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Local music

In "Out," Will Spitz gets a charge out of Thurston Moore, Christine Southworth, and the Museum of Science's Van de Graaff generator, and Chris Rucker has the latest on the Receiving End of Sirens, Slapshot, Bane, and local bands who're playing Coachella. Plus this week's Top 10 and "Club Shot."

Going electric

Last Saturday night at MassArt's Flower Auditorium, Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore knelt in front of two small Peavey amps, fiddled with the settings of a gaggle of effects pedals arranged before him, and manipulated the feedback from his electric and acoustic guitars. In his solo "noise" incantation, he was toying with physics: the amps emitted multiple tonal layers of feedback that cross-crossed and oscillated, producing snatches of odd harmony. The tone and the timbre could change with Moore's slightest movement, becoming mesmerizing and strangely comforting, if a little tedious.

Harnessing the acoustic possibilities of electrically amplified sound has become a standard practice in rock and roll — even Moore's avant-garde parlor tricks are no longer as startling as they might have been 20 years ago. But the night before Moore's gig, composer Christine Southworth staged a performance that was truly electrifying: during the world premiere of her hour-long composition *Zap!* at the Museum of Science, she stood in a metal cage amid a storm of electricity coursing from the museum's 40-foot-tall Van de Graaff generator. Ever since Bob Dylan, "going electric" has had many connotations, but this was something different: though *Zap!* utilized the talents of a flutist, two keyboardists, a cellist, a guitarist, a bassist, a drummer, a vocalist, a double-bello-shaped robotic xylophone, sound engineers, and computer programmers, the centerpiece of Southworth's performance was electricity itself, as millions of volts buzzed, fizzled, and sparked in deafening cracks that punctuated her music.

Southworth has electronic music in her blood: her father, Bill, was one of the inventors of MIDI, the language that allows computers to speak to instruments. And the microchip hasn't

taken far from the process. Southworth, an MIT grad, is creating computer music as a composition at Brown, and Leila Hasan, a doctoral engineer at MIT, approaches the Museum of Science about performance by the pair's Ensemble Robot. "While there," Southworth explains, "I started talking with the who works in IT at the M

OUT by Will Spitz

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sewers gathered in said large, dimly lit room with at one end and two levels wrapping around a complex of a 1950s science-fiction fact that looked as if it of an eight-foot-tall Tesla flame-belching column an eerie blue glow. The musicians and a conductor crammed onto a small balcony, overlooking Southworth also provided vocals in Hasan oversaw the components from the floor. Two monitors provided a grainy view of the stage. It was the generator, which was originally housed at world's largest an-insulated Van de Graaff. Southworth's first time a Van de Graaff employed as a musical in the evening seemed to her appeal: the crowd included children with their parents as college students and with mohawks. Thurston want to watch his back.

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