

Show

Her Motley dream

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history.com, after which the top 30 bands will be selected to move on to the regional evaluation and be judged by a panel of industry experts.

The field will be narrowed to six finalists, who will travel to Los Angeles in November to perform for Motley Crue.

The winning independent band of this talent competition – organised by Motley Crue and US music equipment retailer Guitar Center – will also pocket US\$25,000 (\$35,000) cash, management from 10th Street Entertainment and a recording deal from Eleven Seven Music.

Elsa – who is of Javanese descent and is Soul Distraction's band leader and main songwriter – is on a mission to show the world that Singaporean women can rock.

Rocker girl from S'pore

After all, the last time she checked, she is the only Asian female vocalist in the contest so far.

And she's hoping her countrymen will support her by casting online votes for Soul Distraction.

She told The New Paper over the phone from her home in the suburbs of Vancouver: "Rock music is one genre that Singaporeans are not yet recognised for internationally.

"The unique thing about us is our backstory – that we found our vocalist over the Internet and she's from Singapore! Also, our sound is totally different. What I have to offer are Indonesian influences and melodies that don't sound anything like the typical American or Brit songs."

Elsa – who has been a US permanent resident since September last year – claims she gets bombarded with questions from her band's underground following on where she's from and how come she speaks English so well at all her shows.

The self-confessed "tomboy that no guy dares to bully" said with a laugh: "If a woman can rock, people are already amazed. But if an English-speaking Asian woman from a small island can rock, people are totally shocked."

When three of Soul Distraction's original members quit last year, they were replaced by new guitarist/keyboardist Perry Witt and drummer Don Welin, who are in their 30s.

The band has self-released two albums – which received substantial airplay on college radio stations. They were also self-financed to the tune of \$5,000, as it is not signed to any record label.

But even if Soul Distraction doesn't win the Motley Crue contest, it is hoping to reach out to new fans and gain mainstream recogni-

tion using this platform.

Also, apart from the accompanying exposure, Elsa joined the contest because Motley Crue – which has sold over 80 million albums worldwide – is her favourite rock band of all time.

She gushed: "They were so successful in the '80s but ended up being related to bad things and drug problems. But they went to rehab and are still around. Their story inspires me and Marty a lot."

Coincidentally, about a month ago – at the tail-end of Soul Distraction's five-month Spring/Summer West Coast 2008 tour which took the band to clubs and other performance venues in Montana, Oregon, Nevada, California and Utah – Elsa revealed she auditioned for the new season of American Idol in Utah upon friends' prompting.

She didn't get past the first round, but insists the panel of producers really liked her "unique" voice. She claimed that she wasn't what they were looking for this year.

As she was making the 12-hour drive home from Utah, she heard about the Motley Crue competition over the radio.

She recalled: "Immediately, Marty and I were like, 'Oh my god, we have to join this!'"

"I was really happy to be rejected from American Idol because the Motley Crue competition is more important than being the American Idol. It's a once-in-a-lifetime thing, whereas I can always try for American Idol again, which is what the producers told me to do next year."

