

CITY BEAT

X marks the spot

Music scene thrives on heels of Northgate festival success

Students come to Texas A&M University for one thing — education ... and parties ... and food ... the aspects of living a college life are endless. But there seems to be one element at College Station that individuals always are complaining about — the music scene.



JAMES FRANCIS
aggie life editor

People seem to think the only music available to students and members of the Bryan-College Station community resides in Northgate venues.

And although many of the weekend shows performed around Northgate represent styles from blues to rock to country to Celtic, these musical temples seem to always leave the "big concert" out of the game.

Fortunately, thanks to the success of North by Northgate and the people behind its creation, music is alive and well in College Station (contrary to what people believe is a dying music scene.)

On Saturday, yet another musical gathering will take place at The Grove on the A&M campus. It has been named XFest.

The concert will feature local bands, such as Linus, Blue Earth and Spencer's Rocket, with additional appearances and performances by Reclamation, Peeping Tom, Throwaway People, West Free Exit and Native Strut. Put on by the Aggie Musician's Society, XFest should be considered yet another door opener to the floodgates of music in

this area.

With a variety of sponsors helping to promote the show, KHLR 103.9 the X stands out as one radio station whose name only brings more prominence to the event.

Mark McKenzie, assistant program director at

music is branching into.

"I think that they are becoming more aware that live music is a viable attraction for people who live here, which is why there have been more festivals and gatherings of musicians," McKenzie said.

Another aspect of the "music festival" is the nature of pairing music with fund raising. McKenzie said many organizations benefit from these types of events, thereby enhancing exposure of the charity.

"It's neat that they are using them (festivals) as fund-raisers," McKenzie said. "Live music is a good thing for fund raisers — they attract a lot of people, have a small overhead and raise lots of money."

Even though charities gain exposure and recognition through live concerts, McKenzie said people should still consider being careful about over-promoting.

"There is the danger of overexposing the live music scene, but for the time being, it's an excellent idea," he said. "Finally, the street culture is beginning to have a life force."

With the upcoming 12 hours of constant music on Saturday, it looks like College Station and the live music scene have come together to make a successful pairing.

XFest begins Saturday at noon and wraps up at midnight. There will be free food, tons of fun and all donated proceeds will benefit the Brazos County Girls Club.

It seems like College Station is shaping up to be a musically enhanced and diverse environment. And as the title of the event seems to be a play on a certain popular Fox television series, let's just say: XFest, the music is out there.

James Francis is a junior English major.



KHLR, said it is not the fact that there seems to be more music concerts springing up around town that is helping to open the doors; it is due to people in the community taking note of the live format

CAMPUS CONNECTION

Foreign language courses lack effectiveness

In today's business world, the ability to interact with people of other cultures is vitally important. American businessmen may not know that showing the bottom of your shoe is a serious insult to Arabs (you would be saying they are lower than the dirt and camel dung you stepped in getting there), or that the finger sign for two, with your index and middle finger (like the "V" for victory), is actually an invitation for sex in many European countries. So be careful when you order those bagels.



CHRIS HUFFINES
columnist

To receive a Bachelor of Arts degree, students must take 14 hours of the same foreign language. That translates to four semesters of Spanish, or Russian or Japanese. This requirement would not be a problem, except that this requirement does not truly teach the language and shortchanges students who would like a broad cultural overview, to learn about other people and avoid interesting cultural faux pas.

Studies show that bilingual students achieve more and do better. Great, hooray, back-patting all around. However, these studies cover students who are already fluent in two languages, not just those learning a language.

Also, the portion of the brain that learns language begins working much less effectively at about age 11 or 12.

As most college students are at least a half-decade older than this, it is a little hard to imagine students are learning the language effectively.

Also, while I have never personally seen these studies, no one has ever pointed out whether or not the subjects were primarily bilingual from an early age (which I suspect) or were students who had learned their foreign language after that 11-year-old barrier.

This means that we honestly do not know whether or not learning a foreign language in college will help a college-aged student.

