

Date: Dec 16, 2009; Section: Tropical Life; Page: 1E

BEST OF THE BLOGS

# Sour notes for Miami Music Fest

BY JORDAN LEVIN

[jlevin@MiamiHerald.com](mailto:jlevin@MiamiHerald.com)

Last week's inaugural Miami Music Festival had a lot of potential, but turned out to be one of those highly hyped but badly executed Miami events. There's still hope for the festival, which was modeled after the popular SXSW festival in Texas to promote the local music scene, to continue and improve in future years — but only if organizers listen to concerns and take a hard look at what they want to accomplish and how.

The festival's kickoff on Thursday night was badly attended, and some acts were poorly chosen. Some venues had such sound system problems that bands including popular local group Suenalo left without playing. Other artists, including Jose El Rey, didn't show up.

Things had improved by Saturday night: Betterquality acts (mostly those invited by sponsors, such as SESAC's showcase at Transit Lounge, rather than what often seemed to be the take-what-theycould-get festival selection) and much better turnout. One woman wrote that she was thrilled to discover a band she loved, hard rock act Saints on Fire — exactly what the musicians and the festival hope to accomplish.

The festival's chances seem slim, however, unless organizers deal with significant issues. Many local artists said they opted out because the festival was so disorganized or they felt they were being taken advantage of, and many significant folks on the local music scene felt disregarded.

Everyone I spoke with said the festival needs to be smaller and better focused: fewer venues, fewer and better chosen acts, better promotion.

But there are plenty of South Florida musicians and music-lovers who want an event like the Miami Music Festival to succeed. Some bands said they were thrilled they got a chance to play, and some audiences had a good time.

My guess is that most folks could get past the problems of the first year if things change significantly. Whether they will, or whether there'll be another festival, remains to be seen.

---



ALEXIA FODERE/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

CARIBBEAN BEAT: Dayo Bejide, a Trinidad & Tobago band, performs at the Miami Music Festival .



ALEXIA FODERE/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

POP TRIO: Fancy Me Yet's Natasha Jeanne performs at the Transit Lounge.