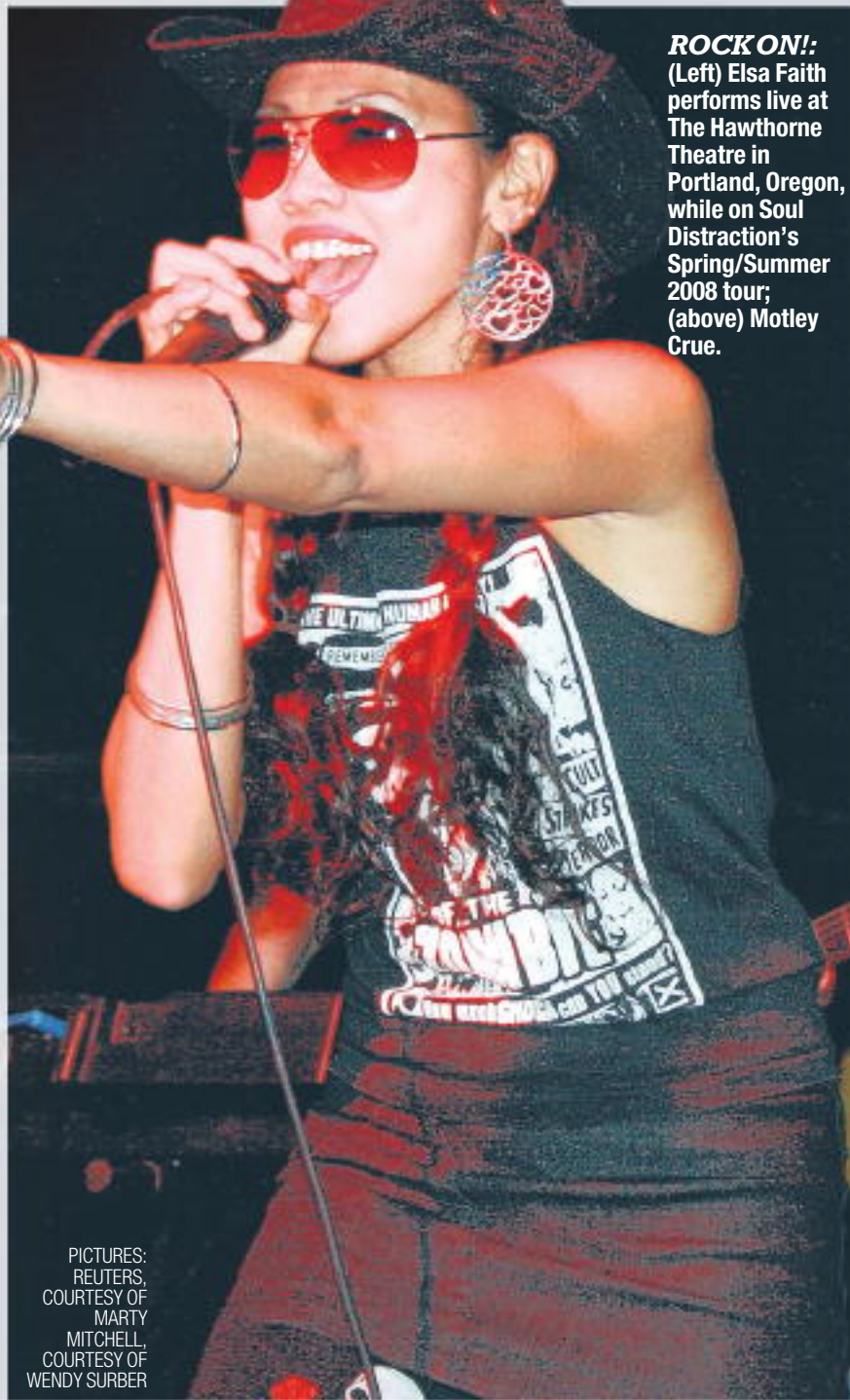
Ever since holding her second wedding ceremony in Singapore last September, Elsa – who studied at Pasir Ris Secondary School and holds a marketing certificate from a private school – hasn't been back to her family home in Tampines.

Luckily, her parents and four siblings are "proud and happy" that she's chasing her dream and have encouraged her to push forward.

Elsa said: "I chose Soul Distraction because there are greater opportunities in America and I knew it could move me towards the future, instead of hanging around (in Singapore) doing nothing.

"It's been a blessing for me to meet both my dream band – and man.

"It inspires me to work harder and make more money, so that I can save up enough to visit (my family) next year."



ROCK ON!: (Left) Elsa Faith performs live at The Hawthorne Theatre in Portland, Oregon, while on Soul Distraction's Spring/Summer 2008 tour; (above) Motley Crue.

PICTURES: REUTERS, COURTESY OF MARTY MITCHELL, COURTESY OF WENDY SURBER



POST-WOMAN

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