



Minneapolis Music History, 1850–2000: A Context

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1. Introduction

This study addresses an enormous and important subject, Minneapolis music from 1850 to 2000. Chapter 4, which provides a historical overview, cannot be definitive given the project's vast scope, but it serves as a framework for analyzing this multifaceted topic. The chapter has four roughly chronological sections. Subsections within each section provide an overview of a musical genre. In-depth discussions of specific genres, when available, are included in the appendix. Chapter 5 focuses on property types, which are often generic, accommodating many types of music simultaneously or sequentially. Chapter 6 is a case study analyzing the Cedar-Riverside/West Bank area, which has a concentration of venues that have served as a melting pot for an array of genres. Finally, the appendices, in addition to offering more detailed information on specific genres, contain more detailed information on specific properties and lists of properties associated with Minneapolis music that have been identified through research. Some of these properties survive; many have been lost. By raising awareness of the city's great musical legacy, this study hopes to raise awareness of significant properties that hosted this legacy to encourage their preservation.

This report does not attempt to document every Minneapolis musician or musical group. Such an endeavor would be impractical and would not align with the scope of the project. Specific musicians and musical groups that are mentioned have had the most significant cultural impact and/or are representative of the musical genre or era in question. Further, although focused specifically on Minneapolis, the report does not attempt to draw a firm line between Minneapolis-based music groups and groups from the broader Twin Cities area. Many musical groups featured members from both Minneapolis and surrounding areas, and, as the largest city in the region, Minneapolis featured the greatest concentration of venues where these groups performed and recorded, contributing to groups identified as Minneapolis-based.

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2. Study Boundaries

Although many aspects of music are not contained by geographical limits, this study focuses on the history of music within the boundaries of the city of Minneapolis.

3. Methodology

The scope of the project was too extensive to address by a standard approach given time and budget constraints. The following report is a collaboration by a group interested in, and knowledgeable about, various aspects of music history. While it was not possible to complete a comprehensive literature review for the city's music history over the course of 150 years, individual authors conducted extensive research related to specific subjects. Likewise, the reconnaissance survey could not delve deeply into the background of buildings and sites; instead, it highlights properties of interest for further study. Both the context and the survey are first steps in consolidating existing information about a rich aspect of the city's history that has often been overlooked by preservationists.

4. Historical Context

Chronology is a useful framework for understanding the evolution of a specific musical genre and for comparing characteristics of various genres over time. The context narrative is organized into four sequential sections highlighting specific musical styles while acknowledging much overlap between and within the sections and styles. “Deep Roots” introduces Native American traditions predating European American settlement that continue to evolve over time. “The Curtain Rises on Minneapolis” covers the last half of the nineteenth century when Minneapolis emerged from the western frontier to become an urban center with cultural institutions and entertainment venues. “Breaking Traditions in the Twentieth Century” discusses musical inspiration that came upriver from New Orleans, spawned jazz, and inspired the Big Band era. Finally, “A New Scene” covers the last half of the twentieth century when everything from folk to funk found an eager audience and Minneapolis emerged as a musical mecca.

a. Deep Roots: Native American Traditions

Before European American settlement in Minnesota, the Dakota and Ojibwe peoples resided on lands across the state. Sites important to the Native Americans have been identified in the “Native American Context Statement and Reconnaissance Level Survey Supplement” prepared for the City of Minneapolis by Eva B. Terrell and Michelle M. Terrell of Two Pines Resource Group in 2016. Section “Culture and Arts” in Chapter 7 of the study identifies cultural resources related to American Indian Month, the sport of boxing, art galleries, and public art. Music is not specifically called out in the section, but it is likely that the Two Rivers Gallery and the Minneapolis American Indian Center, both located at 1530 East Franklin Avenue, have important connections to the performance of Dakota and Ojibwe music. The Upper Midwest American Indian Center, 1035 West Broadway, should also be further investigated for importance to the performance of music.

The city should work with Native American communities to identify locations, and consult with the communities to determine if local designation is the best recognition of these places or if the communities prefer other ways to honor the places. Ideally, this section will be revised in the future in consultation with Native American communities.

b. The Curtain Rises on Minneapolis

Music came to this area with its earliest inhabitants. This context, though, begins in the mid-nineteenth century when the communities of Saint Anthony and Minneapolis emerged on opposite banks of the Mississippi River at Saint Anthony Falls. Early European American settlers imported their musical traditions along with their horses and kerosene lamps from their home states and motherlands. They founded cultural institutions to address frontier needs—including entertainment—and recreate things they desired from the life they left behind. By the dawn of the twentieth century, Minneapolis had gained population and prosperity, and opera houses, dance halls, band shelters, and other venues offered a broad array of musical experiences.

Little of the built environment associated with this period still stands. Some of the buildings became functionally obsolete before the end of the nineteenth century and were demolished as bigger and better music houses were built. Others were lost during the period of urban renewal in the mid-twentieth century when demolition became the answer to removing the city's blight, and some burned after antiquated materials, systems, and design made them firetraps. Despite the lack of extant structures representing this early period of music in Minneapolis, there is a substantial amount of literature that documents its establishment and development.

i. Civilizing the Frontier

By Stephanie Rouse

The community of Minneapolis developed on the west bank of the Mississippi River at Saint Anthony Falls after the area was opened to Euro-American settlement in 1852. Music was, at first, an informal form of entertainment.

A wide variety of musical genres including “culture music,” folkloric, military and marching bands, patriotic and community songs were popular in the early years. Across the river in Saint Anthony, a community established in the 1840s and merged with Minneapolis in 1872, a Professor Bennet led an organized singing group with the assistance of the University’s Glee Club in 1851. Soon after, small groups began to form like the Quintette Club, which debuted in 1855 at the first convention of the Minnesota Musical Association. The event, held at the Universalist Church in Saint Anthony, included amateur musicians and was attended by people from around the state. Another group, the Harmonia Society, was founded by 11 German immigrants in 1861 and had grown to 130 members by its tenth anniversary. The Musical Union, a choral group, was founded in 1864. The Sappho Ladies Quartet, formed in 1877, sang at the



Universalist Church, Saint Anthony, 1857
(source: *Benjamin Franklin Upton, Minnesota Historical Society*)

Republican National Convention held in Minneapolis in 1892. These early groups often performed in halls above first-floor shops on primitive stages.¹

Formal musical groups were difficult to maintain. The Minneapolis Musical Society, for example, failed in 1876 but was replaced by the Orchestral Union.² That same year, the Minneapolis Choral Society was established.³ Perhaps spreading the city's limited musical talent among so many groups is what caused many of them to disband within years of forming.

Church choirs and organists were another source of musical entertainment, and churches provided an early stage for music groups including secular varieties. Some, like the



Pence Opera House, 1869
(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

Congregational Church in Saint Anthony, sought out musical talent to provide entertainment. An 1851 performance cost 50 cents for gentleman alone; if “accompanied by a lady,” both could get in for only 75 cents. There was even a Society for the Improvement of Church Music, which formed in 1853. In 1876, the First Baptist church held organ concerts at Fifth Street and Hennepin Avenue, and Plymouth Church hosted weekly organ recitals in 1892. Other early churches that provided musical entertainment included Westminster Church, First Congregational Church, Second Universalist Church, and the Church of the Redeemer.⁴

Tired of relying on traveling groups coming through town, classical music lovers organized the Minneapolis Symphony Concert in the early 1870s. In 1872, the group's inaugural concert was held at the Pence Opera House under the direction of Ludwig Harmsen, one of the first recognized music professionals in the city. Unfortunately, the concert had poor attendance because of bad weather. The

eighteen-piece orchestra was a forerunner to the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, formed in 1903. Another group credited as the “mother of the symphony-to-be” was the Danz Orchestra and Military Band, organized by Frank Danz shortly after his arrival in 1879. The group performed Sunday concerts at Turner Hall at Washington Avenue and Fifth Avenue North. His son Frank Danz Jr. took over leadership of the orchestral group from 1892 until it dissolved a

¹ Louise Chapman, *The First Fifty Years of Music in Minneapolis: A Chronology of Music Events from 1850 to 1900* (Minneapolis: L. Chapman, 1944); Carole Zellie, “MacPhail School of Music Designation Study,” 2001; John K. Sherman, *Music and Maestros: The Story of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1952); Donald Woods, *A History of Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota from Its Beginning to 1883* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1950).

² Chapman, *The First Fifty Years*.

³ Zellie, “MacPhail School of Music Designation Study.”

⁴ Sherman, *Music and Maestros*; Chapman, *The First Fifty Years*.

decade later with the creation of the Minneapolis Symphony. Members of the Danz Orchestra became core musicians of the new organization.⁵

The late 1880s and early 1890s saw the formation of more vocal groups including the Minneapolis Philharmonic Club, a mixed chorus directed by Willard Patton in the 1890s and, beginning in 1900, Emil Oberhoffer, who would become the first director of the Minneapolis Symphony; the Ladies Thursday Musical, an all-woman choral and instrumental group, founded in 1892; and the all-male Apollo Club, which Oberhoffer had directed from 1896 until he was lured away by the Philharmonic Club. The Apollo Club absorbed the forty-member Mendelssohn Club, which lasted through 1895. The Apollo Club and the Thursday Musical continue in operation today, the sole survivors of the nineteenth-century music scene.⁶



Apollo Club, ca. 1912
(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

Benefit concerts were popular in the city's early years. Several events were typically held every year to raise funds for worthy causes. In 1865, for example, a concert at Harrison Hall raised funds for families of Civil War soldiers. The original Armory Building (at Eighth Street and First Avenue South) sometimes hosted concerts including a benefit on October 30, 1884.⁷

ii. Early Musical Education

By Stephanie Rouse

There is debate about when the first formal vocal school opened and who established it. In the town of Saint Anthony, Mr. Messer was one of the first to offer vocal lessons, starting in 1851. On the opposite bank of the Mississippi, some sources give the credit to L. M. Ford in 1852, who operated in the Baptist church. Others claim that it was a Mr. Widstrand in 1854, who also ran the community's first music store. There were soon other options for vocal instruction. Chester Heath organized a "singing school" at the Universalist Church and held many concerts, while B. E. Messer opened a school at Woodman's Hall and Mr. J. A. Wedgewood had another at Hawe's Hall. The average cost for a class was two dollars for twenty-four evenings of lessons. Mrs. D. C. Payne and J. E. Plummer, who had offices at Winslow House, were among those giving private lessons.⁸

Options for music education continued to grow with the population. The Minneapolis Music School (establishment date unknown) moved from Fourth Street and Nicollet Avenue to 2 Center

⁵ Robert G. Gale, "The Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra," *The Bellman*, November 14, 1908; Sherman, *Music and Maestros*; John K. Sherman, "The Birth of a Symphony Orchestra," *Minnesota History* 33 (Autumn 1952): 93.

⁶ Sherman, *Music and Maestros*.

⁷ Chapman, *The First Fifty Years*.

⁸ Sherman, *Music and Maestros*; Zellie, "MacPhail School"; Chapman, *First Fifty Years*.

Block in 1871. Lyman F. Brown opened a music school at his residence, 312 South Ninth Street, in 1878. The following year, Mrs. Malcom's Academy appeared at 310 Hennepin Avenue and William H. Clarke began teaching piano lessons at 523 Hennepin Avenue. A new level of professionalism came in October 1887 when the Musical Teachers' Association of Minnesota was formed.⁹

The Northwest Conservatory of Music was founded in 1885 by Charles Henry Morse, who had arrived in Minneapolis the previous year. The facility at 608 Nicollet Avenue quickly earned a reputation as the city's premiere provider of musical education. University of Minnesota students seeking instruction in music attended classes at the conservatory from 1891 until the university established its own program in 1903.¹⁰

By the end of the nineteenth century, city directories listed over 250 private music teachers in Minneapolis. Music schools, in addition to the Minneapolis School of Music and the Northwestern Conservatory of Music, included the Johnson Piano School. This was a stark contrast from just thirty years prior when city directories listed no music schools and only three music teachers—Miss Jennie Baldwin, Charles W Johnson, and C. A. Widstrand—all located in the downtown core.¹¹

iii. Music Stores

By Stephanie Rouse

Specialty stores were soon serving the growing interest in music. One of the earliest was Horace Walters Great Piano and Music Establishment, which offered pianos, melodeons, and music according to an 1854 advertisement. Wells and Chamberlain's attracted much attention on May 10, 1868, when two "mammoth French 'music boxes'" opened at the store. In 1869, the S. M. Spaulding Music Store appeared at 38 Nicollet Street, replaced a year later by Farnham's Music Store.¹²

These stores were more than a place to buy sheet music and instruments, doubling as small performance spaces for concerts. Elliott's Music Room held parlor concerts. A larger music store, W. J. Dyers Music Hall, arrived at 509-511 Nicollet Avenue in 1880, promoted as "Importers, Wholesale and Retail Pianos, Organs and Musical Merchandise." By 1884, the business was holding concerts in the music parlor of Dyer and Howard at 408 Nicollet Avenue. The Dyer and Howard music parlor became the home of the Minneapolis Music School in September 1894. Also opened that year was the Muse (formerly Musical Advance), a music publishing company. In 1890, the Century Piano Company offered the first pianos made in Minneapolis. The building also held the office of a new musical organization, the Minneapolis Musical Club, and a concert hall considered one of the best equipped in the Northwest. H. E. Zoch and H. S. Woodruff had studios operating in the building before its official opening on December 15. In 1897, the Howard, Farwell Company Music House opened.¹³

⁹ Chapman, *First Fifty Years*.

¹⁰ Woods, *A History of Theater*.

¹¹ Minneapolis city directories, 1867 and 1899.

¹² Chapman, *First Fifty Years*.

¹³ Ibid.

By the end of the nineteenth century, there were twenty-six companies or sole proprietors offering music, musical merchandise, and instruments for sale in Minneapolis. Many clustered around Washington and Nicollet Avenues. Well-established companies included Century Music, Metropolitan Music Company, Peter Benson, P. A. Schmitt, Levander and Ericson, and the T. M. Roberts Supply House.¹⁴

iv. Early Concert Halls

By Stephanie Rouse

In the city's early years, numerous halls sprang up to provide performance space for all types of music-related events. Information on the more notable halls and buildings follows, but also mentioned among newspaper articles and early books are the Adelphi Varsity Theater, Centenary Church, Comique, Elliott's Music Room, Fletcher Hall, Market Hall, Association Hall (1877), West Hotel (1885), Alcazar Opera House (1885), Exposition Building (1886), Scandinavian Hall, Summer Garden Variety Theater, Chambers and Nedderly's (1855), Bibbins (1855), Elfelt's (1856), Fletcher's (1856), and Bassetts (1859).¹⁵

The first prominent music facility was Barber's Hall, constructed at the corner of Second Avenue South and Washington Avenue in 1854. Two years later, it hosted a concert by two internationally renowned musicians, Norwegian violinist Ole Bull and Italian-French opera singer Adelina Patti. Next came Edwards Hall and Turner Hall, both dating from around 1856. Edwards Hall was located in Saint Anthony on Main Street facing Saint Anthony Falls, on the third floor of a large stone building.¹⁶



Woodman's Hall No. 1, ca. 1860
(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

The Universalist Church (1 Lourdes Place), constructed in 1857, was perhaps one of the first churches to welcome secular music and musical studies. The year it opened, Chester Heath established a music school in the building. Numerous concerts were held there as well as the 1858 Minnesota Musical Association convention. In 1867 the church was home to singing classes. The property was purchased by Our Lady of Lourdes, a Catholic congregation, in 1877 and was extensively remodeled in 1880.¹⁷

¹⁴ Minneapolis city directory, 1899.

¹⁵ Woods, *History of Theater*.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Sherman, *Music and Maestros*; Chapman, *First Fifty Years*.



The first Harmonia Hall, 1937
(source: A. F. Raymond, *Minnesota Historical Society*)

Woodman's Hall No. 1 was installed above a drug store at the corner of Washington Avenue and Second Avenue South in 1857. The hall was very basic, without a balcony, gallery, or elevated seats. The primitive stage had no backstage facilities so performers had to pass through the auditorium to reach the stage. Within a year the space was converted to a Masonic hall and the music moved to Woodman's Hall No. 2, built diagonally across the street. It was "the principal place of amusement on the west side of the river." Poor construction led to its condemnation in 1862.¹⁸

Upper-level halls active in the mid-1860s included Stanchfield's (1858), Hawe's (1859), Harrison's (1862), and Harmonia Hall (1865). Stanchfield's was used primarily for the Signor Hazazar Dancing School and old-fashioned balls. It had a short life, burning down in 1869. Hawe's Hall was not as popular as the other halls at the time and received limited use. Harrison's Hall was the center of theatrical life for the city for three years, but also served as public hall until about 1885. Its construction was watched closely because the condemnation of Woodman Hall No. 2 left few good performance halls available to the musical groups of the time.¹⁹

Harmonia Hall (200 First Avenue North) was considered the forerunner of Minneapolis theaters when it was built in 1865 because it had a balcony and stage settings. The German Harmonia Society used it for their rehearsal and performance space, gymnastic exercises, and a schoolhouse. The auditorium had a capacity of seven hundred seats and was painted with life-sized pictures, with ornamental scroll work on the ceiling. A second Harmonia Hall was built in 1884 at the northeast corner of Second Avenue South and Third Street. The Danz



The second Harmonia Hall, ca. 1885
(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

¹⁸ Edward Bromley, *Minneapolis Album: A Photographic History of the Early Days in Minneapolis* (Minneapolis: Tribune Job Printing Company, 1890), 314; Hess, Roise and Company, "Arts and Culture on the Minneapolis Riverfront," 2006, 18.

¹⁹ Louis Collins, "Fifty Years of Playhouses," *The Bellman*, October 17, 1908; Bromley, *Minneapolis Album*; Sherman, *Music and Maestros*.



Academy of Music, ca. 1874
(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

Orchestra concerts moved to the new Harmonia Hall in 1886, but unlike their previous home at Turner Hall, no liquor or smoking was allowed.²⁰

The Pence Opera House, constructed in 1867, is considered the first Minneapolis theater. Including the balcony, it had seating capacity of 1,000. It opened on June 21 with a joint concert of the Minneapolis Musical Union and the Saint Paul Musical Society. Originally named the Music Hall, it was financed by J. W. Pence. Other than two years when the theater was closed, starting in 1888 (it reopened as the Criterion Theatre), it was

a prominent entertainment venue for forty-one years until 1908, when the last pieces of stage scenery were taken out and the building was demolished.²¹

The Pence received a rival in 1872 when the Academy of Music building was constructed at Washington and Hennepin Avenues. Known for being the first hall in Minneapolis to include a grand piano, the Academy claimed to be the city's premier music hall and the finest west of Chicago until 1883, when the Grand Opera House was completed at the northeast corner of Sixth Street and Nicollet Avenue. The opera house reflected a significant change in design for music halls in the late nineteenth century. Once housed on the second and third floors of commercial buildings with makeshift stages, they became a building type unto themselves. When the opera house opened in 1883, it was the first concert hall of this style in Minneapolis. With a capacity of 1,400 people, it was considered the most luxurious theater in the Northwest.

Unable to compete with the superior characteristics of the Grand Opera House, the Academy had its last performance in March 1883. The derelict building burned down in 1884, a year after closing its doors. The Grand Opera House, in turn, quickly fell from grace after the Metropolitan Opera House opened at 42 Sixth



Metropolitan Opera House, 1904
(source: *C. J. Hibbard, Minnesota Historical Society*)

²⁰ Chapmen, *First Fifty Years*.

²¹ *Ibid.*; Woods, *History of Theater*.



Lyceum Theater, ca. 1905
(source: *Sweet, Minnesota Historical Society*)



Bijou Theater, ca. 1897
(source: *Sweet, Minnesota Historical Society*)

Street in 1894. The opera house closed in 1895 and was demolished in 1896 after the building was purchased by the owners of the Metropolitan Opera House. The Metropolitan Opera House further advanced the music building typology in Minneapolis, serving as home to numerous musically associated companies and groups such as Dyer Music Company, Thursday Musical, and in 1897, Danz Orchestra concerts. While outlasting its peers, the building succumbed to the wrecking ball in September 1937.²²

In the meantime, smaller venues remained active. A new Turner Hall was dedicated by the Germania Society at Washington and Fifth Avenue North in December 1880. Danz Orchestra played during the opening celebration and continued to hold Sunday concerts there through 1886. Also in 1880, the Minneapolis Conservatory of Music was built at 140 South Fourth Street.²³

Two important theaters constructed in 1887 were home to a number of fledgling music groups in addition to being theatrical performance spaces: the Hennepin Avenue Theater, later known as the Lyceum Theater and the Harris Theater; and the People's Theater, later renamed the Bijou Theater. The Lyceum Theater formally opened on October 13 and offered weekly concerts by the Danz Orchestra.²⁴

v. Music in Nature

By Stephanie Rouse

In the city's first decades, two popular locations for open-air concerts were Bridge Square, at the foot of Hennepin Avenue south by the Hennepin Avenue Bridge, and the Lake Harriet Pavilion. In 1877, lawyer Harlow Gale started a dime concert series in Bridge Square where listeners could stroll to the sound of classical music. The series continued through at least 1882. The first series of concerts in Bridge Square performed by the Danz Orchestra began on June 24, 1881. Concerts at the Lake Harriet Pavilion featured the Danz Orchestra, Minneapolis String Quartet, and Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. Danz began a

²² Sherman, *History of Theater in Minneapolis*; Woods, *A History of Theater*.

²³ Chapman, *First Fifty Years*.

²⁴ Sherman, *Music and Maestros*.



Lake Harriet Pavilion, ca. 1910
(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

summer concert series in May 1891, popular with people wanting to get out of town for fresh air and music. In 1894, the Minneapolis String Quartet performed at the pavilion. Downtown venues included a roof garden band concert at the Guaranty Loan Building three times a week in summer 1892 and open concerts on rooftops of downtown buildings. The Union Band held weekly open-air concerts on Hennepin Avenue at Third Street and Ninth Street during the summers of 1875 and 1876.²⁵

In Loring Park, a statue of Ole Bull was unveiled in 1897 on May 17, Norwegian independence day. Bull, a famous composer and conductor, often traveled

to Minneapolis to perform, including the memorable concert with Adelina Patti at Barber's Hall in 1856. The statue of Bull (extant) reflected a mindset—not exclusive to the nineteenth century—that musicians from afar were more valued than homegrown talent.²⁶

vi. The End of an Era

By Charlene Roise and Stephanie Rouse

In five busy decades, Minneapolis was transformed from a pioneer outpost to a mature city with a population of over 200,000. Bridge Square at the foot of Hennepin and Nicollet Avenues, once the heart of the city, was in decline as development pushed south. Small frame structures were replaced by substantial commercial buildings of masonry and iron. World-famous flour mills lined the Mississippi, providing work to laborers and wealth to owners and executives.

The city's physical infrastructure grew apace. Gas lighting had replaced candles, only to be usurped by electricity. Residents pushed to the edges of the settlement by downtown development



Choral performance at the Ole Bull statue, 1929
(source: *Minneapolis Newspaper Photograph Collection, Hennepin County Library*)

²⁵ Ibid.; Chapman, *First Fifty Years*.

²⁶ Sherman, *Music and Maestros*.

were served by an expanding network of streetcars. A system of parks was conceived that wove greenspace throughout the city.

More people had the ability to enjoy parks and other amenities as a middle class emerged from the industrial revolution. Liberated with time and prosperity from the hand-to-mouth existence of their forefathers, this new class had disposable income and mobility to seek out the entertainments, including music, that evolved as the twentieth century progressed.

Good groundwork had been laid in the nineteenth century. By the 1890s, five musical groups performed routinely: the Thursday Musical, University Choral Union, Danz Orchestra, Philharmonic Club, and Apollo Club. The last half of the century had brought the excitement of new musical groups, schools, and buildings. Dozens of music halls above retail shops attracted the growing population, but these early halls were soon outshone by formal ground-floor theaters with elevated stages and the capacity to seat over one-thousand people. This activity and development set the stage for what was to come in the twentieth century.

