

Dropkick amps shut off due to overcrowded stage

Laura Kennedy
ARTS EDITOR

The Dropkick Murphys kicked down the doors to the Field House this past Friday to rock out Irish-style to a crowd of hardcore Dropkick, Red Sox and Celtics fans, and everyone in between. According to fans, the show was high on energy until the sound system was shut off by UNH officials.

At approximately 10:30 p.m., a slew of about 50 girls were called on to rush the stage for a performance and sing-a-long of "Kiss Me, I'm Shitfaced" – a staple move, according to Dropkick fans.

Due to the large amount of people on stage, UNH officials cut off the power to the amps. The band continued to play the last song without any sound reaching the audi-

continued on page 10

ence. The band's console was still running allowing them to hear their own music but not what was being projected, according to Rob Beck, SCOPE security director.

"Officials believed it was an unsafe situation. More people were on the stage than it could hold, so they cut the speakers and turned on the lights so people could exit in a safe manner," said Beck.

Despite this, Dropkick continued to perform for at least another 10 minutes after the amps were shut off. The show did not end early.

The band's Web site said their "goal is to play music that creates an all for one, one for all environment. We view the band and the audience as one in the same; in other words our stage and our microphone are yours."

And fans agreed especially when it comes to being able to get on stage.

"I love it," said Alyssa Skene, junior at UNH. "I've seen Dropkick at least ten times and I've been on stage about six times. It's chill of them to let crazy fans up and it's so much fun to see all the fans on one stage and to be able to see through Dropkick's eyes to the crowd."

Throughout the rest of the show, students were right there with Dropkick as they played non-stop for an hour and a half, jam-packed with songs from early albums, such as "Fields Of Athenry" from 2003's "Blackout," as well as "Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ya" and "State Of Massachusetts" from their newest album "The Meanest of Times."

"They played a lot of new material, but in the end they play great music that makes me happy," said Alissa Skene, a junior at UNH and longtime fan. "Their mix of punk with

Irish music is what makes them one of my favorite bands and why I have loved them throughout the years. I've loved punk ever since. Plus, [lead singer] Al Barr is hot."

Ben Perkins, a freshman at UNH, was the first person in line for the show, lining up at 4:30 p.m.

"I've listened to Dropkick for eight years," said Perkins. "I've seen them at the St. Patty's Day shows before, and I'm not expecting this show to be nearly as good as that, but I still love them."

According to Tim Brennan, guitarist/accordion player for the Dropkick Murphys, "College shows are always different. You don't know what to expect because at college shows people just come to come and they're not all fans."

"This is the closest I've ever been to being 'in college,'" said James Lynch, the group's guitarist, but whatever the type of crowd, "A show always turns out to be a show and we love doing it," said Lynch.

Although fans may think otherwise, Dropkick believes their newest album is one of the best.

"It has a darker feel to it, but it's more complete," said Lynch. "It came together in the least amount of time, but it all goes together. The lyrics, the artwork - everything fits well together."

Having gone through several lineup changes since the band's original start in 1996, Dropkick performed with newest member Jeff DaRosa on Friday, who replaced long-time member Marc Orrell in January. Because of this change, Brennan, who dropped out of college to play for the band one year short of graduation in '03, moved to guitar and DaRosa now plays the banjo, accordion, bouzouki and other various "odd" instruments.

In the end, Dropkick believes in order to be in Dropkick you've got to be there 100 percent.

"If you don't want to be here, it's not worth it. Your heart has got to be in it," said Lynch, a member since 2000.

Despite the fact the show was held in a limited gymnasium, the usual antics of any rock concert like moshing and crowd surfing were alive and kept relatively under control. If things got too out of hand police broke things up, and if kids got too hot, water was sprayed and thrown so the fans could stick it out.

"We took the basic measures for any concert," said Sara Townsend, publicity director for SCOPE. "There was enough security to keep everything under control."

