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Unofficial SXSW 2010: Moose!

BY GAVIN PAUL Published at 5:03 PM on March 21, 2010

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Warehouses, alleys, bridges, co-ops, roller rinks, there's not a structure that isn't a venue when you start to talk about unofficial SXSW happenings. After exhausting one last house party as far East as I could get from downtown, about facing back into the heart to catch Best Coast get the last of nine of their beach rock chill sets on in a wine bar, all any local would hype up to hunt was Austin's Moose Lodge, where over 65 bands from around the world made the Loyal Order of The Moose proud.

Just one year deep in booking shows, the national family fraternal organization was like a 60s bungalow basement time capsule, splayed with free pancakes until they ran out and three separate stages mouse-trapping off one another when, say, a Japanese punk band reminded you to wear your "sweet lovely chocolate smile."

I caught a handful of great bands in my time at the Moose lodge – the gypsy folk of Austin's Agent Ribbons, creeping under the shadow of the lodge's namesake bust; Brooklyn's Cerebral Ballzy reminding kids how important punk rock and skating are with a little foam on their mouths – but Uzuhi, those wily music hearts from Japan stole the fluorescent glow.

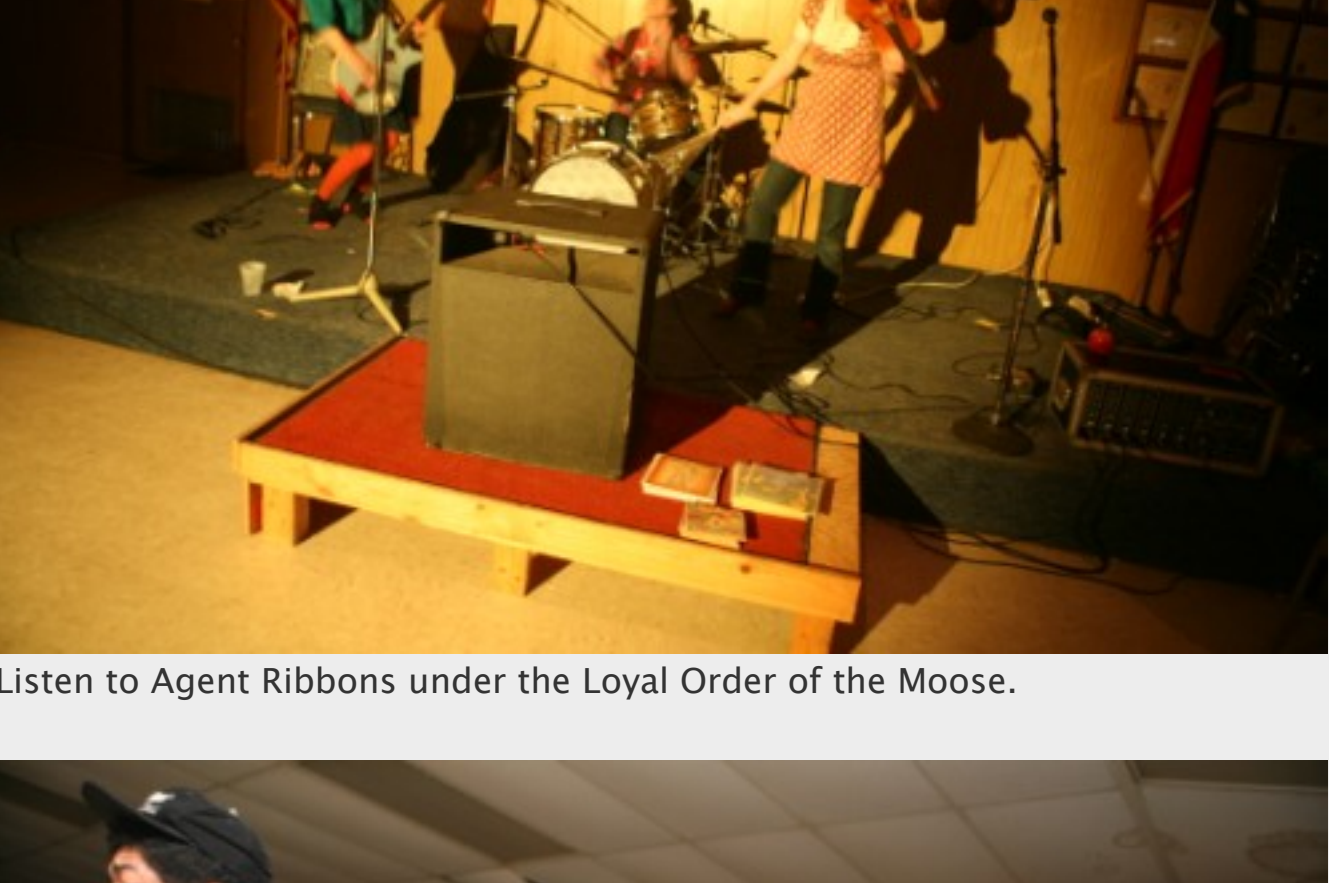
Stumbling Syd Viciously about the band's opening guitar lick, with a pull from his metal-studded belt, ringleader Vo: Gosha tricked a crowd into thinking he was going to get off on rage. But over the course of the next 30 minutes, the band morphed into a circus act of snarky English, pop balladry that ended with every body holding each other's hands, kick-lining to horn sections and parlor keys. Makes sense that Uzuhi means "the sun" in Japanese.