To add insult to injury, language classes, due to their size and the nature of learning a foreign language, do not adequately teach the language.

The embattled professors do their best — more than could be expected of them — but it is difficult to cram a semester's worth of español or deutsch or francais or any other language into the unreciprocated skills of students who are just in a class to graduate. However, there is a solution.

Many students take a language class simply because it is required and do not learn, and the other students who truly wish to learn the language are lost in the shuffle.

The Department of Modern and Classical Languages should offer two language tracks. The first would be the current 14-hour, single-language

track. The other would be a broad-based, multiple-language, multicultural track.

The multicultural track would allow students who appreciate culture, and their own limitations, to experience a wide range of cultural systems, courtesy of taking a wide range of 101-level language classes.

They would pick up the basics of the language, enough to get directions or find the nearest bathroom. This track, however, would not force these students to pound their heads against the language barrier imposed by their own age.

This track would dramatically increase the size or number, or both, of first-semester language classes, but it would lower the size of all subsequent, second-, third- and fourth-semester classes, which would help those students on the single-language track.

They would not have to deal with slackers taking up space and holding up the learning process. The problem is apparent, and with a little juggling of schedules, the solution is not only apparent but easy to implement.

The Department of Modern and Classical languages simply has to ask itself the question of which is of more use to a graduating Aggie: the ability to speak one language well, and probably never again; or the ability to interact with a variety of cultures.

Chris Huffines is a sophomore speech communications major.

VOICE FROM THE CROWD

Corps class requirement treats cadets unfairly

The Corps of Cadets is full of pride. Many aspects of the Corps are memorable and beneficial to its members. The Corps placed in academics is tremendous, and the bond between friends created in the Corps is powerful and leadership skills built are immeasurable. The list of attributes could go on and on.



JESSE SPIVEY
guest columnist

The Corps does have its downfalls, however. One particular aspect of the Corps is ... well, let's just say, downright ridiculous.

Let me explain. In a cadet's career, she is required to take a series of classes, 16 hours of classes to be exact. The freshman and sophomore year require ROTC classes corresponding to

the cadet's outfit affiliation: Air Force, Army, etc. ... The next two years are followed by continuation of ROTC classes or D&C (Drill & Ceremonies) classes for those not seeking a career in the military upon graduation.

It is these D&C classes that fall into the ridiculous category.

To be in the Corps as a junior or senior, if you are not under military contract, you must take these classes, which would lead one to assume that the classes are full of necessary knowledge and wisdom to deal with the real world after graduation. That assumption would be completely wrong.

The class may attempt to offer some type of help but at such an elementary level as to almost be offensive to a senior in college.

During the course of these two years, cadets are forced to not only attend these not-so-helpful classes, spend time on likewise not-so-helpful projects, but also pay for these classes. The classes contribute no benefit to a cadet's degree progress, help not at all in the pursuit of academics, and basi-

cally become a nuisance to a cadet.

So, why, you ask, are these classes mandatory, and why do you have to pay for them?

In the words of Colonel James McClesky, director of Training and Operations for the Corps, "It is a rule in the Standard, and I'm sorry, that's the way it is."

D&C cadets are forced to take and pay for a class that offers them no "real" benefit because it is a rule and that is the way it is. No matter how long a cadet has spent in the Corps or how much time a cadet needs to put into his "real" classes, he or she cannot be in the Corps without it, and is forced out of the Corps if it is dropped.

Recently a cadet found himself in just such a predicament. Cadet S., we'll call him, has spent the last 3 some odd years in the Corps, has over 130 credit hours, and is very close to graduation. However, because he found his grade was suffering in his D&C class due to his neglect of the not-so-helpful class dealing with his "real" studies, he dropped the one

hour class and was removed from the Corps last week.

Cadet S. will miss his last Parents Weekend, his last March to the Brazos and his last Final Review due to the fact that it is rule to take this class and that is the way it is.

Cadet S. was also told his situation was too bad because no exceptions were ever made. When, in fact, there have been exceptions in the past. Why just last semester another senior cadet found himself in Cadet S.'s predicament, and he too dropped the class. He will be marching in his last Final Review.

