

**NSSN**  
**COMPAQ CENTER, SAN JOSE**  
**12-7-01**



There's nothing like a stadium of 16,000 screaming teens to get your blood going on a cold night. LIVE105 hosted this year's benefit for the SF AIDS Foundation at the Compaq Center in San Jose. Tickets sold out within hours for this 7 band extravaganza, forcing the promoters to reconfigure the stage so as to pack even more into the huge ice-hockey home of the San Jose Sharks. In order of appearance the bands were AFI, Alien Ant Farm, Puddle of Mud, Sum 41, POD, System of a Down, and the hugely popular Linkin Park.

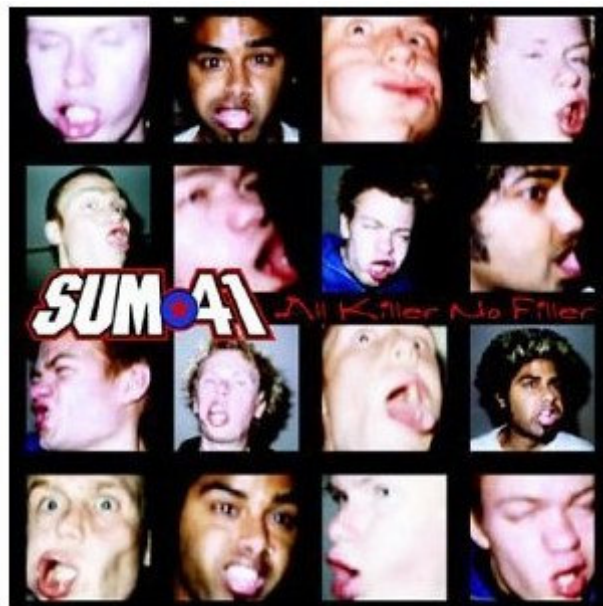
The atrocious acoustics of the venue, plus the non-stop screaming, virtually wrecked Alien Ant Farm and POD, turning the vocals for both bands into an indistinguishable morass of echoes. Puddle of Mud wisely pared the music down to bare rhythms, but they too had significant problems fighting the limits of the venue. Their name notwithstanding, this band demonstrated the best

musicianship of the evening with tightly orchestrated instrumental harmonies and clearly defined musical phrasing.

Other reviewers, such as Live Daily, expressed dissatisfaction with this year's NSSN. "Those that have some history with the event can't help but long for days gone by, remembering when a multi-band bill also meant multiple musical styles. Not So Silent Night was once a wildly eclectic show that offered something for many different age groups.

And we are not talking ancient history here. Back in 1998--a banner year for this concert--Live 105 hosted an extremely funky and diverse lineup that included Cake, Hole, Rancid and Soul Coughing."

Sum 41, however, stole the show with superbly crafted songs with just the right amount of poppy hook without losing the basic spirit of raw punk. They also had the majority of well known songs, which the audience demonstrated by singalongs. Quite impressive when 16,000 people manage to synch.

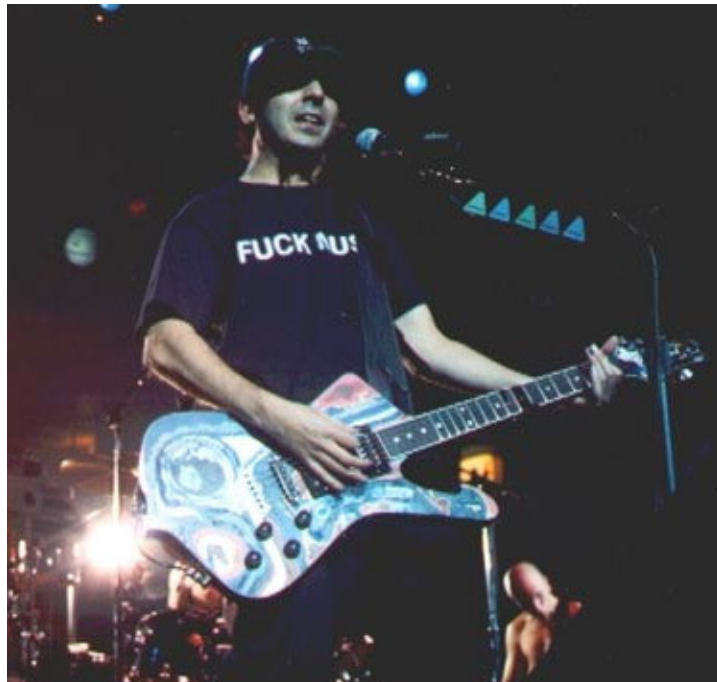


POD, a sort of dreadlocked version of punk cum rap, lost all definition in the huge hall, and eventually gave up musicianship entirely in favor of gyrating showmanship and stage dives in a grand "Oh well, why fight it?" attitude. The fans loved them for all that and for maintaining a frenzied level of infectious energy.



System of a Down found itself slotted unenviably in the next to last position before headliners Linkin Park and their heady Zappa-esque quick tempo and volume changes just could not overcome a nearly exhausted crowd in this anti-musical venue. They never let up the pace, however, and continued to

thrust out their unique form of sound with sharply punctuated drum attacks and split-second timing.



Linkin Park, of course, was Linkin Park. Name brand status notwithstanding, they too had some troubles with the bad sound reverbs in the arena that was designed exclusively for ice hockey -- and not much else. The bands were all top-rated performers, and all of them did the best they could with the situation, but next time, we'd advise against revisiting the Shark Tank for anything other than what the hall was built for.



Their debut album "Hybrid Theory" closed out 2001 with the most album sales of the year (4.8 million copies sold), and the album has now hit seven times platinum in album sales according to the RIAA. With over one hundred performances world wide in 2001, and an ever-growing fan base there is no doubt why Linkin Park is being honored with highest praises as Rocktime Magazine's 2001 Band of the Year. This band seemed to come from no where and traveled on the lips of teenagers to become an instant phenomena. The constant radio play of their hits "Crawling" and "In the End" was paramount to their omnipresent musical force becoming something to reckon with.

The high point was in discovering the boys from Quebec, Canada, Sum 41, who just might be next years up and coming Offspring.