At the same time, Minneapolitans were fortunate that their civic leaders, enriched by profits from mills, mines, and more, were farsighted and generous. The park system was one sign of their vision. The creation of the Minneapolis Symphony in 1903 was another. Up to this time, music was left to the private sector. Establishing the orchestra as a community-supported resource marked a turning point for music in Minneapolis. It seems no coincidence that the University of Minnesota's music program was launched the same year.

Music had become both a popular and cultural institution, but it was never static. With the introduction of the radio, records, and movies on the horizon, change would remain a constant for music and related venues in Minneapolis.

c. Breaking Traditions in the Twentieth Century

By Charlene Roise

i. Dixieland Comes Upriver

In the early twentieth century, when riverboats remained an important mode of transportation, the Mississippi gave the Twin Cities a direct link to New Orleans. According to historian Jay Goetting, “Louis Armstrong told New Orleans friends that in 1918 he planned to play on the steamer *Sidney* between New Orleans and Minneapolis. The following year, eighteen-year-old Armstrong probably saw the Twin Cities for the first time.” Armstrong apparently did not spend much time in the Twin Cities, but he and others planted the seeds of Dixieland that developed a faithful following in the area.²⁷

While not known as a leader in the development of jazz in America, Minneapolis maintained a thriving jazz scene in the twentieth century. This was thanks, in part, to the city’s proximity to Chicago, Saint Louis, and Kansas City, which made it a convenient stop on the tour circuit for many groups. Serendipity also played a role: many jazz musicians called Minneapolis home at some point in their careers.²⁸

The “Great Migration” brought permanent residents to the city. Beginning around World War I and continuing into the mid-twentieth century, millions of blacks migrated from the rural South to the North and West, often seeking industrial jobs in urban areas. In Minneapolis, the largest black community extended north from downtown Minneapolis, an area where Jews and other minorities had settled after nineteenth-century residents moved on. Restaurants, clubs, shops, and other black businesses created a vibrant commercial area around Sixth Avenue North and Lyndale Avenue North. In South Minneapolis, blacks established a commercial and residential community around Fourth Avenue South and Thirty-eight Street, perhaps because of the neighborhood’s proximity to Honeywell, an important supplier of thermostats and other products.



Marigold Ballroom, 1336 Nicollet Avenue, ca. 1930
(source: *Lee Bros., Minnesota Historical Society*)

Blacks were not the only musicians to explore jazz, and no musician in the first decades of the century had the luxury of specializing in jazz. Historian Robert Stebbins noted that “dance bands rang[ing] in size from trios to fifteen-piece orchestras or larger” played “music, often stock arrangements of popular tunes which could be purchased at the local music stores.” These bands

²⁷ Jay Goetting, *Joined at the Hip: History of Jazz in the Twin Cities* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2011), 6.

²⁸ Joe William Trotter Jr., “The Great Migration,” *OAH Magazine of History*, October 2002, 31-33.



Flame Supper Club marquee, no date
(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

played in ballrooms like the Marigold Gardens, established in 1919 on Nicollet Avenue at Grant Street and later known as the Marigold Ballroom, and the “Aragon Ballroom on South Fifth Street across from the Court House.”²⁹

A turning point came in about 1925 when the New Orleans Rhythm Kings took up residence for several months at the Marigold, which was reputed to be “by far the largest hall around.” Clarinetist Frankie Roberts, a Nebraska native who arrived in Minneapolis in 1924, reported that local musicians swarmed to the performances of the New Orleans group and that their playing was transformed by the experience.³⁰

Passage of the Volstead Act in 1919 marked the beginning of Prohibition, but this did not stop people from drinking. Instead, it fostered an alternative production and distribution system largely controlled by gangsters. Minnesota’s border with Canada and its excellent rail network made the Twin Cities, particularly Saint Paul, a hub of bootlegging by the early 1920s. “In 1926, when federal investigators broke a major ring operating out of Cleveland, a startling 41 of the 112 people indicted in the case lived in Saint Paul,” historian Mary Lethert Wingerd reported. She added: “In Saint Paul, neither gambling nor bootlegging were considered ‘real’ crimes. . . . The vice economy provided all sorts of jobs and income throughout the city. . . . To ‘respectable’ Saint Paul, this illicit culture seemed glamorous and daring. Middle and upper-class citizens flocked to shady nightclubs . . . where they could drink and gamble alongside gangster celebrities. . . . Many working people viewed the gangsters less as celebrities than as benefactors, outlaw folk heroes who liberally dispensed jobs and favors during hard times. . . . Amid the labor and political conflicts, the vice economy created a neutral zone where a peculiar sort of cross-class socialization flourished.”³¹

In the gangster world in both Saint Paul and Minneapolis, writer Neal Karlen reported, “the major players were Jews, who were shut out by the city’s business and social elites.” Isadore Blumenfeld, better known as Kid Cann, controlled nightclubs in two areas in Minneapolis where bars—and jazz—flourished in the 1920s: the Near Northside and downtown’s Hennepin Avenue.

²⁹ Robert A. Stebbins, “The History of Jazz in Minneapolis,” manuscript, available at the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul.

³⁰ Goetting, *Joined at the Hip*, 21, 29.

³¹ Mary Lethert Wingerd, *Claiming the City: Politics, Faith, and the Power of Place in Saint Paul* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 254-255;



Flame Supper Club, Harry Blons Dixieland Band, no date
(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

Cann's headquarters was the Flame Cafe on Nicollet Avenue, which he maintained as a legitimate front for his illicit activities.³²

ii. Near Northside Nights

The influential residency of the New Orleans Rhythm Kings at the Marigold in the mid-1920s was feasible because the band members were white. As was the case throughout the country at the time, racial discrimination in Minneapolis was commonplace. In a biography of black saxophonist Percy Hughes, historian Jim Swanson reported, "The Al Noyes Band performed at the Marigold under the stipulation that it would hire no Negro musicians. Offended as he was, Al Noyes agreed, since the band needed the work."³³

Dick Mayes, who played with Percy Hughes and His Rhythm Boys, called racial discrimination "terrible, absolutely terrible," with downtown Minneapolis being particularly "notorious. . . . You never saw black bands down there—Harry's, Carlie's, Freddy's."³⁴ As a result, jazz in Minneapolis evolved

on two main tracks—one, the downtown scene with hotels and Hennepin Avenue, and the other, in the thriving black business district on the Near Northside.

The city counted only 4,176 blacks in a population of 464,456 in 1930, but "while its African American population was small, Minneapolis was not lacking in black music culture," according to historian Douglas Henry Daniels. "Moore's Jazz Orchestra and the Famous Rogers Cafe Jazz Orchestra promised the new music as early as 1920," and "jazz bands performed for moonlight boat excursions, picnics, receptions, and balls presented by various black organizations."³⁵

As noted in a book titled *Minneapolis Negro Profile: A Pictorial Resume of the Black Community, Its Achievements, and Its Immediate Goals*: "Minneapolis, in its early history, was blessed in having a number of gifted musicians who were born and incidentally stranded here during the lean years for black musicians. It was also a time when the Negro in Minnesota was so completely ostracized that he was allowed to own and run his night clubs in his own way and his own time just as long as he kept away from downtown."³⁶

³² Neal Karlen, *Augie's Secrets: The Minneapolis Mob and the King of the Hennepin Strip* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2013), n.p.; Wingerd, *Claiming the City*, 254; Jim Swanson, *Sports and All that Jazz: The Percy Hughes Story* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2011), 28.

³³ Swanson, *Sports and All that Jazz*, 25.

³⁴ Goetting, *Joined at the Hip*, 47.

³⁵ Douglas Henry Daniels, "North Side Jazz: Lester 'Pres' Young in Minneapolis: The Formative Years," *Minnesota History* 59 (Fall 2004): 97.

³⁶ Walter R. Scott Sr, ed., *Minneapolis Negro Profile: A Pictorial Resume of the Black Community, Its Achievements, and Its Immediate Goals* ([Minneapolis]: Scott Publishing Company, [1968]), 150.

During Prohibition, after-hours clubs became popular gathering spots for jazz musicians, and race was less of an issue. The establishments were often “key clubs,” where membership was required and carefully controlled. The *Minneapolis Negro Profile* reported that “on any weekend night on the North Side one might hear Oscar Pettiford, Adolphus Alsbrook, Rook Ganz, Vernon Pittman and many others who after finishing engagements downtown [would] come out [to] the Clef Club, the Benganzi, Twenty Limited, the Elk’s Rest, Howard’s Steak House, or others.” These restaurants and clubs, which “prospered by offering a mix of illegal booze, jazz music, and late-night hours,” according to Goetting, were clustered around Lyndale and Sixth Avenues North. The area became more visible in the late 1930s when Olson Memorial Highway was developed in the vicinity.³⁷

One popular venue was the Clef Club at 637 Olson Memorial Boulevard, on the northeast corner of the intersection with Lyndale. The three-story structure was erected in 1889 and originally held retail space on the first floor, an apartment for the building’s developer, James Kistler, on the second floor, and an Odd Fellows lodge on the top floor. Western State Bank and a pool hall were the first-floor tenants when Kistler sold the building in 1926, and the Elks had taken over the Odd Fellows’ space. Blacks were coming to dominate the neighborhood, long an arrival point for immigrants, and “the shuffling of Elks on the third floor gave way to the rhythmic thud of dancing feet,” a reporter later wrote. “It is perhaps asking a good deal of human nature to expect people to go to a night club or dance hall and not work up a thirst”—so the dictates of Prohibition were routinely ignored.³⁸

After the repeal of Prohibition, the club remained popular and became somewhat integrated. A raid by the police morals squad at this “black and tan all night spot” at 3:00 a.m. on January 15, 1942, made the front page of the *Minneapolis Star Journal*. “Pandemonium reigned when the officers entered the place. Musicians leaped from the band stand. Negroes and white women sitting together hurriedly parted company and scampered for places of exit.” Eighty-nine people were arrested, including twenty-five women. “Four men who said they were musicians with an orchestra playing at a loop theater were among those jailed,” and “several others . . . said they were musicians at an uptown night club.” Among those detained was “Ben Wilson, 49, 1001 Sixth avenue N., reputed ‘mayor of the northside,’” who was “reported to be the owner of the place.” The judge “took the raid victims to task for ‘spending all night in such a place with a war going on, when you should have been at home where you belonged.’”³⁹ The club was apparently shut down soon after the raid.⁴⁰

The Cotton Club was also at Sixth and Lyndale. (Another club by the same name was later established on Excelsior Boulevard in suburban Saint Louis Park.) El Grotto at 714 Olson Memorial Highway became Howard’s Steak House in the 1950s. Local musician Percy Hughes reported that “when Benny Goodman played at the Prom [in Saint Paul], he and his bandmen

³⁷ Goetting, *Joined at the Hip*, 18, 37; Scott, *Minneapolis Negro Profile*, 150, 152.

³⁸ Don Morrison, “Wreckers Write Fins to Clef Club, Dust of Jazz Era Rises from Ancient Building,” *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, November 10, 1957.

³⁹ “89 Arrested in Clef Club Morals Raid; Dice, Card Games Broken Up at North Side Place,” *Minneapolis Star Journal*, January 15, 1942.

⁴⁰ “Girl Resumes Slave Story,” *Minneapolis Star Journal*, March 24, 1944.



The Wheatley Aires performing in the Phyllis Wheatley Center, ca. 1950

(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

stopped by Howard's after hours for a little jamming and established a tradition of stop overs for other visiting artists." Other all-night spots in the vicinity included the Sportsman's Club at Olson Memorial Highway and Aldrich Avenue, the 639 Club at 639 Sixth Avenue North, Musicians Rest at 141 Hyland Avenue North (later the Harlem Breakfast Club), the Maple Leaf at 128 Highland (later Peggy's Rhumboogie, sometimes spelled Rum Boogie), and Old Southern Barbecue at 700 North Lyndale. Club DeLiza, Club Morocco, the Chicken Shack, Ebony Social Club, Freeman's Smoke Shop, Gin Mill, the Hub, the Nest, the Spot, and the Wonderview were some of the other clubs that came and went in the area.⁴¹

The Phyllis Wheatley Settlement House provided a different approach to music on the north side. Established in 1924 as a safe residence for young black women arriving in the city, it evolved into an important social and cultural center for the community and nurtured generations of musicians. In addition to hosting concerts and dances, it had music education programs that encouraged young talent and engaged musical families, such as the Pettifords, who were highly regarded musicians on the club scene. Oscar Pettiford, for example, before gaining international renown with the Woody Herman Band, was involved with the center's programs, and his sister, Margaret, taught jazz saxophone classes there. Their father was locally prominent from regular gigs at El Patio and the Cotton Club.⁴²

While North Minneapolis had the city's highest concentration of blacks, they lived and played music in other parts of the city as well. The Nacirema Club (3949 Fourth Avenue South) in the commercial area extending around Fourth Avenue South and Thirty-eighth Street was a popular venue for jazz shows. In Southeast Minneapolis, a building at 111-117 Fourth Street SE, erected in the early 1920s (demolished 1975), had a large third-floor Eagles club hall where musical events often occurred—including, by the late 1930s, dances with black Big Bands. The building was known as the Labor Temple building after a labor association purchased it in 1942. According to historian Jeanne Andersen, "Waiter's Union No. 614 sponsored a Cabaret and Breakfast dance on May 21" in 1938. "Ray Dysart's orchestra played for the first half of the dance, with Boyd Atkins' Cotton Club orchestra playing the second half." The next year, "the first annual National Negro Jitterbug Dance Contest was held at the Eagles Ballroom" for two

⁴¹ Ibid.; Goetting, *Joined at the Hip*, 131-132; Jim Swanson, *Sports and All that Jazz: The Percy Hughes Story* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2011), 25.

⁴² Swanson, *Sports and All that Jazz*, 61.

days in February. In July 1942, shortly after the change in ownership, Fletcher Henderson played the hall with his fourteen-piece orchestra.⁴³

The building hosted national jazz acts in the first half of the 1950s including Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson, Illinois Jacquet, Dinah Washington, Duke Ellington, Johnny Otis, Johnny Hodges, LaVern Baker, and Ray Charles. Shows also included Dixieland artists like Doc Evans. As musical tastes changed, shows at the Labor Temple stopped. When concerts resumed in 1969, a very different genre had taken root—the first act was the Grateful Dead.⁴⁴

iii. Hennepin Avenue

As historian Goetting observed, “New York has its Great White Way. San Francisco has Broadway and Chicago its Miracle Mile. Minneapolis has its seven-mile-long Hennepin Avenue, known simply as ‘the Avenue’ by the musicians who played on a short downtown stretch from Washington Avenue to Ninth Street.”⁴⁵

Hennepin Avenue had two distinct types of venues: theaters and “stage bars.” The theaters, mostly started for vaudeville, included the Minnesota Theater, where Paul Whitemen and his jazz orchestra played in 1928, and the Palace Theater (424 Hennepin). Music was also an important part of the vaudeville programs at the Orpheum and Miles (later Century) Theaters.⁴⁶

Music played a secondary role at the stage bars, which were, first and foremost, strip clubs. Musicians often played in small crannies next to the stage and hoped that no fights broke out.⁴⁷

Most of the clubs along Hennepin Avenue employed white musicians. When saxophonist Irv Williams came to town in the 1940s, he auditioned for Augie Ratner, who owned a bar on Fifth and Hennepin. Williams recounted that Ratner “liked the band, but he told me, ‘I gotta hire either black or white.’ I said ‘Hire black,’ so he says, ‘I don’t think so, right now.’” Black bassist Dave Faison had success getting gigs at Augie’s, but “when we’d come off the stand, people would want to mix with the band, but Augie would send us downstairs.”⁴⁸

Venues along Hennepin Avenue came and went with great rapidity, with many locations having multiple names within the course of a decade. Also, some clubs changed locations, adding another challenge to tracing their history. The building at 424 Hennepin, for example, was originally the Palace Theater. It became Lindy’s Cafe in the 1930s, then Crombie’s, which featured a Dixieland band, and Augie’s in 1944. The property at 507 Hennepin was the Dome before becoming Vic’s in 1951 and Osterberg’s in 1957. As Goetting noted, “Beginning during the Prohibition, musicians played on Hennepin Avenue six or seven nights per week. A partial listing of downtown places to hear jazz included Augie’s (424 Hennepin, earlier Lindy’s and Crombie’s), Bellanotte (600), Brady’s (also nar Sixth), Camel’s Club (520), Casablanca (402—

⁴³ Jeanne Andersen, “Labor Temple,” *Twin Cities Music Highlights*, <http://twincitiesmusichighlights.net/venues/labor-temple/>, accessed June 27, 2018.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Goetting, *Joined at the Hip*, 57.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 19, 27, 29, 31.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 58-59.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 45-46.

later the Gay '90s), Coconut Grove (above Brady's), Frolics (516, moved to Third Street in the fifties), Gallery, Jockey Club (507—previously Vic's, the Dome, Osterberg's), Moose Lodge, Orpheum Theatre, Palace Theater (424), Paradise (414-1/2), Poodle, Red Feather, Roaring Twenties, Roberts Cafe, Saddle, Sleizers, Spud's, Walker Art Center, and Williams." The Longhorn was "a popular jazz spot in the sixties and seventies run by the owners of the Hennepin Avenue's Poodle." Wolverines Classic Jazz Orchestra, founded in 1973 and long a mainstay on the local jazz scene, played at the Longhorn on Sunday nights.⁴⁹

Other clubs that featured jazz were scattered around downtown. These included the South Side Club at Twelfth Avenue and Third Street and the Arcadia on Fifth Street across from city hall.⁵⁰

iv. Swinging

The University of Minnesota campus was credited with being a hotbed of Dixieland jazz in the 1920s. By the end of that decade, black musicians in Near Northside clubs and elsewhere were importing new developments from jazz epicenters in other states. As historian Goetting noted, "The influential presence of Rook Ganz and Lester Young suggests the well-established circuit of black musicians shuttling between Kansas City, the Twin Cities, Chicago, New York City, and points between." Ganz came to the Twin Cities from Winnipeg in 1931 and settled in the Near Northside. He had a long career, continuing to perform almost up to his death in 1979. Another prominent Minneapolis musician was Lester Young. Born in Mississippi in 1909, he came to Minneapolis with his family in the late 1920s, where his father sought work as a musician.⁵¹

Swing music was a good match for ballrooms in downtown hotels and country clubs, where the way had been paved by Dixieland. The orchestra at the Curtis Hotel (demolished) "is often credited with bringing dancing to the Minneapolis club and restaurant scene in 1919," according to Goetting. In contrast to the discrimination practiced by most clubs, Burt's band regularly performed at the Leamington Hotel (demolished). Music became common in the ballroom of the Radisson Hotel (35 Seventh Street, built 1908 and extensively remodeled), between Seventh and Eighth Streets just east of Hennepin, from the time it opened in 1909. Glenn Miller "had his own band at the Nicollet Hotel" (demolished). Radio stations broadcast shows from the hotel ballrooms, further popularizing Swing music.⁵²

One Big Band that found success in Minneapolis was the Slatz Randall Band. Pianist Slatz Randall formed a band with trumpeter Craig Buie, in Asheville, North Carolina, in the 1920s, and landed an initial gig at the Biltmore Hotel. The band went on to play at a variety of venues in Florida, Texas, Chicago, and Milwaukee before arriving in Minneapolis, where they were soon booked by the Radisson Hotel. Buie later recalled: "The Flame Room had an unusual moveable bandstand—it was on rollers and could reduce the room to serve one or two hundred diners, or expand it to accommodate six hundred. In a short time, we were filling the room on Saturday nights." The band added some local musicians during two stays at the Radisson from October

⁴⁹ Ibid., 61, 62, 131, 133, 141, 158.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 21.

⁵¹ Ibid., 25, 40, 42; Daniels, "North Side Jazz," 96-109.

⁵² Goetting, *Joined at the Hip*, 20, 44, 27, 31, 149.

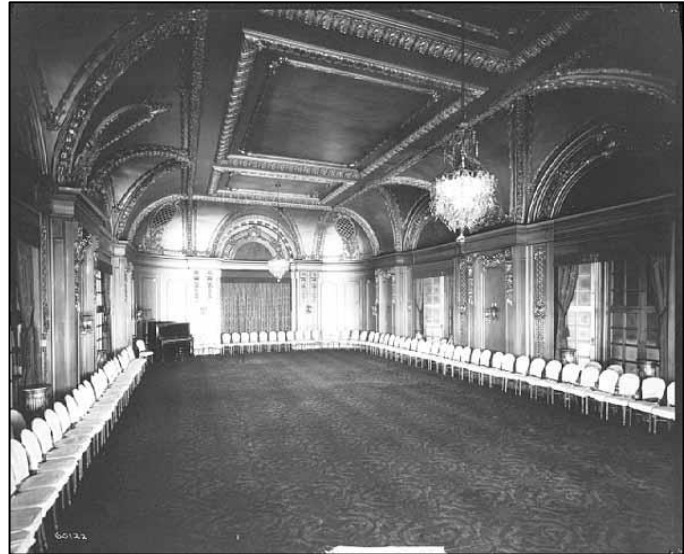
1928 through June 1929 and from fall 1929 through summer 1930, riding out the stock market crash in the city. During their first stint in Minneapolis, a traveling unit of Columbia Records recorded the band playing “Bessie Couldn’t Help It.” According to Buie, “This recording was reissued on the Arcadia label as part of the ‘Twin City Shuffle’ album.” The song helped Randall get a recording contract with the prestigious Brunswick label and the band’s records did well, leading to a tour of clubs in major hotels around the country. Strains from management issues and declining audiences resulting from the economic depression apparently led to the band’s dissolution in 1937.⁵³

Jazz was found in a variety of venues. Musician Les Beigel recalled that “every Chinese restaurant had a band.” Violinist Dick Long “had a three-piece band that played at Dayton’s department store tearoom, while down a few floors in the basement of Hudson’s Jewelers was a speakeasy known as Denny’s. The Golden Pheasant was a walk-a-flight Chinese restaurant on Seventh Street across from the Radisson with a large sign out front and flashing colored lights.” Bands were also featured at the nearby Nankin Cafe (demolished).⁵⁴

v. Mid-Century Metamorphosis

World War II brought changes to the music scene in Minneapolis. Some top jazz musicians, including saxophonist Irv Williams, arrived at the Wold Chamberlain Naval Air Station to play in an all-black band, which performed around the county. Local musicians saw other parts of the country and the world through military service, gaining new insights on music and culture.

Saxophonist Percy Hughes took over the band when Williams headed to New York. Born and raised in Minneapolis, Hughes was stationed in Kansas City after being drafted, which exposed



Radisson Hotel Ballroom, 1925
(source: *Hibbard Studio, Minnesota Historical Society*)



Radisson Hotel, Flame Room, 1958
(source: *Norton and Peel, Minnesota Historical Society*)

⁵³ Craig Buie, interview, by Carl Warmington, December 8, 1987, transcript, at “Jazz in the Twin Cities Oral History Project,” Minnesota Historical Society.

