

Students, alumni rock Iona in WICR battle

By Alana Rome

STAFF WRITER

The Iona College radio station, WICR, hosted its second annual Battle of the Bands on Feb. 21. Five bands, which all included at least one Iona student, showed their stuff for the hopes of snagging the \$100 first-place prize.

Worth Street Station, 42 Grams of Heartattack, Silver Spade, In Dying Arms and Maslow each took the stage at the Christopher J. Murphy Auditorium to showcase their best songs for nearly 100 attendees.

As a prelude to the music, Iona senior Chris Gardner put on a hilarious 20-minute set of stand-up comedy. Gardner's performance, though largely censored, poked fun at everything from overweight black women to the mentally disabled. "I would've liked more people to be in the audience, more energy, but I think (my performance) went pretty well," Gardner said. "The reaction from the audience was gratifying."

Humor aside, 42 Grams of Heartattack took the stage first with a straight up, old-school punk sound that has been largely absent since the 90s. Hailing from Long Island, Iona sophomore Will Spratt and his bandmates Mike Terry (guitar/vocals), Dave Goldsmith (guitar/vocals) and Nate Wing (bass) gave a high energy performance reminiscent of Green Day's heyday and a touch of Dropkick Murphys' Irish insanity.

"Going by punk rock standards, we're trying to make fun, upbeat music," Terry said.

Next up to wow the crowd was Worth Street Station, whose lineup included vocalist/guitarist Matt Costibile, Iona student and drummer Dan Hillier, bassist Tom Kelly and guitarist/vocalist Jon Graber. If nothing else, the presence of this foursome from Bellmore, N.Y., definitely impressed the crowd; not only did the equipment adhere to a black, red and white color ensemble, the band dressed

accordingly to fit their rocking decor. Iona was again hit with the sound of what punk rock used to be; Worth Street Station's Get Up Kids vibe could only be described as refreshing for those backlogged with the sounds of emo and hardcore bands that now pervade the alternative music scene. The set ran relatively smoothly, albeit the band's brand new guitarist and the modest sound system.

Intermission at WICR's Battle of the Bands was not your typical silent break. Senior Matt Guarino, better known as Matty G, took over to play a few songs. Rigging a drumstick to the head of his guitar and putting a snare drum on the floor, Matty G played the guitar, drums and keyboard all at once. Since audience members were not new to these mind-boggling performances, they shouted out requests usually performed by the one-man band, including Rhianna's "Umbrella," Europe's "Final Countdown" and Survivor's "Eye of the Tiger."

"I thought it was important because it's a warm up for 'America's Got Talent,'" Guarino said, having just recently tried out for the NBC series.

Silver Spade, a three-member band from Westchester, N.Y., was third to perform in this yearly music showcase. Vocalist Rick Yapchanyk, an Iona alumnus, guitarist/vocalist Bob Yapchanyk, a current Iona undergrad, and drummer Mike Keeler gave a performance much different from the previous two; the band's Creed-like sound put the crowd at ease, finally hearing something recognizable. Silver Spade's mainstream rock sound, however, was offset by Rick's animation as the band's front-man. He even went as far as to jump off the stage and sing up and down the aisles of the auditorium.

"This show was one of the most fun we've ever had," Rick said. "This is the most out of breath we've been."

In Dying Arms, a four-member band from the Bronx, blew the competition out



Photo by Alana Rome

In Dying Arms' lead singer screams his way to victory and a \$100 prize.

of the water, being the first and only post-hardcore/screamo band of the night. Iona's own Brendan Gomez shredded on the guitar while vocalist Justin Lebowitz pranced around the stage, hitting jazzercise poses and ripping his vocal chords apart. The band's performance, which also included bassist Julian Bayon and drummer Titus Kurian, actually started a mosh pit, led by Iona sophomore Konrad Cunningham and fans that had come to see the band perform.

The last band to show their stuff was a four-piece ensemble hailing from New York City by the name of Maslow. Vocalist Scoop Slone, guitarist Howzr, bassist Dan Holdner and Iona student and drummer Chris Moran gave a pure rock performance of the Velvet Revolver variety. For those who are fans of heavy 80s metal, though, one could certainly hear the Metallica influence hiding beneath the machine-gun drums and squealing guitar riffs.

Voting took place in front of the stage; five makeshift voting boxes with each band's name were placed on a table for attendees to drop in their ticket. After all the votes were tallied, In Dying Arms was declared the winner with 13 votes, making them \$100 richer. The first-place title was a nice way to go out, too, as the performance was In Dying Arms' last. "(We) didn't expect to win at all," Bayon said. Maslow came in at a close second with 11 votes and won the second-place prize of \$50.

Despite the fact not everyone could receive a prize for their performance, spirits appeared high for performers and attendees alike. Even WICR General Manager Scott O'Donnell was please at the show's results. "I would have liked a little more people, but overall, we had a good show," O'Donnell said. "The people who came got what they were expecting. I would like to do it again (next year)."

Second Time?