

# September 26, 1999: Four bands get freaky on stage in Spartanburg

BY ROSS HAGEN  
Guest Writer

GROUNDZERO, SPARTANBURG, SC—This was truly one of the better shows I've seen in a long time, and one that won't come near Davidson anytime soon (too much pain, not enough khaki). I wasn't all that familiar with any of these bands prior to the drive down, so these reviews are more or less based on first impressions.

**Amen.** Amen, a pretty standard new-wave metal band from Los Angeles, did not have a good night. They quit playing after five songs, the singer proclaiming himself to be "sicker than normal." I felt sorry for this guy because he didn't seem to be able to find a microphone that worked. They would cut in and out or just stop altogether, after which he would throw them or otherwise destroy them because, as a rock star, all that can be done when equipment breaks is to punish it for embarrassing you. Other than that, he was pretty animated; climbing up on things, hanging from rafters, etc., in such a way as to give Austin Rios a run for his money. One thing I didn't understand, though, was all the anti-Christian imagery they had on stage. I couldn't understand the words of their songs very well, but it didn't really seem to fit in anywhere with their image except as a shock tactic.

**Slipknot.** These guys were probably my favorite band of the evening, just based on the fact that I have never seen anything quite that deranged before, with the possible exception of the Jim Rose Circus. That and they absolutely rocked.

For those of you unfamiliar with Slipknot, they are a nine-piece band from Des Moines that made a name for themselves on this summer's Ozzfest. In addition to the regular lineup of drums, two guitars, bass, and vocals, Slipknot adds a sampler, turntable player, and two percussionists who played bass drums and beer kegs mounted on platforms, one with springs and the other with a hydraulic lift. The "extra" members of the band alternated between actually playing, crowd surfing, fighting with each other, and just adding to the overall weirdness.

Did I mention that every member of Slipknot wears a matching jumpsuit and some sort of grotesque mask? These guys are like heavy-metal Muppets from Hell. They remind me a bit of GWAR, except they don't use any big cartoon-ish set pieces and costumes.

However, none of these psychotic visuals mean anything if the music is lacking. Luckily,

Slipknot definitely delivers the goods and they whipped the audience into an absolute frenzy from the minute they launched. Their music is in the same vein as much of the current rap/metal stuff, except Slipknot leans towards faster tempos and more emphasis on unrelenting bang-your-head crunch than Korn-y groove. A definite recommendation.

**Machine Head.** Machine Head, one of the headlining bands of the night, has the distinction of being the only band whose songs stuck in my head after the show. Rather than channel their energy into a furious assault, they center more on a big, heavy, mid-tempo groove. One song in particular was very reminiscent of the old Public Enemy/Anthrax tune "Bring the Noise." They have also learned, in the words of Butthead, that the quiet parts make the loud parts seem even louder. Their songs are very well put together and could conceivably "break" one day. Overall an excellent live band.

**Highlight** — getting some Coke & Absolut from the singer. **Lowlight** — one of our friends got suckered into helping the stage crew tear down, thinking he'd get to meet Machine Head. One hour later, after they're done with him and the band has done all of its meeting and greeting, the crew sends him out to wait by the bus with the rest of the fans. Highly uncool in my book.

**Coal Chamber.** It's easy to see why Coal Chamber is such a popular band. They look very goth, play metal, and have a secret weapon that I'll discuss in depth a little later. Coal Chamber's studio recordings have never done much for me, but they do indeed rock it out live. The name of the game so far had been "Everybody in dropped-D," but Coal Chamber took it further; going all the way down to B (yay 7th string!). One result of this is that the guitar tends to blend with the bass and get lost in the mix, but that's okay if you're going for that big heavy groove sound.