⁵⁴ Goetting, *Joined at the Hip*, 32-33. Dayton’s still stands at 700 Nicollet Mall, but the tea room is no longer in place.

him to that active jazz scene. He soon became part of the Negro Ground Force Army Band, which was transferred to Camp Livingston in Louisiana in 1944. There, he experienced blatant racial discrimination for the first time. According to a biography of Hughes, “Throughout the country, jazz critics recognized the Twin Cities as a jazz center because of the outstanding play of the musicians from the Wold Chamberlain Naval Band. Led by Hughes, these musicians became the foundation of good jazz in the Twin Cities for years to come.”⁵⁵

Swing remained popular through World War II, and Be-Bop emerged in the 1940s and 1950s. Clubs became somewhat more dispersed. Duffy’s at Twenty-sixth Avenue South and East Twenty-sixth Street (demolished) “boasted consistent quality music in the early 1950s.” Nearby Schooner’s Tavern (2901 Twenty-Seventh Avenue South, extant) also featured jazz groups in the musical line-up. Irv Williams found work at the Calhoun Beach Club (2900 Thomas Avenue South, extant). But times changed as musical tastes evolved, World War II veterans started families, and residential development boomed in the suburbs. Percy Hughes, who had to downsize his band in 1956, blamed the proliferation of television sets for “kill[ing] the nightclubs.”⁵⁶

From the 1950s on, many branches of jazz have thrived in the Twin Cities, although the primary venues for some forms were in communities surrounding Minneapolis rather than in the city itself. Urban renewal, a response to the urban flight, targeted some areas that had been hotbeds of jazz, particularly the black commercial area on the Near Northside. In an article in the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* in November 1957, Don Morrison reported on the demolition of the Kistler Building, once home of the Clef Club: “Doomed by the Glenwood redevelopment project, the Kistler building now reverberates to wrecking sledges—the sounds reawakening, a sentimentalist would claim, echoes of all-night jam sessions in which Benny Goodman or Gene Krupa might be sitting in at what used to be called the Clef club.”⁵⁷

While urban renewal obliterated the jazz venues on the Near Northside, it added at least one during the 1960s, the Golliwog Lounge at the top of the Sheraton Ritz Hotel. A product of downtown urban renewal, the Sheraton Ritz was located on Nicollet between Third and Fourth Streets. This period also witnessed a renaissance of local cultural institutions, and jazz musicians were happy to find steady work at new and expanding venues. The Guthrie Theater created a staff band when it opened in 1963 and it routinely hosted visiting jazz artists. The Modern Jazz Quartet inaugurated musical performances at the new theater on May 27, 1963, just twenty days after it had opened with a staging of *Hamlet*. And while television hurt the club scene, radio continued to be a means of expanding jazz’s reach. Leigh Kamman, who became a legendary broadcaster, started doing live shows for KSTP in the 1960s. The first broadcasts were from Freddy’s.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Swanson, *Sports and All that Jazz*, 29, 52-54.

⁵⁶ Goetting, *Joined at the Hip*, 46, 162.

⁵⁷ Don Morrison, “Wreckers Write Fins to Clef Club, Dust of Jazz Era Rises from Ancient Building,” *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, November 10, 1957.

⁵⁸ Goetting, *Joined at the Hip*, 47, 50, 127; Neal Bond, “On This Day in Minnesota Music History, May 27, 1963,” *Twentieth Century Minnesota Music History Channel*, Facebook, @twentiethcentuymnnesotamusicchannel.

A biography of Percy Hughes observed that “whites would have been much slower in discovering Percy . . . if it hadn’t been for the efforts of Leigh Kamman of WLOL, who promoted him and other jazz artists on his afternoon show ‘Swing Club.’” Leigh sponsored the group at the Calhoun Beach Hotel and the Radisson in downtown Minneapolis and promoted them on the ‘We call It Jazz Show.’ . . . It was also through his continued support that Treasure Inn became a hangout for white college kids from the University of Minnesota, Hamline, Macalester, St. Thomas and Augsburg. So many flocked to the Inn, in fact, that the floor of this house-turned-nightclub had to be shored up to keep it from collapsing.”⁵⁹

vi. And Beyond

As the years passed, jazz faced increasing competition from the folk revival, rock, and other genres. By the late 1970s, one writer said that “jazz in the Twin Cities was somewhat in a funk, and there was no place to go to find information about local gigs by local jazz musicians.” Enthusiasm for jazz rebounded in February 1979 when the Twin Cities Jazz Society (TCJS) had its initial event and over two thousand people flocked to a concert at Saint Paul’s Prom Center featuring a variety of international and local jazz musicians. TCJS’s first newsletter, issued in April 1979, listed seventeen events including Herbie Mann and Phil Woods at the Longhorn and Herbie Hancock, Sarah Vahughan, and Tony Bennet at Orchestra Hall. All in all, thirteen Twin Cities clubs were hosting jazz events. TCJS helped stimulate interest in jazz. By the time it reached its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2004, TCJS claimed that “today, the Twin Cities has one of the most active jazz scenes in the world. Outside of New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, more jazz can be heard in the Twin Cities than anywhere else in the U.S.” In that twenty-five years, the number of jazz venues in the Twin Cities had jumped from thirteen to forty-nine, including the Dakota Jazz Club (which moved from Saint Paul to 1010 Nicollet Mall in 2003), Artists’ Quarter (opened on Twenty-sixth Street east of Nicollet in the early 1970s; closed in 1990 and reopened in Saint Paul several years later), Cafe Luxx (formerly in the Hotel Luxford, now the DoubleTree Suites, at 1101 LaSalle), the Times Cafe (on the Nicollet Mall in the current location of Target headquarters; the interior of the Times was salvaged and reassembled at the commercial space at 201 East Hennepin Avenue), Jazzmine’s (formerly at 123 North Third Street), and Rossi’s Blue Star Room (formerly at 80 South Ninth Street).⁶⁰

Radio station KBEM/Jazz 88, which became dedicated to jazz in 1986, also expanded the audience for the genre. In addition to offering jazz programs from Dixieland to avant-garde, the station did special live broadcasts from local venues and helped organize summer and winter jazz festivals. A program of the city’s school system, which provided its call letters (Board of Education of Minneapolis), the station used students to assist with broadcasting and operations, training a new generation to appreciate jazz music. And KBEM was not alone. By 2004, “Leigh Kamman’s ‘Jazz Image’ is still going strong in its thirty-first year, now on [MPR station] KNOW-FM. . . . KFAI has been broadcasting daily jazz programs for 25 years. KJZI/Jazz 100.3 programs smooth jazz; KLBB presents swing, big bands and vocalists; and WCAL plays jazz on the weekends.”⁶¹

⁵⁹ Swanson, *Sports and All that Jazz*, 63-64.

⁶⁰ Jerry Swanberg, “Then and Now: 25 Years of Jazz in the Twin Cities,” *Twin Cities Jazz Notes*, March 2004, 1, 3.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

Jazz was also promoted in concert hall settings. At the University of Minnesota, the Northrop Jazz Season was launched in 1979, joined in 1994 by jazz concerts at the Ted Mann Concert Hall. In downtown Minneapolis, Orchestra Hall included jazz acts in its many offerings, with Dixieland and Big Band shows in the mix. This music was also popular for summer concerts in Minneapolis parks, particularly the Lake Harriet Bandstand.

For Further Research

- The products of the “Jazz in the Twin Cities Oral History Project” are at the Minnesota Historical Society. The collection includes a number of sound recordings and eight volumes of transcripts from eight interviews of jazz musicians conducted by Carl Warmington and Margaret A. Robertson between 1987 and 1991.
- The role and influence of musicians’ unions merits further analysis. In the first decades of the twentieth century, Minneapolis was a notoriously anti-union town. Labor’s frustration with the open-shop system led to the 1934 truckers’ strike—“a skillfully organized labor offensive that catapulted the city into a state of virtual civil war,” according to historian Mary Lethert Wingerd.⁶² The American Federation of Musicians had an “office and club rooms . . . on Glenwood Avenue.” One musician explained that this was “a convenient congregating place where one might pick up a playing date, shoot pool, play cards, and be served a light lunch. In addition there was a club bootlegger who vended moonshine in special-sized bottles; the half pint was a comfortable pocket size and was supplied when you asked for an ‘E-flat.’”⁶³
- The effect of city regulations and fees, such as cabaret tax, also influenced the music scene. For example, Goetting quoted drummer Joe Kimball: “My first job after the war ended was at Schooner’s Tavern in South Minneapolis with John Robertson’s band. The group played until the 20 percent cabaret tax was put into effect.”⁶⁴

⁶² Wingerd, *Claiming the City*, 263.

⁶³ Goetting, *Joined at the Hip*, 49.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

d. A New Scene

World War II was a watershed for the United States. Military service exposed Minneapolitans to new cultures. This, along with the general prosperity following the war, brought change, and still more change was stimulated by the Vietnam War. Some musicians adapted folk traditions for the new age. Others turned up the volume and explored entirely new sounds. Bob Dylan, Prince, Hüsker Dü, the Replacements, and others gained international renown, putting Minneapolis music on the map.

i. Good Folk

By Charlene Roise

As historian Gillian Mitchell observed, the folk music revival that emerged in the 1940s was not a homogenous movement. Instead, it “represented a large umbrella under which gathered a plethora of musicians, students, academics, political and social activists, special-interest groups of various kinds, and admirers, young and old. Budding composers of anti-nuclear and civil rights protest songs, earnest graduate students with a passion for obscure Appalachian string-bands, and those interested in topping the charts with a new folk ballad, thereby becoming the next Kingston Trio, all found a place within the revival during its halcyon days in the late 1950s and early 1960s.”⁶⁵

The concept of folk music evolved in Europe in the late eighteenth century as intellectuals in evolving nation states sought ways to differentiate their country from others. Cultural traditions of local peasants, including their songs, were appropriated to reinforce national identity. In the nineteenth century, folk customs were embraced as an antidote to the jarring transformation brought about by industrialization. Interest in folk music broadened in the United States in the twentieth century, thanks in part to federal relief projects during the Depression that collected information on regional cultures. In addition, the proliferation of radio technology introduced folk music to larger audiences.⁶⁶

“Folk music began to leave the pages of the academic thesis and become part of performance culture” by the 1940s, according to Mitchell. While the tie to “left-wing intellectuals of the urban north” remained strong in the post-war period, the size of this sector of the population ballooned, as college enrollment increased more than four-fold from the 1940s to the 1960s. By 1970, half of all Americans between the ages of 18 and 22 were attending college. “The post-war world of suburban housing, mass culture and conformist values instilled in many . . . young people a sense of cultural disorientation and barrenness, for which the revival of folk music constituted part of the remedy.” Folk music was “also closely related to the political stance of many of these same ‘baby boomers.’ Folk music, during the early 1960s, continued to go hand-in-hand with political activism, and thus many of those who loved folk music also participated in civil rights struggles and in the budding student movement.” The sense of rebelliousness was influenced by the Beatnik movement of the 1950s and would, in turn, influence the rock culture that grew in the late 1960s.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Gillian Mitchell, *The North American Folk Music Revival: Nation and Identity in the United States and Canada, 1945-1980* (Hampshire, England; Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 1-2.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 9-10, 68-69, 95.



Gene Bluestein directing camp, 1956
(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

The foundations for the folk music revival in Minneapolis were planted in the first half of the twentieth century, according to historian Melinda Russell. “Early activity in Minnesota focused on collecting little-studied regional music. Historian Theodore Blegen published *Norwegian Emigrant Songs and Ballads* in 1936. The following year, Sidney Robertson and Minnesotan Marjorie Edgar recorded Minnesota musicians performing Scots Gaelic, Serbian, and Finnish music.” Russell added that “by the 1940s and 1950s, emphasis shifted from folk song collecting to performances and public education.”⁶⁸

This trend was exemplified by Gene Bluestein, who was born in New York in 1928 to Jewish immigrant parents and moved to Minneapolis in 1950 to enroll in the University of Minnesota’s cutting-edge American Studies program. Bluestein had been influenced as a child by contact with folk singer Pete Seeger, who used his musical talents to promote a leftist political agenda. Like Seeger, he took up the banjo and, according to an article in the *Minnesota Daily*, was “probably the leading student and performer of folk songs in the area. . . . His eclectic repertoire includes labor songs, sea shanties, and ‘Elizabethan’ folk songs.” Public performances included appearances on WDGY-AM radio. In 1957, he helped arrange a performance by Seeger at the Unitarian Society in Minneapolis. Russell noted that Bluestein “began a television show on American folksong on educational station KTCA Channel 2” in January 1958, and “followed that up in the spring with the *World of Folksong*.” This and subsequent shows “formed the basis of his *Minnesota School of the Air* educational radio programs, which were distributed for use in the classrooms in 15-minute lessons throughout the state in 1958-59.”⁶⁹

Work by musicians and academics like Bluestein set the stage for several camps of folk music in America by the mid-1960s that were delineated by folklorist Ellen Stekert:

- Traditional singers—“those who could be said to belong clearly to, and musically represent, a particular regional and ethnic tradition.”
- Imitators—Close followers of the traditional singers, who sought to replicate their music and lifestyles.
- Utilizers—Musicians who adapted traditional music for popular tastes.
- New aesthetic—Composers and performers inspired by folk music to create their own sound.

⁶⁸ Melinda Russell, “Dinkytown Before Dylan: Gene Bluestein and the Minneapolis Folk Music Revival of the 1950s,” *Minnesota History* 65 (Winter 2017-2018): 288-301.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Mitchell noted examples of the latter group, including “performers such as Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Pete Seeger, and their successors, such as James Taylor, Paul Simon, Janis Ian and Don McLean. . . . Their compositions, often employing folk song structures and traditional instrumentation, but nonetheless new, married the traditional idea of the folk song to the modern idea of commercial popular music,” broadening the definition of folk music in the process.⁷⁰

In a book published in 1976, *Minstrels of the Dawn: The Folk-Protest Singer as a Cultural Hero*, Jerome Rodnitzky pointed to Bob Dylan as one of four central figures of the folk movement along with Woody Guthrie, Phil Ochs, and Joan Baez. Dylan was born in Duluth, raised in Hibbing, and participated only briefly in the Minneapolis music scene, but he is claimed as a local legend in all three locations. In Minneapolis, he quickly lost patience with classes at the University of Minnesota, where he had enrolled in fall 1959, and moved to New York City in January 1961. He returned to Minneapolis occasionally, most memorably in December 1974 for two sessions at the recording studio Sound 80. These sessions produced five songs for *Blood on the Tracks*, often credited as his best album.⁷¹

During his initial residency in Minneapolis, Dylan frequented coffeehouses such as the Ten O’Clock Scholar in Dinkytown. Coffeehouses became popular milieus for folk music culture. Dylan had been drawn to the epicenter, Greenwich Village in New York City, which was soon imitated by entrepreneurs around the country. In Minneapolis, the coffeehouse scene was concentrated around the University of Minnesota campus, with nodes in the West Bank, Dinkytown, and Stadium Village. In addition to full-time coffeehouses, other venues, including church basements, appropriated the “coffeehouse” label to promote gathering spots. Amateur performers were often welcomed and open stages were common, reinforcing the populist nature of the movement. The Coffeehouse Extempore and the New Riverside Cafe were important venues in the Cedar-Riverside area. Folk music was also promoted by festivals, a concept started by the Newport Folk Festival in 1959.⁷²



New Riverside Cafe,
329 Cedar (extant), 1972
(source: Eugene Becker,
photographer;
Minnesota Historical
Society)

“Tips for Musicians
(Their Only Pay for
Entertaining You),”
from New Riverside
Cafe
(source: Minnesota
Historical Society)

⁷⁰ Mitchell, *North American Folk Music Revival*, 10-11.

⁷¹ Jerome L. Rodnitzky, *Minstrels of the Dawn: The Folk-Protest Singer as a Cultural Hero* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1976); David Kenney and Thomas Saylor, *Minnesota in the '70s* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2013), 85-87.

⁷² Mitchell, *North American Folk Music Revival*, 76-79.

Folk music—typically on the more blues-infused end of the folk music—also made it onto bar stages. A group that gained national followers, Koerner Ray and Glover, gained traction at the Triangle Bar and other West Bank saloons. Guitarist Dave Ray and harmonica-player Ray Glover got acquainted in 1960 during a “folk party” near the University of Minnesota. They were soon performing at local coffeehouses around the campus. During a visit to New York, they met guitarist John Koerner, who eventually joined them in Minneapolis.⁷³

Their first recording was made by a small studio in Wisconsin. In 1963, Elektra Records signed them to a recording contract, which resulted in three albums and brought invitations to folk festivals around the United States. According to reporter Jon Bream, the group’s success “opened the doors for artists such as bluesman Paul Butterfield, by indicating to major recording companies that musicians were delving beyond the accepted boundaries of traditional folk music.” The group influenced a new generation of musicians, such as Beck: “I discovered [Koerner Ray and Glover] records when I was about 14, when I was getting into playing guitar and folk music. They were a big influence because they seemed to be one of the only people from that folk-revival period who would just completely play their music with abandon.”⁷⁴

A year or two after recording *The Return of Koerner, Ray & Glover* in New York in 1965, the trio disbanded. Koerner moved back East to do solo work. By the late 1970s, Ray was part of a group called Snake, which was “necessarily eclectic,” according to Ray. A reviewer noted that the “sextet pays blues, jazz, rock and reggae. The only thing that seems to tie the songs together is that most of them are rhythm-oriented.” Ray and Glover came back together again in 1987 to make an album, but Koerner was busy doing solo work. After a thirty-one-year hiatus, the group reunited in 1996 to do another recording.⁷⁵

In addition to Koerner, Ray, and Glover, Minneapolis was fortunate to have an extensive array of talented folk musicians that supported a vibrant music scene. While coffeehouses and bars provided year-round venues, outdoor festivals were an opportunity to reach a broader audience. In spring 1978, for example, the Minneapolis Folklore Society hosted the West Bank Folk Festival, the first of what was planned to be an annual celebration. In addition to performances by local folk singers and groups, the festival offered acts from around the nation and the world. According to a neighborhood newspaper, the festival drew over two thousand attendees and “was a major artistic and financial success.”⁷⁶

The local folk scene was nurtured by Red House Records, which was established in Saint Paul in 1983. In the beginning, Red House recorded only Midwest artists playing folk music, blues, bluegrass, and Americana.

⁷³ Jon Bream, “Koerner, Ray and Glover Drift Together for Performance on Radio,” *Minneapolis Star*, September 11, 1975.

⁷⁴ Ibid.; Jon Bream, “Where It’s At,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 1, 1997.

⁷⁵ Jon Bream, “Snake Helping Guitarist Ray Pay the Rent,” *Minneapolis Star*, December 22, 1978; Jon Bream, “Koerner, Ray and Glover—Together Again,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 10, 1996.

⁷⁶ Mitchell, *North American Folk Music Revival*, 79; “First West Bank Folk Festival a Major Success,” *Many Corners*, April/May 1978.

Some folk devotees in Minneapolis channeled their energy into reviving ethnic music such as Jewish klezmer and Irish traditions. Mitchell noted that “Minnesota-born banjoist Leroy Larson, a key figure in the revival of Scandinavian music in the 1970s, mingled traditional and ‘old time’ Scandinavian music with original jazz-banjo and ragtime compositions.” The Snoose Boulevard Festival, an annual event on the West Bank for several years, built on the community’s Scandinavian roots. By the late 1980s, this ethnic focus had evolved into “world music, . . . a distinctive genre [that] was developed . . . essentially as a marketing strategy through which to promote global (particularly non-Western) styles of music.”⁷⁷

While the folk scene continued—and continues—to thrive in Minneapolis, it began to wane as a dominant movement on the national scene by the mid-1960s. Bob Dylan’s performance with the Paul Butterfield Blues Band at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965 is often cited as a watershed moment—when he “boldly and publicly indicated that he was tired of the perceived constrictions of the folk movement and desired a dramatic change of direction.” Rock’s ascendance, though, was well underway by this time, and “there was no point at which the folk revival suddenly vanished,” Mitchell observed. “Rather, as revival-style folk music mingled with the sounds of other popular music, the two began to merge and enrich one another.” Ultimately, “the concept of music as artistic expression”—which Dylan personified—“superseded the belief that music had, above all, a political responsibility.”⁷⁸

For Further Research

In-depth information on the Minneapolis folk music scene is in several collections at the Performing Arts Archives in the Archives and Special Collections at the Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota-Minneapolis. The library requires that original audio/video materials be converted into a digital format before they are used, and the researcher must bear this cost and allow time for it to be completed.

- The Al Haug/New Riverside Cafe Collection extends from 1965 into the twenty-first century. The cafe, the city’s first full-service vegetarian restaurant when it opened in 1970, moved in the following year to the intersection of Cedar and Riverside Avenues, ground zero for Minneapolis’s folk scene. The collectively managed business closed in 1997. Haug booked performances for the cafe and other West Bank venues and hosted folk music shows on KFAI radio. In addition to audio-cassette and reel-to-reel recordings of performances at the cafe, the collection includes administrative and promotional materials.
- The Cedar Social Video Collection has about 150 video cassette recordings and digital files of the show, which was broadcast on a Saint Paul cable channel, SPNN Metro Cable, between 1990 and 1996. Pop Wagner and Adam Granger hosted the two-hour-long programs. Guests included John Koerner, Dave Ray and Tony Glover (Koerner, Ray, and Glover); Stoney Lonesome; Bill Hinkley and Judy Larson; Robin and Linda Williams; Out of Africa; and Peter Ostroushko and Dean Magraw.
- The Red House Records Collection includes artists files, promotional materials, press clippings, and records from 1983 to 2011 associated with this important Saint Paul-based

⁷⁷ Mitchell, *North American Folk Music Revival*, 170-180.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 136-137, 142.

recording label. The finding aid notes that “the label specializes in folk music, blues, bluegrass, and Americana. . . . In the early years of the label’s existence, the company focused solely on folk music artists from the Midwest.” It later branched out to include artists from around the United States, as well as Canada and Great Britain.

The library’s Upper Midwest Literary Archives has a complete set (thirty issues) of *The Little Sandy Review*, a folk music fanzine published by Paul Nelson and Jon Pankake from 1949 to 1965. While published in Minneapolis, its focus was on prominent folk musicians from around the country. It did, though, cover local newcomers like Bob Dylan, The New Lost City Ramblers, and Koerner, Ray, and Glover.

ii. Singing the Blues

By Charlene Roise

According to historian Judy Henderson, blues was introduced to the area by “classic blues singers like Gertrude ‘Ma’ Rainey.” These musicians, “who first toured the Midwest and South with minstrel and vaudeville companies, formalized the blues idiom and paved the way for urban blues singers of the 1920s and 1930s.” Blues music did not gain much of a foothold in Minnesota, though, before the 1950s. Then, “following the national trend, blues spread to non-African-American audiences in Minnesota. Aficionados heard it in clubs including the Dome and the Key Club in Minneapolis. . . . Blues players such as ‘Lazy Bill’ Lucas, born in Arkansas in 1918, and Baby Doo Caston, who was born in Mississippi in 1917, attracted small followings among black and white audiences.”⁷⁹

As Henderson noted, Leonard “Baby Doo” Caston was one of the blues musicians who performed in the Twin Cities in the mid-twentieth century. A piano and guitar player, Caston moved from the South to Chicago in 1936, where he joined the Five Breezes. The group made records and had a few hits. He performed for the USO during World War II, then formed a new band, the Big Three Trio, with Willie Dixon and Ollie Crawford after the war. In 1949, the trio was apparently a house band at a Minneapolis bar, the Dome. In 1950, he married Minneapolitan Josephine Breedlove. After living in Jackson, Michigan, for twenty years, they came back to Minneapolis around 1970, where Caston continued to perform until his death in 1987. In 2011, the Twin Cities Blues Music Society posthumously gave Caston its first Blues Legacy award “for his lifetime contribution to and influence upon the Blues music genre in Minnesota.”⁸⁰

Like Caston, piano player and singer “Lazy Bill” Lucas came from the South to Chicago, where he arrived in 1941. After performing with blues greats including Snooky Pryor, Howlin’ Wolf, and Little Walter, he settled in Minneapolis in 1962, where he remained until his death in 1982. In addition to club gigs, he hosted the “Lazy Bill Lucas Show” on KFAI that promoted blues music.⁸¹

In Minneapolis, the blues and folk music scenes—as well as other musical genres—have often overlapped. Bonnie Raitt recalled that in the late 1960s and early 1970s, “The word on the East Coast . . . was how incredibly cool Minneapolis was because it was this seamless blend of folk and blues and rock and soul music.” While attending Radcliff College, she hung out at the club scene in Cambridge, Massachusetts. “Having seen John Koerner every Monday night at Jack’s Bar in Cambridge and hearing about Minneapolis through his eyes, it just had a legendary status the way Greenwich Village did.”⁸²

⁷⁹ Judy Henderson, *African American Music in Minnesota* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1994), 3.

⁸⁰ “Renowned Blues Musician (Baby Doo) Caston Dies” (obituary), *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 23, 1987; “Josephine Breedlove Caston” (obituary), *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 13, 2004; “Entertainers to Move Behind Bars,” *Minneapolis Star*, March 18, 1949; Greater Twin Cities Blues Music Society, “Bruce McCabe, Baby Doo Caston Honored at 2011 MN Blues Hall of Fame Ceremony” (press release), November 2, 2011.

