

Jul 21, 2003

Front Page

Main Stories

What's
Happening

Interview

Sections

Sounds

Shows

Flicks

Columns

e-Street Team

Job

Opportunities

Classifieds

Info Guide

Pubs & Clubs

Dining

Movies &
Theaters

Venues, Stadiums
& more

Sports/ Outdoors

Schools & Local
Info.

Contact Us

Archives



Sections: Shows



Photo by Estevan Oriol

The Transplants

by Daniel Q. Marek
April 09, 2003

**Transplants
opening for Foo Fighters
Dodge Theatre**

400 W. Washington Street, Phoenix, 602.379.7888

Monday, April 14, 7 p.m.

\$30

Sections:
Shows

[Steel Pulse](#)

[Asia Blonde](#)

[Euriska](#)

[Everclear](#)

[Hopesfall](#)

With side-projects being all the rage in rock today, it was only a matter of time before some of punk's greatest ventured out to blow the competition away. Tim Armstrong (Rancid) and Travis Barker's (Blink-182) latest, the Transplants, drives old-school punk to new dimensions by mixing in fresh elements borrowed from other genres.

From dub ska, hip-hop rhythms, Armstrong's signature gritty backing vocals and blues-styled guitar solos, to Barker's love of urban beats and stellar ability to keep the beat rolling and tight – the Transplants have blown out the wall of punk only to rebuild it bigger and better. College Times spoke to singer Rob Aston while on break in his LA apartment to see how the transformation from roadie (Aston was originally a roadie for Rancid) to front man has changed his world.

College Times: How did you originally meet Tim Armstrong?

Rob Aston: I started out as a Roadie for AFI then went on to work for Rancid. I guess it's still going on, because I'm working this summer for the Warped Tour. It's too much fun not to, you know? But I met Tim through AFI when I was working for them. We played a show together in Berkley and that's how I met him.

So how did the two of you become connected creatively?

We were just driving around one day and he just played me two songs with no vocals and he asked me if I could write lyrics to it. I gave it my best shot and he liked it – that's how it all started right there.

So you must have been a huge Rancid fan?

Oh yeah, that's what's cool to me, I get to work with Tim Armstrong and Travis Barker, make records, and put them out. I mean at the end of the

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day, that's what I have and that's what I'm really proud of.

So how did you pick who would do the guest appearances for the album?

Everyone that's on there are just people we know and friends. People like Brody (Armstrong) of the Distillers, Davey (Havok) from AFI, Eric (Ozenne) from the Nerve Agents, I mean everyone on there, we're fans of their work and we wanted to steal them and put them on our record.

With everyone still having so many prior commitments, is it going to be hard to keep playing shows and working on new material?

That's the only thing that's really hard. We're going out next month on tour, but during that time we're going to be writing and recording a new record. Because everyone is so busy with other projects, we have to take what time we have together and make the most of it you know? So we're gonna' try to finish another record by the end of the year.



Was there a big transformation for you switching from roadie to front man?

Nothing has really changed. It is what it is... I'm thankful that I got to see a bunch of stuff that goes on beforehand as a Roadie. I kinda know what to avoid, business wise and whatnot you know, I'm glad to have that because I would imagine that someone that was thrown into it without that knowledge - that would be damaging. As far as everything else, nothing is different... I mean, I'm still nobody. I never really put consideration into being into a band or doing whatever. So this is just all fun and a bonus to me you know. I was just happy being a roadie, but this, this is the shit and I wouldn't trade it for nothin'. I just want to have fun with it while we can and see how well we can do it.

