

# La Puente had a noisy evening

Bridgetown DIY started the week off with overwhelming intensity.

By MAX HEILMAN  
chimes.arts.editor@biola.edu

My Monday night started out normal enough. I went to class, chipped away at my mountain of homework and had my brain destroyed by anti-music at Bridgetown DIY. Drawing from all over the spectrum of electronic, dance, hip-hop, industrial, noise and even extreme metal, each band who played on Oct. 10 provided a unique aura for everyone in the room that night.

Echavox started the night out strong with Andrew Eastman's DJ set backed up by Ryan Kozycz, junior philosophy major and former drummer in The Freedmen's Bureau, on drum set. As loops

made with Ableton Live provided seismic drops and atmospheric samples, Kozycz channeled his inner Zach Hill with viscerally free-flowing rhythmic blasts. The two musicians shared ambient and structural prominence.

Kozycz often played around the beat while Eastman's Ableton Push midi controller became the foundation, and vice versa. Echavox essentially played one half-hour song, weaving dark ambient, trip-hop, punk rap and many more. Drummer and DJ alike embraced the eccentricities of their instruments, providing an infectiously powerful sound of organic and synthetic groove.

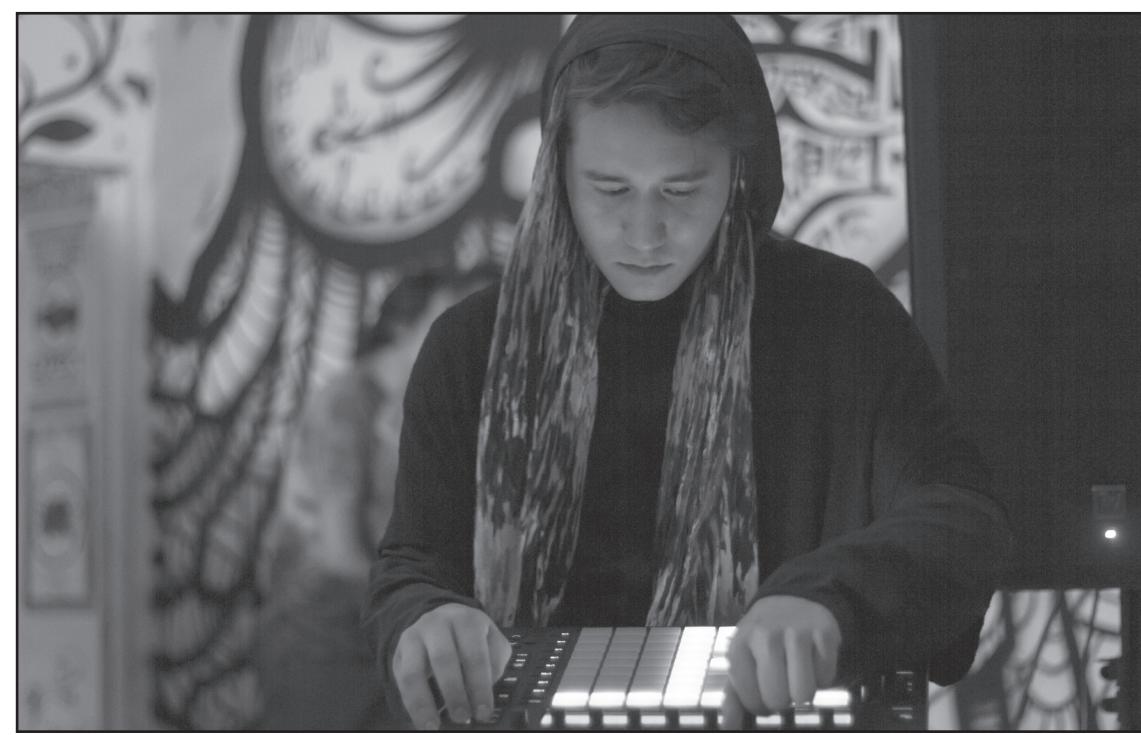
After an explosively emotional beginning, the audience caught their breath while S280F played a more minimalist set of trap beats, soundscapes and hypnotic samples. While not terribly interesting from a compositional perspective, his navigation of sampling and mixing boards kept his music interesting. The two subsequent acts plunged into total sensory overload.

