
AND IF ONLY ONE MORE...



THE STORY OF THE DETROIT AREA HALL SHOW MUSIC SCENE

THE WEAKEND / FORMERLIFESAKE / CHIODOS
HOME TEAM / DESIGNED BY YOU / RESCUE
BEFORE I GO / BOTTOMED OUT / JUST ASK
ASUNDIAL / MYCOMPLEX / ALUCARD / ETC.

6PM DOORS, YOUR LOCAL HALL, NO BOOZE, NO FIGHTS.



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It's a cold night at the Magic Stick in the city of Detroit, MI. The music scene that my friends and I all grew up in, despite all of our differences, was ending at this one show. It was time to make a permanent history. I have been on a mission to create a 180 page book documenting the scene with interviews and images.

This process wouldn't be complete without describing how I learned slowly through trial and error the process of making my own magazines based on BMX bike riding starting in the 5th grade in 1998 called *Local BMX Magazine*. As I started going to "hall shows" (concerts put on at VFW-type halls) at the beginning of high school the focus of the zine changed from strictly BMX to BMX and music so I changed the title to *Parking Block Zine*. With each issue I would learn more about design, writing and generally putting together a publication. For the first part of my thesis work I put together an issue of that zine and that led up to the Book I would create.

It had been a few years since I had worked on a zine, and quickly I started running into the problems that I had forgotten about when I was making them throughout my grade school years. I often hit snags because people often get lazy and forget about these types of projects unless they are directly involved. Thus staying on top of those people would become a key issue throughout the process of the zine and book.

Being one of the kids that came from the scenes DIY roots that watched it transition away from that and eventually fail, I decided to create a book about the scene that featured images and interviews. Having a bit of the Do-It-Yourself ethic left in me I figured if I didn't get it done, no one would. I should give a background though of the Hall



Above:
Parkingblockzine 7 cover

Show music scene itself and what changed.

For a younger kid who loves music, being in a band is nearly always a fantasy. It isn't easy to gather people together of like minds to create a project that everyone syncs perfectly on. It takes a lot of work to set up a concert. It takes a lot of effort to own a venue. A music scene can only function at its full potential when all of these things work together and are appreciated and supported by a fan base.

In Metro Detroit in the late-1990's a set of bands and friends started to work in this way. There was the right mix of bands, motivated people, and available venues. In my book there are icons of gear symbols spread throughout the book. These gears are inserted to represent the way which different people worked together to make a thing larger than any one person could handle. They also represent how when you don't replace gears that left with ones that fit, it can throw everything off. This probably was one of the bigger factors that would eventually lead to the end of the Hall Show scene. Younger kids coming into the scene would see the bands like *Chiodos* or *The Audition* playing in front of thousands of people every night and see the path to popularity and power instead of fun and experimentation.

It became harder to book a hall as time went on. Certain halls were perpetual favorites, like the Lions Club at 15 Mile and Utica Rd. in Frazer, MI (known as "15 and Utica"), and the American Legion north of 9 Mile on Mound Rd. in Warren, MI (known as "9 and Mound), but even those would shut their doors to the scene eventually. It seemed there would generally be a few good shows at a hall, and then there would be one extremely large show with

Below:
Gear logo from book



either a.) overcrowding b.) fights, or c.) some other form of drama like underage drinking in the parking lot.

As a hall show is a do-it-yourself venture, the shows were extremely understaffed to deal with 300-500 teenage kids running amuck in a venue. The hall would usually have 1 or 2 staff members there working. Some would later hire security to calm the place down. Most places would simply deny kids saying they were going to have a concert, or as I found in interviewing Brandon McConney, raise the price until they were simply priced out of range for a high school or just out of school kid. "9 and Mound" was up to \$900 to rent for a night. Throwing a show you had to have a band that drew a ton of paying people just to break even for the night. When working on the book, I initially intended to get an interview from one of the halls, focusing in on the 15 and Utica Lions Club. It didn't pan out, as they according to friends "won't even talk to you if you as much mention the word concert."