I wouldn't suggest rushing to the intranets to pick up their record, but for a Moose hunt, it was an entertaining find. And is one more fine showing of the free treasures found without a badge.

Otherwise, as the rest of the day shaped up to be a bust, with Austin being unseasonably cold, schedule times askew and one case of trickery at a club by the University called Club 1808 that advertised a free peek at San Francisco's lo-fi fuzz rockers, The Mantles, only to surround me with hands when I started snapping photos because I didn't have credentials, Best Coast, from the basement of a wine bar deserves a best-of-the-end tag, turning smile after smile with hazy sun, tambourine-punched lo-fi fun, capping the theme of the route – the best things during SXSW are free.



Uzuhi wants to see your "Sweet Lovely Chocolate Smile".



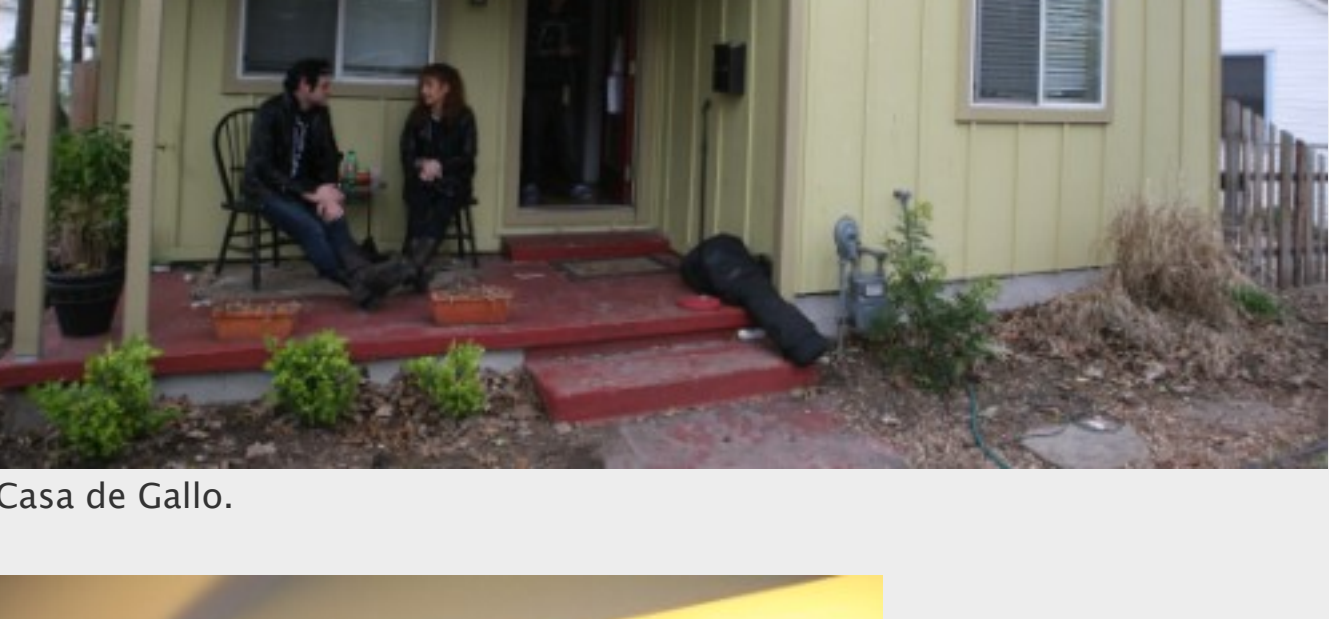
Listen to Agent Ribbons under the Loyal Order of the Moose.