Cadet S. will miss all of his senior Corps events due to sporadic enforcement of a rule forcing him to take a non-beneficial one hour class because that's the way it is.

It is sad that Cadet S.'s memories of the Corps will leave such a bitterness, and his respect for its leaders be so diminished because of this situation, but hey, I guess that's the way it is.

Jesse Spivey is a senior journalism major.

GENDERSCOPE

Both sexes must act out against sexual assault

It's 2 a.m. After a long Saturday night hanging out with friends on Southside, you decide it is time to go back to your Northside dorm. Waving goodbye to your friends, you head for home. On your way, you pass by the Commons and the Quad and listen to the last sounds of late-night revelry. Smiling to yourself, you start thinking about the night, remembering that great person you met at the party, the funny joke your friend told, the old acquaintance you ran into.



JENNIFER JONES
columnist

Before you know it, you've weaved your way past Heldenfelds and the Psychology building, and suddenly you realize there is not another soul around. No laughing friends, no cuddling couples — no one but you and Lawrence Sullivan Ross on the Academic plaza.

Quickening your steps, you start thinking about other things, like how dark it is, how quiet it is, how absolutely alone you are. By the time you reach Fish Pond, you are already fumbling for your keys and ID card. The quiet noises of night combine to emphasize your vulnerability.

No one would hear you if you yelled. No one would see you if you were attacked. Why hadn't you thought about this before you left your friends' room? Why hadn't you crashed at their place for the rest of the night? What had you been thinking?

You were probably thinking the same thing most Aggies think when they head off across campus in the middle of the night — absolutely nothing.

Having been indoctrinated into Texas A&M with multiple recitations of the Aggie Code of Honor and tales of knightly gentlemen, it does not occur to most people to be afraid on campus.

That is, until they are walking across it alone through poorly-lit grounds. And when they arrive at their dorms or cars unscathed, they breathe a sigh of relief and chastise themselves for worrying so much. Aggies don't lie, cheat or steal, they remember. They certainly don't rape.

Take Back the Night, sponsored by the National Organization for Women chapter on campus, is an event designed to encourage women to take back the right all individuals should have — to feel safe walking across campus alone at night.

Traditionally, events such as this do not include male participation. It was not until a few years ago that men were even allowed to march with the women across campus as a symbol of unity in the fight against sexual violence.

Sexual assault tends to be viewed as a strictly female issue — women have to worry about it, deal with it and fix it. People forget, however, that sexual assault is not limited to women.

Men are also victims. And even though a high percentage of sexual assault is committed against women by men, somehow men are never thought to be included in strategies of prevention.

We think women must bear solely the responsibility when the truth is that sexual assault doesn't happen alone. It takes two.

Thinking about the history of the women's movement, it is obvious why men have been excluded. Women were fought at every turn in their battle for equality and came to rely primarily on themselves if they hoped to advance in society.

Men were tossed aside as means to achieving a desired end. Women's liberation meant a woman no longer required a man to create better life for herself.

Modern-day "girl power" leaves little room for male influence.

Events such as Take Back the Night focus on this empowerment of women, helping to give women the confidence, skills and tools to walk through the world with strength and dignity.

Great. Now we've got confidence. We've got skills. We've got mace.

Big deal. Sexual assault is still going to happen.

Why? Because people won't start talking about the roots of aggressive sexual behavior. People don't want to start tackling the larger gender issues that start at birth and are never addressed until it is too late. People don't want to believe men are raped, too.

Why do we insist on Band-Aid cures for the gaping wounds in our society?

All of the self-defense classes and all of the marches sponsored by well-meaning organizations help to empower women and increase their awareness but, unfortunately, do little to solve the problem because they fail to include all the pieces of the puzzle.

Although women can achieve greatness by themselves, they alone cannot solve a problem that involves both sexes as both victims and assailants. Only by actively encouraging both sexes to talk openly about sexual assault on campus will the problem of sexual violence ever find a permanent solution.

Jennifer Jones is a senior psychology major.