A void was left at the top as popular bands moved on and there was a clamoring for position. Around this time My Space Café opened. It was transition from an era where everyone had to work together to make a single show happen, to an era of show saturation from having a multitude of permanent venues. The model of a full time venue works at places like Static Age where Chris Zomerfeild loves the music, comes from a background in Hardcore and understands what helps and hurts a scene from years of involvement as a regular show attendee and band member. Unfortunately for a lot of people who latched on to the other venues that were more in it for money, they were out of luck when the places slowly closed down and there became nowhere to have a show. There just wasn't a market for as many venues as opened to have a show nearly every night.

In the early 2000's there was a gradual change in underground music as "emo" took over (it is debatable what, if anything this grouping of bands had to do with the original style that the term "emo" was coined from but that's for another time and place) Phasing out were the underpinnings of a Punk Rock ideal that included a complete do-it-yourself (DIY) culture. Everything was by the kids and for the kids. No outside help from major corporations or businesses was involved. Replacing it was a "me first" attitude of kids that expected things to be handed to them on a golden platter. The party aspect was also building up in a negative manner. According to Dave Daniele from *Asundial* in an interview in the book:

...and a lot of the kids just started bands to find girls and that sort of deal and it kinda led to this bullshit rockstar kind of persona that was portrayed by a lot of other 'hardcore' bands like *Chiodos* or that sort of thing and it really lead to the big downward spiral of drugs and alcohol with these young kids and just getting really out of control. It just became not any fun anymore.

This trickled down to the local scene as bands started having less to do with Punk idealism and slowly the DIY distros and bookstores like Idle Kids started to disappear and bands slowly stopped doing email and regular mail lists for Myspace bulletins. Kids seemed to want everything handed to them on a platter. The sense of experimentation was replaced with wanting to 'make it

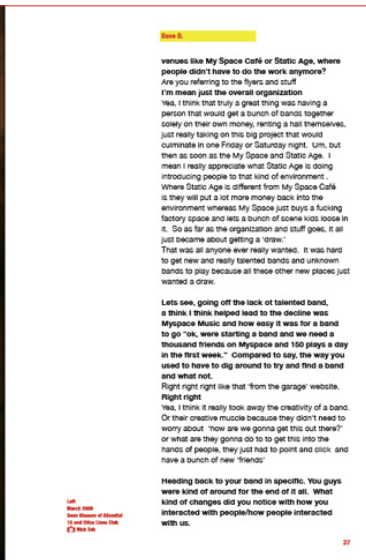
big.’ Slowly it ate itself up to the point where a local show could never draw much of a crowd. Kids lost interest in local bands and wanted to support more touring bands if they went to shows at all. All is not lost though, with bands like *Fireworks* and *The Swellers* there is a new hope on the horizon.

As I started to create this book there was a great interest in what I was doing. I told some of my close friends from home in the Utica area about the project and they were quite excited about the idea. I then made some flyers and took them to the last *Fordirelifescape/The Weekend* show at the Magic Stick. The night was amazing

and people were very open to the project. I quite frankly could have used way more time on the book, but because of the tight deadlines, I was forced to keep people focused on sending me their images and information.

As emails started coming in, I noticed there was an interesting trend. The people who were the first to hop on board and pledge their support of the project were the same scene leaders that made everything happen when the scene was thriving years ago. It was interesting phenomena that actually shed some light into why things died off when a leadership vacuum occurred. As

Below:
spreads from my book



their generation of show-going kids grew up and moved on or away, the next group was not quite as motivated to contribute to the wellbeing of the scene and were also a bit lazier when it came to contributing.

In conclusion, the perfect storm of declining interest, and increasing age, cost, and variety caused the decline of a unified scene. My book hopefully will work as a time capsule for those involved to look back at and show their families many years in the future “this is what I did when I was young.” Eventually the trends will swing back around as they always do, hopefully back to an open environment that encourages kids to start a zine or a band or book their own show in a rented hall.