⁸¹ Minnesota Blues Society, “Lazy Bill Lucas Profile,” <http://www.gtcblms.org/adopted/lucas.html>.

⁸² Jon Bream, “Raitt Shares Her Minnesota Memories,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, September 1, 1998.

An example of an interesting combination of genres and venue occurred at a concert in August 1970 at the Guthrie Theater. Titled “Homegrown,” the concert showcased only Minnesota musicians. A reviewer opined that “ ‘Homegrown’ connotes more than simply something grown at home. It conveys as well as feeling of pride which stems, not primarily from the exceptional merits of the product, but from accidental geographic association.” Among the acts performing were Roy Alstead: “He plays guitar and harp in a jazzy-bluesy way reminiscent of John Mayall and he does it extremely well.” A group called “Bamboo” with Dave Ray, Will Dunicht, Danny Hall, and Jeremy Hall, was less successful, “play[ing] somewhere between blues and rock, never combining the two satisfactorily. . . . They are much stronger on straight blues.” John Koerner “is great to watch and listen to. He’s a perpetual motion machine—stomping, strumming and singing at once, producing a complete, full sound which few solo musicians are able to accomplish.” Willie Murphy’s band was also on the line-up, featuring Wee Willie Walker, Russ Hagen, John Beach, Voyle Harris, Gene Hoffman, and Kenny Horst in addition to Murphy. “The group played blues-oriented soul. . . . This is a new type of music for Murphy, whose more familiar style was exhibited in a piece called ‘Conquistadors,’ which greatly resembled Brubeck’s ‘Take Five.’”⁸³

The eclectic bill continued with Leo Kottke, “a superb guitarist, playing styles varying from country blues to classical Bach with equal alacrity.” The closing act, the Sorry Muthas, featured Papa John Kolstad, Bob Steinicki, Cal Hand, Bull Hinkley, and Judy Larson, and “plays country-blues and bluegrass using phrasing which sometimes seems more like that used by radio groups of the ’30s and ’40s than like country singers. . . . The group is concerned with audience-group rapport and plays to the audience rather than concentrating on making their music authentic, which is the failing of so many of today’s country musicians.”⁸⁴

One of the “Homegrown” performers, Willie Murphy, provides an interesting case study of a local musician, typically labeled as a bluesman, whose long legacy extends beyond the blues. Murphy has been described by music critic Chris Riemenschneider as a “singer, songwriter, guitarist, pianist, filmmaker, and all-around argonaut.” While he developed a strong fan base in the Twin Cities, his popularity had a limited range, a common problem for local artists. As Riemenschneider observed, “In a music scene rife with musicians famous for not being more famous, Murphy might be the godfather.”⁸⁵

Born in the mid-1940s, he was raised in the Whittier neighborhood in South Minneapolis and started taking piano lessons at the age of four. He claimed that the area around Nicollet Avenue and Twenty-sixth Street “was the bohemian district way before the West Bank.” He started playing house parties in the area with Dave Ray, “and gigged steadily with R&B bands in such Lake St. clubs as Mr. Lucky’s and Magoo’s,” both near Nicollet and Twenty-ninth Street.⁸⁶

⁸³ Kristen Bachler, “Homegrown Talent at Guthrie Shows Cause for Pride,” *Minneapolis Star*, August 24, 1970.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Chris Riemenschneider, “Willie Murphy’s Odyssey,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, February 5, 2010.

⁸⁶ Jim Meyer, “The ‘Mayor of Mill City,’ Willie Murphy Keeps on Running with an Autobiographical Release,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 29, 1997; Jean Andersen, “Mr. Lucky’s,” Twin Cities Music Highlights, <https://twincitiesmusichighlights.net/venues/mr-luckys/>; Jean Andersen, “Cream at the New City Opera House,” Twin Cities Music Highlights, <https://twincitiesmusichighlights.net/creamnco/>. Magoo’s and Mr. Lucky’s were were apparently displaced for the construction of a K-Mart.

In 1969, Murphy teamed up with “Spider” John Koerner to record an album, “Blues, Rags and Hollers,” for a national label, Elektra. The album became a classic and was reissued by Red House Records in 1994. Murphy’s next success came in 1971 when an emerging talent, Bonnie Raitt, came to town and he produced her first album with her engineer-producer brother, Steve Raitt. (Raitt made her Minneapolis performing debut that year at the Whole Coffeehouse in at the University of Minnesota’s Coffman Union.) Murphy’s skills were challenged by the primitive “recording studio,” pulled together by Dave Ray in a barn on an island in Lake Minnetonka.⁸⁷

Elektra offered Murphy a job as a house producer, requiring a move to New York or Los Angeles, but he decided to hunker down in Minnesota and start a band, Willie and the Bees. The band, which Riemenschneider christened “the greatest party band this town has ever seen,” played off and on for twenty-three years.⁸⁸

Murphy founded a record company, Atomic Theory, in 1985, claiming “I don’t want to be a folk label.” In addition to releasing an album of his own music, “Piano Hits Willie Murphy/Willie Murphy Hits Piano,” he produced records for “veteran country singer Becky Thompson, world-beat rockers Boiled in Lead, and the New International Trio, which mixes Cambodian sounds with elements of classical and folk music.”⁸⁹

In the 1990s, he began summer tours in Europe, playing festivals throughout the continent. This is a common pattern for Minneapolis musicians, who enjoy the money and relative fame they achieve abroad that is more elusive in the United States.⁹⁰

Murphy’s talents, however, did not go unrecognized at home. In 1990, when the Minnesota Music Academy launched the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame, Murphy joined Prince and Bob Dylan as the inaugural inductees. In the first year of the Mill City Music Festival in 1996, he was proclaimed “Mayor of Mill City.” A *Minneapolis Star Tribune* poll in 1997 listed Willie and the Bees in the Top 10 of “the best local live bands of all time.”⁹¹

Curt Obeda, vocalist and guitar player for the Butanes, a popular local blues group, called Murphy “probably my favorite white soul/blues singer.” In a 2010 interview, though, Murphy cautioned, “I love to play blues, but don’t cast me strictly as a blues guy. . . . I know I’m better at it than most people around here, but that doesn’t mean it’s what I do best.”⁹² This had been his refrain for decades as he continually pushed musical boundaries. A preview for a 1989 show at the Guthrie warned: “Don’t expect solo blues-styled piano like the music Murphy offers weekly at the 400 Bar on the West Bank. Don’t expect the kind of jazz R&B he plied with Willie and the Bees, his top-notch dance-oriented band that broke up four years ago.” Instead, Murphy was showcasing a new album, “Mr. Mature,” that he had recently released on his Atomic Theory label. A reviewer noted that “the recording is about as eclectic and intriguing as an hour of music

⁸⁷ Riemenschneider, “Willie Murphy’s Odyssey”; Jon Bream, “Raitt Shares Her Minnesota Memories,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, September 1, 1998.

⁸⁸ Riemenschneider, “Willie Murphy’s Odyssey.”

⁸⁹ “Atomic Theory to Wide Angle: A Guide to Local Record Labels,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 7, 1989.

⁹⁰ Riemenschneider, “Willie Murphy’s Odyssey.”

⁹¹ Ibid.; Jim Meyer, “The ‘Mayor of Mill City,’ Willie Murphy Keeps on Running with an Autobiographical Release,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 29, 1997.

⁹² Riemenschneider, “Willie Murphy’s Odyssey.”

on the alternative-music radio station Cities 97.” For the Guthrie show, he sang, played guitar and keyboard, and was backed by talent from a variety of groups: “Vocalists Melanie Rosales and Margaret Cox, both members of Dr. Mambo’s Combo; keyboardist Lisa Krieger of Ipso Facto; drummer Michael Bland, who plays with Mambo’s Combo, Mubbla Buggs, and others; bassist Jim Anton of Beat the Clock; percussionist Jose James, formerly of Willie and the Bees; guitarist Billy Franze of Mambo’s Combo, and violinist Wendy Ultan, who freelances.”⁹³

For Further Research

As this overview of Murphy’s career shows, local musicians frequently collaborated for one-time events and as groups. The group Koerner, Ray, and Glover is discussed in the folk section. Blues is also intertwined with rhythm-and-blues music and strongly influenced rock. Further research is needed on the city’s many talented individual musicians and groups as well as the venues that supported them.



Triangle Bar, 1974

(source: *Linda Gammell Photographs, Hennepin County Library*)

⁹³ Jon Bream, “Willie Murphy Takes on New Image—No More ‘Bees’ R&B, He’s Mr. Mature,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, April 28, 1989.

iii. The Minneapolis Sound, R&B, and Funk

By Kristen Zschomler

As noted above, the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul was home to a small but vibrant black community in the twentieth century. From 1910 to 1970, millions of blacks fled the South due to lack of jobs, Jim Crow laws that perpetuated segregation, and the promise of a better future for their families in northern industrialized cities. The migration occurred in two waves: 1910 to 1940 and 1940 to 1970. In 1910, only 0.3 percent of Minnesota's population was black. By 1930, there were 9,445 blacks in the state, or roughly 0.4 percent of the population. The years between 1950 and 1970, the "Second Great Migration," saw Minnesota's biggest influx of blacks from the South. Minneapolis's black population grew 436 percent; Saint Paul's by 388 percent; and the state's overall population by 1,583 percent. Even though the overall percentage increased greatly, the 34,868 blacks in Minnesota by 1970 still accounted for only about one percent of the state's overall population.⁹⁴



Nacirema Club, 3949 Fourth Avenue South, Minneapolis, 1975.

(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

While the North offered hope of a better future, the new arrivals faced *de facto* segregation in Minnesota, with restrictive housing covenants on deeds preventing blacks from purchasing homes in many areas. As a result, three distinct black neighborhoods developed in Minneapolis: the Northside, the Seven Corners area, and the Southside. The Southside neighborhood was located between roughly Thirty-Eighth and Forty-Sixth Streets and bounded by Chicago Avenue on the east and Nicollet Avenue on the west. "The corridor along Fourth Avenue South was the Black community's residential heart. Thirty-eighth Street and

Fourth Avenue was the center of the Black business district, with over twenty Black-owned businesses from the 1930s to the 1970s." The Northside, a predominately Jewish community during the 1920s with numerous business along Plymouth and Sixth Avenue (later Olson Memorial Highway), experienced a demographic shift throughout the mid-twentieth century as more blacks settled in the neighborhood and the area's Jewish occupants moved into the surrounding suburbs of Golden Valley and Saint Louis Park. The Seven Corners area was where Cedar and Washington Avenues intersected.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Frank Hobbs and Nicole Stopps, "Demographic Trends in the 20th Century" in United States Census Bureau, Census 2000 Special Reports (Series CENSR-4) (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2002), A-21, A-26.

⁹⁵ Calvin F. Schmidt, *Social Saga of the Twin Cities: An Ecological and Statistical study of Social Trends in Minneapolis and St. Paul* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Council of Social Agencies, Bureau of Social Research, 1937); Tina Burnside, "Southside African American Community," *MNopedia*, accessed February 12, 2017, <http://www.mnopedia.org/place/southside-african-american-community-minneapolis>; Carole Zellie and Garneth O. Peterson, "North Minneapolis: Minneapolis Historic Context Study," 1998, 27–29, 39, prepared by Landscape Research for the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission and the Minneapolis Planning Department.

Along with the vibrant neighborhoods, churches, and businesses in these communities, there was a dynamic music scene:

R&B, soul, and funk music in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota went through dramatic changes during the 1960s and 1970s. Predating these changes, a vibrant jazz scene beginning in the 1920s laid the groundwork with several players being instrumental in helping teach young local R&B musicians how to play. However, many of the early R&B pioneers, including Mojo Buford, Maurice McKinnies, and Willie Walker, came to Minnesota from other states and brought the music with them. They were born in the south and moved to the Twin Cities already full of experience in the worlds of blues and gospel.

This local music scene largely did not extend beyond the black community, with only a few curious whites venturing into clubs in black neighborhoods to experience it first-hand. In the mid-1960s, a night on the town starting in North Minneapolis and heading south would mirror the progression of musical styles. If you started at the Blue Note, you would likely catch Bobby Lyle playing jazz with Gene and Jerry Hubbard. A short walk south to Jimmy Fuller's Regal Tavern could entail a performance by Mojo Buford and his "Chi 4" playing Chicago-based blues. Heading further south into downtown to King Solomon's Mines might include a performance by a soul group with gospel roots such as the Amazers. Leaving downtown on Nicollet Ave to South Minneapolis would take you to Mr. Lucky's and the adjacent Magoo's where Dave Brady and the Stars would be playing the latest R&B hits from the Temptations, The Impressions and others.

Beginning in the late 1960s, show bands became big draws in the Twin Cities. Notably, Maurice McKinnies & The Blazers added other singers to emphasize the show aspect during performances and later the Valdons became wildly popular with a front of four singers backed by the nine piece Navajo Train. Up to that point, a definitive Minnesota R&B style had not yet developed, but the foundation for a new sound was being laid. The players in the scene were flexible, as it was the only way to be a full-time musician in the Twin Cities. If you weren't getting gigs playing R&B, you sat in playing jazz or sometimes rock. In addition, the music community was tight, as groups were established but lineups were rarely set in stone. The closeness of the overall scene allowed a musician the opportunity to sit in with a variety of groups and learn multiple styles. By the mid-1970s, Willie and The Bumblebees, Band of Thieves, and Prophets of Peace were playing a fusion of R&B, funk, jazz and rock. By the late 1970s, the Lewis Connection took this fusion and added synthesizers and a disco-influenced feel. . . .

As with the previously mentioned housing covenants, black artists faced similar segregation in where they could perform. Chicago transplant Mojo Buford stated: "I don't like what the club owners are doing to black musician. Think about how I've been kicked around, dogged by musicians, club owners and booking agents. It's hell on a black man here trying to make it. I just can't figure it out. If you got over two blacks in your band, you can't get a gig. That's pitiful."⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Will Gilbert, Eric Foss, and Danny Sigelman, "Twin Cities Funk and Soul," *Secret Stash: Dedicated to Uncovering Music History* 1 (September 25, 2012): 3-4.

Not only was it difficult to find venues as a live musician, many black artists in the Twin Cities could not get national exposure to move their careers to the next level. After years of trying to make it in Minnesota, many stopped performing or relocated, such as the silken-voiced and charismatic Willie Walker, who retired, or Maurice McKinnies, who left for better opportunity in the San Francisco Bay area, or “Minnesota’s Queen of Soul” Wanda Davis, who returned home to Louisiana.⁹⁷

Segregation in Minneapolis was not just limited to housing restrictions, but also where black artists could perform and attend shows. Most major downtown venues did not hire black musicians and faced consequences when they catered to black audiences, such as King Solomon’s Mines and the Flame Bar. When King Solomon’s first opened in the previous location of the Five O’Clock Club, it provided its mainly white audience with light jazz. After Dean Constantine took over the business in late 1966, he brought in acts such as the Coleman Hector Afro-Cuban Sextet, Dave Brady and the Stars, the Infinites, the Amazers, Maurice McKinnies and the Blazers and the Exciters. Two years later, he was raided and his liquor license revoked, forcing the club to close, the same fate that would befall The Flame about a decade later when it introduced live R&B and funk acts (see “Jazz” section). Numerous black-owned venues, such as the Cozy Bar, the Blue Note, and Peacock Alley, were demolished by roadway construction and urban renewal efforts.⁹⁸

While many black artists struggled to find venues or broader opportunities, several



Dancing at King Solomon’s Mines, 1967.
(source: Mike Zerby, photographer; Minnesota Historical Society)



Robert Martin, Jimmy Wallace, and Billy Halloman at the Blue Note, ca. 1975-1985
(source: Charles Chamblis; Minnesota Historical Society)

⁹⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 29.

key groups bridged the racial divide and created a vision of integrated music that the city's most famous musician would specifically seek when forming his first band, The Revolution. Acts like Dave Brady and The Stars, Prophets of Peace, Band of Thieves, and Willie and the Bees included black and white artists. As reported in *Secret Stash: Dedicated to Uncovering Music History*: "Dave Brady and the Stars were one of the first R&B groups in the Twin Cities to find crossover success with white audiences. Carl Bradley recalls, 'White Minnesotans would see The Temptations on the television or buy their records but they would never see R&B around town until Dave Brady and The Stars.' Being a band with both black and white members, they had more opportunities than all-black bands to play R&B for white audiences."⁹⁹

Several key recordings were made in Minneapolis that spread the developing sound beyond the local live music scene. The first known R&B recording in the state was done in the basement of a modest Northside home at 1501 Newton Avenue North. David Hersk was fifteen years old at the time, and ran Gaity Records out of his parents' house. He recorded the Quarter Notes, an R&B group from Robbinsdale, in 1954.¹⁰⁰

Minneapolis's first black record label, Black and Proud Records, was created by local DJ Jack Harris after he moved to Minneapolis in 1968. Between 1968 and 1969, the label produced five albums, most of which were recorded at Kay Bank Studio at 2541 Nicollet Avenue (extant). The first song recorded under Harris's label was Maurice McKinnies and the Champions' "Sock-A-Poo-Poo '69 (Parts I & II)" and through Harris's connections, the song saw airplay not only on the local station KUXL, but also in the Detroit and Memphis markets. The group later recorded "Sweet Smell of Perfume" / "Pouring Water on a Drowning Man." While label-founder Harris was in Minneapolis for only a short stint, he had a huge influence on the local R&B, funk, and soul music scene:¹⁰¹



Former Cookhouse Studio, 2018. The building previously housed the Kay Bank Studio, where several recordings were made in the 1960s.
(source: Kristen Zschomler)

Jack Harris performed as a musician before moving to Minnesota, but once he started working at KUXL his focus changed to being a DJ and promoting groups and shows. KUXL radio personalities had a tradition of promoting black music events, but "Jack Harris came in and took it to another level. He was always at the clubs to talk with the

⁹⁹ Gilbert, Foss, and Sigelman, "Twin Cities Funk and Soul," 6.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Campbell, "Gaity Records (David Hersk)," Minniepaulmusic.com, 2013, http://minniepaulmusic.com/?page_id=3356.

¹⁰¹ Gilbert, Foss, and Sigelman, "Twin Cities Funk and Soul," 8-10.

bands and club owners and promote shows,” recalls Herman Jones, the drummer for the Exciters. It was through these events that Jack got to know Maurice McKinnies and The Champions and The Exciters. Though Jack did not perform live in Minnesota, he was the emcee for many concerts and was behind the recordings for the Champions and Exciters. “All that stuff [was] Jack. I couldn’t even come up with a name like that! ‘Sock-A-Poo-Poo,’ ‘Work Your Flapper.’ He was coming up with these things to catch people by surprise,” recalls a chuckling Ronnie Scott, the organ player for the Champions.¹⁰²

Harris was not only a DJ, songwriter, and promoter, he was a recording artist on his own label. Performing under the stage name Jackie Harris and the Champions, the group recorded “Do It, To It / Get Funky, Sweat A Little Bit” and “Work Your Flapper (Parts I & II).” The Midnight Stompers was the other act on Black and Proud Records, recording “King Lover” / “A New Dance, Solid Cow.” Harris left Minneapolis in 1970 to work at a new radio station in Nebraska, but in his two short years in the city, he left an indelible mark on the local music scene.¹⁰³

The legacy of this generation of musicians with their ability to play all musical styles laid the foundation for the young artists coming up behind them. Together, this foundation combined with the vision of the next generation of artists created a new sound that dominated the sonic landscape of the 1980s, and still reverberates today.

Many of the key locations associated with the R&B, funk, and blues scenes have been demolished, often by roadway expansion. Only six (perhaps seven) of the twenty-one locations identified in the publication *Secret Stash* are extant:

<i>Venue</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Current Condition</i>
ASI	711 West Broadway Avenue	Demolished
Blue Note	622 Eleventh Avenue North	Demolished for highway construction
Club Malibu	334 East Lake Street	Extant
Cozy Bar	522 Plymouth Avenue North	Demolished for highway construction
The Depot/Uncle Sam’s/First Avenue	701 First Avenue	Extant
The Flame	1523 Nicollet Avenue	Extant
Jet-A-Way	654 Second Avenue South	Demolished
Kay Bank	2541 Nicollet Avenue	Extant
King Solomon’s Mines	114 South Ninth Street	Building extant (Foshay Tower), interior rebuilt
Marigold Ballroom	1336 Nicollet Avenue	Demolished
Minneapolis Armory	500 South Sixth Street	Extant
Minneapolis Auditorium	1301 Second Avenue South	Demolished
Mr. Lucky’s, Magoo’s, and Mattie’s BBQ	West Twenty-Ninth Street and Nicollet Avenue	Mr. Lucky’s and Magoo’s demolished; Mattie’s possibly

¹⁰² Ibid., 9.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 8-11.

<i>Venue</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Current Condition</i>
		still extant at 2835 Nicollet Avenue South
Nic ‘O’ Lake Records	Lake Street and Nicollet Avenue	Demolished
Peacock Alley	220 North Fifth Street	Demolished for highway construction
Phyllis Wheatley Center	809 Aldrich Avenue North	Demolished
Regal Tavern	Seventh Street and Olson Memorial Highway	Demolished for highway construction
Riverview Supper Club	2314 West River Road	Demolished
Sound 80	2709 East Twenty-Fifth Street	Extant
The Taste Show Lounge	14 North Fifth Street	Extant
The Way	1913 Plymouth Avenue North	Demolished

Another key location for this era is the Nacirema Club at 3949 Fourth Avenue South, which still stands.

“The Power and the Glory, the Minneapolis Story—Prince” and the Minneapolis Sound

The “Minneapolis Sound” is a musical genre created in the early 1980s and defined as a blending of rhythm and blues, jazz, funk, rock and roll, new wave, and punk. The Minneapolis Sound grew out of the city’s dynamic and diverse music scene, where young African American musicians growing up in the 1960s and 1970s—Prince (Rogers Nelson), André Cymone (Anderson), Morris Day, James “Jimmy Jam” Harris III, Terry Lewis, and others—absorbed the R&B, jazz, funk, and rock of their predecessors, and combined it with the new wave and punk sounds emerging from England and New York City.¹⁰⁴



Prince’s childhood home, 2620 Eighth Avenue North, 2018. Prince lived here from 1965 through approximately 1973.

(source: *Kristen Zschomler*)

Prince was the principal architect of the Minneapolis Sound. A true musical prodigy, Prince mastered the piano by about age eight while living at 2620 Eighth Avenue North, where he could play anything he heard by ear on the piano and began songwriting. He mastered the guitar as a young teenager, and also played the bass and drums, heavily employed synthesizers and drum machines in his songs, and was an accomplished studio engineer. When asked to define the Minneapolis Sound, Prince’s former band member and protégé, producer James “Jimmy Jam” Harris III, said, “It’s a Prince sound. I

¹⁰⁴ Kristen Zschomler, “Prince (1958-2017),” *MNopedia*, <http://www.mnopedia.org/person/prince-1958-2016>.

think that's where it all began, and everyone's taken different pieces of it and turned it into their own sound.”¹⁰⁵ In fact, over his career, Prince was involved with scores of side projects with associated artists where he performed, wrote, arranged, and/or produced, helping to spread the Minneapolis Sound throughout the 1980s.¹⁰⁶ This section of the context, therefore, primarily focus on Prince and those aspects of his career directly tied to Minneapolis. A full discussion of his career through the building of Paisley Park in 1987 is presented in the “Prince, 1958-1987” National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (see Appendix D). Other key artists from Minneapolis associated with the Minneapolis Sound are presented after the discussion of Prince.

