

Only the mud was like last time as Woodstock '94 plays to Generation X

INDEPENDENT

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Where have all the flowers gone? Woodstock festival-goers cavort in the mud to the strains of Del Amitri yesterday./Photograph by Charles Arbogast.

All mobile phones and panic attacks

RISING above the mud and moving with the music, 200,000 fans recaptured the Woodstock spirit of 25 years ago in upstate New York yesterday.

Alleged profiteering led to the \$30 million, three-day Woodstock '94 festival being dubbed 'Greedstock' and heavy security has earned it the label of 'Woodstalg'. But, as the anniversary festival got under way in Saugerties, the crowd

camped out on an open farm field seemed hellbent on having a good time.

People played in the mud and went topless, as they did a quarter of a century ago. But there were reminders that this was the Nineties, not the Sixties: one naked man held a cellular phone. Pizzas sold for \$11. The official programme cost \$16.

Drugs and alcohol were officially banned — though marijuana did seem to be toler-

ated. The psychiatric unit of the festival field hospital reported that its main problem was panic attacks caused by too much caffeine, too little sleep and too many people.

Most of the crowd were teenagers and people in their twenties, with a scattering of veterans of the original festival. They lounged on the grass, swayed to the music, or practised a vigorous form of contact dancing known as moshing. A dozen or so shed

their clothes but most stuck with T-shirts and shorts.

'This is our Woodstock. This is our music,' said Johanna Miller of Washington, DC. 'What Woodstock was in 1969, this rave is for us. This is technology, the 1990s. The music may not be about peace and love. It doesn't have a political message. But it's ours.'

Another festival at the site of the original Woodstock, Max Yasgur's farm in Bethel,

was cancelled two weeks ago, but thousands of hippies still turned up and staged an instant festival of their own. 'We're going to Bethel — we heard there's free pot and everything,' said one 18-year-old on her way there with a vanload of friends.

'We're here because this isn't organised at all,' said a Californian as she danced at Bethel. 'This is free. This is not advertised on MTV.' Revival too far? page 8