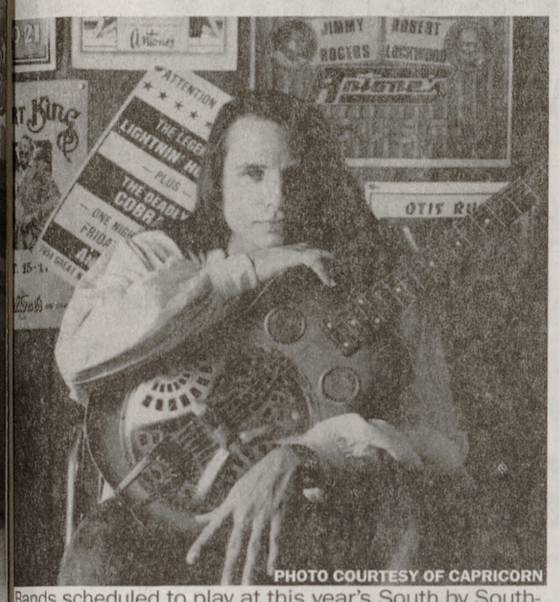
SXSW
SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST

The music of the masses

South By Southwest Music Festival kicks off with 800 bands



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Bands scheduled to play at this year's South by Southwest Music Festival are, counterclockwise from top: Ian Moore, Therapy, Vallejo and Reverend Horton Heat.

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BY JULIA RECINDUS
The Battalion

Austin has long been the headquarters of struggling up-and-coming musical acts. The city has given birth to artists such as Stevie Ray Vaughn and Willie Nelson and has been the stage for other bands waiting for their time in the sun.

South by Southwest (SXSW), the annual music and film festival held in Austin, helps bands of all trades accomplish their goals and gives them exposure.

The music festival lasts from March 15 to 19 and provides endless entertainment for participators and guests alike. Music journalists from around the globe travel to the Texas capital to listen to performers and inform the public of what they hear.

Programs in the festival's music category include performances, a music conference, a trade show and information on the technological features of the music industry and the role of the Internet.

Scheduled performers include Reverend Horton Heat, Cypress Hill, Sebadoh, John Paul Jones and Steve Earle. Performers from the past who have taken advantage of the event to boost their careers include Monster Magnet, Sonic Youth, Gravediggaz, the Dixie Chicks, Ben Folds Five, Beck and Sublime, to name a few.

While the festival hosts many bands from Texas, this year's festival has an array of bands visiting from Europe and Asia, whose sounds are falling on the ears of U.S. citizens for the first time. More than 800 bands are scheduled to perform on 40 stages over the course of the festival.

The Spotlight, a Web page devoted to promising young groups that can be found at SXSW's official site at www.sxsw.com.

The page has interesting tidbits of information on many of the European bands performing at the festival, including Sack from Dublin, Ireland, which appeared on the soundtrack to *The Rage: Carrie 2* with its song "Laughter Lines." The Spotlight also informs readers that the lead singer of Olso, Norway's Lokomotiv has a croon that has been compared to that of Radiohead's Thom Yorke.

Bands are also traveling from various areas of the United States to get their feet in the door of the music industry. Mountain Consolidated, a band who draws inspiration from folk, hip-hop and country, will be making the trek to Austin from Seattle, Wash., the birthplace of grunge. Also scheduled to appear is Silkenseed, a band that originated at Tulane University in New Orleans, La., but is now located in Portland, Ore.; the band recently released an album on Rainforest Records titled *Hurry Home*.

These bands along with many others, can be viewed at and their music downloaded from the Spotlight Website.

Those interested in hearing new and innovative sounds will not want to miss the chance to lend an ear to any of these groups. The shows have been scheduled at numerous Austin locations such as the Atomic Cafe, Soho Lounge, Hole in the Wall, Waterloo Brewing Company and Antone's. The only catch is that some locations have age requirements; for venues and age requirements, visit the Web page.

The music conference will take place March 16 to 19. Steve Earle, a six-time Grammy nominated recording artist, will open the event. Record company presidents, record label representatives, booking agents, managers, indie label representatives and journalists will be in attendance to answer questions and offer the chance for potential acts to receive advice and interact with the industry in the SXSW Mentor Program.

The mentor program features one-on-one meetings to help artists come in contact with those experienced in the business who can give them personal attention. Demo listening sessions have also been set up for anyone scouting out future hits.

Elliot Roberts, the well-known manager of Neil Young since 1968, will be speaking at the conference and sharing stories about his experiences. Chris Johnsen, head of marketing at Grand Royal Records, home of (and owned by) the Beastie Boys, will attend the conference, as will Holly George-Warren, editorial director of Rolling Stone Press.

The trade show is another attraction that draws together those already in the music industry and those seeking entrance. New artists and showcases are promoted by their record labels and merchandise is laid out for viewing. Representatives from various publications can meet new artists and advertisers, and international exhibitors can sniff out deals. The trade show is also the location of the Acoustic Daytime Stage where musicians will provide entertainment throughout the day. The hours of the trade show are March 16 and 17 from noon until 6 p.m., and March 18, noon to 4 p.m. Online music companies will also exhibit their Websites and offer explanations of their services. MP3s and the legal issues surrounding them will be discussed, as will the role of technology in the industry.

All performances and discussions scheduled are subject to change, so check the Web page at www.sxsw.com for updates.

SXSW has a reputation for uncovering new talent and gives visitors the opportunity to take a trip into a world of undiscovered musicians and emerge with the sound of something new to the world of music ringing in their ears.

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