Prince and his friends were keenly focused on music, absorbing songs they heard on local radio stations KUXL, KQRS, and KMOJ, and listening to the house bands at the recently formed Northside community center, The Way. Prince's Northside neighborhood was undergoing dramatic changes in the late 1960s and early 1970s. During the 1960s, frustration grew among many black communities that were not seeing the economic growth that the majority of other Americans experienced following World War II. Even with a small black population and collaboration between black advocates and white supporters in the liberal-leaning city of Minneapolis, tensions still boiled over in the summer of 1966 and again the following year. Riots tore through the Northside, and National Guard troops were called in to keep the peace.¹⁰⁷

After the riots, community leaders and local and state politicians met to try to address some of the disparities experienced in the community. While arguably little systemic change resulted from the discussions, one positive outcome was the creation of The Way Community Center in August 1966 (1900 block of Plymouth Avenue North; demolished). The center became a key hangout location for area youth, and offered a strong music program: “Before long, The Way had an official band – The Family – that merged covers of songs by Jimi Hendrix, James Brown, and Earth, Wind, & Fire with its own R&B originals. It was a magnet for talented black youth in the city, starting with a core group of northsiders, include



The Way Community Center, 1913 Plymouth Avenue North, late 1960s.

(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

¹⁰⁵ Emily Goldberg, “The Minneapolis Sound” (Saint Paul: KTCA2 Production, 1988), <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x599owa>.

¹⁰⁶ According to the PrinceVault.com Chart History page, Prince was involved in the works of twenty-four associated artists who charted on the Top 100 Singles, thirty-seven on the R&B Singles, forty on the Billboard R&B Albums, twenty-two on the Top Disco Dance Singles, and forty-four on the Top 200 Albums lists.

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Rosh, “Black Empowerment in 1960s Minneapolis: Promise, Politics and the Impact of the National Urban Narrative” (master’s thesis, Saint Cloud State University, Saint Cloud, Minn., March 2013).



Participants in the Walker-Bryant Art Workshop, a summer arts school for middle and high school students at Bryant Junior High School, 1968. Prince Rogers Nelson is not pictured; however, this workshop might have attracted the young artist to the school.

(source: *Eric Sutherland, Walker Art Center*)

Joe Lewis Sr., Randy Barber, Pierre Lewis, and Sonny Thompson.”¹⁰⁸

As older teens, Prince, Charles, Terry, André, and other musically inclined kids hung out at The Way, absorbing the music of The Family and other local musicians, even joining in and jamming, and trying out the various musical instruments at the center. This opportunities provided at The Way were critical to the musicians’ early musical development, including the exposure to live R&B and rock music, and also created important connections. For Prince specifically, he performed as a session musician at age seventeen with The Lewis Connection, which included bassist Sonny Thompson. Thompson would later join Prince’s 1990s band The New Power Generation.¹⁰⁹

Prince, his older cousin Chazz, André, and Terry formed their first band in the early 1970s, eventually landing on the

name Grand Central. In its earliest manifestations, the band was essentially egalitarian, with Charles as the *de facto* leader, since he was the original founder and lead singer. The band rehearsed at Charles’s house first, then latter in André’s attic or basement at 1244 Russell Avenue North,¹¹⁰ or in Terry’s house next door at 1248 Russell, including occasionally setting up in Terry’s enclosed back porch where neighborhood kids would hang out in the alley to listen and dance. Percussionist William “Hollywood” Doughty joined Grand Central, and André’s sister Linda began playing with the group after Prince’s father gave him a Farfisa organ. With Linda on keyboards, Prince was freed up to play lead guitar. They covered their favorite bands, like Sly and the Family Stone, Grand Funk Railroad, and Santana, and began branching out with original songs.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Andrea Swensson, *Got To Be Something Here: The Rise of the Minneapolis Sound* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 53.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹¹⁰ Prince also lived with André at 1244 Russell Avenue North between 1975 and 1976 when he was sixteen to seventeen years old. Barbara Graustark, “Prince: Strange Tales from André’s Basement . . . and Other Fantasies Come True,” *Musician Magazine*, September 1983.

¹¹¹ Charles Smith, email communication and in-person interviews with Kristen Zschomler., 2017; Terry Jackson, “Terry Jackson Recounts Formation of the Minneapolis Sound,” interview in *Insight News*, July 5, 2004, http://www.insightnews.com/aesthetics/terry-jackson-recounts-formation-of-minneapolis-sound-part/article_07a849bc-4d41-5bce-8666-00a96f517388.html; Ericka Blount Danois, “Minneapolis music Pioneer André Cymone Speaks for the First Time in Twenty-Seven Years,” *Wax Poetic*, October 29, 2012, <http://www.waxpoetics.com/blog/features/articles/André-cymone/>; Matt Thorne, *Prince: The Man and His Music* (Chicago: Bolden, 2016).



Grand Central percussionist Terry Jackson's home, 2018.
The band Grand Central often rehearsed here.
(source: *Kristen Zschomler*)

Prince attended Bryant Junior High School on the city's Southside for seventh and eighth grades (1970-1972), likely due to the strong music courses the school offered. James "Jimmy Jam" Harris III also attend Bryant, and the two bonded over music.¹¹² Harris later met Terry Lewis, and the two formed the band Flyte Tyme, which would often play in Battle of the Bands against Prince's bands.

The democracy of Grand Central was soon challenged through two incidents in approximately 1974 or 1975 that resulted in a major power shift and established Prince as the clear front man. First,

Charles, André, and Terry wanted to add saxophonist and rhythm guitar player David Eiland. Many R&B and even rock bands had a solid horn section, and they thought Grand Central would benefit from adding this traditional element. Prince was apoplectic and threatened to quit over the suggestion. Jackson claims they all backed down, letting Prince have his way. The reason for Prince's vehement opposition to the suggestion is unclear. Prince was also part of the decision in late 1974 to replace his cousin Charles, the band's original leader and drummer, with Morris Day, a drummer from North High School. Charles's football schedule often conflicted with band practice, so Prince and André decided to replace him with Day. Under both drummers, the band was notorious for its musicality and showmanship, often participating in and winning Battle of the Bands competitions or playing at school dances.¹¹³ It was also around this time, in early 1975, that the sixteen-year-old Prince moved into André's house at 1244 Russell Avenue North, his "last stop after going from my dad's to my aunt's, to different homes and going through just a bunch of junk."¹¹⁴

After Charles' departure, the band was renamed Champagne (Shampagne in some sources). By early 1976, Prince, André, and Morris continued doing live performances, and recorded six original songs at A.S.I. studio in north Minneapolis (711 West Broadway Avenue; demolished). David Rivkin was the sound engineer at the studio, and helped them record their original songs "39th St. Party," "Grand Central," "Lady Pleasure," "Machine," "Whenever," and "You're Such a Fox." Saint Louis Park-native Rivkin (a.k.a. David Z) and his younger brother Bobby (a.k.a. Bobby Z) would play a key role in Prince's rise to fame over the next few years—David as his sound engineer, recording the demo tapes that landed Prince a major recording contract and overseeing the live recording at First Avenue of Prince's most recognizable song, "Purple Rain,"

¹¹² Zschomler, "Prince (1958-2016)"; Cathy Applefeld Olson, "Jimmy Jam on Rocking Out with Prince in the 7th Grade and His Lifelong Chicago Fandom," *Billboard*, June 14, 2017.

¹¹³ Jackson, "Terry Jackson Recounts Formation of the Minneapolis Sound"; Ronin Ro, *Prince: Inside the Music and the Masks* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016), 11; Smith, 2017.

¹¹⁴ Graustark, "Prince."

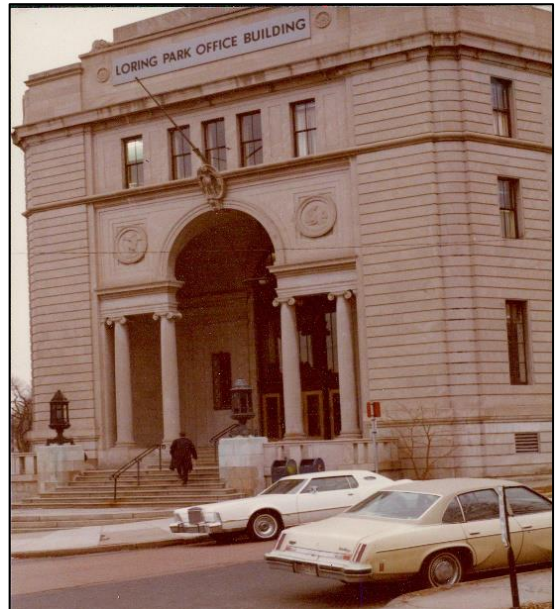
and Bobby as the drummer in The Revolution, his first band as a Warner Bros. recording artist.¹¹⁵

It was also in early 1976 that the trio recorded at Moon Sound Studios, which was briefly located at 4937 Twenty-Eighth Avenue South in Minneapolis after moving out of the basement at 5708 Stevens Avenue South. It relocated to 2828 Dupont Avenue South by the end of the year. Owner Chris Moon's modest recording fees, compared to other studios, allowed numerous black artists to record demo tapes. A writer, producer, and sound engineer, Moon did not want to perform and was looking for a band to record his songs. It was during that session that Moon asked the shy, seventeen-year-old Prince if he was interested in working with him. Since Prince played the keyboards, guitar, drums, and bass, Moon figured it would be easier to work with one person instead of assembling a group. Prince accepted Moon's offer and would go to the Lake Nokomis studio, and then Moon's new Dupont Avenue studio later that year, to compose, arrange, and record the songs Moon left for him, including the co-penned "Soft and Wet," which would end up on Prince's first album. Through this collaboration, Prince was able to begin mastering studio recording and engineering techniques, a key to his ability to create his own sound as a Warner Bros. artist a few years later.¹¹⁶

Moon tried to connect the young artist with record companies in New York City, but nothing came of it. Prince asked Moon to manage him, but Moon had no interest in the more mundane aspects of managing, so he contacted a local ad executive and former musician Owen Husney. Husney was blown away when he heard the recordings of Prince playing all the instruments and singing, and even more so when Moon explained the Prince also did all the recording and engineering. Moon brought the young artist to Husney's home at 4248 Linden Hills Boulevard in Minneapolis, the first floor of duplex (extant), and Husney became Prince's first official manager, working to get "the next Stevie Wonder" a major recording



Moon Sound Studio, 2018. Prince worked with owner Chris Moon here in the first half of 1976, before the studio moved to Dupont Avenue (which was later demolished).
(source: Kristen Zschomler)



Owen Husney's office and studio location, 1970s. Husney was Prince's first manager and helped him land his recording contract with Warner Bros. in 1977
(source: Hennepin County Library Special Collections)

¹¹⁵ Per Nilsen, *Prince: A Documentary* (London: Omnibus Press, 1999), 25, 259. The Rivkin brothers grew up at 3725 Glenhurst Avenue South, Saint Louis Park.

¹¹⁶ Thorne, *Prince*, 22-23.



Sound 80 Studios, 2018. Prince recorded his demo tapes here, which landed him his Warner Bros. recording contract in June 1977.
(source: *Daniel R. Pratt*)

contract.¹¹⁷ He found Prince an apartment at 2012 Aldrich Avenue South (extant) in Uptown and paid for it so the young artist could focus on his music. Husney's office was in the Northwestern National Life Insurance Company building at 430 Oak Grove. Husney set up photo shoots for Prince and time for the young artist to record demo tapes at the premier studio in Minneapolis, Sound 80, at 2709 East Twenty-Fifth Street (extant), where Husney's former bandmate David Z was a sound engineer.¹¹⁸

Sound 80 was widely recognized as the top recording location in the Twin Cities at the time. National artists Bob Dylan

(*Blood on the Tracks*, 1975) and Cat Stevens (*Izitzo*, 1977)¹¹⁹ recorded there, along with local bands such as the Suburbs and the Suicide Commandos (*Make A Record*, 1977). "Funkytown" by Lipps, Inc. was recorded at Sound 80 in 1979 and charted at Number 1 in 28 countries the following year.¹²⁰ The studio also holds the distinction of creating the world's first digital recording for commercial release. The Grammy-Award-winning album, recorded in 1978, featured "Appalachian Spring" by Aaron Copeland and "Three Places in New England" by Charles Ives, performed by the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and recorded on 3M recording equipment.¹²¹

Between December 1976 and approximately April 1977, the eighteen-year-old Prince and Rivkin re-recorded many of the Moon Sound demos, along with some new numbers. Prince arrived at Sound 80 on his own to record his demo tapes, with no backup band. He planned to sing all of the parts and play all the instruments himself. Rivkin explained the process: "We'd have everything set up, drums in one corner, piano in the next, guitar in the next. He'd play the drum part on his cassette machine and he'd sit down and play the drums. Then when it came time to

¹¹⁷ Goldberg, *The Minneapolis Sound*.

¹¹⁸ Nilsen, *Prince*, page; Certificate of Title to Prince Rogers Nelson, title number G22000459 issued August 15, 1977, Hennepin County, Minnesota.

¹¹⁹ Cat Steven's *Izitzo* is considered a pioneering album in the synth-pop genre, with its use of the LinnDrum machine and Polymoogs. This may have been what drew him to record at Sound 80, since they had invested in cutting-edge equipment. Prince was recording in the studio at the same time as Stevens, and he would observe the older artist, noting his professionalism and musical skills. It is intriguing to think about how the experimental sounds that Stevens was creating inspired the young artist, who would come to define his sound with LinnDrum machines and Polymoogs, and was considered the King of Synth-pop by the early 1980s. Cat Steven's song "Was Dog a Doughnut?," recorded in Copenhagen and included in the final album, is a B-boy classic and often sampled song by Hip-Hop and Rap artists. Dave Kenney and Thomas Saylor, *Minnesota in the 70s* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2014), 95; Kakairie 2015.

¹²⁰ Ironically, the song laments about wanting to leave Minneapolis for a funkier place—New York City—and was recorded at the same time Prince was creating a new, funky sound in Minneapolis that would dominate music in the 1980s and make the city a major music center.

¹²¹ Kenney and Saylor, *Minnesota in the 70s*, 78–101.

play the bass, he had a separate part that he hummed into the machine, played the bass part in his ear, and he played the bass part. He did the same thing to all of the horns,¹²² synths, guitars – he had them all. He hummed them into the cassette machine. It was kind of interesting because he played everything, so he needed to arrange it in his head ahead of time, have the parts laid down on this little cassette machine, so he could remember what they were.”¹²³

Working with the state-of-the-art equipment at the premier Minneapolis studio also gave the young artist the opportunity to “get hip to polymoogs” (polyphonic two-handed synthesizers), which he used as the main keyboard on a several songs on his first album and became a key sonic element in the Minneapolis Sound.¹²⁴

With the Sound 80 tapes, Husney was able to shop Prince around to several major recording studios. While Prince often spoke resentfully of Husney after their falling out following Prince’s first album release in 1978, Husney gave the young artist the connections and resources needed to land a major recording contract. In addition to paying for Prince’s housing and studio time, he created deluxe press kits to accompany the demo tapes that eventually created strong interest by several major labels.¹²⁵ Prince signed a contract with Warner Bros. on June 25, 1977, after just turning nineteen, even though Husney sold him as being seventeen.¹²⁶ Biographer Ronin Ro details the terms of the contract:

His contract reportedly called for three albums in twenty-seven months, the first to be recorded within six months. The three were to cost \$180,000—the usual \$60,000 per disc allocated to acts like the Ramones. If he submitted them by September 1979, Warner could renew the contract for two years (for another three albums) and an additional advance of \$225,000. If Warner wanted a second option period after this—in September 1981, for a year and two more albums—the company would advance him yet another \$250,000.

Husney called it perhaps the most lucrative contract ever offered to an unknown. “Well over a million dollars,” he said. Another time, he said it set a precedent and was “the biggest record deal of 1977.”¹²⁷

Prince’s first album, *For You*, was primarily recorded in California and was release on April 7, 1978. Prince spent six months and over \$100,000 to complete the album, and later admitted that he focused too much on making the album perfect, re-recording tracks multiple times in an attempt to get the perfect sound. The result was a “light, pleasant soul-pop, impressive mainly for

¹²² Although the demo tapes are not available to refute Rivkin’s claim that Prince played horns, it seems unlikely. Most sources state that Prince only played the saxophone briefly in junior high. It also seems unlikely that he brought in horn players, since most sources state that he played all the instruments on his demos.

¹²³ Nilsen, *Prince*, 260; Kenney and Saylor, *Minnesota in the 70s*, 93.

¹²⁴ Tim Carr, “Prince: A One-Man Band and a Whole Chorus Too,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, April 30, 1978.

¹²⁵ Thorne, *Prince*, 33.

¹²⁶ Eliza Berman, “Dearly Beloved . . .,” in *Time: Prince, An Artist’s Life 1958-2016* (New York: Time Inc., Books, 2016), 23–24; Ro, *Prince*, 22.

¹²⁷ Ro, *Prince*, 22

his virtuosity of writing, producing and playing all instruments. The songs were well received by black and R&B audiences, but had little crossover appeal.”¹²⁸

With modest album sales, Warner Bros. was interested in getting their new artist national exposure through tours and television spots. The problem of being a one-man show in the studio was that he could not perform alone live. At first, Warner Bros. attempted to set him up with musicians from Los Angeles, but Prince returned to his Minnesota roots and recruited some familiar faces for his touring band. Childhood friend and bandmate André Cymone was tapped to play bass, and Bobby Z was selected as the drummer. Prince’s cousin Charles introduced him to Gayle Chapman, a keyboardist from Duluth, who auditioned for Prince at his rented house at 5215 France Avenue South (extant). Chapman and Matt Fink (later known as “Dr. Fink” for his on stage medical scrubs attire with The Revolution) provided the keyboards and synthesizers. The band practiced at the U-Warehouse at 400 East Lake Street (extant). While Prince planned on playing the guitar on stage, he wanted another guitarist to help fill out the band’s sound. Saint Paul native Dez Dickerson auditioned for Prince at Del’s Tire Mart, the band’s new rehearsal location (1409 South Second Street, Minneapolis; demolished). The two jammed, and Prince was impressed: while Dez could nail an excellent solo, he was not a show-boater and could play backup as well as lead. The newly formed band continued to practice at Del’s until the speakers and other equipment Pepe Willie had loaned the nascent band were stolen. Willie stepped in to help, allowing the musicians to practice in his basement at 3809 Upton Avenue South in Minneapolis (extant).¹²⁹

It was also during this time that Prince fired Husney. Some say he did this because Husney did not drop everything to bring Prince space heaters when he wanted them for his rehearsal space. Willie claimed that was just a symptom of a larger problem. Prince, Willie, and others felt that Husney should have solely focused on Prince; however, Husney still worked as an ad executive. Prince became frustrated that he was not Husney’s sole focus at this critical time of launching his career. Even with all of Husney’s efforts in getting Prince a major recording contract, Prince remained almost hostile about Husney, denying that he really did that much for him as a young artist. Willie stepped in to fill the gap as temporary manager and was key in coordinating Prince’s first live performance.¹³⁰

Warner Bros. executives flew into Minneapolis to see Prince and his Minnesota musicians’ premier performance at the Capri Theater in North Minneapolis at 2027 West Broadway Avenue (extant). The Capri was a movie theater, but Prince chose to hold the concert there in part to help the owner, who was experiencing financial difficulties and also wanted to convert the theater into a concert venue. Three performances were scheduled on January 5, 6, and 7, 1979, with the executives watching the performance on January 6:

¹²⁸ Chris Salewicz, “Half a Million Dirty Minds Can’t Be Wrong about This Man,” *New Musical Express*, June 6, 1981; Ro, *Prince*: 26; Jeremy Ohmes, “The Minneapolis Sound,” *Pop Matters*, June 3, 2009, <https://www.popmatters.com/94060-the-minneapolis-sound-2496026723.html>.

¹²⁹ Smith, 2017; Dez Dickerson, *My Life With Prince: Confessions of a Former Revolutionary* (Nashville: Omni PublishXpress, 2004); Pepe Willie, phone interview by Kristen Zschomler, August 7, 2017.

¹³⁰ Pepe Willie, phone interview with Kristen Zschomler, August 7, 2017; Thorne, *Prince*, 46–47.

When local disc jockey Kyle Ray introduced Prince's debut concert at the Capri Theater in north Minneapolis earlier this month, he hallelujahed in the tradition of Muhammad Ali: "The power and the glory, the Minneapolis story—PRINCE."

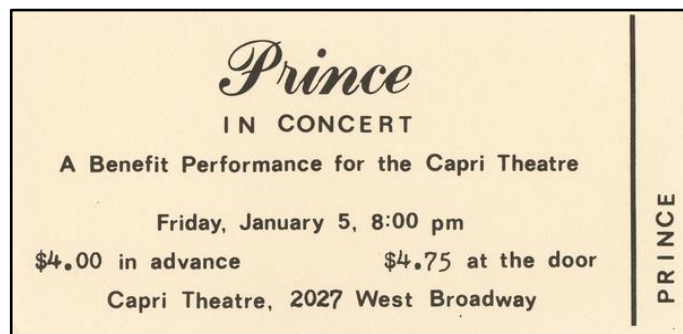
He wasn't just fanning the audience. At 18, this young black wizard from the Twin Cities plays countless instruments, and wrote, arranged, produced, played and sang everything on his first album. He is indeed powerful.¹³¹

Local music critic Jon Bream stated that Prince "strutted across the stage with grand Mick Jagger-like moves and gestures. He was cool, he was cocky, and he was sexy. . . . As a whole, Prince's performance clearly indicated he has extraordinary talent," and he predicted a "royal future for Prince."¹³²

Warner Bros. did not agree that the band as a whole was ready for prime time. Dickerson recalled technical sound difficulties and that their overall performance was not tight.¹³³ Prince was devastated and the show on January 7 was cancelled, in part due to low ticket sales. Yet he channeled his energy into practices and his next studio album, which was recorded in California between April and June 1979. The eponymously named album was released in October, but the song "I Wanna Be Your Lover" was released two months prior. It was "Prince's biggest hit to date, reaching Number 1 on the U.S. Billboard Hot Soul Singles chart, Number 3 in the Billboard Disco 100 chart and Number 11 in the Billboard Hot 100." Prince also had his first foray into music videos with the song. In August 1979, Prince recorded the video in California. It showed



Paradise Movie Theater, late 1930s.
Built in 1927, this long-standing institution on Minneapolis's North Side became the Capri Theater after renovations in 1967.
(source: *Minneapolis Star Journal*, *Minnesota Historical Society*)



Ticket to Prince's first concert as a Warner Bros. recording artist, 1979. For his first show as a national recording artist, Prince chose the Capri Theater in his childhood neighborhood over venues in New York City and Los Angeles.

(source: *Gift of Pepe Music Inc.*, *Minnesota Historical Society*)

¹³¹ Jon Bream, "Our Teen-age Virtuoso Is Home to Play at Last," *Minneapolis Star*, January 5, 1979; Smith, 2017; Martin Keller, "The Power and the Glory, the Minneapolis Story," *Twin Cities Reader*, January 19, 1979.

¹³² Bream, "Our Teen-Age Virtuoso," January 7, 1979.

¹³³ Dickerson, *My Life With Prince*, 36.

the feather-haired artist playing the piano, guitar, bass, and drums, highlighting his prodigious talent.¹³⁴

For You and *Prince* made their mark on the R&B and soul charts but did not see the crossover to white audiences that he wanted. His early recordings did show his musical virtuosity, however, as they included the soon-to-be common credit “produced, arranged, composed and performed by Prince,” a remarkable feat for such a young artist. While both albums highlight Prince’s Minneapolis musical roots in R&B, funk and rock, they had not fully incorporated the synth-pop, punk, and new wave music that was coming out of England and New York City. Bandmate Dickerson exposed Prince to much of that music, such as Devo, Generation X, and Spandau Ballet. His next effort would bring it all together and would be his “creation story.”¹³⁵

Having spent the majority of his \$180,000 and most of his contractual time on his first two records, Prince produced his third studio album in six weeks. Even though he had unprecedented control over his first two albums for a young, untested artist, they were still produced in California and overseen by studio executives. Knowing that he had to produce another album quickly and for little money in order to meet the terms of his contract, Prince conceived, wrote, and recorded his next effort quickly, in May and June 1980, at his rented house at 680 North Arm Drive in Orono.¹³⁶

Prince recounted the album’s creation and recording: “Nobody knew what was going on, and I became totally engulfed in it,” he said. “It really felt like me for once.”¹³⁷ Prince described his process for conceiving and recording *Dirty Mind* in a 1981 interview: “Strange as it may sound, this last album, a lot of it was done right there on the spot, writing and recording. That’s how a lot of the stranger tunes came out. . . . Most of the stuff was written on guitar, that’s why the album is pretty guitar-oriented. I’d just got that real raggedy guitar and it sounded real cool to me. But like I said, I guess that’s where the lines came from, the swearing and like



Prince’s rental property on North Arm Bay of Lake Minnetonka, 2018. Prince rented the property in the town of Orono from late 1979 through early 1981 and recorded his seminal album *Dirty Mind* here in May and June 1980. The original house was demolished after a fire in 1982, and a new house was built on its foundations.
(source: *Kristen Zschomler*)

¹³⁴ Nilsen, *Prince*, 261; PrinceVault.com, “I Wanna Be Your Lover” music video page. The album *Prince* also contained the Prince-penned “I Feel For You,” which was a Top 10 hit for R&B/funk singer Chaka Khan in 1984, and won Prince a Grammy in 1985 for Best R&B Song. A video for “Why You Wanna Treat Me So Bad” was also filmed in 1979 (location unknown but likely in Los Angeles) and includes live footage of Prince and his band.