Hailing from Austin, Texas, Street Sects set up synthesizers, trigger rigs, mixing boards, effects pedals and a formidable wall of giant speakers before turning on a fog machine. They kept pumping

fog into the room until I could see no more than a foot in front of me. Without warning, several strobe lights broke through the murk, reducing my surroundings into a solid wall of pulsating light. Then the music started.

While I had difficulty distinguishing songs from their new album, "End Position," Street Sects' performance heightened the senseless abandon of their recorded material to impenetrable levels. With their audience in an appropriately claustrophobic environment, their vicious blend of punk rock, industrial noise and black metal tore through the fog like a knife. Implementing anything from dark-wave to Death Grips-esque chaos, the disorienting assault took no prisoners.

The mysterious members of the band deliberately screamed in the face of anyone within close proximity to the band, which no one could realize until literally bumping into them. They even brought out a bladeless chainsaw, the sound of which inspired the first legitimately terrifying sensation I have ever felt at a show. Yet, towards the end of the set a certain calmness swept over me through the sonic battery. I felt a total loss of sanity, and with that came a cathartic tranquility



BROOKS GINNAN | The Chimes

**ECCLECTIC SOUNDS:** Andrew Eastman opened the night with his unique blend of several styles of music, accentuated by turbulent percussive accompaniment provided by Ryan

that remains within me now.

Just when the dazed audience started recuperating, Arizona's Faze Snake closed out the night with a monolithic dirge. The fog had dissipated by this point, but the duo's monstrous combination of free-form noise and industrial rhythm might go down as the

loudest thing I have ever heard. Watching the two sound manipulators erect draconian sonic horror begged the question of its place within artistic expression.

A hooded man screaming at the top of his lungs into a harmonica microphone over an avalanche of distortion might seem like the

farthest thing from art, but I cannot deny the dreamlike state I fell into while witnessing it. The abusive nature of the night's conclusion certainly differed from that of its more accessible beginning, but everyone left Bridgetown in a state of mind only reached by finding beauty in confrontational expression.

## Fit for a King's identity fades



**COMPETENT AT BEST:** Christian metal heavyweights Fit for a King miss opportunities to take chances with "Deathgrip."

**"Deathgrip"**  
gives way to  
unfortunate  
trends in modern  
heavy music.

By MAX HEILMAN  
chimes.arts.editor@biola.edu

Before anyone loses their minds, Death Grips have not returned. Fit for a King has.

Having established themselves as one of the more relevant bands coming from Solid State Records, Fit for a King has become one of Christian metal's flagship bands. They sported enough technical flare and respect for their roots to merit their popularity as a "Christian alternative" to bands like Whitechapel. However, the

changes present in "Deathgrip" fall in with popular stylistic patterns, something Fit for a King mostly avoided until now.

With musical atrocities like Emmure and Attila embracing the synthesis of nu metal and modern deathcore, heavy breakdowns have given way to disguised bounce riffs, while lyrical themes compare more to prepubescent angst than anything related to hardcore punk or death metal.

While Fit for a King have not entirely embraced the worst elements of "nu deathcore," the gravitation towards that approach does nothing to help the quality of "Deathgrip." Unfortunately, one of the worst examples of this shift comes with opening track "Pissed Off."

Even after discounting the horrifically juvenile title, this track sounds like textbook bro rock with breakdowns and growled vocals. Nothing about this track overtly crosses into Attila territory — the breakdown annihilates — but the riffs are more conducive to getting youth group kids jumping around than donkey kicking each other. These are negative changes.

With the tone set, "Deathgrip" adds up to a more frustrating lis-

ten than a bad one. Fit for a King have more than enough chops, but they suffer a lack of artistic vision. Take "Dead Memory," for instance. This track begins with a genuinely impressive drum fill, leading into a throat-shredding shriek, blast beats and triumphant melodies, but drops into a chorus that would have sounded generic five years ago. Again, the production is stellar. These guys know their stuff from a logistical point of view. But compelling moments cannot compensate for an otherwise boring track.

"Cold Room" provides a noticeable glimmer with a noodling guitar line that alludes to tech metal luminaries like Animals As Leaders. This track sounds like it could turn the tide of the record. Even though the rest of the track ventures nowhere interesting with good-cop-bad-cop vocal structure and beefy mosh riffs, Fit for a King's tasteful shredding takes the cake. If only the rest of the album kept this up.

