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Unofficial SXSW 2009: Nerds and noise ordinances

BY GAVIN PAUL Published at 2:16 PM on March 19, 2009

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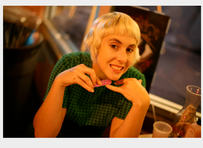

Likewise, as last year's navigation of badge-less activities showed us, there is no shortage of free and awesome come SXSW time in Austin. In fact, the town is so overloaded with tunage and eyes to watch it that the ultimate marketing experiment is created, party promoters forced to think less free PBR and more, say, PB&J sammies toasted with Elvis prints. Even before the festival proper kicked off, a sweet girl at Beauty Bar was slinging free manicures. Of course I didn't plan my attack based on the level of free swag I could score. Most of it just sounded rad – Monstrosity Indie House Party – or so nerdy it's gotta be rad – Game Boy Data Pop Fest? Sold.

As for the Game Boy throw down, indeed it was both nerdy and rad. If you're not familiar with 8-bit rockstars, it's basically a geeked-out dj set-up. Instead of scratching a record, dudes and gals will employ early-80s, video game thumb skills, kitschy-digitizing everything from the Little Mermaid's "Kiss The Girl" to Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode." I mean, it was cool for the first two acts that I caught, a crew of three, complete with back-up vocals called 8Bk OK, followed by an artist dubbed Sievert, who wanted to make it very clear that he was from space, complete with a NASA jumpsuit. And a girl standing next to me didn't think anything was strange about her Chuck-E-Cheese's family pack. But I could only take so many variations of buttons 'A' and 'B' before my rock and roll heart started to get angry.

Sievert rocks the Contra code.

So the indie house party was on deck. Promising three-floors of art, beer and talent ranging from New Zealand dance punkers Bang Bang Eche to NYC's disco house set, The Golden Filter, I figured the place would at least reach the a.m. hours of Thursday. Sadly, by the time I made it cross-town to the suburban house, the fun shut down because of a city noise ordinance. And the kegs were dry. So I indulged in the art, staring way too long at a jailhouse caricature of Ex-Pres Bush, before fending for one of Austin's infamous burritos made in a cart, and calling it a night to day one.

Monstrosity winds down.

Per a rewind to daylight, some top-notch unofficial goodness was had, as well. NYC's indie-promoter Todd P is at it again, throwing shebangs at Ms. Bea's on the East Side of the city, where I caught an afternoon dedicated to female rockers, while downtown I was able to easily bar hop to tunes via Ezra Furman and The Harpoons, Vetiver and an oddly affable set by Swedish folkster, The Tallest Man On Earth, among a few other spotlight hopefuls (pics and deets below).

Todd P and his van.

Vetiver entertains a sweaty Mohawk crowd.

The Gay Blades jumpstart a Creekside gala.

Ezra Furman & The Harpoons show on time to their first set, despite their van breaking down in Tennessee.

Forever show Ms. Bea's what women and rock and roll are made of.

When not shaking everyones' hands in the crowd, Kristian Matsson, *a.k.a. The Tallest Man On Earth was frightening people with a cappela outros.*

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OTHERS TAGGED WITH

8Bk OK, Bang Bang Eche, Ezra Furman and The Harpoons, Forever, The Gay Blades, The Golden Filter, The Tallest Man On Earth, Vetiver

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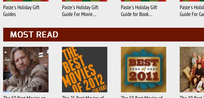

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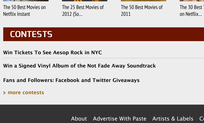

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