¹³⁵ Jason Shawhan, “Dez Dickerson on Prince, Purple Rain, and the Most Insane Thing He’s Seen on Stage,” *Nashville Scene*, November 18, 2014; Ohmes, “The Minneapolis Sound.”

¹³⁶ Kristen Zschomler, “Prince, 1958-1987,” Multiple Property Document Form, Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, Saint Paul, 36.

¹³⁷ Bill Adler, “Will the Little Girls Understand?” *Rolling Stone*, February 19, 1981.

that—it’s basically what I was feeling at the time. Anyway, I wasn’t being deliberately provocative. I was being deliberately me.”¹³⁸

Prince envisioned the recordings made at his Orono home studio to be demos that would be re-recorded in Los Angeles. However, Warner Bros. executives liked the raw, stripped-down sound, and while they were concerned about sales and radio airtime due to the explicit lyrics, the “demos” with some basic mixing at Hollywood Sound Recorders were released. The album was widely recognized as innovative and cutting edge, and is arguably the first to fully capture all the elements of the Minneapolis Sound. As described by music journalist Jeremy Ohmes:

When Prince released *Dirty Mind* in the fall of 1980, no one was prepared for, as Rolling Stone put it, “one of the most radical 180-degree turns in pop history.” Gone was the simply enjoyable, slightly suggestive commercial R&B of Prince’s previous albums; in its place was a visionary, wildly ambitious amalgam of funk, punk, new wave, R&B, pop and experimental rock, laced with sexually explicit lyrics and over-the-top shock. On the album’s cover he stands defiant and seductive, wearing nothing but a bandanna, black bikini bottoms and a bedazzled jacket. And the music finally matched the image, too. From the title track’s robotic funk to the synth pop of “When You Were Mine” to the hyper-drive punk of “Sister” to the straight-up dance party jams, “Uptown” and “Partyup,” Prince experiments with everything on *Dirty Mind* and fuses black and white musical styles with little regard for established genres. This breathtaking, newfangled fusion of electro-pop, hard rock and funk not only won over rock and new wave audiences, but it also held on to his R&B audience. More importantly though, Prince’s audacious third album set the style and tone for much of the innovative urban music the Twin Cities would soon be known for.¹³⁹

While the album did not provide the Top 10 hits Warner Bros. hoped for, they saw enough excitement and critical acclaim around Prince’s latest work that they extended his contract, allowing him to branch into side projects. Prince and The Revolution toured America and portions of Europe for the first time. The tour also brought Prince back home to Sam’s on March 9, 1981 (renamed First Avenue December 31 of that year).

Moving out of the rental property in Orono, Prince purchased a house at 9401 Kiowa Trail (demolished) in the southwestern suburb of Chanhassen, where he lived and recorded from 1981 through November 1985. Numerous



Greyhound Bus Depot, late 1930s. After operating here from 1937 to 1968, Greyhound moved to a new location and the building was converted into a music venue, The Depot, in 1970. It was renamed Uncle Sam’s, then Sam’s, and finally First Avenue on December 31, 1981.
(source: Hennepin County Library Special Collections)

¹³⁸ Adler, “Will the Little Girls Understand,” February 19, 1981.

¹³⁹ Ohmes, “The Minneapolis Sound.”

important recordings were made at this location, including portions of *Controversy*, *1999*, and *Sign O' The Times*, and side projects such as records by the Time, Vanity 6, and The Family.¹⁴⁰

Prince's commercial and critical success grew with his two subsequent releases, *Controversy* (1981) and *1999* (1982), both recorded at his new home studio on Kiowa Trail and remixed in California. Released October 14, 1981, *Controversy* peaked at twenty-one on the U.S. charts and had four commercial singles, though none came close to the Billboard Top 10 ("Controversy," "Sexuality," "Let's Work," and "Do Me, Baby," the latter of which was believed to have been written by André Cymone but credited to Prince). The album, again an essentially solo work, and the related tour and music videos are notable for several reasons. First, the title track is one of Prince's earliest attempts to mythologize himself, repeating questions that many asked about the artist at the time, and that he apparently wondered why people cared. As biographer Matt Thorne explains, "In the midst of all this egoism, however, he finds time to recite the Lord's Prayer (always popular with musicians, from Elvis Presley to David Bowie), answering the question he poses in the song as to whether he believes most in himself or God."¹⁴¹

The album also includes one of Prince's first forays into political issues with the "brief, inconsequential vamp 'Ronnie, Talk to Russia,'" and his first use of the Linn LM-1 drum machine, which became the foundation of his sound. Finally, the album, videos, and tour blend the "licentiousness and religious that would later become Prince's signature blend." The video for the title track has Prince and the band playing in the light of a large stained-glass window and the stage is flanked by two angel statutes. The tour began with the never-released song "The Second Coming," which was not meant to refer to Prince as a Christ-like figure, but rather as a reference to the Book of Revelation and a warning about the impending apocalypse, the dominant theme in his next album.¹⁴²

1999 did not present a pessimistic view of the impending end of the world. Rather, Prince turned the apocalypse into a celebration and gave voice and relief to an entire generation raised in the shadow of fear of nuclear annihilation. The message was clear: be glad, because through death we shall be liberated, but until that time, just have some fun. His videos for releases of *1999* with his "multicultural, rainbow-coalition" and mixed-gender band, The Revolution, on the new music channel MTV (his were some of the first videos by a black artist to get frequent airplay) helped define the fashion, dance moves, and sounds of the new decade. "1999," "Let's Pretend We're Married," and "Automatic" were filmed at the Minneapolis Armory in November 1981.¹⁴³ Music journalist Sheffield goes so far as to say that the album was one of the decade's most influential and that it established Prince as the King of Synth-Pop:

Strange as it seems in retrospect, there was no reason to think his new music had any shot at pop radio. He was three years past his only Top 40 hit, 'I Wanna Be Your Lover.' But he clearly wasn't thinking in those terms – he made the music even more outrageous than

¹⁴⁰ Nilsen, *Prince*, 261–262

¹⁴¹ Thorne, 69.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Toure, *I Would Die 4 U: Why Prince Became an Icon* (New York: Atria Books, 2013); Zschomler, "Prince, 1958–1987."

the lyrics, experimenting with the newfangled technology of Oberheim synthesizers and Linn drum machines.

He'd obviously studied the latest New Wave records in the import bin. As guitarist Dez Dickerson recently told *Billboard's* Michaelangelo Matos, Prince was inspired by 'the New Romantic thing,' especially Duran Duran and Spandau Ballet, who were in rotation at First Avenue, the Minneapolis club immortalized in *Purple Rain*.

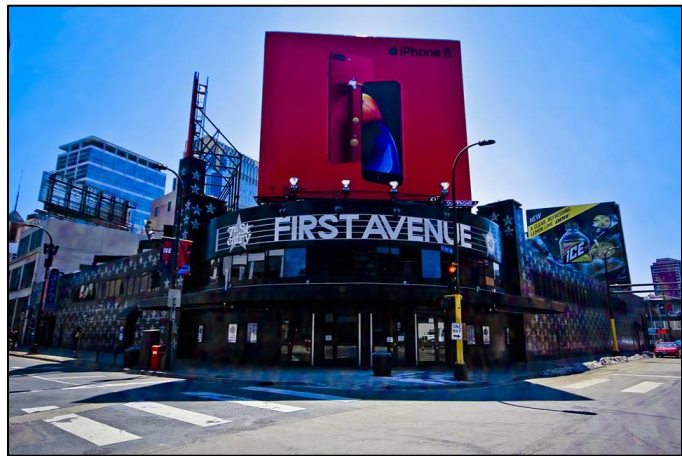
1999 came on as the ultimate New Romantic statement. It was the synth-pop album to beat all other synth-pop albums, in the year synth-pop took over. 1982 was full of futuristic electronic records mixing disco beats with arty concepts – from the Human League's *Dare* to Yazoo's *Upstairs at Eric's*, from George Clinton's *Computer Games* to Duran Duran's *Rio*. Hip-hop went techno with Afrika Bambaataa's 'Planet Rock' and 'Looking for the Perfect Beat' and Grandmaster Flash's 'The Message'; so did the goth-punk kids in New Order with their club hit 'Temptation.'

But as any of these artists probably would have conceded, Prince topped them all, creating his own kind of nonstop erotic cabaret. Instead of just overdubbing instruments to replicate a live band, he built the tracks around a colossal synth pulse, which made *1999* one of the decade's most influential productions. 'Little Red Corvette' became such a massive pop hit, it's easy to overlook how radical it sounded at the time. All through the song, you can hear the machines puff and hiss, as if Prince's engines are overheating, with his studio as a Frankenstein lab full of sparks flying everywhere. It's sleek on the surface, but the rhythm track keeps sputtering and threatening to blow up.¹⁴⁴

With no Number 1 hits and only one Top 10 album under his belt (*1999*), Prince pitched the idea of a major motion picture to his label.

While initially unsure, Warner Bros. eventually backed the artist's effort, and Prince spent most of 1983 and early 1984 writing, recording, and filming the movie *Purple Rain*. Prince and The Revolution recorded three of the soundtrack's songs live at the local venue First Avenue during a fundraiser, including the title track.

The fundraiser was held on August 3, 1983, three months before filming for the movie was set to begin, to benefit the Minnesota Dance Theatre (MDT), which was headquartered just a block from First Avenue in the Hennepin Center for the Arts at 528 Hennepin Avenue (extant; historically the Masonic Temple). MDT had been helping the rockers prepare for dance scenes for their

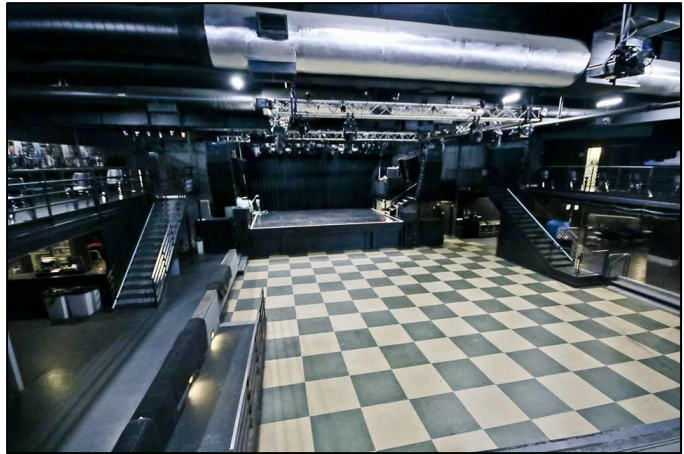


First Avenue exterior, 2018
(source: *Diamonds and Pearls Photography*)

¹⁴⁴ Rob Sheffield, "Prince's '1999': How the Synth-Pop Masterpiece Launched a Movement," *Rolling Stone*, October 27, 2017.

cinematic debut. The sold-out concert raised \$23,000 for the dance troupe, and the nightclub provided an ideal backdrop for recording a new single that would go on to become Prince's signature anthem and "one of popular music's greatest landmarks."¹⁴⁵ Although they had not heard the ballad before, "fans in attendance seemed to understand it was a landmark moment," wrote one music journalist recounting that evening's concert in the days following Prince's death in 2016.¹⁴⁶ Journalist and rock critic Alan Light characterizes the performance in *Let's Go Crazy*: "When [Prince] reaches the chorus, repeating the phrase 'purple rain' six times, the crowd does not sing along. They have no idea how familiar those two words will soon become, or what impact they will turn out to have for the twenty-five-year-old man onstage in front of them. But it's almost surreal to listen to this performance now, because while this thirteen-minute version of 'Purple Rain' will later be edited, with some subtle overdubs and effects added, this very recording—the maiden voyage of the song—is clearly recognizable as the actual 'Purple Rain,' in the final form that will be burned into a generation's brain, from the vocal asides to the blistering, high-speed guitar solo to the final, shimmering piano coda."¹⁴⁷

Employing a trick he learned from Moon, Prince brought in a recording truck for the evening, and at the helm was former Sound 80 Studio engineer David Z. With the exception of nineteen-year-old guitarist Wendy Melvoin, who debuted with The Revolution that night, recording live was par for the course for the band members. Many did not realize, however, that that evening's set would be featured on the soundtrack. Apparently neither did Prince, who had not "necessarily planned on using the First Avenue recordings on the actual album." But when he listened to the tapes, he found that some



First Avenue stage, 2018.

Prince performed in this venue many times throughout his career. He filmed his most famous movie and recorded the title song, "Purple Rain," here.

(source: *Diamonds and Pearls Photography*)



Purple Rain star, interior of First Avenue, 2018. While the exterior is covered with numerous artists' stars, there are only two stars inside—one for Joe Cocker, the first musician to perform when the building became a music venue, and one for *Purple Rain*, where over half the film was shot and three key were songs were recorded live.

(source: *Diamonds and Pearls Photography*)

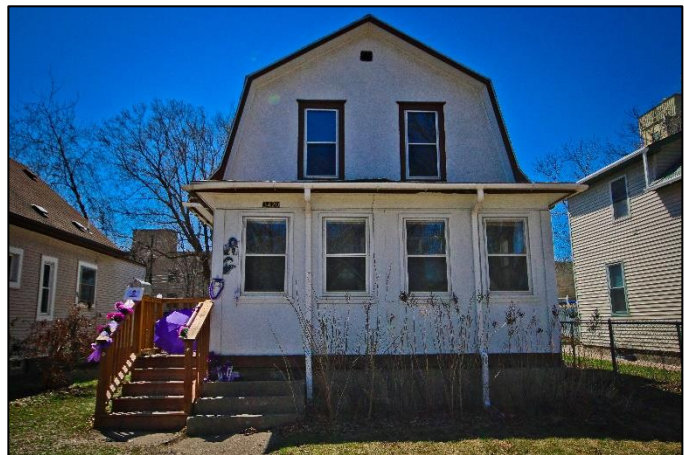
¹⁴⁵ Alan Light, *Let's Go Crazy: Prince and the Making of Purple Rain* (New York: Atria Books, 2014), 2–3.

¹⁴⁶ Chris Riemenschneider, "Prince and First Avenue: A History of the Club's Ties to Its Brightest Star," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, April 30, 2016.

¹⁴⁷ Light, *Let's Go Crazy*, 2–3.

of the new songs sounded good, in both performance and audio quality. Incredibly, not only “Purple Rain,” but also two other songs that were debuted that night—“I Would Die 4 U” and “Baby I’m a Star”—wound up on the final *Purple Rain* soundtrack.¹⁴⁸ While the live recording was used in the film and soundtrack, the footage used in the film was actually recorded later as part of the overall filming: Prince and the band were lip-syncing to the previously recorded music.

Prince captured First Avenue’s magnetism and raw energy through the live recordings that ended up on the soundtrack, as well as in the filming for the movie. Over half of the semi-autobiographical film was shot in the club, with the backstage scenes filmed nearby at the Orpheum Theater.¹⁴⁹ Although it was a relatively low-budget production (\$7 million) with a rookie cast and crew—including Prince as the main character—the movie grossed \$80 million at the box office. The release propelled Prince into superstardom. More than 20 million copies of the album were sold internationally by the fall of 1984, and it topped the *Billboard* charts for twenty-four weeks. As Alan Light remarked in *Let’s Go Crazy: Prince and the Making of Purple Rain*: “Prior to this release, Prince was nowhere near a household name: while he had established himself in the R&B community, he had just one album that could be considered a mainstream hit, and no singles that had peaked above Number 6 on the pop charts. He was shrouded in mystery, surrounded by rumors about his ethnic background and sexual preference, and had completely stopped talking to the press as of the release almost two years earlier of his previous album, *1999*.”¹⁵⁰



Purple Rain house, 2018. The house was featured in Prince’s movie *Purple Rain* as his character’s residence.
(source: *Diamonds and Pearls Photography*)

The album is the first to have substantive contributions from the members of The Revolution; all previous Prince records were essentially solo efforts with the members providing only limited vocals, guitar, or keyboard work. The film and soundtrack, released in June 1984, were instant

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 6.

¹⁴⁹ Other key *Purple Rain* locations included rehearsal space at The Warehouse at 6651 Highway 7 in Saint Louis Park (demolished), the house of Prince’s character “The Kid” (a.k.a. the “Purple Rain” house) at 3420 Snelling Avenue, Minneapolis (exterior shots only; the property is extant and was purchased by Prince when it went up for sale in 2015; he continued to own at the time of his passing); and Flying Cloud Warehouse at 6472 Flying Cloud Drive, Eden Prairie (interior for The Kid’s house; demolished). Limited portions of the movie were filmed in California. The videos for “Purple Rain” and “Let’s Go Crazy” consist of film footage from First Avenue. For a full listing of all filming locations, see PrinceVault.com/Purple Rain page under the “Shooting Schedule & Locations” heading. It is interesting to note that the exterior shots of the apartment for Morris Day’s character was located just a few blocks from Owen Husney’s office building, that the character Apollonia’s apartment was on Glenwood Avenue, near John Nelson’s apartment, and that the club where Apollonia’s group performed was called The Taste, which appears to be a reference to The Taste Show Lounge, a major black performance venue in downtown Minneapolis.

¹⁵⁰ Light, *Let’s Go Crazy*, 6.

commercial and critical successes, with the film receiving an Oscar in 1985 for Best Original Song Score. With the triple hit of a successful movie, soundtrack, and massive tour for *Purple Rain*, Prince became one of the biggest musical performers in the world and a cultural icon. First Avenue also became a landmark following the release of the movie.

During this time, Prince did many side projects with Morris Day and The Time, Vanity 6, Apollonia 6, The Family, and others. His protégés, producers Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis of Flyte Tyme Studios in Minneapolis, were also busy, working most notably with Janet Jackson (*Control*, *Rhythm Nation 1814*). Thanks to this exceptional burst of creativity, the Minneapolis Sound dominated the 1980s airways.¹⁵¹



Orpheum Theater, 1980s. This was the first major downtown venue at which Prince performed (1980 for the Prince tour). Prince was one of the first, if not the first, local African American musician to headline a show in the highly segregated downtown music scene. In addition, all backstage shots for his movie *Purple Rain* were filmed here.

(source: Hennepin County Library Special Collections)

During the last half of the 1980s, Prince continued to explore new musical sounds, such as the psychedelic pop feel of *Around the World in a Day* (including the Number 1 hit “Raspberry Beret” [1985]) that was a strong counterpoint to the rock-heavy *Purple Rain*, and switched between collaborative and solo works. He disbanded The Revolution in 1986 after the release of *Parade*, which provided him another Number 1 hit, “Kiss” and was the soundtrack to his less successful second movie, *Under the Cherry Moon*. In 1987, he returned to his roots by completing his next studio album and widely considered second masterpiece *Sign O’ the Times* alone, but he also collaborated with other side bands and projects. He closed out the most successful decade of his career with a Number 1 soundtrack for the Tim Burton movie *Batman* (1989). Prince also

ventured into club ownership in 1989, opening Glam Slam at 110 North Fifth Street. The fact that Prince was one of the first, if not the first, local black musician to headline a show at a major venue in the segregated downtown Minneapolis music scene (in 1980, at the Orpheum Theater, 910 Hennepin, extant), and then only nine years later was able to purchase and run his own major music venue in downtown Minneapolis, is remarkable (Glam Slam closed in 1997). In 1989, *Rolling Stone* magazine named four of Prince’s albums from the 1980s in the Top 100 of the decade, with *Purple Rain* coming in Number 2 (after The Clash’s *London Calling*), 1999 at 16, *Dirty Mind* at 18, and *Sign O’ The Times* at 74. Only Bruce Springsteen matched with four albums. None of Prince’s albums from subsequent decades were included in such lists.

In 1991, Prince formed his next band, The New Power Generation, and began incorporating more hip-hop and rap into his work. The 1990s were defined by his stand against what he saw as unfair practices regarding a musician’s intellectual property. He took on the music industry and its

¹⁵¹ Zschomler, “Prince, 1958-1987.”



Paisley Park, 2018. Prince completed his artist compound in 1988.

(source: *Diamonds and Pearls Photography*)

contracting procedures, changing his name to the unpronounceable Love Symbol and often appeared with the word “slave” on his face in protest of his recording contract with Warner Bros. and his fight to gain ownership of his master recordings. His efforts helped other artists have more control over their intellectual property. Prince saw less commercial success with hit songs and album sales in the 1990s through the time of his passing in 2016 (his last Number 1 song was “Cream” in 1991). In the early 2000s, Prince influenced the business side of the music industry more than the sonic landscape.

With slipping record sales but continuing success touring, Prince found innovative ways to distribute his albums and reach Number 1, such as selling them with concert tickets (*Musicology*, 2004), and giving people the chance to enter a sweepstakes to win a private performance (*3121*, 2016). However, he continued to collaborate extensively; perform massive worldwide tours, as well as more intimate performances in his Paisley Park compound (built 1987-1988); and innovate methods for music distribution and sales. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2004 in his first year of eligibility.¹⁵²

Over his career, Prince sold over 100 million records worldwide, received an Oscar for Best Original Song Score for the music in *Purple Rain* (recorded at First Avenue), and won seven Grammys, including two for *Purple Rain*. Prince's discography consists of thirty-nine studio albums, five soundtrack albums, four live albums, five compilation albums, seventeen video albums, and twelve extended plays, plus a collection of hundreds, if not thousands, of unreleased songs, videos, and other recordings. Prince was a spectacularly prolific artist, collaborator, and music and business innovator. He left a lasting legacy on music, culture, and the recording industry. Prince was not just a recording artist, and he was more than a musical genius. There are many talented, great musicians, but not all become legends or icons. Prince was able to tap into the *zeitgeist* of the 1980s and offer an entire generation characterized by fear (of nuclear war, AIDS, divorce) the right party. He gave Gen Xers permission to have some fun.¹⁵³ Since his untimely passing from an accidental fentanyl overdose on April 21, 2016, there have been numerous tributes and recognition of his impact. Scores of books, documentaries, articles, and essays discussing his influence on music and society have been published. Minnesota Public Radio launched a streaming music service, Purple Current, in April 2018 that plays nothing but Prince, artists who influenced him, and artists he influenced. Museum exhibits and scholarly symposiums have been held. The author Lynn Stuart Parramore summarizes Prince's influence:

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Berman, “Dearly Beloved . . .,” 25; Jim Farber, “Kingdom of Sound: An Album-by-Album Look at One of the Most Bountiful Music Libraries in Pop History,” *Conte Nast Special Edition, the Genius of Prince*, 2016, 55-60; Dream Hampton, “Prolific Prince,” *Ebony*, June 2016, 94; Touré, *I Would Die 4 U*.

Prince, a child prodigy who taught himself to play a wide range of instruments, explored daring erotic themes in his music. He played with new ways to be a man of color in America, putting on theatrical stage performances in which the musician/sex symbol showed off his feminine side in purple silk and diamonds.

Creating a style never before heard, Prince blended pop, funk, blues, jazz and rock 'n' roll. He set his own rules in the music industry and branched out from music into film. His songs could be explicitly raunchy ("Darling Nikki") but could also bring passion to a spiritual plane ("Adore"). Prince broke with pop tradition to include frequent religious motifs in his songs, such as the messianic "I Would Die 4 U."

