

Hit the City

By HUNTER L. GORINSON

SpeakeasyDC Comes on Down to "The Showcase Showdown"

Local storytelling collective SpeakeasyDC has never been afraid to take on some sensitive topics -- the first generation immigrant experience, the pitfalls of coming out, and one's deepest personal fears among them. But after staging a tribute to human failings at their worst with the top-selling "Sin Show" at last year's Capital Fringe Festival, the Speakeasy crew has decided to bring a little levity back to the Fringe Fest stage and they've settled on an unlikely piece of inspiration -- "The Price is Right." Get ready to enter "The Showcase Showdown" -- Speakeasy's story-skewed adaptation of the games made famous by Bob Barker and thousands of play-at-home housewives nationwide.

"Last year was fun and funny, but it was heavy...This is like a palate cleanser, not for the audience, but for our own process -- something light, playful and game-y," said Speakeasy Director Amy Saidman. "The Price is Right' just sort of emerged as a great way to get to that."

Taking a cue from their source material, Saidman and her eight-strong cast -- featuring of a mix of Speakeasy regulars, workshop graduates and newcomers -- are making audience participation the centerpiece of their full-length production. Speakeasy's raconteurs will host eight games during the 90-minute production, including four drawing that'll be drawing on the infamous "Contestants' Row."

Instead of playing for cash, however, the volunteers selected will be

scoring points for guessing the true story in "Flip Flop" and the real ending in "Plenko" to name but two of Speakeasy's "Price is Right" reinventions. In all, it's a package that Saidman says "plays with the tone and kitsch" of America's longest running game show -- even if that all-expenses-paid Hawaiian vacation will have to wait.

"The Showcase Showdown" hits the stage at the US Navy Memorial for just four shows at 8 p.m. on July 9, 10, 15 and 16. Tickets are \$15. For information, visit SpeakeasyDC online or the Capital Fringe Festival homepage at www.capfringe.org.

701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW • www.speakeasydc.com

Pop-Up Art, PBR and Music for a Good Cause at U St.'s Affinity Lab

Pop-up art exhibitions -- temporary, one time use installations capable of being erected nearly anywhere -- are on the rise in metropolitan centers across the country. But while that concept may be growing in popularity, U St. "entrepreneurial space" Affinity Lab and the organizers behind next summer's Monument Music and Arts Festival have teamed with the DC arm of Chica-



Speaking truth to Barker: A "Price is Right" classic gets a Capital Fringe facelift care of SpeakeasyDC.



Pop up for a new kind of community activism and awareness on July 15 at Affinity Lab.

go-based non-profit Dream for Kids to take it to a new end -- charitable giving -- with the Pop-Up Festival @ U Street this July 15.

To be staged in Affinity Lab's "Virtual Space," the Pop-Up Festival will feature an art auction, free food, free beer provided by Pabst Blue Ribbon, and music from jazz-funk improv quintet One Big Woo, experimental indie rock polymath Matthew Hemerlein and Philippe Chetrit of DC DJ outfit Fatback -- best known for their monthly dance nights at LIV and the 9:30 Club.

According to Dreams for Kids Art Director Jackie Cantwell, up to 30 DC area artists will have their art up for sale with 20 percent of the proceeds going towards the charity's continued mission of "empower[ing] youth living in poverty and those with disabilities by uniting them with their peers, recognizing their abilities, and allowing their voices to be heard." Starting bids will range from below \$100 to over \$600 -- a myriad of price points that will make it easy to pick up new work by up-and-coming artists on the cheap.

"People [will be able] to walk away with great art at a fraction of what they would pay at a gallery or professional auction," said Affinity Lab manager and Monument co-organizer Joshua Phelps. "It's going to be a less intimidating way for people to come in and enjoy an art auction -- and less stuffy than what they may be used to."

