

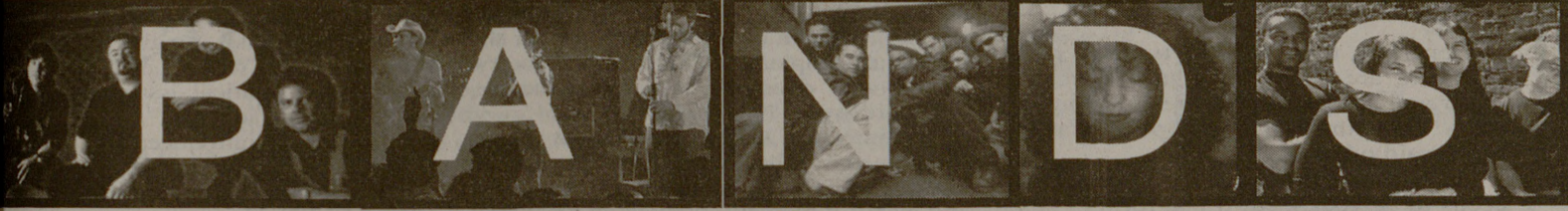
AggieLife

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THE BATTALION

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BATTLE of the



Five bands battle it out for the AMA unsigned band of the year competition, proceeds go to CARPOOL

By LYCIA SHRUM
THE BATTALION

Coca-Cola, Dick Clark Communications and the CMJ Network have teamed up to establish a new award category for the American Music Awards to honor the best unsigned band in America.

By submitting three original songs, biographies and photos, any band was able to enter. Over 800 entries were received, 50 were chosen for the competition. The new award category was created to provide a creative platform for unsigned artists and bands, and to bring new music to the forefront of the music and entertainment industry.

Susan McDermott, spokesperson for Coca-Cola, said the company recognizes the passion that people have for new music and wanted to do something to help promote it. What started out as 50 bands has now been narrowed down to five of the best, unsigned bands from around the nation. The five bands, Yo, Flaco!, Carbon Leaf, Live Honey, Fade and solo artist, Jennifer Marks, began the College Market Tour on Oct. 11 and have one more stop before making their way to Reed Arena to open up for the band Stabbing Westward. College Station will be the last stop for the College Market Tour before they are narrowed down to three.

Stabbing Westward, an alternative-rock band originally from Chicago, will headline the competition. With four albums and having

toured with bands such as Rage Against the Machine, Depeche Mode and Kiss, Stabbing Westward has established itself in the music industry and has gained experience as a touring band. McDermott said that the band has

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— Shelly Bhushan
Live Honey lead vocalist

become a well-known group.

"The reason for Stabbing Westward headlining the last show is because this band embodies the type of sound and musical experiences that serve as a great example for upcoming bands in the new music arena," McDermott said.

Each of the five bands brings a different style of music to the competition, ensuring the audience will hear something pleasing to the ear. From Jennifer Marks' acoustic sound to Yo, Flaco!'s hip-hop acid jazz, the music spectrum is hit on both ends, as well as somewhere in the middle. As the bands prepare for their next show in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and

then the final show in College Station, some band members are taking it as it comes while others feel more anxiety as the final show nears.

Barry Privett, vocalist and penny whistle for the band Carbon Leaf, said the band is just doing the best they can at every show. Privett said you cannot get caught thinking about it [the competition] too much. He said it is such a cliché to say, but they are all just glad to be here.

Chris Brightwell, lead and rhythm guitarist for the band Fade, said the band had only been together about two months when they entered the band contest. Brightwell said it is so surreal to wake up everyday not really knowing what day it is.

Shelly Bhushan, lead vocalist of Live Honey, describes its music as aspects of the great artists of each genre being dumped into one big melting pot. Bhushan said they entered this contest blindly, probably just as every other band did, thinking "why not give it a shot?" She said it is hard knowing not everyone will make it because each band has so much talent.

"I really think at the College Station show, the intensity will be stronger for us knowing it's the last performance before they narrow the five bands to three," Bhushan said.

Neil McIntyre, vocalist of Yo, Flaco!, said they are really feeling the college crowds they have been playing for during the past two weeks. McIntyre said the vibe with college crowds is always so intense. When it

comes to the College Station show, McIntyre said the energy will definitely be there. He said all the bands are great with each band's sound being different.

"How can you say one band is better than the other? It's like comparing apples to oranges," McIntyre said.

Jennifer Marks, the only solo artist on the tour, said she feels so fortunate to be on the tour. She said the other bands have really been great in making her feel like a part of everything. Marks said it was awkward at first being all by herself, but she is at ease now; that is until the final show.

"I know my heart will be racing from before the time I perform until the time it's all over. But I love what I do and I absolutely enjoy my job," Marks said.

CARPOOL has also played a large role in helping sponsor the College Station show. CARPOOL is the student-run, designated driver organization and all proceeds from the show will go toward the organization and its efforts against drinking and driving. According to Greg Stanley, director of fundraising for CARPOOL, the proceeds will help fund a new endowment which will serve the purpose of supporting CARPOOL in future years.

"It's an amazing thing, and I am just excited to be a part of it," Stanley said.

Tickets are still available at all Ticketmaster locations up to the day of the show. Reserved seating is \$12.50 and floor tickets, which are standing room only, are \$15.

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