

Dispatch Rocks the Garden to Save Zimbabwe

 Written by **Matthew Chao**

 Tag it: 

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Dispatch: Zimbabwe

July 13-15, 2007

Madison Square Garden

 Two Pennsylvania Plaza
 (32nd St. & 8th Ave.)

madisonsquaregarden.com
myspace.com/dispatch
dispatchmusic.com
eliasfund.org
artingeneral.org

In the early '90s, three college students, Chad Urmston, Brad Corrigan, and Pete Heimbold, formed an indie band called Dispatch, that took advantage of Napster's free service to distribute themselves over the internet. The band went on to become an underground sensation--and then, much to the chagrin of their obsessive fans, they announced their plans to break-up in late 2002.

When Dispatch started performing they built a following by appealing to the indie audience's eclectic tastes. The band intentionally blended genres (ska, folk, punk etc.) and has remained independent of major label support to avoid being pigeonholed; that way audiences could discover what they liked about the band on their own terms. The band's success became emblematic of the integrity implied by staying independent.

The trio played its last concert in the Hatch Shell in Boston on July 31st, 2004. The Last Dispatch, as the concert was commonly referred to, was a landmark event in independent music history. With a turnout of over 30,000 people, this free concert had fans flocking from places as far away as Australia to attend what was then believed to be Urmston's, Corrigan's and Heimbold's last concert together as Dispatch.

What had made the band such a powerful entity was not only the crossing of genres musically, but in the messages they sang through their lyrics as well. "Elias," one of their more popular songs, is about a Zimbabwean living in Sector 17, one of the most heavily AIDs/HIV infected areas in the country. From the experience of meeting this man, the band created multiple non-profit organizations, such as the Elias Fund, an education-based organization working to provide opportunities



(From left to right) Chad Urmston, Pete Heimbold, Brad Corrigan



All Points Bulletin album cover



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On January 5th of this year, Dispatch suddenly announced a benefit concert to be held on Saturday, July 14th at Madison Square Garden. Tickets for "Dispatch: Zimbabwe" were made available through Ticketmaster on January 10th, and tickets sold out within the first half hour of the MySpace presale.

Dispatch quickly booked another concert for Friday July 13th. Within 24 hours, again, tickets for both shows were sold out. After further deliberation, a third show was booked for Sunday July 15th. Proceeds for this three-day event will go directly to charities that work to fight disease, famine and social injustice in Zimbabwe.

The Elias Fund has made plans to present "From Zimbabwe with Love," On Saturday July 14th, from 1-4 pm, a showcase featuring artwork, photography and music from the country. The event, meant to raise money in addition to the concert, will take place at Art in General, located at 79 Walker Street, New York, NY. Tickets are \$20 at the door.

Dispatch was about music, nothing beyond that, never money. Proving this over and over by turning down record offers. In addition to that, being true to their nature, the band has encouraged the use of personal recorders and cameras in their upcoming Zimbabwe concert.

Dispatch has not made any announcement about whether or not the band will reform for any performances beyond this concert. Tickets are currently sold out over TicketMaster, but live recordings are planned on being released after the concert ends.



Last Dispatch movie poster

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