Their idea: marijuana. The National Organization for the Reformation of Marijuana Laws has worked to decriminalize the drug for both recreational and medical uses since its foundation in 1970.

Saturday, the Lincoln chapter plays host to a benefit concert at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Culture Center to promote the legalization of the long-disputed plant.

"Nebraska could really benefit from (growing marijuana)," said NORML chapter president Jessica Sievers. "The plant can grow in almost any type of soil, and the fibers have numerable uses."

Local blues and rock act Meandering Blue is lending its time for the cause.

"People need to understand that

marijuana is not as bad as the government says, and it has a lot of good uses for sick and healthy people," drummer Tom McKee said.

The concert will take place the day before National Medical Marijuana Day on Sunday. Among NORML's goals for marijuana advocacy is the recognition of the plant's medicinal properties, which seem to be enjoying ever-increasing support by the established medical community.

On NORML's official Web site is an excerpt from last August's New England Journal of Medicine:

"Doctors are not the enemy in the 'war' on drugs; ignorance and hypocrisy are. Research should go on, and while it does, marijuana should be available to all patients who need it to help them undergo treatment for life-threatening illnesses."

Sievers planned this concert to raise funds specifically for the promotion of marijuana as treatment.

"We are trying to get the word out on the whole issue," Sievers said. "It benefits sufferers of glaucoma and

helps ease the pain of HIV and AIDS as well as multiple sclerosis."

California has traditionally been the most tolerant of medicinal uses for marijuana, but recent crackdowns by the state attorney's office and federal judges has led to the closing of most California marijuana shops.

But Sievers does have reason to throw a party Saturday. After the election Nov. 3, five states passed voter mandates calling for the medical legalization of the drug: Alaska, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon and Washington.

The Lincoln chapter of NORML plans to send some proceeds back to its headquarters in Washington, D.C. The rest will be spent on local advocacy.

Sievers said the show will be kept clean of any illegal activity and open for everyone interested in the issue.

"With the success of the Democrats and the issue in the last election we want to celebrate," she said.

The all-ages show is \$2 with additional donations accepted. The concert will run from 9 to 12 p.m. at the Culture Center, 333 N. 14th St.

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