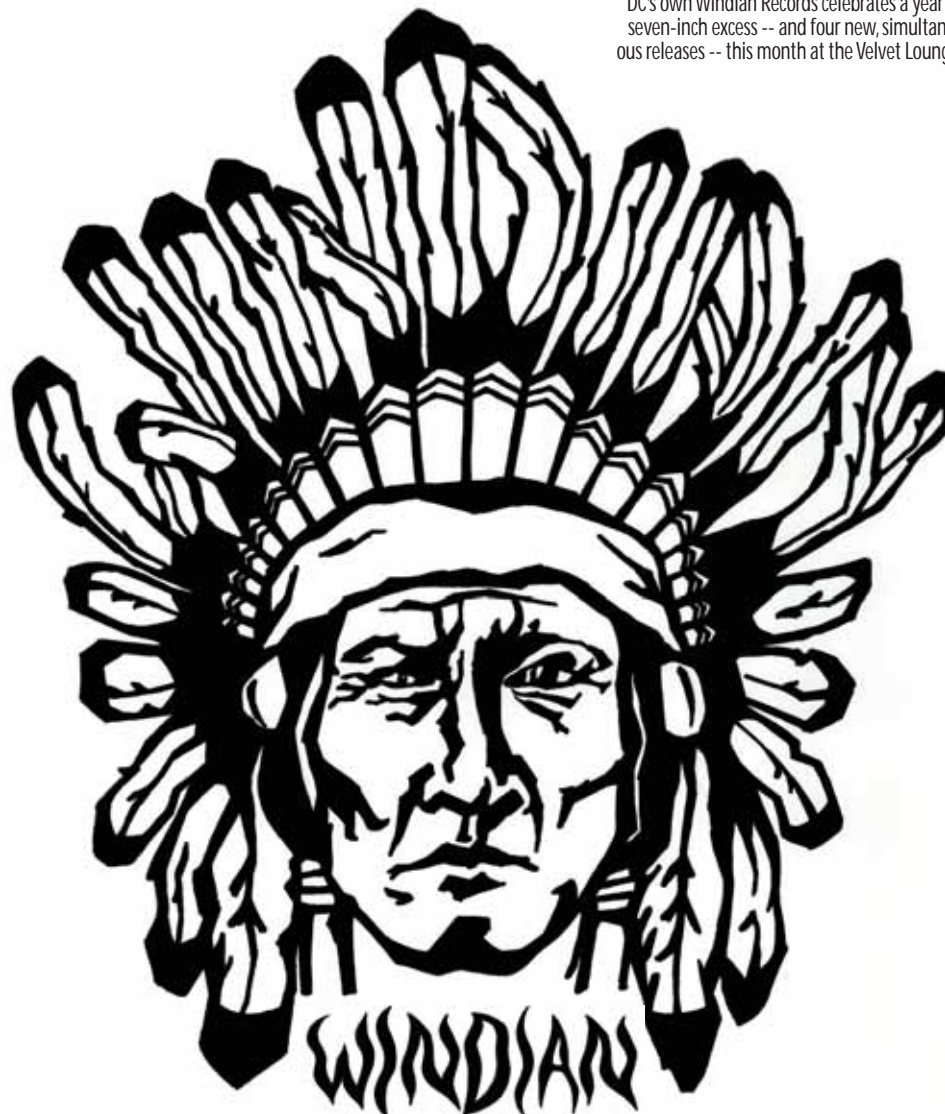
Just the second in the Monument's monthly sponsored non-profit fundraisers, the Pop-Up Festival @ U St. is an entirely free and unticketed event, although there will be a \$5 suggested donation at the door. Doors open at 6 PM.

920 U St. NW • www.affinitylab.com

Windian Records' Punk Rock Birthday Bash

Not one to pass on a party, Travis "Cobruh" Jackson, drummer of The Points -- the DC-based punk and roll trio once hailed by the New York Times for their "poor sound quality," yet "nearly perfect" delivery -- is celebrating the one year mark of his record label, Windian Records, with a suitably uncouth first anniversary soiree. Started as means to get a few unheard Points tracks onto wax 12 months back, the vinyl-only label has since spewed forth some of the best three-chord rock and roll from DC and beyond -- and many a Windian band present and future will be on hand to lay waste to U St.'s Velvet Lounge this July 30 and 31 in its dishonor.

Headlining the two-nights of drunk and roll are The Points and The Shirks with fellow DC bands New Rock Church of Fire, The Electrocutions, Social Problems, Maybe Baby and The Cheniers filling out the ranks, alongside Richmond's The Ladies, seasoned Left Coast scene vet Kerry Davis's one-woman noisemaker, Two



DC's own Windian Records celebrates a year of seven-inch excess -- and four new, simultaneous releases -- this month at the Velvet Lounge.

Tears, and a reunion of North Carolina's The Spinns.

"It's minimalist punk rock -- very, very uncomplicated rock and roll, bare bones stuff. Our artists definitely don't have any drum rolls or a lot of crazy guitar solos. It basic, fun party rock and roll -- the stuff we love," said Jackson of the line-up. All, he adds, are due for to get the Windian seven-inch treatment as the label rolls on in the coming months.

In the short term, however, there are dual reasons to celebrate. Windian is dropping four new singles on the day the show kicks off -- including a pair of unreleased recordings from near mythic punk progenitors Crushed Butler and Testors. All will be available for purchase, along with label-emblazoned t-shirts, beer cozies, record bags and other assorted swag. Two-day passes are available through the Windian website for \$16, while individual nights run \$10 a pop at door.

915 U St NW • windianrecords.blogspot.com. ♦