Visually, Coal Chamber is pretty engaging, as any good goth band should be. The singer looked sort of like Alice Cooper from way back in the day, the drummer had black electrical tape X's over his nipples, and the guitarist looked like he belonged in Orgy. Now we get to the secret weapon: the bassist. There's been some debate as to whether the person we saw Monday night was the same as the person regularly associated with the band, but whoever she was, she's definitely in the running for Queen of the Undead. The girls idolize her, the guys fall in love with her, and Coal Chamber's fan base grows. Needless to say she was a hot topic for conversation during the ride home.

One beef I have with Coal Chamber is that I feel that they don't extend their image far enough into their music. When a band comes onstage to the main themes from "A Nightmare Before Christmas" and "Halloween" (techno mix!), I expect some good cheesy scare music in the same vein as Type O Negative or Alien Sex Fiend, especially with that much fishnet onstage. Instead we get Korn worship. The kids liked it, though, and it did rock pretty hard, so I guess I should trust that Coal Chamber knows what they are doing. My only complaint is that the sound setup blocked the exits from the area between the barricade and the stage, leaving no where to go if somebody gets passed up to the front. The security guards, therefore, were pushing crowd surfers away from the stage to an uncertain fate rather than collecting them when they get to the front and sending them back in one piece. Hopefully Ground Zero won't find itself in court over this because it seems to be a very nice venue with a tightly knit group of patrons. Cheers!



◆ Coal Chamber is staring at you.

# IdnEgo — Relationship advice for friends and family, foes and lovers

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*IdnEgo are Freud's psychoanalytic voices that influence all relationship decisions. Id, who represents the unconscious and licentiousness in all of us, rarely agrees with Ego, who touts the conscious and morally-aware course of action.*

*Want to hear what IdnEgo have to say about your relationship dilemma? Or have any comments about their advice? Send your questions and thoughts to: AskIdnEgo@hotmail.com. All inquiries will be kept confidential. (Please note: All advice offered in this column is purely for entertainment purposes and should not be considered professional clinical advice.)*

Dear IdnEgo,

Help! A good friend of mine recently set me up on a blind date with someone who was "perfect" for me. She goes to a nearby school and since I had to go up there last weekend to use the library, I figured I'd meet her for a drink. Well, one thing led to another and I ended up staying at her place. The problem? I come back to school and in two days I've already gotten 8 e-mails from her! Stuff like "how right our friend was about how perfect we were for each other," "what a great time she had," "that she misses me," and "plans to come visit next weekend." Can you believe this?! Look, I thought she was cute and I enjoyed hooking up with her...but that was it! How do I let her know that I'm not interested in any kind of relationship (although I wouldn't mind hooking up with her again)? I'm afraid of really pissing off my friend who set this whole thing up. It would have been nice if she had mentioned that her friend was a little obsessive.

Signed, In deep.

Dear "In deep,"

Id loves these sorts of weekend diversions—but hates the aftermath. (Id just doesn't understand why women have to be so clingy about one night stands.) First of all, chill out about the e-mails. She'll get the picture pretty quickly once you give her a clue. Try sending her an 8x10 glossy signed with the message, "Something for you to remember me by—since you'll never see me again." Or, send her a nice poem: "Roses are red, Violets are blue—hey, leave me the hell alone you freakin' psycho." So don't stress. Believe me, you'll have this problem in the future and probably in much worse scenarios. Regarding your friend and fear of her getting mad—did you ever think that maybe she had a thing for you and decided to set you up with psycho to show you how good she was? Ummm...

In your best interest, Id

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Dear "In deep,"

Ok, so you got a little carried away and now you're stuck fending off someone who might be boiling rabbits before long. So the trick is to break things off without getting your friend angry and without offending the girl too much. Basically, you need to tell Id to shut up so you can exercise a little more restraint and be a little more tactful, suave, and subtle. Simple stuff, such as, "Listen, I thought you were great—I had a really good time, but I'm just getting out of a serious relationship and need my space." Keep in touch with her, let her know you don't think she's a slut for sleeping with you, and be really nice to her friend. Oh, and one final piece of advice: give up on trying to hook up with her again. Ego already thinks you're a schmuck for hooking up with her once.

Your friend, Ego.

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