

# FEATURES

Review

## Free Radio Asheville Highlights Local Bands

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Staff Writer

Local band Piedmont Charisma gave an intense and amazing performance at a benefit concert for Free Radio Asheville in Vincent's Ear April 14.

The concert also featured the bands Pirate on a Stick and The Rugburners, as well as a group of local DJs. The performance by Piedmont Charisma, however, stood out as the best of the night.

The benefit was in celebration of three years on the air for the local low-power radio station, which currently broadcasts at 107.5 FM despite the lack of Federal Communications Commission approval.

The concert was one of the largest grossing fundraisers the station has ever put on, according to "DJ Kool Wip."

The bands and DJs performed for free and all of the profits from the show went to the station.

Unfortunately, Pirate on a Stick, the first act of the night, was not impressive. Composed of three high-school students, the band featured the rather sparse lineup of drums, a five-string bass guitar and vocals (plus, an eye-patch-wearing mannequin head mounted on, you guessed it, a stick).

They opened their performance by butchering the seminal Detroit rock band MC5's anthemic "Kick Out the Jams."

While normally a great song to start a show, their cover of it lacked the manic energy and infectious excitement the song is supposed to celebrate.

Except for one more cover I did not recognize, the rest of the band's performance was of original material, none of which was much better.

Two particularly painful "songs" featured the lead singer reading some spoken word material over the lurching morass of drums and bass, bringing back painful memories of the self-conscious, forced insight of teenage angst-mongers.

Musically, there really was not much the band could do with only two instruments, a fact not hidden by the drummer's frequent cymbal-crashing or the fancy effects processor used by the bass player.

Most of their performance, then, was reduced to an unsteady punk-metal thrash with the singer yelling various misunderstood-teenager bromides over the din.



AMANDA ANDERSON/ STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Free Radio Asheville, held at Vincent's Ear, raised funds to support the low-power station that offers music alternatives to local regulated stations in the area. The event featured locals Piedmont Charisma, Pirate on a Stick and several DJs.



While the music was lousy, at least the band had a sense of humor. They did not take themselves too seriously, as demonstrated by their self-deprecating comments between songs.

Still, this was not a very auspicious way to begin the benefit. Fortunately, the concert improved from there as the second band, The Rugburners, took the stage. The Rugburners, a recent addition

to the Asheville music scene, cut a striking contrast to Pirate on a Stick. They were visibly older and were much more musically accomplished.

After tuning up, all of the members exited the stage, except the bass player, who began playing a brisk, steady bass line.

Slowly the other members—two guitarists and a drummer—joined him on stage, each adding his con-

tribution to the music until it built into a wonderfully cacophonous climax.

Unfortunately, after this introductory instrumental, the band had a hard time molding this impressive wall of sound into equally impressive songs.

While an occasional chord progression or hook stood out, in general, the upbeat, pop-rock songs were nothing to get excited about.

Ironically, their music resembled a lot of the mediocre current rock music on the commercial radio stations that Free Radio Asheville provides an alternative to.

During their hour-long performance, I found myself more interested in the obviously inebriated fellow wearing an American flag bandana and doing some very creative, kung fu style dance

moves in front of the stage.

Finally, after an unnecessarily long performance by The Rugburners, Piedmont Charisma had its turn to play, immediately transforming a concert of otherwise middling quality into an exciting rock-and-roll event.

Piedmont Charisma features Charles Corriher on vocals, Ben Ridings on guitar, Chad Pry on bass guitar and Josh Charisma on drums, all of whom are UNCA students, as well as Emily Staton on keyboards.

As the band was getting ready to play, Corriher distributed flyers to the crowd titled "Political/Sociological Flair in the Interpretation of Piedmont Charisma's On-Stage Dance Moves Pt. 1."

The amusing flyers described the proper dance movements to each song, aided by a series of stick-figure drawings with helpful arrows to illustrate the appropriate actions.

Corriher was also gracious enough to demonstrate the jerky, absurd moves before each song.

