



Fugazi brings emo-core sound to Carpenter Gym

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Five dollars isn't a lot of money to pay when it can buy you a ticket to see a four-band concert, headlined by the legendary hard-core act Fugazi.

When Fugazi's Ian MacKaye opens his mouth, his voice carries clearly over whatever background noise and sound system problems may be present. Though the gyms' size hurt the performances of the other bands on the bill, it didn't seem to bother Fugazi in the least as they pummeled the audience with older songs from "Steady Diet of Nothing," as well as tunes from their most recent and best selling album "In on the Kill Taker."

Fugazi is not your average band. Despite an almost obsessive desire to stay out of the mainstream, the band has been inundated with offers from major labels, all of which have been turned down flat. The band tasks itself with avoiding the rhetorical,

constantly looking for new ways to get its message across. "We try to put across ideas that are not just pre-fabricated," MacKaye said on the way to the stage for Friday's performance.

But the band leaves much of the creativity up to its audience in the hope that listeners will take an active role in the performance. "The greater the investment the listener makes," MacKaye said, "the greater the return."

Throughout the set, audience members had to be continually urged back from the stage so that everyone could get a good place to stand and listen. Out of respect for the band, who frown upon moshing and crowd surfing, very few people did more than bounce up and down to the beat.

At one point, MacKaye stopped the show in the middle of "Reclamation" to admonish a group of skinheads who were getting a little too rough for the band's taste. "Do us a favor," MacKaye said,

"would you skins mind not knocking shit over here?"

Following the incident, Fugazi didn't miss a beat, jumping back into the song they had to stop due to the disturbance. Their low-key style of dress gave them a very man-on-the-street look. It's amazing to see a band with minimal theatrics pull off an exciting show on pure passion and energy.

The first band of the evening was Newark's own Clevinger, a four-piece lineup with a sound that is difficult to put into a pre-existing category. Their sound ranges from melodic to downright hard. Top that with a female vocalist, and the result is a very original blend of styles.

Sound quality, however, left much to be desired, owing mostly to the large size and horrible acoustic qualities of the Carpenter Gym. Clevinger attacked this obstacle with the only weapon at their disposal — volume.

Towards the end of their set, the

quirks were taken out of the sound system, giving their final songs a much cleaner sound.

Late that night in a small room above the John Carpenter Gym, Josh Latshaw of the Enoch Collective sat while waiting for Fugazi to start their set.

The band had just left the room as he told the story of how his friend, bandmate and fellow Enoch Collective cohort Nathan Gray once pondered the thought of winning the Publishers Clearinghouse sweepstakes.

With his winnings, Gray had fantasies of breathing new life into the hard-core scene in Newark, using the money raised to put on more shows, and eventually having a place where area bands could play at will.

"You can do all these things," Latshaw said, "you can just start small." Gray looked up briefly from his task of counting the money raised by the night's show and cracked a smile that seemed to say "you can

indeed do these things."

However small, the Enoch Collective, a Newark-based group whose agenda is to hold shows and give local kids a chance to see more bands, pulled off a doosey Friday night.

Gray and Latshaw are also two of the members of Boy Sets Fire. Far too often, bands with huge talent must wait years before gaining the respect that only a few realize they deserve. Hopefully, Boy Sets Fire will not have to linger in obscurity for too much longer. Having just completed recording a track for a Creep Records compilation LP, it looks like they may be well on their way to finally getting their due.

Locals who have seen this band before, many of whom were in the crowd Friday, know how energetic both the band and its audience get at their shows. Friday night was no exception.

Whatever sound problems existed

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in the first hour of the show were resolved by the time Boy Sets Fire blazed into its first song. They didn't let up until the last chord had been struck, ending an incredible performance.

Next on the bill was The Warmers, a D.C. band fronted by Alec MacKaye, formerly of Ignition, and Beefeater.

The band was slower paced than the two proceeding acts, with a more melodic feel that seemed to lend itself to the room better than the other bands more hard-edged sound.

At one point MacKaye tried to tell a story, but after two attempts, and only getting out: "I woke up this morning," he gave up and started the next song. The crowd's impatience wasn't due to a bad performance, they just didn't seem to be into the slower style of The Warmers.

Between bands, a product toss was held by Switch skateboard and snowboard shop, who gave away two skateboards and many stickers.

Winners were also announced in the "Win a date with Brandi contest." Entries were gathered over the past several weeks, with the grand prize being an all-expense paid date with local nasty girl Brandi Schofield.

When the ballots were drawn, local hopefuls lost out to rock stardom, as Brendan Canty from Fugazi walked away with the big prize.

Unfortunately, the skinheads were persistent in disrupting the evenings events. Police responded and arrested one of the perpetrators, essentially ending the disturbance.

But the two small incidents were a mere scratch on the face of an almost flawless night of excellent music.