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## Glastonbury dream for rock man Tom

03 May 2007

It's probably every teenagers dream to take to the stage at one of Britain's biggest music festivals and play in front of thousands of adoring fans.

But for Tom Ralphs, from Attleborough, that daunting and exciting opportunity is a firm reality after he won the chance to play at this summer's sold-out Glastonbury Festival.

The 18-year-old now faces rubbing shoulders backstage with hit groups the Artie Monkeys, the Who and the Chemical Brothers as he prepares to play to a crowd of 5,000 music fans at the festival's Left Field stage on Sunday, June 24.

And to make the occasion even more challenging for Tom he will only meet his fellow band members for the first time just three days before he is due to show off his skills as a rhythm guitarist and song writer.

However Tom and his new found band mates, who have to write and perform their own protest song for the festival, will be given handy stage tips beforehand from veteran agit-pop singer Billy Bragg and The Specials' Jerry Dammers.

Tom and the other four band members are appearing at the three-day festival after they separately impressed judges at the National Foundation for Youth Music's Build a Band competition finals which were held in London at the weekend.

Now Tom, who studies music at Wymondham College and plays in his band the Chemical Cocktail, is looking forward to taking his parents to the festival so they can enjoy the famous mud encrusted campsite and inevitable torrential rain.

He said: "It is just going to be phenomenal to play at Glastonbury. Everybody seems really bowled over about it because it is such a huge thing for a boy from a quiet Norfolk town to be taking part in.

"I have never been to the Glastonbury Festival before but I have heard so much about it, especially how long the queues are for the toilets.

"My parents should enjoy wading through all the mud as they make their way from our camp site to see us on stage."

So far the largest crowd that the self-confessed punk fan has played in front of was several hundred youngsters at Bury St Edmunds' Corn Exchange last year.

Tom, who is inspired by the Clash and Green Day, said: "I think we will be fine on the night as all the people who won the competition seem to be musicians of the highest calibre."

Billy Bragg, describing how he would help Tom and the others, said: "We want them to choose the topics and come up with the imagery.

"Then we'll step in with some advice and guidance because it's a big leap getting up on stage at a festival."

Tom and his band will be appearing in the Left Field tent the same night as Billy Bragg and Get Cape. Wear Cape. Fly.

The Glastonbury Festival was not held last year but 153,000 people braved the event's mud filled campsite and packed arena in 2005.

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