



Local Bands Get Warped

BY FAREINE SUAREZ

AVENGED SEVENFOLD. Story of the Year. New Found Glory. Sugarcult. Any alternative rock fan following the music scene is sure to have heard of these bands. They've plastered MTV with singles and have been running in and out of the NorVa for the past few years.

The even more dedicated fans already know that these four have one thing in common: they were once unknown bands nominated by fans and hand-picked by a panel of Ernie Ball judges, winning the opportunity to share a small stage tucked in a corner with other unknown bands at the Vans Warped Tour.

Now, in the 11th Annual Ernie Ball Battle of the Bands, four Virginia bands are gearing up to do the same thing. They battled their way to the top and beat out over 13,500 other bands to land a spot on the Ernie Ball Stage and play for potentially thousands of listeners.

It's that time of year, folks. Once again, the Verizon Wireless Virginia Beach Amphitheater will come alive with the sight of multi-colored hair dye, sick piercings, and loads of eyeliner from sweat-drenched fans of all ages there to get drunk (off of life) and hear some good music. And while you're there, be sure to support the following local bands and check out the Ernie Ball Stage. You could be seeing the next big thing.

CONDITIONS

Find their music on: www.myspace.com/conditionsband

What do you get when you combine guitarists Jason Marshall, Dave Haygood, and Alex Howard; bass player Josh Thomas; drummer Ryan Tinsley; and vocalist Brandon Roundtree? The result is Conditions, a relatively young band from Richmond that got their name from the exact method they were formed.

"There were a lot of conditions involved," said Thomas. "Jason and I got together and we were like, this is who I want in the band, and this is what they're gonna play, and if they won't do it, then this won't work. A friend of mine once told me this quote that describes the band perfectly: 'The conditions of everything you do in life must be choice, love, and passion.'"

Formed in October 2006, Conditions has only played seven shows together so far. But don't let their youth fool you, these guys are

serious about their music—one of their seven shows was at The Bamboozle in New Jersey, which is among the largest rock show festivals on the East Coast.

If you dig a darker punk-pop sound with intricate guitar rhythms similar to that of Senses Fail and Chiodos, then Conditions is your band.

TOKYO

Find their music on: www.myspace.com/tokynomusic

Virginia Beach's Tokyo is literally new to Warped Tour this year—only one of the band members has been to the all-day festival, and that was five years ago.

Oh well. Robert Smith, Aaron Lachman, Josiah Schlatter, and Felix Schlatter aren't too worried about it. All four members grew up in musically active churches, so making music has become as natural to them as breathing. The two-year-old band has opened up for Virginia Beach's own MAE and keeps their fan base close, playing for friends and the community often. Expect them to bring a different sound to Warped Tour, one full of keyboards and spacey guitars reminiscent of Coldplay and U2. If you're looking for a break from all the moshing and screaming, come chill out with Tokyo.

THE YEAR THAT WAS

Find their music on: www.myspace.com/theyearthatwas

Taking their name from a picture caption in *Time* Magazine, The Year That Was is determined to make 2007 just that. Hampton natives Cotie Brown, Damian Scott, Steven Hascher, and Owen Lamb came together in January, and in just seven months, managed to tour in clubs all over Virginia and up north, recorded their EP "Confronting Your Dreams," and supplied a number of merch items—all while two of the band members were still in high school.

"Life to us is all about taking chances and never looking back," said guitarist Cotie Brown.

TYTW keeps their lyrics simple, speaking from personal experiences of lost friendships and saying goodbye. Combined with just the right amount of screaming, TYTW emits a sense of frustration and emotion that every listener can relate to.

THIS TIME IT'S WAR

Find their music on: www.myspace.com/thistimeitswar

Hardcore progressive-metal band members John Gammon, Justin Lawson, Brandon Rickey, and Alan Simpson formed This Time It's War three years ago at a Richmond high school, combining their talents on two guitars, a bass, and drums to form a rhythmically-challenging package that's only missing one thing: a vocalist. After letting go of their latest vocalist last June, TTIW is hoping to end their streak of bad luck (there have been a few different vocalists for the band) by auditioning new vocalists this coming month. They may not find

one before Warped Tour, but that's no problem for them. They're more focused on playing good music than singing.

"We try to write metal that is thought-provoking and different," the band wrote in an email. "Ultimately we want to make our own mark on music, that when someone hears one of our songs it's instantly recognizable as us. It's a pretty difficult thing to do, but I think we'll get there one day."

Perhaps they will. Expect to see TTIW light up the local scene with their wicked guitar solos soon—they've bought a house in Virginia Beach and all four guys plan to move in together to focus on their music careers. ●

Warped Tour
July 24
Verizon Wireless Virginia Beach
Amphitheater