The absurdity was increased by Staton, who loomed behind her Casio keyboard decked out in a bright pink dress and a huge cardboard hat decorated with life-size photos of the other band members' faces.

A description of these antics, however, make the band sound like a novelty act, which they most certainly were not.

Once they started playing, they unleashed a dense, thrilling sonic assault, giving an excellent performance that establishes them as one of the best bands in Asheville.

Their actual sound is hard to describe. It features electronically processed vocals, cheesy keyboards and distorted guitar set against the relentless rhythm of bass and drums.

Needless to say, the actual experience of hearing them live greatly surpasses such a paltry description of their music.

My favorite moment of the concert was when Ridings applied a screwdriver to his guitar, sliding it up the bridge of his Fender Telecaster to send out waves of raucous noise.

They are frankly and irresistibly fun in concert. Their performance was a definite crowd-pleaser, instantly filling the floor in front of the stage with an eager audience.

After Piedmont Charisma's performance, which only lasted about 30 minutes, a group of local DJs played some music, but by that time, it was nearly 2 a.m. and the club had mostly cleared out, effectively ending a worthwhile benefit concert.

## Holocaust Commemoration Week Events at UNCA

Orin Shepherd

Staff Writer

UNCA observes Holocaust Commemoration Week April 16-19 with a variety of programs and events across campus designed to raise awareness of the tragedy.

"It's not only a good way to remember the dead, but to raise awareness for other political and social issues around the world," said Richard Chess, a UNCA professor of literature and language and di-

rector of the Center for Jewish Studies.

"If we have a commemoration, it is certainly very important in preventing that sort of thing from happening again," said Yetta Williams, a junior sociology major.

On April 19, members of the community, in addition to UNCA faculty, staff and students, continuously read names of Holocaust victims on the steps of Ramsey Library from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m.

Following the Reading of the Names, a silent walking vigil left for the Beth Israel Temple on Murdock Street for a Yom HaShoah (Holocaust commemoration) ceremony at 7 p.m.

On April 17 in the dining hall's private dining room, students, faculty and staff read selections of poetry and prose written by Holocaust survivors, children of survivors and others who were moved by or lived during the time of the Nazi sweep across Europe.

A couple of different films were screened, including "The Quarrel" on April 16, which focuses on philosophical and theological issues surrounding the Holocaust.

"Schindler's List" was shown on April 18 in the Highsmith Center lounge, followed by a discussion with Eric Wellisch, a World War II veteran, who participated in the liberation of several concentration

camps.

All throughout April in the upper level of Ramsey Library is the exhibit, "Choosing to Remember: From the Shoah to the Mountains," a collection of letters, pictures and stories of those who lived through the Holocaust and the Nazi era who now live in the Appalachian region.

Those individuals include Markus and Maria Reich, who live in Asheville. According to the exhibit, Markus was rounded up and sent into a concentration camp in 1939, only to escape and be recaptured two years later.

There he met his wife, Maria and after the liberation of Europe moved

to America.

After the exhibit leaves its place in the hallway of the upper floor of Ramsey Library, it will be housed in the library's Special Collection as a donation from the Center of Diversity Studies.

An estimated 6 million Jews were killed under Nazi supervision between 1939 and 1945, in addition to over 6 million more non-Jews, including Gypsies, Poles, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals and Soviet prisoners of war.

The idea of a Holocaust Commemoration Week has its roots in the Holocaust literature classes.

Holocaust Commemoration observances started in 1973 with

Leatrice Robinsky of Cleveland, Ohio who taught in the Cleveland Public School System her entire career. Her programs and ideas served as a model for schools nationwide.

The idea of a Holocaust Commemoration Week celebration at UNCA was started last year by Sam Kaplan, assistant professor of mathematics, which in its first year only included one event, the Reading of the Names.

According to Richard Chess, there was so much interest and participation, the programs expanded to encompass a wide variety of events that would be educational and informative.