Cerebral Ballzy channeling the proverbial punk.



Moose!



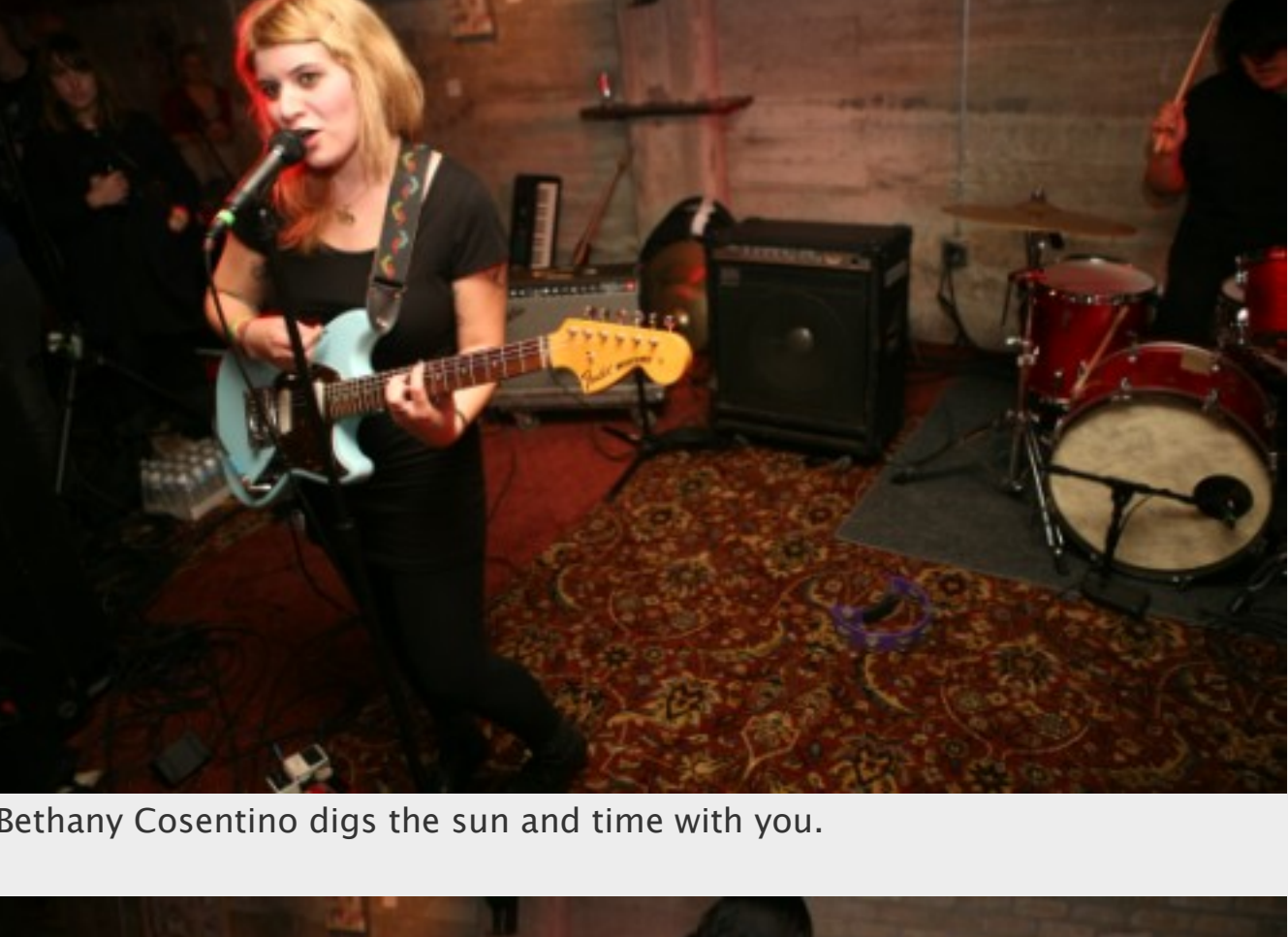
Casa de Gallo.



