

# A bite-sized RAMfest

 By [Jana van Heerden](#)

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The biggest news on the festival calendar is usually the announcement of the international acts for RAMfest. This year the change of set-up was the hot topic. The news that the three-day festival had been slashed down to a single day was greeted with abject horror in Cape Town, where it had always been a three-day event, although Bloemfontein and Port Elizabeth were thrilled to be invited to the party alongside Durban and Joburg. Then the announcement of the United Nations of international line-ups brought the focus right back to the music.

There was heavy metal from Sweden (In Flames), psychedelic trance from Israel (Infected Mushroom), drum and bass from Belgium (Netsky) and American electronic pop rock (Awolnation). Now people were excited again.

The Ostrich Farm venue outside Cape Town had suffered some bad press this summer due to the disastrous Paul van Dyk event. A stray poster of that festival was the only thing left to remind me of it. By comparison, RAMfest was cooking - in more ways than one.

## Spontaneous Shit Happens

The shortage of shade at the stages was the only "fail" in the overall organisation of this event. In the heat of the day Newton Knife Gang played to a thin crowd in the early stages of heatstroke. Nonetheless, the boys from Joburg set the standard for the day with their high energy levels. Fokofpolisiekar once again rocked out, complete with Johnny de Ridder who was absent at the RAMfest gigs the previous weekend. And Taxi Violence played a few new tracks off their "Party Album", but the treffer of their set was Shit Happens, a spontaneous song to keep the crowd entertained while a guitar was fixed.



It was very strange to see these bands in the glare of sunlight. Somehow the night is an important extra member of any "heavy" band. Luckily, The Narrow got a slightly darker time slot. Call me literal, but there is something special about seeing The Narrow perform Lonely Sunday Morning live on a Sunday.

## Safety before badass

I tried to make a point of seeing all the international acts, but got sidetracked by the locals. We waited around for In Flames, but when it was announced that it would be another 10 minutes due to a safety check we headed for the electro stage. "How badass is a metal band that needs a 10 minute safety check?" asked a guy who had been drinking since 9am. Pithy question I thought, 'til he spilt half his drink on my Plus One.

Over at the electro stage Haezer's killer set made us forget that we were actually just biding time for the next act on the main stage. Just like the Mercury tent at RAMfest 5, I was sucked in by the pretty lights and the tight drum and bass.

In its bite-sized format RAMfest seems more polished and holds fewer surprises, but it wasn't enough. The rest of the country might be happy with a day, and I think it's wonderful that Bloem and PE got in on the action, but in Cape Town we need a weekend. A four-day festival would be even better \*nudge nudge\*.



## Yea

- \* 99.9 percent of the line-up
- \* The general organisation
- \* The remote wide-angle camera giving the crowd a surreal view of the performers and themselves on the big screen
- \* The decor at the electro stage, the eyes coming out of the flowers were quite spectacular
- \*The long bar with what seemed to be a million bartenders scurrying behind it

## Nay

- \* The lack of shade at the stages
- \* R200 for the official RAMfest shirt
- \* Very few "gypsy" performers, such as fire dancers

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Photography by Michael Ellis

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