

Music is March-ing on: Guilfordian music calendar

BY GABE POLLAK
STAFF WRITER

By the end of the month, you will definitely be out of breath.

Whether it's midterms, the upcoming Merge Records marathon or a multitude of other local music events, there's a lot to run around for in March.

Conserve your energy and consider these five of our favorite March happenings.

March 8 / Jack Name, Whiff Boy, the Three Brained Robot, Für Die Kinder, MBdV/ 1404 Glenwood Avenue

The starting gun sounds with a WQFS-sponsored show at Glenwood Books on Friday, March 8.

Headliner Jack Name slams together David Bowie glam with Lou Reed lo-fi and — Boom — something sounding like the Rocky Horror Picture Show occurs.

Does that mean you should dress in drag and practice your time warp for this show?

Maybe not. But it certainly would not be the most bizarre thing to go down before Name's psychedelic fuzz fest.

Greensboro group the Three Brained Robot, who frequently perform in nothing but underwear and capes, might be the bills' most intriguing band.

On "Butterflies," Three Brained Robot singer-provocateur Sam Martin chants, "Butterflies control my feelings," over a lurking Odd Future-esque beat.

With local minimalist DJs Für Die Kinder and MBdV also on the bill, whatever happens during the show, it will certainly be an experience.

March 8, 15, 22, 29 / Billy Millman / Mark's Restaurant

The race to see it all continues on a more conventional note with senior Billy Millman's weekly acoustic sets at Mark's Restaurant on Dolley Madison.

Millman, who has honed his craft at the restaurant since arriving at Guilford in 2010, plays a one-man show of original folk tunes.

He has nearly as many kinds of songs as Mark's has dishes.

There is a song about a spirit animal, "Jaguar Afternoon," a song about North Carolina, "Caroline," and a lot of songs about love.

Between the bouncy "Hey, Hello," and another Kooks-y number, "Six Cigarettes," you may end up singing along with your mouth full.

Besides, what goes better with a love song than some duck tacos?

March 14 / AMPLIFIER Seventh Issue Release Show with Black Santa, Elemeno, and Sacred Oaks / The Crown in the Carolina Theatre

Halfway through the month, with spring break quick on your heels, is no time to slow down.

On the first Friday of spring break, local arts zine, Amplifier, hosts its Seventh Issue Release Show at the Crown, a bar inside the Carolina Theatre.

Amplifier will be simultaneously

celebrating the birth of their seventh issue and mourning the death of the zine.

Amplifier's Seventh Issue is also its last. But just because the occasion is sad does not mean the music has to be.

Expect an energetic set from headlining University of North Carolina at Greensboro group, Black Santa.

March 22 / Merge Records 25K / Chapel Hill to Durham

Now it's time for the real race. Merge Records is hosting a 25-kilometer road race from Chapel Hill to Durham in honor of their 25-year anniversary.

"Celebrate 25 years of independent music — kilometer by kilometer," announced the Bull City Running Co. on their website.

The post-race concert lineup has yet to be announced, but if Merge's current roster is any indication — boasting Spoon, She & Him and Grammy-winners Arcade Fire — both the 25K and the show are sure to get your heart racing.

March 29 / Leaders of the New School: Beau Young Prince, Blue Roots Experiment, C. Pitt, Dante Ck, L.A.B., Elite Kennedy, Diversi-Leek / Club House

Don't slow down yet. The final mile of this month's musical marathon is well worth the wait.

On the last Saturday of the month, Beau Young Prince '13 headlines his own hip hop homecoming with the Blue Roots Experiment playing second-to-last for an evening of futuristic sounds at Club House.

Junior Rod Walker and senior Malek Williams, performing as L.A.B. and Diversi-Leek respectively, round out this night of Guilford music.

At the finish line of this month's musical melee, check The Guilfordian for another calendar of local music selections.

