

# PLAYBACK:stl

Home Cover Story Profiles Reviews Columns Events PB Blog Links Contact Search join us

## Power Chord Academy

Written by Cindy Gao

Thursday, 27 April 2006

*I spoke with Zac Einstein, camp director of PCA, to discuss the academy's mission and that eternal question: pirates or ninjas.*



Dave Simon's Rock School, move over. Power Chord Academy, in its eighth year of business, is moving its Midwest location from Chicago to St. Louis. An intensive summer program for the most dedicated of teenage musicians, PCA provides a comprehensive look at what it takes to be successful in the music industry. I spoke with Zac Einstein, camp director of PCA, to discuss the academy's mission

and that eternal question: pirates or ninjas.

and that eternal question: pirates or ninjas.

### We have rock schools here in St. Louis; could you tell us what sets you apart?

Well, they don't really do what we do. We do more of a practical experience. Kids come in and form a band: We pair the kids up according to their age, experience, level, style of music they're interested in, bands they like; that sort of thing. So rather than just learn a song or learn to play with each other, it's more about writing a single. We bring them into the studio to record that single, we shoot a music video for that single; it's much more about learning to play together in that sort of basic experience. It's a much more practical experience. We do daily seminars on what it takes to succeed in today's music climate. We bring in music industry people to discuss the nuances of the business. All of our staff are mostly in signed touring bands—bands that have records out, that have worked with major labels—bigger independents and major labels—recognizable staff names. We're also bringing in huge national artists. Last year, we had the All-American Rejects, Rise Against [the Machine], the Donnas. This year we've got Unwritten Law, Thrice, Powerman 5000. We've got just amazing artists who come in and do private shows for the kids, do a Q&A session...so our students get to meet rock stars right off the bat. Then essentially, a few days later, they're playing a concert on the same stage with the same lighting, with the same stage setup as these major rock stars that they've met. They're actually playing two concerts: one for the camp, and one for friends and family. They're playing in big venues. So

### Columns

- backlisted
- band on the run
- celluloid atrocities
- come out and play
- delirious nomad
- dividing by zero
- elliott goes
- fish in a barrel
- first person
- listening station
- local scenery
- norse code
- photo gallery
- play. stop. rewind.
- portraits
- pretentious record
- store guy
- profile
- riyl
- sports desk
- take five
- talk to our lawyer
- the state i'm in
- three to see
- turning japanese
- you are here
- archives
- sxsw 2006

### Archives

- Cover Story
- Profile
- Columns
- Reviews



it's a bit different than the rock schools that they have in St. Louis already.

**What venues are the kids playing in?**

It's at Washington University, and we are in the Edison Theatre. That's a pretty big theatre.

**In terms of succeeding in the music industry, does your camp tend to focus more on major or independent labels?**

Obviously, we want to give the kids the best information available. We want them to know what it takes to succeed in today's music climate. We give them instructions on everything from publishing to A&R to how labels work to stage technique to songwriting—everything related to music and the business of music. It's not specifically related toward major labels. In fact, we offer a 52-page handbook on all of that. We certainly discuss major labels and what's involved with independent vs. major labels and how major labels work and how labels work in general, but it's definitely across the board. We're not about telling the kids what to do, but more of instructions on how things work.

**Are there any skill level requirements for the academy?**

We have a pretty good cross level from beginners to advanced. Some of the kids there are better than some of our counselors. *[Laughs]* We have some prodigies that come in, but it's across the board. We get as many beginners as advanced. But you know, there's always tricks to learn; there's always something to learn when it comes to music. Really, I think what's the best part about the camp with the kids is that for a lot of them, it's their first time working in that band environment. A lot of these kids have never played with other kids. A lot of them take lessons on their own, but have never been in that band setting. It's their first experience in a band, and it's an amazing first experience. It's the full experience in one week.

**Aside from the practical side of music, do you guys also teach kids about the performance side? Like, do you watch footage of Keith Moon?**

*[Laughs]* Not necessarily. We do have seminars on how good you can be onstage; I'm sure Keith Moon's name has come up in years past. We talk about style and stage presence, that's for sure.

**Last question: Pirates or ninjas?**

Pirates or ninjas? *[Laughs]* Arrrr. I'm a pirate fan.

For more information on Power Chord Academy, visit their Web site at [www.powerchordacademy.com](http://www.powerchordacademy.com).

Last Updated ( Monday, 01 May 2006 )

<      Next  
Prev      >

Back



