

A Battle of the Bands multimedia party

Mac Battle of the Bands 2018 Lineup

Artificial Daylight

What

Signi

Jeremy

Deva

Vostok

Crusoe

Austin Cobb Trio

The 2018 edition of the Battle of the Bands saw eight bands face off for the chance to play at Stubb's in February.

The Battle of the Bands is McCallum's annual fundraiser for the guitar program. This year, the fundraiser will help the guitar program travel to Nashville to record at historic RCA Studio B and play at the Grand Ole Opry.

"What I like about it is that it's open to any student at McCallum and any style, whether it be folk, hip-hop, metal, punk," guitar teacher and Battle of the Bands organizer Andrew Clark said. "It's a chance to showcase the diversity of the students' musical interests."

Artificial Daylight opened the Battle with a mix of original songs and improvisation.

“My favorite part is just jamming out with the people you care about and having fun,” drummer Drake Snider said. “I plan to continue playing with my band and hopefully we can create an album.”

Next up, What played.

“We formed our band two days before, so we were just having fun,” guitarist and singer Riley Edwards said. As for the band name, “There was a sign-up sheet in guitar, so I just wrote ‘What’ because I didn’t know what to call our band, and then I forgot to change it,” Edwards said.

“

I was really focused on playing keyboard, and I broke off one of my keys. I looked up because I didn’t know what to do and there was an entire mosh pit raving in front of me.”

– keyboardist Vostock

After What, Battle of the Bands veteran Signi Johnson played two covers and an original solo.

“I wanted to perform one of my own,” Johnson said. “This is pretty much the only opportunity that I get to perform so I took it.”

Jeremy Mock followed Signi and played three original songs, “Just Another Day,” “Afternoon Eyes,” and one untitled song.

“It usually takes me about two months to write a song, but [the untitled] one only took me two days,” Mock said. “I got this whammy pedal and was messing around with it, and I came up with this riff that repeats for the entire song. [In all], making weird sarcastic comments was my favorite part of performing.”

Deva (Janssen Transier, Tomas Marrero, Asher Lowenstern, and Memphis Lamont) played two originals and a cover of “Airplane

Blues" by the Black Keys in the middle.

"The first song was definitely a highlight," said Marrero, the guitarist and lead singer for Deva. "We decided to open with that one because it was the most energetic, and the acts that came before us were more mellow, singer-songwriter stuff, so that woke the crowd up."

"

I know we played well because afterwards, the sound guy said that he wanted to record us!"

– Crusoe lead guitarist Austin Rummel

During Vostok's set a mosh pit formed to the left of the stage.

"I was really focused on playing keyboard," Vostok said, "and I broke off one of my keys. I looked up because I didn't know what to do and there was an entire mosh pit raving in front of me. That was a little surprising to say the least."

Second to last, Crusoe played a mix of originals and covers, closing with their version of Van Halen's "Hot for Teacher."

"I think we played really well," said junior Austin Rummel, the lead guitarist for Crusoe. "Everything felt tight, and there was some nice groove that you only get within friends. I know we played well because afterwards, the sound guy said that he wanted to record us! That makes me feel really good because we've only had a few rehearsals. I've never performed keys in a non-classical setting before, so that was a new experience for me."

While this was Rummel's first time playing with Crusoe, he's played live before.

"I've played around 80-100 gigs around town," Rummel said. "I've played at ACL and Summerfest in Milwaukee."

The Austin Cobb Trio played last. Austin Cobb played at last year's Battle, but his band fell through on him just before the event.

"I was determined enough to not quit, and I went up there with backing tracks, but because of monitor problems, I couldn't use them," Cobb said.

"My goal was just to sound good and feel confident and have fun. I wasn't too concerned about winning, but it was definitely an added bonus that we did."

– Deva front man Tomas Marrero

Ultimately, he cites last year's BofB as one of the reasons he wanted to play an active role organizing this time around.

"Last year was pretty chaotic", he said, "and I didn't want that. It's just kind of my tendency to make sure that things happen. During Battle of the Bands, I was running around telling people, 'You're having your sound checked now, you have 45 seconds.'"

In the end, the two winners of the Battle of Bands were chosen by a popular vote and a paid vote. Deva and the Austin Cobb Trio were the respective winners.

"I'm really thankful that I won," Austin Cobb said. "All the bands were good, it could have been so many different people, so I'm really glad. Whatever form music takes, it's absolutely in my future," Cobb explained. "Plan A of course is to have commercial success in one form or another. Gary Clark Jr. is doing great playing blues with a twist. If that doesn't work out, [my future] is going to involve music; whether that's as a producer [or a] musician for hire, it's going to involve music."

Of his Deva mates, Marrero said: "I'm really proud of the

guys, they killed it. My goal was just to sound good and feel confident and have fun. I wasn't too concerned about winning, but it was definitely an added bonus that we did."

Before they play at Stubb's though, they've got other shows coming up. "We've got a gig lined up the 28th at the Carousel Lounge," Marrero said. "We might play a couple of co-op parties down on campus just to get some stage time too."

All in all, this year's Battle of the Bands was a big success for the guitar program.

"This was our most successful year in terms of sheer dollars, so I know for a fact we're moving forward with the Nashville trip," said Cobb. "It's really exciting."

– with reporting from Michael Speciale and Ellie Sullivan

Exclusive video clips from Battle of the Bands

MOCK TAKES THE MIC: Senior Jeremy Mock performs an untitled original song, one that he had written only two weeks prior to the Battle of the Bands. Mock's other two songs, "Just Another Day" and "Afternoon Eyes", were originals as well. "It usually takes me about two months to write a song, but that one only took me two days," Mock said. "[In all], making weird sarcastic comments was my favorite part of performing." You can find his music online at [his SoundCloud link](#). Video by Ellie Sullivan.

DEVA STATUS: With infectious energy and catchy riffs, Deva (Janssen Transier, Tomas Marrero, and Asher Lowenstern as well as guitarist Memphis Lamont) perform an original song. "I'm really proud of the guys, they killed it," Marrero said. "[This has] always been something I love and I hope to

continue to do.” Video by Ellie Sullivan.

VO-STOKED: Despite breaking a key off of his keyboard mid performance, freshman DJ Vostok captivates the crowd with his unique electronic set and intense, space inspired look during Battle of the Bands. “My favorite part of performing is the rush you get from being up on stage,” Vostok said. “I don’t know what it is or what causes it but there’s something about it that gives you this huge endorphin dump and it’s the best feeling ever.” Video by Ellie Sullivan.

THE MONSTER MOSH: During the final song in Vostok’s performance, students ran to the front of the auditorium, triggering an impromptu mosh pit. “Me and my friends were sort of moshing in our seats so we decided we might as well get up,” junior Abby Greene said. “We weren’t expecting anyone else to join, but they did and it was fun.” Video by Ellie Sullivan.

CRUSOE CONTROL: Crusoe played a mixture of originals and covers, closing with their version of Van Halen’s “Hot for Teacher.” After their performance, the band was approached by the sound technician, Nate Zivan, a former McCallum guitar major, who was interested in recording them. “That makes me feel really good because we’ve only had a few rehearsals,” lead guitarist junior Austin Rummel said. “I think we played really well. Everything felt tight, and there was some nice groove that you only get within friends.” Video by Ellie Sullivan.