

music **music report**

BY KEVIN WIERZBICKI



Battles

**PLUG AWARD
BALLOTING OPENS**

Nominees for the 2008 Plug Independent Music Awards have been announced and fans are encouraged to vote for their favorites online. Of Montreal and Battles lead the pack with seven nominations each, while Justice and Arcade Fire have each tallied six. Spoon, El-P, Band of Horses and the National have all been nominated in five categories. All of these artists are slugging it out in the Album of the Year category, alongside Radiohead, Panda Bear, Beirut and Sharon Jones & the Dap Kings.

Some New Artist of the Year nominees include Bat For Lashes, Deerhunter, White Rabbits, Sea Wolf and Vampire Weekend. There are 29 categories in all, including awards for Zine of the Year, College/Non-Commercial Radio Station of the Year and Music Blog of the Year.

Voting will continue through Feb. 8 at www.plugawards.com, with winners announced at an awards ceremony and concert in New York City on March 6.

D.I.Y. OR DIE (FOR FREE!)

And speaking of independent, have you seen *D.I.Y. or Die: How to Survive as an Independent Artist*? Here's your chance to not only see the film but snag a copy of it for your library. From now through April, the film will be available as a free download at Microsoft's Zune Marketplace and at Zune.net.

On why he's giving the film away while it's available for DVD purchase, director Michael W. Dean comments: "It's my gift to the world. People write me every day and tell me the film got them off their ass. I made the film to spread a message, not make money."

The film will be broken down into eight episodic chapters with one new chapter added to the free download each week. After that, seven extras from the DVD featuring interviews with producer Steve Albini, actress/musician Lydia Lunch and Ian MacKaye of

Fugazi will be added to the freebies.

Performers and interviewees in the film itself include Ron Asheton of the Stooges, Mike Watt of the Minutemen, J. Mascis of Dinosaur Jr. and Craig Newmark, the founder of Craigslist. The episodes are being released without DRM protection, and you can legally make as many copies you like.

**ALL ANDREW, ALL
THE TIME**

GoTV Networks, the mobile media network, has announced a new show to be hosted by rocker Andrew W.K. "Living Thoughts with Andrew W.K." will air on the network's Altitude channel and will bring Andrew's slant on music and culture right to your cell phone.

The musician is of course known for his party-hardy image, something the mainstream got its first taste of back in 2001 with the raucous "Party Hard" on Mercury debut *I Get Wet*. You can only imagine what might happen when W.K. hangs out with Klaxons, Saves the Day or the Color Fred, or hits a red carpet event to corner celebrities.

As W.K.'s new battle cry goes, "Let the party on your phone begin!" GoTV's other channels include Hip-Hop Official, ES Musica, College All Access and Fantasy Sports Edge, all receivable on a broad range of wireless devices via subscriptions with Alltel, AT&T, Boost Mobile, Helio, Sprint, Nextel or Verizon. www.govtnetworks.com

**BETTER CALL SCOTLAND
YARD!**

No Brits to arrest here! Better call on the Scotland Yard Gospel Choir when they play the Knitting Factory's Alterknit Lounge on Nov. 29.

The Chicago-based chamber-pop outfit will be holding a release party for its latest, a self-titled effort released through Bloodshot Records on Oct. 23. You can investigate the show for a mere \$7. ■

live show reviews

M.I.A.

Nov. 9 @ The Wiltern

Unlike many of her male counterparts, M.I.A. doesn't rap about fly rims, opulent jewelry, multi-zeroed bank accounts or guns — well, at least not in the same gangsta-machismo manner. Nope, instead this English-born Sri Lankan raps political couplets



M.I.A. rocks and rhymes.

and multiple bars on social issues that bang harder than all the 50 Cents and Kanye Wests combined.

Call it smart rap, if you will, but M.I.A.'s approach to the hip-hop game has landed her atop the throne of indie rap, and her live show secures her rule over the indie hip-hop community.