Prince will be remembered as an artist who not only remade the sonic landscape but also left us with expanded notions of what it means to be male and female, black and white, erotic and spiritual.¹⁵⁴

Other Minneapolis-Based Artists

André Cymone

André Cymone left Prince's employment in 1981 and launched a solo career under contract with Columbia Records, releasing three albums in the early 1980s: *Livin' in the New Wave* (1982), *Survivin' in the 80s* (1983), and *AC* (1985). His first two albums were recorded at American Artist Studios in Owen Husney's office, and *AC* was recorded in New York, California, and at Metro Studios in Minneapolis (buildings for both Minneapolis studios extant; studio space nonextant).¹⁵⁵ Cymone's sound incorporated a different vision of new wave and funk fusion from Prince's signature sound, and had several key hits on the R&B charts. After Prince wrote and recorded "The Dance Electric," he gave the song to Cymone, who overdubbed his vocals. It was his only Top 40 hit on the Hot 100 charts, reaching Number 10 on the Billboard Black Singles Chart and Number 8 on the Billboard Hot Dance/Disco Chart in 1985. After his 1985 release, Cymone focused more on producing and writing. He returned to recording in recent years, releasing *The Stone* in 2014 and *1969* in 2017.

Morris Day

Day, a drummer living at 2024 Upton Avenue North, convinced his friend André Cymone to let him audition for the band Grand Central. The band's drummer and founder, Charles "Chazz" Smith, was often unavailable for practice since he was also on the football team, so Prince and André decided to replace him with the talented Day. Day himself said, "I played drums all day, every day. I would skip school to do it. . . . What changed it was meeting guys my age who were just as serious as I was. When Prince came into the equation, that dude was all music." After Prince's rise to fame in the early 1980s, he had a clause added to his contract with Warner Bros. to produce side acts. In 1981, Prince took members of his teenage rival band, Flyte Tyme (namely James "Jimmy Jam" Harris on keyboards and Terry Lewis on bass), and Day's band, Enterprise Band of Pleasure (including Jesse Johnson on guitar), to create the new endeavor, The

¹⁵⁴ Lynn Stuart Parramore, "Prince, Bowie and Haggard: Icons? Legends? What's the Difference?" Reuters, April 27, 2016, <http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2016/04/27/prince-bowie-and-haggard-icons-legends-whats-the-difference/>.

¹⁵⁵ Allmusic.com, "André Cymone: AC," accessed 2018, <https://www.allmusic.com/album/ac-mw0000650044>; PrinceVault.com.

Time. While the band performed live as an opening act for several of Prince's tours in the early 1980s, their albums were essentially produced, arranged, composed and performed by Prince under his pseudonym Jamie Starr, with Day providing the vocals and doing some songwriting. The band was active until 1985, then reformed again in 1989-1990 to play a role in *Graffiti Bridge* (1990), Prince's follow up movie to *Purple Rain* (1984). The Time had several hit songs throughout their career, including "Jungle Love" and "The Bird" in 1984 and "Jerk Out" in 1990. Prince retained rights to the band's name, so they often performed under the name The Original 7ven.¹⁵⁶

James "Jimmy Jam" Harris III and Terry Lewis

Flyte Tyme was an opening act in 1981 for Prince with the renamed band The Time, led by former Grand Central drummer Morris Day. They were major contributors to the albums *The Time*, *What Time is It?*, and *Pandemonium*. The two were fired from Prince's employment after he realized they were working on a side project with the S.O.S. Band in Atlanta. After their dismissal, Prince asked Lewis to come back, but Lewis declined unless the offer was also extended to Harris. Freed from Prince's restrictions, the duo took the basic instrumental tracks they laid down in Atlanta and recorded the vocals at their new studio in Minneapolis at 4330 Nicollet Avenue South under their newly formed business entity, Flyte Tyme Productions (established in 1982). The duo continued to work at the Minneapolis studio until 1988, when they relocated to Edina (now Minneapolis Media Institute at 4100 West Seventy-Sixth Street). Key recordings at the Minneapolis location include albums by the S.O.S. Band and Alexander O'Neal, and most famously, Janet Jackson's breakthrough 1986 album *Control*. The duo relocated to Santa Monica, California, in 2004, and over the course of their careers have had a huge impact on the music industry.

Harris and Lewis have produced more Number 1 songs and award-winning albums than any other songwriting and production team in history. They have been credited with over one-hundred Billboard Top 10 songs, twenty-six Number 1 R & B hits, and sixteen Number 1 Hot 100 hits with artists such as Janet Jackson, Mariah Carey, Boyz II Men, and Johnny Gill. In addition, Harris and Lewis have received five Grammy awards and one-hundred ASCAP awards for songwriting and song publishing. In 2005, they became the first recipients of the Heritage Award to be producers as well as songwriters. Harris and Lewis were honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2010, and the duo was inducted into the Soul Music Hall of Fame at SoulMusic.com in December 2012.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Alison Stewart, "Morris Day Won't Let You Forget Him" (quote), *Chicago Tribune*, April 16, 2015; Fanfare, "Minneapolis Musicians Association Local #74," January 1976; PrinceVault.com, "The Time," 2017, http://www.princevault.com/index.php?title=The_Time.

¹⁵⁷ The History Makers, Interview with James "Jimmy Jam" Harris III, website dated 2018, <http://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/james-jimmy-jam-harris-iii>

iv. Rock/Punk/Alternative

By Jason Wittenberg

1950s and 1960s

The Rise of Rock and Roll

Although the origins of rock and roll music cannot be pinpointed with precision, there is widespread agreement that African American rhythm and blues (R&B) laid the foundation for rock and roll music, along with influences from a range of additional genres such as soul, jazz, gospel, and country music. In a musical context, use of the term “rock and roll” started in the 1950s. The earliest rock and roll pioneers, including Bill Haley and the Comets, Elvis Presley, Fats Domino, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, and Jerry Lee Lewis, rose to prominence in the mid-1950s, giving rise to a whole new wave of music.

Rock ‘n’ roll music evolved significantly in the 1960s. The Beatles, having formed in 1960, altered the course of music during the decade, releasing six of the top seven top-selling records in the decade. As noted on the web site Rock Music Timeline, “Sixties songwriting moves beyond pop love songs and begins to include social consciousness and political statements. In the latter half of the decade psychedelic music reflects the growing hippie culture. Bubblegum music is created to generate radio friendly pop singles. Album sales begin to gain importance, as a harder rock sound emerges and sows the seeds for heavy metal.”¹⁵⁸

Minnesota music journalist Martin Keller wrote, “The revolution that rock ‘n’ roll fueled here and across American culture firmly took root in the early ’60s. But by 1970, the music was forever changed as the country slid into darker times with the war in Vietnam, the civil rights struggle, environmental and women’s rights issues, plus the debilitating political assassinations of the Kennedys, Malcom X [*sic*] and Martin Luther King. But for a brief, fleeting time, transistor radios, hi-fi’s stacked with 45s and black-and-white TV sets infiltrated the airwaves with the sounds from the bandstands and two-track recording studios that romantically launched an era of high hopes and rock ‘n’ roll dreams.”¹⁵⁹

Music Venues of the 1950s and 1960s

Early rock and roll was performed in venues such as ballrooms, roller rinks, teen dance clubs, and armories throughout the region. Many music-focused ballrooms were in suburban areas and smaller communities in greater Minnesota. Larger auditoriums featured major rock acts in both Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The largest Minneapolis venues included the Minneapolis Auditorium (1301 Second Avenue South, demolished), the Minneapolis Armory (500 South Sixth Street, extant), and the Minneapolis Labor Temple (117 Fourth Street SE, extant). Dave Maetzold, a member of a local band, the Avanties, noted, “There were not many places in Minneapolis for concerts. There was the Minneapolis Auditorium, then the Armory. There were a few national groups that performed at the Prom (in Saint Paul), but the Prom held maybe two

¹⁵⁸ Rock Music Timeline, “1960’s Decade Overview,” accessed August 3, 2018; <http://www.rockmusictimeline.com/1960s.html>.

¹⁵⁹ Martin Keller, *Music Legends: A Rewind on the Minnesota Music Scene* (Brainerd: Jim Bindas, Books and Projects, 2007), 14.



The Minneapolis Auditorium, 1905
(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

thousand.” The Avanties opened for bands like the Beach Boys and The Dave Clark Five, drawing approximately 5,000 people to the Armory.¹⁶⁰ The Minneapolis Auditorium held approximately 10,000.

Other popular Minneapolis venues included Mr. Lucky’s and the Marigold Ballroom. Mr. Lucky’s (also known as the Loon and Café Extraordinaire) was located on the 2900 block of Nicollet Avenue (demolished), an area that also included at least one other music venue, a record store, and a recording studio. Rick Shefchik, author of *Everybody’s Heard about the Bird*, refers to the Lake Street

and Nicollet Avenue area as “the epicenter of Minnesota rock in the 1960s.”¹⁶¹ The area was later cleared for an urban renewal project and the now infamous closing of Nicollet Avenue on the north side of Lake Street.

The Marigold Ballroom, located at 1336 Nicollet Avenue (demolished), started including rock music in line ups by 1965. The Marigold was constructed in 1919 and featured various styles of music throughout its history. Many of the area’s most popular rock and roll bands played there often. The venue hosted frequent performances, for example, by the Del Counts, Castaways, Underbeats, Avanties, Chancellors, and More-Tishans.¹⁶² National and international acts also played the venue until it closed in 1975.

The Minneapolis Labor Temple began hosting rock music in 1969, with a performance by the Grateful Dead, a nationally known band, in February of that year. The venue featured a number of national and international acts that year as well in 1970, including Deep Purple, MC5, Alice Cooper, and the Small Faces. The facility was short-lived as a rock music venue, closing near the end of 1970. The building was demolished in 1975.

Minneapolis and Twin Cities Musicians of the 1950s and 1960s

As previously mentioned, it would be impossible to separate the acts who were formed in Minneapolis, versus those that came from Saint Paul or other nearby communities. Bands enlisted members living throughout the metro area and played in venues in both major cities. The two cities and the surrounding suburbs served as a musical hub, honing the skills of numerous great acts to go on to the national stage.

¹⁶⁰ Rick Shefchik, *Everybody’s Heard about the Bird: The True Story of 1960s Rock ‘N’ Roll in Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Jeanne Anderson, “Twin Cities Music Highlights,” last modified 2018, <http://www.twincitiesmusichighlights.net>.

The Augie Garcia Quintet, formed in Saint Paul, is referenced by some sources as the first rock and roll band in the Twin Cities.¹⁶³ In 1955, Augie's single "Hi Yo Silver" is considered to be Minnesota's first rock and roll record.¹⁶⁴ While opening for Elvis Presley he was pulled off stage for allegedly upstaging Presley, the headliner of the show. Garcia went on to record six more singles before returning to the workforce. He occasionally played shows around town into the 1990s, before his death in 1999.

According to MinniePaulMusic.com, "The 'big bang' era of rock, music triggered by Bill Haley and the Comets with their epochal song 'Rock Around the Clock,' sent shock waves around the world in 1955 and budding young musicians in the twin cities [*sic*] headed to the local music stores to buy guitars and drums and amps and a microphone or two and rounded up some likeminded friends to start up new bands."¹⁶⁵ Placing the "rock and roll" label on much of the 1950s Minneapolis music is not easy, as many of the groups of this era were performing music that might be more accurately categorized as rhythm and blues, doo wop, and soul. Martin Keller notes that, in addition to Augie Garcia, "Minnesota's rock soil had been plowed and planted by pioneers like . . . The Velquins, The Delricos, The Flames and others in the late-'50s."¹⁶⁶ A number of the groups recorded in the North Minneapolis basement studio started by David Hersk (see below).

The Minneapolis Armory and Minneapolis Auditorium were two of the primary venues to accommodate national touring acts. The Minneapolis Auditorium hosted some of the largest acts, including performances in the 1960s by Aretha Franklin, the Doors, Simon and Garfunkel, Tony Bennett, and Jimi Hendrix.¹⁶⁷ Early Twin Cities visits from the pioneers of rock and roll included:

- Chuck Berry. Norway Hall, Minneapolis. April 1956.¹⁶⁸
- Elvis Presley. May 13, 1956, Saint Paul Auditorium, at 3 p.m., followed by a performance at the Minneapolis Auditorium at 8 p.m. the same day. Local opening act at the Saint Paul performance was a group fronted by Augie Garcia.¹⁶⁹
- Jerry Lee Lewis. Minneapolis Auditorium. April 20, 1957.
- Buddy Holly. Minneapolis Auditorium. April 25, 1958.

¹⁶³ Jeanne Anderson, "Twin Cities Music Highlights," last modified 2018.

<http://twincitiesmusichighlights.net/augiegarcia/>.

¹⁶⁴ Jacquie Fuller, "Augie Garcia: The Godfather of Minnesota Rock 'n' Roll," accessed July 27, 2018, <https://www.thecurrent.org/feature/2012/07/26/augie-garcia>.

¹⁶⁵ "MinniePaulMusic," accessed July 29, 2018, http://minniepaulmusic.com/?page_id=1575.

¹⁶⁶ Keller, *Music Legends*, 8.

¹⁶⁷ Andrea Swensson, "Then and Now: Minneapolis Auditorium, Where Elvis and Jimi Hendrix Once Performed," *Local Current Blog*, August 8, 2013.

¹⁶⁸ Jeanne Anderson, "Twin Cities Music Highlights," last modified 2018, <http://twincitiesmusichighlights.net/venues/norway-hall/>.

¹⁶⁹ Linda James, "Waiting for Elvis," *Minnesota History* 66 (Spring 2018): 4.

By the mid-1960s, a local booking agent suggested that there were 350 bands in the Twin Cities area that could be booked for local ballroom gigs.¹⁷⁰ “People referred to the Big Three—the Accents, Underbeats, and Avanties”—in the mid-1960s.”¹⁷¹

Popular local rock bands of the era included:

- The Underbeats. The band formed in 1962 with members from North Minneapolis and Brooklyn Center. Later relocated to Los Angeles and renamed the group Gypsy, in 1969.
- The Del Counts. Formed in Minneapolis in 1961.
- The Trashmen. Formed in 1962.
- The Castaways. Formed in 1962.
- Danny’s Reasons. Formed in 1962.
- The Accents. Formed in 1963.
- The Avanties. Formed in 1966 with members of the former Tempest Trio.¹⁷²
- The Litter. Formed in 1966.
- Crow. Formed in 1967.

The Trashmen

The Trashmen, after forming in 1962, were already among the more popular local rock and roll bands in the Twin Cities area when they recorded and released their hit single “Surfin’ Bird.” After originally recording the tune at Nic-O-Lake Records, a local radio celebrity informed the band that the song was too long, so they recorded a shorter, Diehl-approved version, at Kay Bank Studio. The song was played on WDGY shortly after being recorded and the band signed autographs on the eighth floor of Dayton’s department store shortly after its release.¹⁷³ Released on November 13, 1963, the song entered the *Billboard* charts on December 7 and stayed there for thirteen weeks, peaking at number four.¹⁷⁴ Along the way, notes Rick Shefchik, the hysteria surrounding the song was interrupted by the national shock of the assassination of President Kennedy on November 22.¹⁷⁵ And in January 1964, the hit song was then overshadowed by the Beatles’ first U.S. single, “I Want to Hold Your Hand.”¹⁷⁶

Although some think of the Trashmen as a “one-hit wonder,” they were considered among the most talented and hardworking bands in the region, touring incessantly. The group arrived in their Chevy van to 292 concert dates in 1964 and another 270 shows in 1965.¹⁷⁷ According to MinniePaulMusic.com, the band played at a venue called The Gables (Lyndale Avenue South

¹⁷⁰ Shefchik, *Everybody’s Heard about the Bird*, 165.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹⁷² “MinniePaulMusic”, accessed July 27, 2018, http://minniepaulmusic.com/?page_id=1802.

¹⁷³ Shefchik, *Everybody’s Heard about the Bird*, 111-113.

¹⁷⁴ Anderson, “Twin Cities Music Highlights.”

¹⁷⁵ Shefchik, *Everybody’s Heard about the Bird*, 115.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 151.

and Franklin Avenue West, exact address unknown) on weekends for a few months. In 1967, “after a five year run including a national hit song, one of the first rock’n’roll albums recorded in Minnesota, ten 45’s, hundreds of jobs, and thousands of miles on the road, the band members decide to move on to other pursuits and The Trashmen come to an end.”¹⁷⁸ The group did play reunion shows, beginning in the 1970s.



The Beatles at Metropolitan Stadium, August 21, 1965
(source: Neale, *Saint Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press*,
Minnesota Historical Society)

British Invasion

In the mid-1960s, the “British Invasion” greatly influenced rock music on both sides of the Atlantic. The Beatles became a dominating force in rock music, along with others that included the Rolling Stones, Herman’s Hermits, the Dave Clark Five, and the Animals. Early Twin Cities-area performances by major British groups included¹⁷⁹:

- The Rolling Stones. Danceland in Excelsior, June 12, 1964.
- Dave Clark Five. Minneapolis Armory, November 17, 1964.
- The Beatles. Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington on August 21, 1965 (the only Minnesota performance by the group). The band stayed at the Leamington Motor Inn in downtown Minneapolis, later demolished.
- Yardbirds. Dayton’s eighth-floor auditorium, August 5, 1966. This was apparently the first American performance with Jimmy Page on bass.¹⁸⁰
- Herman’s Hermits and The Who. Minneapolis Auditorium, August 20, 1967.
- Led Zeppelin. Guthrie Theater, May 18, 1969.
- The Who. Guthrie Theater, June 8, 1969. The local opening act was Koerner, Ray, and Glover.
- The Kinks. The Depot, May 22-23, 1970.

Other significant, early rock performances in the Twin Cities area

“On April 25, 1958, Alan Freed’s Big Beat show rolled into Minneapolis. On the bill that night at the Minneapolis Municipal Auditorium were 17 acts, including Buddy Holly and the Crickets, Chuck Berry, Screamin’ Jay Hawkins, the Diamonds, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Frankie Lymon.”¹⁸¹

The Beach Boys played a concert at Big Reggie’s Danceland, Excelsior, May 3, 1963.

¹⁷⁸ MinniePaulMusic.com, http://minniepaulmusic.com/?page_id=7358, accessed October 15, 2018.

¹⁷⁹ These dates may not reflect the first concerts by these bands in the Twin Cities, but are early examples.

¹⁸⁰ “Page on the Road: The Yardbirds Tour 1966,” accessed July 27, 2018, <http://findingzoso.blogspot.com/2012/08/page-on-road-yardbirds-tour-1966.html>.

¹⁸¹ Anderson, “Twin Cities Music Highlights,” <http://archive.is/q4l3r#selection-1165.0-1165.277>, accessed October 15, 2018.

Recording Studios

Gaity Records was started by David Hersk in his parent's basement at 1501 Newton Avenue North (extant) in 1955. The idea started with his desire to record singles off the radio with his Wilcox-Gay Recordette to make his own records. He made enough money recording songs for his friends that he built a makeshift recording studio in the basement to record live bands. It began with classmates, which he "charged five hundred dollars for a thousand pressings and three hours of studio time." Some of the big name acts he recorded include the Valquins in 1959, the Big M's in 1958, and the Wisdoms in 1959. The Big M's recorded in Hersk's studio but pressed the 45s at Kay Bank Studio and released the album on Laura Records.¹⁸²

Kay Bank Studio opened in 1959 at 2541 Nicollet Avenue (extant). It was run by Amos Heilicher and Vern Bank, whose wife was the inspiration for the studio name. After a recording by Bobby Vee in 1959, Kay Bank Studio gradually became the most prominent location to record rock music in the Twin Cities in the 1960s. One of the most influential songs of the time recorded at Kay Bank was "Liar, Liar" by the Castaways in 1965. The studio was also the location of Soma Records (Amos spelled backwards). Soma Records released "Big Hits of Mid-America" in 1964 and added Volume Two in 1965.¹⁸³ These records are an influential documentation of the region's rock and roll music from this era.

Other—Radio, Record Stores, Major Compilation Records, Etc.

In the mid- to late 1950s, WDGY, a longstanding area radio station, began broadcasting rock and roll music on a continuous basis.¹⁸⁴ Bill Diehl was an early DJ at the station and he became a well-known figure in local rock and roll broadcasting and promotions. The station was influential to David Hersk and the founding of Gaity Records.¹⁸⁵

Other influential radio stations during this time include KQRS, first known as KEYD (Family Broadcasting), at 900 Hennepin Avenue (extant), which opened in 1948.¹⁸⁶ KSTP had a popular program called Hi Five, similar to Dick Clark's American Bandstand. This is where the Widsoms and the Flames appeared in 1959.¹⁸⁷ KDWB went on air on September 16, 1959, immediately becoming competition as a rock and roll station for WDGY.¹⁸⁸

The Electric Fetus Record Store, celebrating its fiftieth anniversary at the time of the writing of this report, opened its doors on June 10, 1968, at 521 Cedar Avenue South. The store moved across the street, to 514 Cedar Avenue, in 1969. The business moved to 2000 Fourth Avenue South in 1972, later expanding into the entire building.¹⁸⁹ The store remains in this location during the writing of this report in 2018. Peter Jespersen suggested that the "Electric Fetus was

¹⁸² Swensson, *There's Got To Be Something Here*, 13, 15.

¹⁸³ Rick Shefchik, *Everybody's Heard about the Bird: The True Story of 1960s Rock 'N' Roll in Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 184.

¹⁸⁴ Shefchik, *Everybody's Heard about the Bird*.

¹⁸⁵ Swensson, *There's Got To Be Something Here*, 12.

¹⁸⁶ Anderson, "Twin Cities Music Highlights," <http://twincitiesmusichighlights.net/keyd/>.

¹⁸⁷ Swensson, *There's Got To Be Something Here*, 19.

¹⁸⁸ Anderson, "Twin Cities Music Highlights," last modified 2018, <http://twincitiesmusichighlights.net/kdwb/>.

¹⁸⁹ Penny A Petersen and Charlene K. Roise, "A History of the Electric Fetus," 2006, prepared by Hess, Roise and Company for the Twin Cities Blues Music Society.

really the first independent record store in town that catered to an alternative music audience, so to speak, the underground.”¹⁹⁰

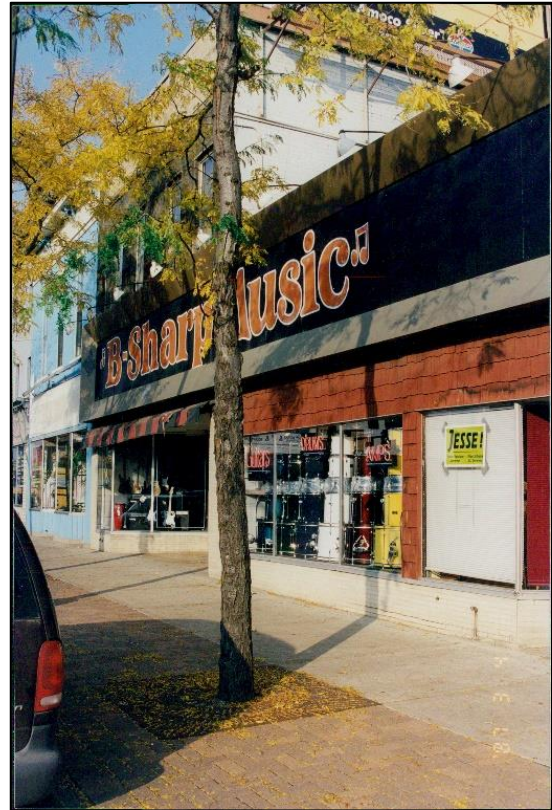
Music store

Shefchik notes that B-Sharp music in Northeast Minneapolis was a popular place for rock bands of the era to purchase their instruments, perhaps beginning with a relationship between the Trashmen and the store.¹⁹¹ An early advertisement lists the store’s location in Columbia Heights (4050 Central Avenue NE, extant) while later ads show the store at its long-time home in Northeast Minneapolis, at Central and Lowry (2417 Central Avenue NE, destroyed by fire in 2005).

