



MEDUSA FESTIVAL



Downtown New York City diva LOURDS produced the third and latest version of her woman-fronted-bands festival, Medusa Festival, at hallowed punk dive CBGB's in July 2004, and if you were expected a mild-mannered group of sincere, acoustic-strumming, singer-songwriters - well, you came to the wrong place!

Medusa, you may remember, was the mythological creature who had snakes instead of hair, and whose glance could turn a man into stone.

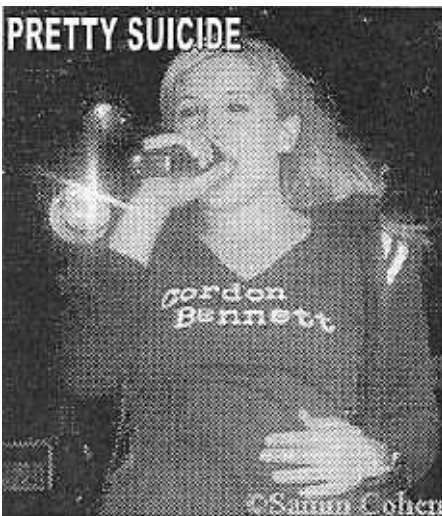
"Bottom line", said LOURDS, "Medusa was a badass bitch!"

For ten US dollars, festivalgoers got to see seven diverse bands, representing the many faces of women who rock: from pop to blues to goth to straight-up rock and roll.

"The best thing about it is all the support we have from all the bands", LOURDS said, pausing for a moment between sets, her hair sticking out snakelike from her head. "I only pick bands who are willing to show the support for the others. All the later bands are here by the time the first band goes on, and the first bands stay the rest of the night."

Word has spread about this annual festival, and LOURDS receives more applicants each year. She picks them based on the quality of the music as well as their commitment to playing in and supporting a women's rock scene.

"It bothers me we don't have as much of that anymore in New York", LOURDS said. "We need a community, with women supporting each other, and it has to be the people who rock out. And every year with Medusafest, we've got that kind of support."



Pop-rockers PRETTY SUICIDE kicked off the night at 7:45, with a hook-laden beat that



brought to mind rockers like CHEAP TRICK (it's not a coincidence that one of the band's most popular covers is "I Want You To Want Me"). Fronted by vivacious blonde Courtney (just Courtney!), the New York-based PRETTY SUICIDE got the early crowd rocking out, with their synchronized windmill guitar slashing and high kicks on songs like "Picabo Street" and "User Abuser".

"I'd call what we do high energy party rock", said Courtney after their set. She took the time to plug their 2003 CD "Suicide Shot", and the forthcoming (Oct. 2004) "After Hours". Their website is: <http://www.prettysuicide.com>.

Between sets, DJ Plain Jane spun tunes by women bands from all over; including classic covers and new material. She distributed a few CDs of her setlist, and mine remains in heavy rotation!

Throughout the night, there were drawings for door prizes ranging from sex toys, to hand-crafted leather garments, to all manner of other goodies.

Next up was GOODFINGER, a five-piece band with a blues-rock bent, fronted by Scrappy (just Scrappy!), selling such rockers as "Takin' Back A Piece Of The Action", and "Drag Me Down". Their website is <http://www.goodfingermusic.com>.

The next band up was THE OUTSIDE, a two-year-old NYC outfit that's already got a hardcore group of fans, who wail and scream along with the songs. Fronted by vocalist Tree



(just Tree!), members of their street team passed through the crowd, handing out copies of the band's latest EP "You Are The Alpha Gracias Por Nada". Tree's vocals go from light and sweet to the hardest crunching rock wails you can imagine. This is a band that glories in sudden shifts in tempo and their fans like the whiplash. They threw roses at the drummer. Their website is <http://www.the-outside.com>.



As she did with all the bands, LOURDS took to the stage to introduce the next act, NEW PROFESSIONALS, raving over their song, "Nothing Pretty". Frontwoman Karen Curious (Yes! She has a last name!) fronting the band on vocals and bass has long been an essential member of many downtown bands, and started NEW PROFESSIONALS in 2002, releasing the CD "Come Hell Or High Drama", in 2003. With a lot of experience and a variety of influences, the band has a confident sound that can head into country one moment (think LUCINDA WILLIAMS) to grinding rockers that reverberate throughout the body. Curious's reputation as one of the best downtown rockers is well-earned. Their website is <http://www.new-professionals.com>.

LOURDS herself was next up, and she doesn't have to worry about following anyone: her