Blasting head-banging hits from her latest, *Kala*, and her debut, *Arular*, M.I.A.'s electric presence sends a tingle down the audience's spine as soon as she hits the stage and charges through opener "Bamboo Banga" and "Paper Planes," the two most noteworthy tracks from her recent release.

Relying heavily on fans' responses, M.I.A. intimately integrates herself into the audience, not literally, and breaks down the artist-fan division to become one with the listeners.

—John Ochoa

**EVANESCENCE/
SICK PUPPIES**

Nov. 10 @ The Greek

Evanescence has played plenty of shows in Los Angeles, but it's been a while since they headlined and even longer since they indulged in a little bit of fan service. And since there's no such thing as a fair-weather Evanescence fan, both old and new additions to the goth metal act's cult

following would get what they came for.

Opening band Sick Puppies were a bit of an odd stylistic match-up for Evanescence, but the Australian-bred L.A. transplants brought a youthful intensity to the show that provided a balancing contrast to its headliner. Though a bit more simplistic in its approach to riff-heavy rock, the band showed that it was the perfect opening act by balancing its shredding with an emotional genuineness.

Evanescence then took stage in their usual thunderous manner, frontwoman Amy Lee taking immediate ownership over her audience, as she usually does. From hard rocking tracks "Sweet Sacrifice" and "Whisper" to the softer, more melodic singles "Good Enough" and "My Immortal," Lee put on a dynamic theatrical performance, but truly shined when she let loose the extremes of her vocal range.

As showcased in the old school, pre-*Fallen* track "Understanding" during the band's encore, Lee is the undisputed top female vocalist of rock, mastering both delicate vulnerability and a powerful command within each of her songs. If only she would put more effort into interacting with the rest of her band, especially the newer members, to make their presence seem a little more

natural, her band would have the proverbial full package.

Even with a longer set list than it had on Family Values or its previous headlining tour, the band still left me wanting, despite a respectable job of rotating songs from its entire body of work into its set lists. Though it only has two major album releases out, the band still has a plethora of material from which to form sets, with even lesser known songs having a cross section of fans that would give up liquid cycliner entirely to hear them live. Maybe therein lies the secret to the band's longevity, leave us wanting more *without* giving less.

—Brien Overly

**MOROS EROS/
STILETTO FORMAL**

Nov. 11 @ The Knitting Factory

Sunday night at the Knitting Factory was a scream-fest, and I don't mean that in a positive, Halloween-like way. The band that played before Stiletto Formal was a group of guys painted in neon and bathed in a wave of black light — they had an Amsterdam-style otherworldliness that made them, if nothing else, visually engaging. It didn't take more than a few screams, though, for me to start wondering if I could buy industrial-strength earplugs at the bar.

Relief came a painful 30 minutes later when Sunny Davis, the attractive electric cello player from Stiletto Formal, sauntered on stage wearing a green dress, black tights and white stiletto heels. Lead singer Kyle Howard followed her and much to my chagrin started screaming into not one but two mics. I felt like I had been duped.

WTF?! Had all singers forgotten how to sing? The music wasn't bad, but as they say in the old country, "It's hard to focus on the road when your copilot is screaming into your ear."

Another painful half hour later, Moros Eros took the stage and slowly set up their instruments and a skull-shaped candle, which they lit dangerously close to the back curtains.

"It's nice to have a sold-out show in Hollywood," singer Zach Tipton said, causing four of the dozen or so people in the club to turn around to see if the room had suddenly filled up.

For the third time that night I heard screaming instead of singing, which brought me to the sad conclusion that all the bands whose songs and videos I had enjoyed so much on MySpace had clearly been replaced by zombie doubles. A sad turn of events.

—Bourbon With Brendan

**AUTOMATIC MUSIC
EXPLOSION**

Nov. 12 @ The Key Club

I've never been partial to people trying to force me to have a good time, but the Automatic Music Explosion (A.M.E.) wanted so badly

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