Glossing over the competent "Disease" and "Shadows & Echoes," "More Than Nameless" brings nu metal back with a vengeance. It even features slipknot-esque mutterings during the pre-breakdown section, a

completely unwelcome addition to what could have been a solid, if predictable song. Nu metal elements only makes this album more annoying. This unfortunate trend in modern 'core music only appeals on a lowbrow level if appeals at all.

Devastating heaviness does make some much-needed appearances, most notably in "Stacking Bodies," but even this album's most intense moments have been heard many times before. While the intro of "Unclaimed, Unloved" bearing no difference from that of "More Than Nameless" represents a more embarrassing examples of this, even the evocative title track falls into the clichés of the metalcore genre.

Ryan Kirby's lyrics, while not at all original, fit well into the Christian metal mold. Whether he asks God for deliverance from the troubles of this world in "We Are All Lost" or adopts a more straightforward call to arms for his fellow believers, Christian listeners will find plenty of relatable content. Indeed, this album has its moments of compelling delivery, but those looking for anything truly interesting should look to Meshuggah's latest album instead.

## Iceland: more than just an island of ice

Imagination and creativity exude from the country's unique music culture.

By MORGAN MITCHELL  
morgan.l.mitchell@biola.edu

The picture that most likely comes to mind when an American hears about Iceland is a field of snow and eskimos fishing out of frozen lakes. A tiny island northeast of the U.S. with a population of 323,002 — 22,010 less than Anaheim alone — the country's culture can seem secluded and hidden.

In reality, Iceland has produced creative and amazing bands, singers and composers with success in America such as Sigur Rós, Of Monsters and Men, Björk and Jóhann Johannsson.

Sigur Rós arguably represents

Iceland's creativity best. Their career as an influential post-rock band began during 1994 in Reykjavík, Iceland's capital. The band's name uses Icelandic wordplay, the language spoken in Iceland, because the individual words "Sigur" and "Rós" mean "Victory" and "Rose." Although the phrase breaks grammatical rules, "Victory Rose" borrows from frontwoman Jónsi's younger sister, Sigurðrós, who was born a few days before the band was formed. Sigur Rós is known for its minimalist, ethereal sound and use of bowed guitar.

Without knowledge or understanding of the Icelandic language, one might assume all of Sigur Rós' lyrics are Icelandic. On "Von," "Ágætis byrjun" and "Takk," Jónsi sang a few of the songs in "HopeLandic," according to the band's website. The lyrics in Sigur Rós' 2002 album "Ó" are completely in Hopelandic, or in Icelandic, "Vonlenska."

Technically a form of tongues designed to fit the music, "HopeLandic" acts as another instrument. It got its name from the first song Jónsi sang it on "Hope" — or "Von." The listener is supposed

to interpret their own meanings of the lyrics which can then be written in the blank pages in O's booklet.

Iceland sports its own unique traditional style of music that, although not popular or listened to by younger generations, incorporates other genres and still garners appreciation today.

"It's kind of hard to explain," said Anna Guðrún Heimisdóttir, a 24-year-old Icelandic native currently residing in Innri Njarðvík, Gullbringusysla, Iceland. "It's like singing and talking a poem, if you YouTube 'Ólafur Liljurðs,' you can hear what I am talking about."

A popular band currently in Iceland called Skálmöld combines metal with this traditional style of music. Their website says, "Skálmöld plays music that could be described as Battle Metal, a potion of Epic Viking Metal, old school Death and Thrash Metal, entwined with the Icelandic heritage."

Influenced by Iceland's roots, Skálmöld's lyrics follow the strict rules of ancient Icelandic poetry with the outcome being a power-

ful mixture of heavy metal and heroic sagas.

An album of theirs that might resonate with Americans is "Börn Loka" — "Loki's Children" — released in late 2012. Before Loki and Thor became prominent Mar-

vel characters, they were Norse mythological Gods celebrated by Icelanders and other Germanic peoples. Börn Loka is now the name of the band's official fan club. Their newest album "Vöguvisur Yggdrasils" is out as of

Oct. 3.

Iceland's cultural and historical pride fuels its beautiful music, as exemplified by Skálmöld's website, "Who would be better suited for telling the stories of the Vikings but the Vikings themselves?"



MY SPACE | Courtesy

**SECLUDED BEAUTY:** Iceland's unique atmosphere and rich cultural history has produced music reflecting the best aspects of the country, ranging from heavy metal to cinematic post-rock.