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Unofficial SXSW 2010: East Meets West

BY GAVIN PAUL Published at 1:37 PM on March 19, 2010

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Not that the charm of the East Side of downtown Austin is gone, with Mrs. Bea's, the quaint little Hispanic dive bar selling-out to some new digs by the name of Cheer-Up Charlie's. Gentrification is a business, after all. But as the epicenter of the underground/unofficial SXSW movement, an artist's lounge isn't the best fit.

Add to that an influx of tents and preview shows that used to be downtown proper, as with the Japanese rockness caught at the Typewriter Museum (see drunk guitarist sleepy town in an alley below), and a mass exodus over to the French Legation Museum's lawn party with the hype-tastic shoe gazers, The XX, headlining, and you can forget Highway 35 even separates the badged from the badgeless. Why even cross? The museum's lawn was something out of Eden for music heads, bursting with flowers and true green lawn, allowing BYOBers and such.

That said, I did skip out and cross the highway for some great free things going on downtown. Showed up a hair too late to see the Egg Men Beatles cover band reinterpret fab four hits on a ukulele. But had plenty of spare minutes to jump over to Hoek's Death Metal Pizza, where Brooklyn Vegan helped stock their dorm room-sized patio with thrash after thrash of metalheads, the crown going to Denver's Speed Wolf, a Pantagram one-off punched with moments of pop sludge and a yelp or two. Great to eat a slice to.

This was all after loitering around South of downtown (SoCo: South Congress) at the annual Schuba's (top-notch Chicago venue) take-over of the Yard Dog, where the Born Ruffians and Freelance Whales seared in a hot Austin backyard many moments of noodle and hand-clap pop cheer, the 'Ruffians inciting a shouting match with "I Need a Life," an elbow-to-elbowed crowd spitting back the chorus - "Oh but we go out at night."

That everybody did, of course, as this bumble of a music city goes. Best thing I saw come nightfall was back at Cheer Up Charlie's, where a dude I'll call Captain Gay, mostly because of his leather chaps, sailor hat and the repeated announcement of how much he loves Jewish men, strutted through a set of severely entertaining skuzzy west coast rockabilly. His real name? Hunx. With his backup doo-wop band (all ladies) referred to as Punx. They got by on a lot of gimmick, but a single called "Cruisin'" from their forthcoming LP, had straight dudes taking off their shirts; a genuine little beach pop nugget you'll probably hear more of.



Japanese rock soldier down.



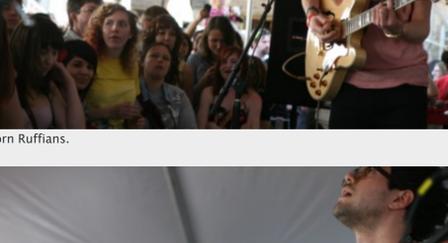
French Legation Museum paradise.



Speed Wolf @ Hoek's Pizza.



Born Ruffians.



Freelance Whales channeling some yelp.



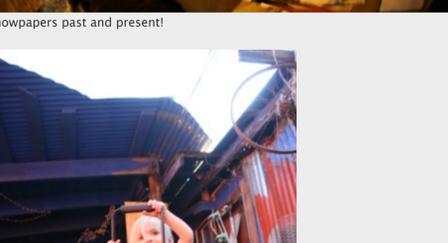
Hunx feeling his Punx out.



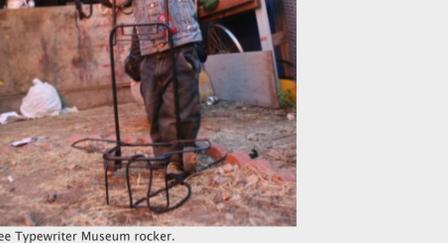
Showpapers past and present!



Wee Typewriter Museum rocker.



Dolly cross-dressed to the metal nines.



A psych-rock breather in the parking lot of an Ethiopian restaurant with Family Portrait. Nice and wholesome.



Always enjoy.

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