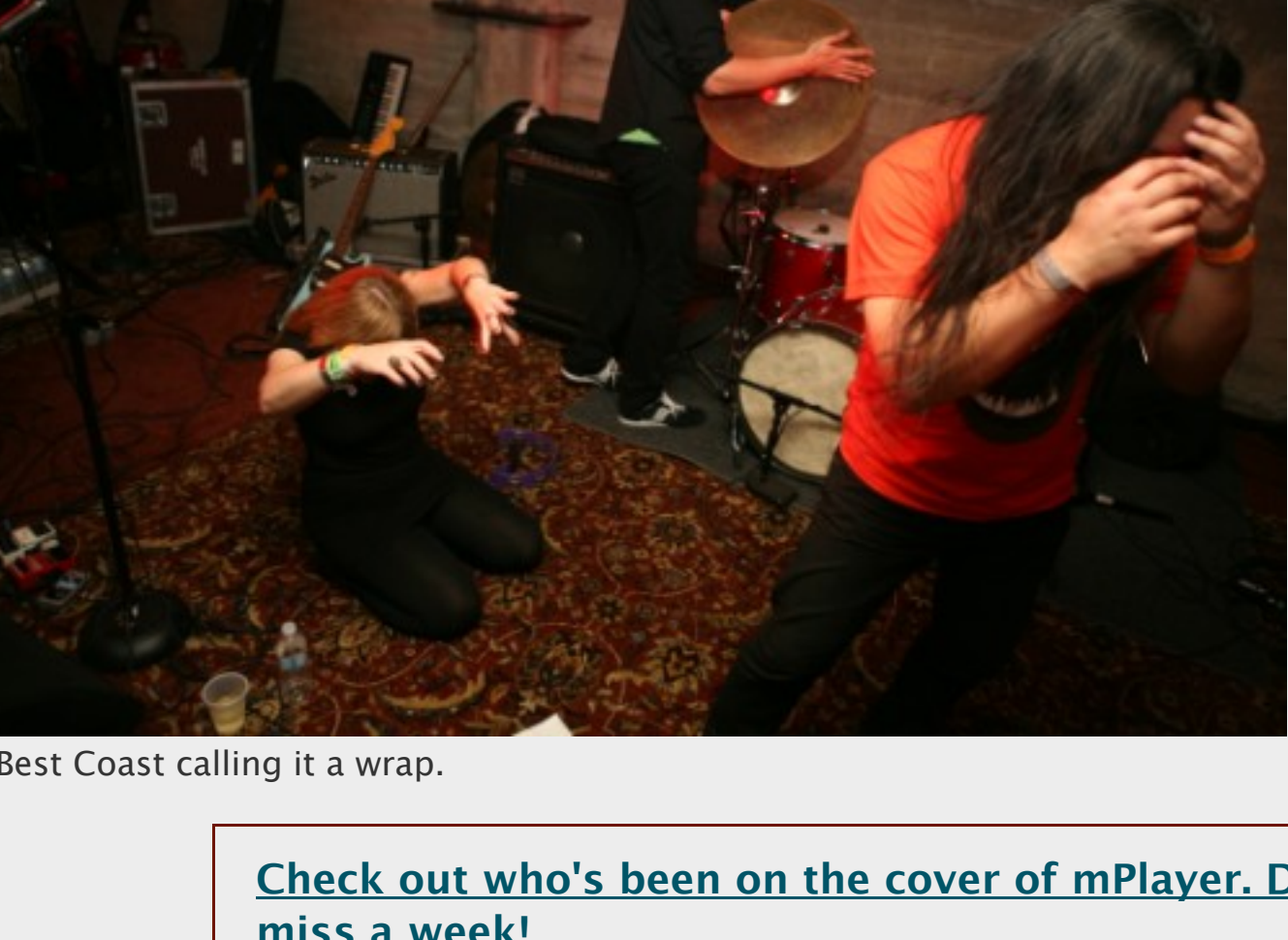
Soft Reeds have been listening to some Talking Heads.



Blackie solving some amp issues at a house party on the East Side.



Bethany Cosentino digs the sun and time with you.



Best Coast calling it a wrap.

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Agent Ribbons, Best Coast, Blackie, Cerebral Ballzy, Soft Reeds, The Mantles, Uzuhi

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