

# It's a grrrl thing

Female quota high enough?  
Good, you'll be welcome to get involved with Ladyfest Brighton, says **Russell Warrior**.

## LADYFEST BRIGHTON

19-23 October

[www.ladyfestbrighton.co.uk](http://www.ladyfestbrighton.co.uk)

## WHAT IS IT?

THE FIRST Ladyfest was held in Olympia, Wa., U.S.A. The likes of Bratmobile, Cat Power, Holly Golightly, Sleater-Kinney and The Gossip played. The festival aimed to promote women musicians, artists, writers and film makers and provoke debate on feminist and queer politics. You didn't have to be gay, or even female to be involved but you definitely had to be a feminist of some sort and believe you were reclaiming culture from mainstream corporate society. The bands kicked ass too.

Since Olympia (sort of the capital of the US underground 'indie' scene and 'riot grrrl') there has been a Ladyfest in almost every city on earth from Berlin to Singapore to Brisbane. As important as the event itself is the planning. It's like an alternative W.I. Ladyfest is organised by volunteers who fundraise in advance to finance the event by putting on gigs and selling cakes. Everyone works or plays for free and the profits go to community charities. There are treasurers, facilitators and committees. On the Ladyfest Brighton website you can read the minutes of their meetings and find gems like:

"Deerhoof would be touring at the time.  
Should they play Ladyfest?  
Discussion over whether their female quota was high enough."



## WHAT HAPPENED IN BRIGHTON?

Last month was Brighton's turn to host a Ladyfest with 4 days of bands, DJs, and film and art exhibitions all over town.

NC went to press before Brighton's Electrelane and the amazing Afrirampo from Japan played at The Sallis Benney on the Saturday. And also before Spider and The Webs, with ex Bikini-Kill

Tobi Vail and Dub Narcotic's Chris Sutton, headlined an all-dayer of local and international talent at The Engine Rooms on the Sunday.

But the highlight for many was going to be the UK debut of Sweden's Jenny Wilson who played on Friday at 'The Do' (Core Club), a favourite amongst Ladyfest organisers too.

Artist and member of the Ladyfest team, Laura Guy: "It was



Electrelane

## LADYFEST WEB LINKS

[www.ladyfestbrighton.co.uk](http://www.ladyfestbrighton.co.uk)

[www.thresholdwomen.org.uk](http://www.thresholdwomen.org.uk)

[www.rawa.org](http://www.rawa.org)

[www.truthaboutrape.co.uk](http://www.truthaboutrape.co.uk)

[www.partylinedc.com](http://www.partylinedc.com)

[www.jennywilson.net](http://www.jennywilson.net)

[www.electrelane.com](http://www.electrelane.com)

[www.afrirampo.com](http://www.afrirampo.com)

difficult to decide who was going to do the door while Jenny was on. She was amazing. She was too tall to stand on the stage as the ceiling was too low. She played with her sister and we just didn't want her to stop."

Jenny Wilson sang on the cult hit *You Take My Breath Away* by electro-pop band The Knife. Jenny's album, *Love and Youth*

(out 2006), has brilliant wistful pop, like on *Let My Shoes Do The Walking*, and gentle-voiced songs.

A very busy night tested the The Core Club's air-conditioning with the likes of Partyline and the infectious energy of Alison Wolfe (ex-Bratmobile and Hawney Troof) who danced like music had just been invented.

Local singer-songwriter Lianne Hall kicked off the arts exhibition on Thursday at St Andrews Church and discussion panels, Q&A's and films were held at the The Marlborough Theatre throughout the festival.

## WHAT WAS THE POINT?

Mainly to give money to Brighton Refuge, Truth About Rape, RAWA (Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan) and Threshold a mental health charity. All good.

It's all good for the organisers too. When they catch up on their sleep they'll be able to appreciate what an amazing thing it is to connect with people from all over the world and get them all partying and talking. It'll stay with them forever.

Ladyfest B's main aim was to showcase female talent across the arts and provide a safe place for a group of people to listen to the music they like without boring boy DJs and dickheads on the dancefloor. Job done, I couldn't make it.