



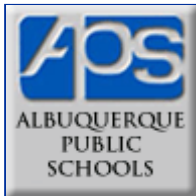
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Reliving the Sounds of the '90s

By Leanne Potts
Of the Journal

Lollapalooza is back from the dead. You remember Lollapalooza: the Gen-X extravaganza that wrapped hip-hop, alt-rock, metal, poetry slams and political-action booths into a traveling lifestyle circus.

Organized by Perry Farrell of Jane's Addiction, Lollapalooza was the tour that showed the music industry alt-rock was commercially viable.

It also was the original summer package tour, the forerunner to Lilith Fair, Ozzfest and H.O.R.D.E. To this day, tacking the suffix "palooza" on an event name is shorthand for "large-scale raucous event attended by a herd of hipsters."

(I once had a co-worker who had a party to raise money for his dog Squeaky's cataract surgery — at least that was the co-worker's story as he charged admission. He called the event Squeaky -palooza, and I don't know if the dog regained his eyesight. But I digress.)

Lollapalooza died in 1997 after its seventh summer. Few mourned its passing because by that time most felt the alt-rock showcase had sold out. Even Farrell, disgusted with how mainstream his child had become, had disassociated himself from the festival two years earlier.

(Plus, his heroin addiction was giving him trouble.)

Tellingly, the year Lollapalooza ended was the same year Celine Dion's bombastically sappy "My Heart Will Go On (Love Theme from The Titanic)" blasted from every car radio.

Times had changed. A few years into the dot.com boom, the angsty gloom of Nine Inch Nails and Soundgarden seemed as dated as Doc Martens.

The national mood was euphoric, delusional: We're rich, the Dow will hit 30,000 and we will be able to retire at 40 and live on our stock options! Give us sunny teen pop and escapist dance music; give us Spice Girls and 'N Sync!

The nation had not had such a surge of serotonin since the late 1980s. Then, poof!, it was gone.

Lately it's been feeling very early 1990s again. Just like in 1991 (the year of Lollapalooza's birth) a Bush is in the White House, the economy is wheezing and war looms with Iraq. Courtney Love is even getting arrested for cursing at authority figures.

It's déjà vu all over again.

Farrell decided the time was right to resurrect his music festival. "You sit out in the water and you wait for the waves to come, and this time the music industry, the bands out there, this just seemed to be the perfect wave," he told MTV News.

Lollapalooza 2003 will stop in 28 cities and feature a reunited Jane's Addiction backing its first new album in 13 years, Jurassic 5, Incubus, Audioslave and Queens of the Stone Age.

Right now, Albuquerque isn't on the Lollapalooza schedule; the closest the fest will come to New Mexico is Denver and Phoenix. But more cities and bands are expected to be added, so look for updates at www.lollapalooza.com.

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Lollapalooza isn't the only Gen-X nostalgia trip headed your way. A musical based on the life of seminal alt-rocker Frank Black is scheduled to open off Broadway in May or June.

Yes, it's Frank Black, the stage version.

"Teenager of the Year" (titled after Black's 1994 solo album of the same name) will follow Black's career from his days with the Pixies to his solo career and feature songs from both eras. New York City writer/director Josh Frank told Entertainment Weekly the musical was "sort of a beat poem to the '80s (and) how alternative rock crashed the mainstream party."

For those of you unfamiliar with Black, he was Kurt Cobain before Kurt Cobain was Kurt Cobain. Black, however, resisted the urge to kill himself and is probably playing in a bar, somewhere, tonight.

Black and the Pixies aren't the first rock acts to be depicted on stage. ABBA, Culture Club and Janis Joplin have all been the subjects of recent plays or musicals ("Mamma Mia," "Taboo" and "Love Janis," respectively.) But this may be the first time an alt-rock legend has made it to the theater.

Lili Taylor gets my vote to play Kim Deal. And Jack Black would be a perfect Frank Black.

Leanne Potts can be reached at lpotts@abqjournal.com. For more musings on popular culture, go to www.abqjournal.com/weblogs/shock/htm.



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