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Meredith 2008: Fun In The Sun

Mudslides, torrential rain and gumboots. This wasn't a Meredith for the faint of heart writes **DARREN LEVIN**. Photography by **KRISTY MILLIKEN**.

Part *Hearts of Darkness*, part disaster flick, this wasn't a Meredith for the faint of heart. Two-and-a-half days of unrelenting downpour made 2004's biblical thunderstorm look like a comparative cakewalk.

Meredith's Supernatural Amphitheatre, about 90 kilometres west of Melbourne, was awash (pun intended) with fluoro ponchos and gumboots. But only for those who were lucky enough to get them.

Early weather reports – about 50mm of rain and lashing winds on Friday – saw Bunnings in Richmond sell out of most sizes by 3pm. The unlucky ones had to navigate mudslides with little more than thongs and Chuck's.

“You know, I prayed for perfect Meredith weather and that's just what we got,” said a barefoot hippy straggler named “Morph” who wandered in and out of shelters reading auras.

“I've been coming here for seven years now and I don't remember a Meredith where it rained for two days straight. At least you can say you'll always remember this one.”

It may have been the acid and a flask of pineapple and gin talking, but it was hard to disagree with his sentiment. Like the extreme heat of 2006 and the aforementioned thunderstorms in 2004, which was capped off by an unforgettable performance by the Dirty Three, this was a Meredith to remember.

Save for their three “hits”, headliners MGMT from Brooklyn were overrated buzz kill, so it was left to the so-called lesser names to provide the weekend's bright spots. Local heroes Tame Impala, Mountains in the Sky and Muscles impressed, while international acts including Ten East, Man Man and Saul Williams were other highlights.

When the sun finally showed its face, peaking through the clouds on an ordinarily dreary Sunday morning, it was greeted by a warm round of applause.



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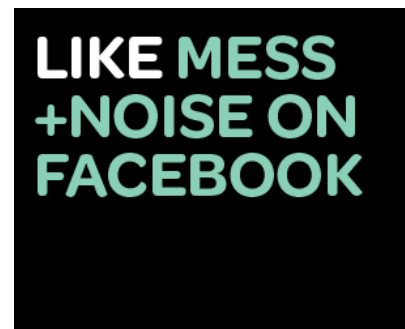
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- Published on Sunday, December 14 2008 by **Darren Levin**.

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