

# COMBAT ROCK

## Bands get down and dirty to fight for a spot in Movin' On

### Infraction

This alternative rock band has been around for four years, having been together on and off since 2001. Gianni Antonaccio (senior-hotel restaurant and institutional management) describes the band's music as having a '90s rock influence.

"We're pretty much just like alternative rock with little bit of an influence of classic rock," Antonaccio said. "Somewhere along the lines like Pearl Jam, Foo Fighters, Our Lady Peace."

Because the band members all go to different schools, Antonaccio said the band usually plays clubs and bars on the weekends in Hanover, Pa., and Baltimore. The band hopes that a chance to play Movin' On will expand its fanbase.

"We're definitely looking for an opportunity," Antonaccio said.

### Some Downtown Avenue

At least a six-piece band and sometimes more, Some Downtown Avenue runs the risk of pretension, but singer and guitarist Chris Rizzo (junior-graphic design) said it's never the case.

"We have a very laid-back style," Rizzo said. "I think that's why a lot of people have taken a liking to us."

Rizzo said the motivation behind the band comes from the fact all its members listen to basically the same kind of music.

"It's primarily ska music, alternative, jazz backgrounds, funk," he said.

Reel Big Fish and Streetlight Manifesto are among the band's larger influences, said Rizzo, who counted Ted Leo and the Pharmacists as a personal influence for his own songwriting.



Courtesy of Myspace.com

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Movin' On, the 12-hour outdoor music festival scheduled to take place on April 26 on the HUB lawn, predominantly features national acts of varying genres. On the side-stage, however, five local bands will share the spotlight.

On Saturday night, 10 bands — all of which feature at least one Penn State student — will play a 20-minute set each at the HUB Alumni Hall. A panel of four judges, selected from the Movin' On committee, will grade each band on various criteria, including crowd draw, originality and overall live performance. Movin' On assistant director Jared Newman (senior-public relations) said. The five highest-scoring bands will be offered a spot at the spring music festival.

Newman said more than 30 bands sent in applications and music to play in the battle. The entire committee listened to each of the bands' submissions and decided on the 10 that will perform in Saturday's battle.

Some of them are relatively new; others have been around for years. They all play in State College with differing frequency, and in all likelihood, you probably haven't heard most of them. Here's a rundown:

### If you go

**What:** Movin' On Battle of the Bands

**Details:** Admission is free.

**Where:** HUB Alumni Hall

**When:** 9 p.m. Saturday

### Shades of Scarlet

Shades of Scarlet has been around for roughly three years now, and the band is no stranger to competitions.

Competitions that aren't dominated by metal acts, however, are something of a new concept for the indie pop act that lists Lifehouse and the Afters as influences.

"We don't fit into those battles at all," guitarist Erik Suchevecich (junior-electrical engineering) said. "But we've won a few of them."

Suchevich said the key to these victories for Shades of Scarlet has been its accessibility.

"Our music is very catchy, regardless of genre," he said. "We have fans from junior high school to much, much older crowds."

### Hopes High

Not many State College bands can say a Grammy-nominated producer produced their first album. But not only can the members of pop-punk band Hopes High make this claim, they can boast a planned return trip to Nashville to work with said producer, Charlie Kelley, on their next album.

"All of next year we're going to be writing a new album, then next summer we'll go back to record our next album," guitarist Keenan Hall (sophomore-crime, law and justice) said. "We have plans to go back to Nashville."

The band's influences have not changed from bands like Blink 182 and Yellowcard, but its new music has taken a turn toward adulthood.

"It's definitely more mature," Hall said. "We wrote our first album [when] we were juniors in high school. We've grown up since then."



Courtesy of Myspace.com

### The Hope Fallacy

Eric McCrum (sophomore-division of undergraduate studies) describes his band's pop-punk style as happy and upbeat.

"We get awesome crowd responses," McCrum said. "We're really energetic and active up on stage. We're always jumping around and trying to get the crowd on its feet. It's always a good time."

Besides trying to win this particular battle, the band is also vying for a spot on the Vans Warped Tour stop in Pittsburgh through Ernie Ball's Battle of the Bands competition.

"Right now, we're actually No. 5 today in the most popular bands of the region," McCrum said.



Courtesy of Myspace.com

### North of Nittany

Patrick Breen, Eric Lawry and Derek Biddle, all sophomore theatre majors and 60 percent of North of Nittany, met early last year and began playing music together right away.

"We just jammed together in North Halls, which is where our name comes from," said Biddle, the band's bassist.

North of Nittany, Biddle said, is "a mix between jam band and a little bit of funk," adding his band sounds closest to Dave Matthews Band, although its influences are constantly changing.

"When we write a song, it's just what we were listening to the weekend before," Biddle said. "The new Raconteurs album just came out, so we'll probably write something rocking like that."

Biddle said he's aware some people aren't into jam bands and his band will play a more up-tempo set to try to please the crowd.

### The Slant

Andre Costello, guitarist for The Slant, gives his band some big shoes to fill.

"It's like if the Beatles and Radiohead had a love child," Costello said. "It's a psychedelic folk-rock sound."

Besides the previous two, the band boasts a diverse list of influences that includes Animal Collective, The Books, Bob Dylan, Simon and Garfunkel, and Silverchair.

Costello said all the band members know how to play multiple instruments, which makes songwriting a democratic process. The band also enjoys improvising during live shows.

"We improvise whenever we play live," Costello said. "We're a little experimental."

### Hay Sugar

What happens when a bluegrass band loses its fiddle player? If you're guitarist Matt Leech (senior-earth science), the answer is clear: start rocking out.

"We used to be a bluegrass band, but we lost our fiddle player. He's in New Zealand," Leech said. "When he left, we kind of changed our sound to a funk, rock, blues kind of thing. It's pretty much straight ahead rock 'n' roll."

Leech said the band plays "mostly for fun," but that doesn't mean the rock 'n' roll foursome doesn't have its eyes on the prize.

"We're trying to win it," Leech said. "We like to play music to have fun, but we take it seriously and want to make it sound good."



Courtesy of Myspace.com

### Acalasia

One quick look at Acalasia's Myspace.com page and you'd guess pretty quickly that the band might sound like Tennessee pop-punk band Paramore. Acalasia even has a redheaded frontwoman.

Bassist Stephen Wells (senior-mechanical engineering) wouldn't contradict you.

"We sound like a cross between Paramore and My Chemical Romance," Wells said.

Wells also said Acalasia just recorded a three-song sampler with Paramore's producer. The band will give out the sampler for free at the Battle of the Bands.



Courtesy of Myspace.com

### The Warskills

Over spring break, the Warskills recorded its first song ever, solely for submission to the Movin' On Battle of the Bands. Getting onto the competition's lineup, however, was the culmination of a long-term dream.

"We always wanted to play Movin' On," Warskills guitarist and singer Bill Ryan (sophomore-recreation, park and tourism management) said of his bandmates, all but one of whom attended State College Area High School.

Ryan said his band sounds most similar to bands like Arctic Monkeys and the Strokes, but the vocals and the presence of a synth make it lean toward the Killers.

Although his band has existed for only three months, Ryan said the Warskills will have more than enough material to play a full set, and it wouldn't even have to play any covers.