More Music Events In March

March 7
Trouble
9 p.m. @ TYP

March 8
Daddy Issues
9 p.m. @ Ninth Street Bakery

March 13
Feminist Poetry Slam
7 p.m. @ The Greenleaf

March 15
Big Something
10 p.m. @ Blind Tiger

March 16
Holder's Scar
8 p.m @ Fantasy

March 31
Of Montreal
9 p. m. @ Blind Tiger

March 29
Music & Bonfire
8-10 p.m. @ the Lake

Crowd-controlled Pokémon game spawns truly fascinating social experiment

BY ALLISON STALBERG
STAFF WRITER

"Gotta catch 'em all?" Maybe not this time.

"Twitch Plays Pokémon," a social experiment and channel on the video-streaming website Twitch, consisted of thousands of users simultaneously attempting to play one copy of Pokémon Red.

Pokémon Red follows a young boy, often referred to as Red, through a land of creatures called Pokémon. Players can capture, name and train them to fight.

The game has two goals. First, become the champion of the region by defeating eight Gym Leaders, then the Elite Four, the top four Pokémon trainers. Next, complete the Pokédex, an in-game encyclopedia, by obtaining all 152 Pokémon.

"Twitch Plays Pokémon," however, showed the game in a new light.

Online, each player typed commands through the channel's chat room.

After 16 days, 7 hours and 45

minutes of continuous play online by an estimated 650,000 Twitch users, Red's long journey came to a successful end with 30 Pokémon caught and many stories to tell.

The game was an Internet sensation, consisting of fan art, backstories and even a religion and political parties.

With thousands playing all at once, the chat room was crowded with commands of what Red should do. Since no collaboration was involved, Red fumbled through the game, taking from hours to whole days to get from point A to point B. This system of gameplay was pure anarchy.

Soon though, the system added a second way to play, through democracy, in which the game counted the players' various inputs and had Red perform the most popular command. Players could vote on whether to put the system on democracy or anarchy.

"When things get difficult, like in the Safari Zone, democracy always comes into effect," said first-year Sam Knecht. "Beyond that, I think people go

towards anarchy. It seems a lot more people like anarchy than democracy. They use democracy when they know they can't get through without it.

"Democracy, while it's more likely to get things done, is a lot slower. So entertainment-wise, it doesn't really do it."

While government came as a part of the game, the religions were created by the fans. One of the religions created was the cult of the Helix Fossil. In the game, players are given the choice between Helix and Dome Fossils.

The Helix Fossil was chosen, and Red often unintentionally selected the Helix Fossil, as if trying to consult it for advice. Unable to be gotten rid of, the fossil earned an immortal status.

Because of this, the Helix Fossil was turned into a god of sorts by the fans. The fossil was eventually revived into an Omanyte, informally nicknamed Lord Helix. Naturally, with the Dome Fossil the exact opposite of the Helix Fossil, the Dome Fossil was treated as the devil.

Red's team of Pokémon also consisted of a Pidgeot, nicknamed "Aaaabaaajss" in game and "Bird Jesus" out of game. The Pidgeot was considered a savior due to being one of the few Pokémon the players managed to keep from the beginning and was exceptionally strong in battle.

Fans even managed to capture the legendary Pokémon Zapdos with a Master Ball. It was nicknamed "AA-j" in game and "John the Zapist" out of game.

"Humans always need to create narrative and context, it's in our nature," said Educational Psychologist Claire De La Varre in an email to The Guilfordian. "People have a need to explain their behaviors and the behaviors of their characters/avatars, and like to build worlds."

The game, as a social experiment, brings to question if an educational analysis is expected of what is usually seen as just silly fun.

The anonymous game creator said in an interview with badatvideogames.net, "Although

I claim it is a social experiment, I think that gives the false impression that it was planned or for a particular purpose, it's just a fancy way of saying 'I want to see what happens.'"

On the second day of gameplay, the creator said in the same article, "I didn't think it would be this popular, I thought it would get a small but dedicated following with many other people showing a short passing interest."

From a psychologist's point of view though, the popularity makes sense.

"Game players are always looking for novelty: the chance to be part of something with so many other people, the fun/frustration of actually playing," said De La Varre. "It's sort of a combination of all kinds of social activities like a flash mob, MMOG, cult or secret society complete with jargon and their own mythology."

"I think it must also be appealing to feel that you and thousands upon thousands of other people are all playing the same game."