Along with Dropkick classics, Dropkick had to play their recent big-time hits "Tessie," a fan favorite and Red Sox anthem, and "I'm Shipping Up To Boston," now best known as the theme song to Martin Scorsese's "The Departed," and was originally a single off of '05's "The Warrior's Code."

"[Boston] is a city people take a lot of pride in," said Lynch.

NEW HAMPSHIRE (UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE)

Date: Tuesday, April 29, 2008
Location: DURHAM, NH
Circulation (DMA): 8,000 (7)
Type (Frequency): Newspaper (2WK)
Page: 1,10
Keyword: Dropkick Murphys

Despite the new following, some longtime fans disagree with the moves that Dropkick has recently made.

"I love Dropkick's sound," said Sarah Furlong, a junior at UNH. "I've been a fan since the beginning, but these songs are what make fans think they are sellouts. They're not being true to their fans."

Though longtime fans may not like this new-fangled success, the band could not be happier about it.

"It's been unbelievable," said Lynch. "It has helped us out in so many ways, from gaining a new fan base to getting mentioned in music publications such as Rolling Stone, who never wanted anything to do with us."

Perhaps that's why Dropkick was a bit harder to book this time around, despite having performed at UNH just four years ago.

"Dropkick was kind of hard to get," said Townsend. "It took a while but because of them being a local band they seemed to want to do it more."

SCOPE has a middle agent who takes a look at what SCOPE chooses students would be interested in and then gives a price to the artist's booking agents to see if the cost is affordable. If SCOPE can accommodate the offer then the show is a go.

Despite a little trouble, Dropkick confirmed in the end. After that, everything fell into place. Within four-and-a-half hours, all 2,200 tickets were sold out, making it the first time ever for a SCOPE production to have a one-day sellout.

Students were glad they stood in line the first day.

"I waited in line for two hours, but it was well worth it," said Furlong.

The last time Dropkick was here was in October of '04. They played in the Granite State Room and did not even sell all the tickets allotted.

"The Dropkick show from a few years ago undersold the GSR – probably about 500-600 tickets were sold and they didn't even fill up the room," said Townsend. "This year, that many tickets sold in like two hours. It's unbelievable the change we've seen with this band."

State Radio, the concert's opening band, performed for 35 minutes prior to the main event. Described on their MySpace page as "outspoken and thought-provoking... inventive, socially and politically charged," they brought about a different sound to the table, with a little mix of everything from rock to reggae.

Certain songs were reminiscent of Sublime, and then switched off to Bob Dylan-esque during another point. Branching off from the band Dispatch, who broke up in '02, lead singer and guitarist Chad Urmston, who goes by Charlie Stokes, had low-key vocals to combine with the heavy beats. Urmston, along with bass player Chuck Fay and drummer Mike Najarian, played songs that consisted of high-energy music, getting the crowd pumped up for

Dropkick to perform. Most popular it seemed was a song titled, "CIA," off of their recently released album "Year of the Crow" in September '07. It started off at a slow pace, but moved to a sped-up chorus and back down to slow reggae beats and bass.

"They're better than I thought they would be for an opening band. They sound like your token college band, so it was easy to get into," said Skene.

According to Townsend, State Radio was booked after Dropkick was finalized.

"We felt their sound would work well with the Dropkick crowd," she said.

In the end, both State Radio and Dropkick seemed to enjoy the show.

To put it simply—

"It was f***ing awesome," said Furlong.

Perhaps we'll see them in another four years, back again to rock out at UNH.



Photo courtesy of Bernie DiFloures

Dropkick's full lineup includes: Al Barr, lead vocals; Ken Casey, bass, vocals; Matt Kelley, drums, bodran; James Lynch, guitar, vocals; Josh "Scruffy" Wallace, bagpipes, tin whistle; Tim Brennan, guitar, accordion; and Jeff DaRosa, mandolin, accordion, banjo, acoustic, tin whistle, and bouzouki.