1970s

Rock music evolves and splinters

While rock and roll music featured different sub-genres from the beginning, it continued to splinter into an even greater range of styles. “Rock” became a more common shorthand term for rock and roll music. Concerts for the most popular rock bands became larger, commercial events. At the same time, disco music reached its peak popularity in the mid- to late 1970s.



B-Sharp Music, no date
(source: *City of Minneapolis*)

Heavy metal music expanded as a rock subgenre in the 1970s, moving beyond some of its blues-rock origins and gaining a large mainstream following that could fill many of the largest arenas in American cities. British bands such as Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin get credit for kickstarting the genre. Australia’s AC-DC merged early rock and roll influences and heavy metal. American metal scenes developed in places like Southern California, where Van Halen was an early influence.

Partly in response to trends noted above, the mid- to late 1970s featured the early years of punk rock music. In England, the Sex Pistols, the Damned, the Clash, along with many others, shook the music world. In New York, a scene centered around CBGB also influenced the rise of a network of Minneapolis bands. “The triumvirate of Oar Folkjokeopus record store, Jay’s Longhorn Bar, and the Twin/Tone label worked synergistically to make Minneapolis one of the most original, viable, and vital music scenes in the world.”¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Cyn Collins, *Complicated Fun: The Birth of Minneapolis Punk and Indie Rock, 1974-1984* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press. 2017), 67-68.

¹⁹¹ Shefchik, *Everybody’s Heard about the Bird*, 127, 159.

¹⁹² Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 3.

Music venues of the 1970s

Arena Rock of the 1970s

Concerts for major rock musicians became larger, commercial events. Although stadiums were used for concerts during previous decades, large-scale, indoor arenas—often built primarily as venues for professional hockey and basketball—became more popular locations for major rock music performances. These facilities featured a much larger capacity than the Minneapolis Auditorium, Minneapolis Armory, and Minneapolis Labor Temple. Major indoor arena venues were constructed in Bloomington (1967) and Saint Paul (1973). Bloomington’s Metropolitan Sports Center—later simply known as Met Center—opened in 1967 as the home of Minnesota North Stars hockey. The seating capacity for concerts exceeded 17,000. There were few major music performances at the Met Center in the late 1960s. Early 1970s concerts included what was billed as the First Met Center Pop Festival, which took place in 1970 and included Canned Heat, Grand Funk Railroad, the Stooges, and others.¹⁹³ Rock performances during the first year of the Saint Paul Civic Center (concert capacity of 17,800) included such acts as the Faces, Led Zeppelin, and Aerosmith. “Arena rock” hit its stride in the mid-1970s. Both Twin Cities-area arenas continued to host major concerts throughout the 1970s and beyond. The Minneapolis Auditorium became a less prominent music venue in the face of competition from newer and larger venues.

“During the early and mid-1970s, live music in the Twin Cities was largely limited to rock cover bands and the West Bank blues scene. Most radio stations played only Top 40 music. . . . Appearances by the New York Dolls at the state fair and by the Ramones at Kelly’s Pub—along with landmark releases by those bands as well as David Bowie, Patti Smith, Iggy Pop, the MC5, and others—further sparked the drive to build a scene to support new, original music in Minnesota.”¹⁹⁴

The Depot in the 1970s

The first half of 1970 featured the grand opening of a live music venue that would eventually become known nationally and internationally. On April 3, 1970, Joe Cocker and his 27-piece band headlined a performance in a former bus depot at the corner of First Avenue North and North Seventh Street. The club was originally named the Depot, later Uncle Sam’s, followed briefly by Sam’s, and ultimately First Avenue and the Seventh Street Entry.

Early concerts included the Faces, Frank Zappa, and Alice Cooper. The Kinks kicked off their U.S. tour with two nights at the venue.

Chris Riemenschneider, author of *First Avenue: Minnesota’s Mainroom*, suggests that “touring acts got the bulk of the attention, but local bands did find a foothold during the Depot era. It quickly became the place many Twin Cities rock musicians clamored to play.” Further, “By the time the Depot came along, the celebrated Twin Cities garage-rock scene had splintered. The Trashmen . . . had mostly called it quits, and two of Minnesota’s other noteworthy bands from the mid-’60s, the Underbeats and the Castaways, had broken up. Nevertheless, their members wound up playing the Depot on occasion with their newer, heavier, hazier groups, Gypsy and

¹⁹³ Anderson, “Twin Cities Music Highlights,” <https://twincitiesmusichighlights.net/venues/met-center/>.

¹⁹⁴ Collins, *Complicated Fun*.

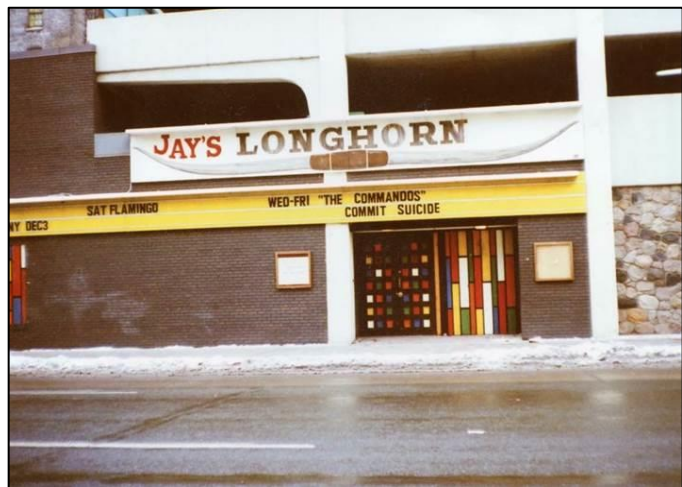
Crow. The Litter was the one well-known '60s group that hung on long enough to play the venue with more frequency.”¹⁹⁵

Financial struggles caused the Depot to close in June 1971. The venue remained closed for a year before re-opening as Uncle Sam's in July 1972. The club had been reborn as a disco hot spot. For much of the remainder of the 1970s, during the Uncle Sam's era, live performances took a back seat to DJs playing recorded music. According to Riemenschneider, “Many local bands had either faded, hit the road, or called it a day” during the peak of the disco era. Of the bands that did play, most were local groups rather than national touring acts. Cain was one of the most significant local groups to play at the venue in the mid-1970s. Cain's singer noted that the venue was “still the premier room in town” for live music.¹⁹⁶

As a backlash against disco gained steam in the final years of the 1970s, longtime employee and manager Steve McClellan had ideas about making live music the main attraction at the venue once again.¹⁹⁷ One concert—a performance by the Ramones on November 28, 1979—is considered a turning point for the club, ushering in a new era of punk and new wave music at the venue. The Hypstrz, a local band with a history of performing at Jay's Longhorn, opened the show.

Jay's Longhorn in the 1970s

Jay's Longhorn (14 South Fifth Street, extant) is the club largely considered the birthplace of the Twin Cities punk and new wave music scene. Chris Riemenschneider notes that “Jay Berine started booking bands at Jay's Longhorn, a dive bar on Fifth Street just off Hennepin Avenue, in the summer of 1977.”¹⁹⁸ As noted in Cyn Collins' *Complicated Fun*, “Within months, the main stage at Jay's Longhorn was also a destination for national and international punk, indie rock, no wave, and new wave bands, including Blondie, the Ramones, Talking Heads, Iggy Pop, the Dead Boys, Gang of Four, the Buzzcocks, Elvis Costello, the Only Ones, and many others. Formerly a popular jazz club, the new underground rock club became the place for these bands to play and for Twin Cities music fans to see live, original music in their hometown, making the Longhorn an integral foundation of the early Minneapolis scene.”¹⁹⁹



Jay's Longhorn, no date
(source: *Suicide Commandos Facebook page*)

¹⁹⁵ Chris Riemenschneider, *First Avenue: Minnesota's Mainroom* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2017.) 38,40.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 54, 52.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 57.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 54.

¹⁹⁹ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 123.

Local bands that frequently played the Longhorn were Minnesota's original purveyors of underground rock in the Twin Cities, including the Suicide Commandos, Flamingo (later known as the Flamin' Oh's), Fingerprints, Curtiss A., and the Suburbs. Hüsker Dü's Bob Mould recalls his band's first performance at the venue in 1979, after many of the previously noted bands were well-established at the club: "It was a dream come true for me—everyone played the Longhorn. . . Hüsker Dü was now an actual band, and we'd played a show at the Longhorn."²⁰⁰

Duffy's in the 1970s

Located at 2601 Twenty-Sixth Avenue South (demolished), Duffy's had long been a music venue. Duffy's was originally known as Heinie's Tavern, but was reopened as Duffy's in 1953. It featured an open courtyard that was closed in with a domed ceiling, called the Satellite Room. It announced in July 1979 that it was being reinvented as a rock club.²⁰¹ Robert Wilkinson remembered Duffy's by noting, "It became a real hot spot. The guys were bringing in all kinds of cool people . . . Bauhaus, Iggy Pop, the Cramps, the Damned, Bruce Cockburn, the Fleshtones, Nina Hagen, Plasmatics, the Jets, Joan Jett, the Psychedelic Furs, Jools Holland, Circle Jerks, Curtiss A."²⁰² Similarly, Michael Reiter, drummer in many bands of the era, suggested, "There was a period when Duffy's was a cooler venue than First Avenue. They were getting more interesting shows because First Avenue was still Sam's and they were still wrestling with dance nights."

Minneapolis and Twin Cities Musicians of the 1970s

In *Complicated Fun*, music journalist Martin Keller recalled the mid-1970s by noting that "at the time, the dominant local bands were the Lamont Cranston Band, Willie Murphy and the Bees, Doug Maynard Band—the West Bank scene, and the Coffehouse Extempore folk music scene...It was a West Bank scene until the punk movement struck in Minneapolis, and then it was largely a downtown phenomenon, heavily influenced by south Minneapolis movers and shakers."²⁰³

Bands that initiated this new scene included Skogie, Thumbs Up, Suicide Commandos, and Flamingo. Cyn Collins explains that "bands such as Suicide Commandos, Spooks featuring Curt Almsted (Curtiss A), Flamingo (originally Prodigy), the Hypstrz, the Suburbs, Fingerprints, and NNB would perform at parties or whatever venue would have them, playing in front of small, occasionally hostile, audiences."²⁰⁴

Suicide Commandos

One of the era's true pioneers, "The Suicide Commandos were ahead of the punk curve starting in 1975 and had already signed to Mercury Records in 1977. Chris Osgood and bandmates Dave Ahl and Steve Almaas had inspired an untold number of local musicians to start bands..."²⁰⁵ The

²⁰⁰ Bob Mould, *See a Little Light: The Trail of Rage and Melody* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2011), 32.

²⁰¹ Anderson, "Twin Cities Music Highlights," <https://twincitiesmusichighlights.net/venues/duffys/>.

²⁰² Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 290.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 12, 2.

²⁰⁵ Riemenschneider, *First Avenue*, 67.

group released singles on P.S. Records in 1976 and 1977. Blank Records, a subsidiary of Mercury Records for a brief period of time, released the *Make a Record* LP in 1977. Jon Bream's *Minneapolis Star* review, published February 28, 1978, referred to *Make a Record* as "refreshingly rudimentary and uncompromisingly spirited."²⁰⁶ Twin/Tone's very first LP was *The Commandos Commit Suicide Dance Concert*, recorded live at the Longhorn (a venue they frequently played), on November 24, 1978, and released in 1979. Only 1,000 copies were pressed, making it a relatively rare, collectible item.

Music journalist Martin Keller said this about the Suicide Commandos, regarding their impact and the context within which they formed and performed: "The Suicide Commandos were pioneers, probably on a parallel course with the Ramones in New York and the whole punk explosion in England with the Sex Pistols and later the Clash, and all the great bands came out of the UK. I think there were little micro punk or new wave scenes like this around the country, a reaction to the music culture, which had become pretty decadent. The days of free-form radio were pretty much over. There weren't a lot of venues, other than small, developing public radio outfits like KFAI and KMOJ, and to some extent KBEM. I think it was a reaction to a sense that rock music had lost its spirit. The Commandos and the bands that grew out of that whole period pretty much reinvented it."²⁰⁷

Writing about a Suicide Commandos reunion show at the Lyn-Lake Street Fair in 1995, Jon Bream refers to Osgood as the "godfather of Twin Cities punk" and notes that, "in addition to being the torch carrier for Twin Cities punk rock, Osgood has been a guitar teacher and at a college and a musical instrument store." The article notes that Osgood taught Bob Mould (of Hüsker Dü) and Dave Pirner (of Soul Asylum) how to play guitar.²⁰⁸

Fast-forward to May 5, 2017, Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges proclaimed Suicide Commandos Day in the city of Minneapolis, noting the group's importance and influence. Mayor Chris Coleman did the same in Saint Paul. The proclamations coincided with the release date of the band's first studio album in thirty-nine years.

The Suburbs

The Suburbs formed in 1977 with original members Chan Poling, Beej Chaney, Bruce Allen, Michael Halliday, and Hugo Klaers. Cyn Collins describes the band this way, "Their amalgam of punk, funk, no wave, new wave, jazz, and soul sounds combined with their brilliantly funny lyrics, unique fashion sense, and great musicianship to take the scene by storm—rapidly building audiences drawn to this new sound."²⁰⁹

The Podany Office Furniture Warehouse building, located at 2708 E Lake Street (extant) served as studio, rehearsal, and living space for many artists and musicians. Cyn Collins notes, "The Suburbs formed at the Podany and had their first practices there. They rented the two-thousand-

²⁰⁶ Jon Bream, "Local Artists' Albums Break No New Ground," *Minneapolis Star*, February 22, 1978.

²⁰⁷ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 20.

²⁰⁸ Jon Bream, "Commandos Gig Turns Patriarch Into A Punk Again," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 21, 1995.

²⁰⁹ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 184.

square-foot basement space, including a former rathskeller, which became a notorious spot for their popular underground performances and parties.”²¹⁰

Some people were surprised by how quickly the Suburbs were recruited by Twin/Tone Records to record one of the first records for the label.²¹¹ Bob Mould referred to the band as “a hard-drinking rock band that wrote clever Midwestern story songs played at medium to high speed. Once the Commandos ceased to exist, I found myself in the front row of almost every Suburbs show in the area.”²¹²



Podany Office Furniture Building, now known as the Coliseum Building, 2018.
(source: Jason Wittenberg)

The band had iconic logo was designed by guitarist Bruce Allen, who produced much of the band’s album art. Allen passed away in 2009 at the age of fifty-four.

Recording Studios of the 1970s

Blackberry Way

Blackberry Way studio moved into Dinkytown, at 606 Thirteenth Avenue Southeast (extant) in the late 1970s. The space had already housed a studio called p. david studios.²¹³ The studio became a popular place to record influential local music, including many of the releases by Twin/Tone Records.

Sound 80 Studio

Sound 80 Studio, constructed in Minneapolis’s Seward neighborhood (2709 East Twenty-Fifth Street) in 1970-1971, would quickly become known as a high-quality studio where notable recordings were made from a wide variety of genres. Although not the most prominent location for recording rock music during the 1970s, the Del-Counts and Suicide Commandos recorded at the studio. In addition, the studio hosted a performance by the Suicide Commandos that was broadcast live on KQRS in 1976, released much later on compact disc by Garage D’or Records. Chris Osgood remembers, “We stuffed Sound 80 with our friends (It is where we later recorded *Make A Record* about 16 months later) and insisted that David not edit out any mistakes or miscues.”²¹⁴

²¹⁰ Ibid., 172.

²¹¹ Ibid., 191.

²¹² Mould, *See a Little Light*, 40-41.

²¹³ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 214.

²¹⁴ Chris Osgood, email message to author, August 6, 2018.

Record Stores

North Country record store opened at Twenty-Sixth Street and Lyndale Avenue in 1972. Vern Sanden bought the store and reopened it as Oar Folkjokeopus in January 1973. “From its inception in 1973, Oar Folkjokeopus record store was a key portal to new music discovery for adventurous fans and musicians in the Twin Cities.”²¹⁵ In the 1970s and beyond, the record store was more than a place to buy hard-to-find releases and records featuring a wide range of genres, it was a place to linger for many who formed influential bands in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Chris Osgood, when asked to compare the Electric Fetus and Oar Folkjokeopus at the time, remembers that “the (Electric) Fetus hadn’t gotten groovy yet—It still catered to the West Bank/Blues people. Oar Folk was it- but it was plenty!! Especially with the imports!”²¹⁶ During this era, the record store contributed to the Twenty-Sixth and Lyndale area being considered a hub of the music scene. Other significant sites at or near the intersection included the CC Tap (later CC Club) and the Modesto apartments, located at 2545 Garfield Avenue (extant). The Modesto was home to—and hangout for—a number of record store employees, musicians, and others involved with the music scene.²¹⁷ Residents included Tim Carr and Peter Jespersen.

“The tastemakers at Oar Folk, Wax Museum, Electric Fetus, Hot Licks, and Northern Lights record stores shared these new musical experiences with adventurous fans eager for the next thing, and the stores became gathering places where tunes and ideas were exchanged and relationships formed.”²¹⁸

Record labels in the 1970s

Twin/Tone Records in the 1970s

Twin/Tone Records was first headquartered in the Bryn Mawr neighborhood of Minneapolis in 1977 at 445 Oliver Avenue South (extant) and was founded by “Oar Folkjokeopus manager Peter Jespersen, recording engineer Paul Stark, and music enthusiast and funder Charley Hallman.”²¹⁹ Plans had been made for the label at weekly meetings at the CC Club (2600 Lyndale Avenue South, extant).²²⁰ The label was a critical outlet for the local scene. Initial releases in 1978 included singles by Spooks, the Suburbs, and Fingerprints. Twin/Tone’s 1970s output also included live records by the Suicide Commandos (recorded at the Longhorn) and a double LP, released in 1979, called *Big Hits of Mid-America Volume Three*. The release’s name was inspired by the influential 1960s Soma compilation records referenced earlier in this report. Martin Keller suggested that, “like Soma Records before them, the Twin/Tone label responded to the recording and distribution needs and the preponderance of talent of the times.”²²¹

Publications in the 1970s

The *Twin Cities Reader* began publishing arts and entertainment news at the beginning of 1977 and folded in 1997.

²¹⁵ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 67.

²¹⁶ Osgood, email.

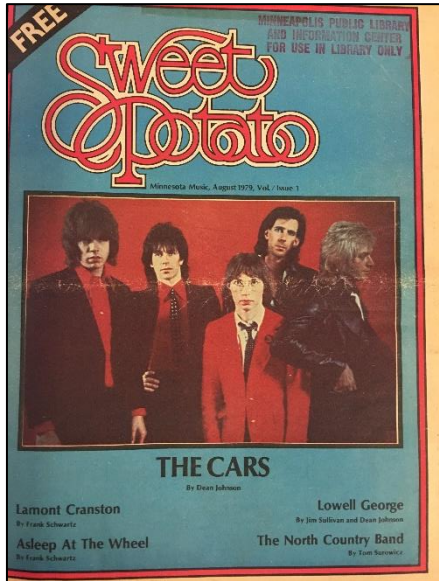
²¹⁷ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 180.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 211.

²²⁰ Bob Mehr, *Trouble Boys: The True Story of the Replacements* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2016), 60.

²²¹ Keller, *Music Legends*, 87.



Sweet Potato advertisement, 1979.

(source: Hennepin County Library)

A publication called *Sweet Potato* started publishing in August 1979, originally monthly. *Sweet Potato* was a primary source of rock music events in the Twin Cities and was located four blocks south of Oar Folkjokeopus. The band the Cars, from Boston, was featured on the first publication's first cover in advance of the band's upcoming performance at Saint Paul's Midway Stadium. But local bands received a good deal of coverage. Martin Keller, the publications music editor, explains that "over the years, the paper regularly provided needed exposure for new bands such as Figures, Fingerprints, The Magnolias and the tough-as-spikes Pistons, plus emerging studios like Blackberry Way and other indie labels. It also established the Minnesota Music Awards." The publication evolved into *City Pages* in 1981, a weekly that is still published in 2018.²²²

A music publication called *Connie's Insider* by Connie Hechter was waning by 1976 when *Sweet Potato* came on

the scene. They hosted the annual Connie Awards, an event that recognized the recognize the region's musicians.

Radio

KFAI radio went on the air May 1, 1978. Collins noted that the early punk scene "grew gradually by word of mouth among friends, early fans, a few journalists, and community radio, such as KFAI."²²³ The radio station greatly expanded its coverage area in 1984.

KQRS and KDWB continued playing mostly mainstream rock music. KQRS did regular broadcast live concerts, as referenced above with the Suicide Commandos.

Influential concerts

- Minneapolis Auditorium. Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, May 24, 1970.
- Saint Paul Auditorium. Jimi Hendrix, May 3, 1970.
- Minnesota State Fair. New York Dolls, September 1, 1974. Chris Osgood: "A lot of people have come to think that was the beginning of a new chapter, the Dolls coming to town and people like us thinking about the possibilities."
- Jay's Longhorn. Elvis Costello, February 14, 1978.
- University of Minnesota Fieldhouse. A major outdoor concert, September 22 and 23, 1979. Presented by the Walker Art Center, Marathon '80: A New-No-Now-Wave Festival. Known as M-80, the festival included local, national, and international groups. The local and familiar groups included bands such as Curtiss A, Flamingo, the Suburbs, NNB, Fingerprints and New Psychonauts. Chris Osgood of the Suicide Commandos presented The Minnesota Rockestra, a lineup of various local musicians. The festival

²²² Keller, *Music Legends*, 88.

²²³ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 2.

attracted Joan Jett, the Feelies, and Devo, among many others. The flyer for the event suggested that the show was “a preview to Rock in the 80s.”²²⁴ One author suggested that the event was, “Arguably the first alternative music festival ever held.”²²⁵

1980s

In August 1981, MTV: Music Television launched for the first time, airing a constant stream of music videos. Although it got off to a slow start, the cable network increased in popularity and had a substantial impact on the direction of music. “The network brought success to newcomers...who used increasingly sophisticated techniques to make the visual elements of the video as important as the music. MTV also gave renewed life to veteran performers such as ZZ Top, Tina Turner, and Peter Gabriel, each of whom scored the biggest hits of their careers thanks to heavy rotation of their videos.”²²⁶ Although MTV would evolve into an entirely different format in the 1990s, music videos were featured on the network throughout the 1980s.

The 1980s would prove to be the decade when Minneapolis music would have the greatest cultural influence. Inspired by those who provided the foundation a couple of years earlier, several Minneapolis bands were forming at the very end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s that would make a national and international impact on the direction of underground and alternative rock music. During the era, of course, Prince attained stardom as one of the most popular performers in the world, further shining a spotlight on Minneapolis and First Avenue and the Seventh Street Entry.

Peter Buck of R.E.M. noted, “Minneapolis was like Athens (Georgia) for us then, just this oasis of sanity or something, where you could get away with anything and not feel like a total freak. It had tons of great bands, great record stores, good college radio, and papers and fanzines.”²²⁷

Punk music itself became increasingly factionalized, with some groups pursuing a more commercially viable sound while others remained in small clubs and basements with a do-it-yourself ethic. More aggressive punk music was labeled “hardcore,” a term apparently coined by Vancouver band D.O.A.²²⁸ Meanwhile, new wave music would reach its peak in the 1980s and would become a more distinct genre of its own.

Heavy metal experienced a resurgence in the 1980s and expanded into new subgenres.

Vinyl record sales declined throughout the 1980s while cassettes sales peaked in the late 1980s before compact discs became the preferred way to purchase recorded music.

²²⁴ Riemenschneider, *First Avenue*, 67.

²²⁵ Mehr, *Trouble*, 63.

²²⁶ “MTV Cable Television Network,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed August 3, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/MTV>.

²²⁷ Jim Walsh, *The Replacements: All Over but the Shouting: An Oral History* (Saint Paul: Voyageur Press, 2007), 159.

²²⁸ “D.O.A.,” *First Avenue*, accessed August 4, 2018, <http://first-avenue.com/performer/doa>.

Music venues of the 1980s

Uncle Sam's and First Avenue/Seventh Street Entry in the 1980s

Uncle Sam's transitioned to Sam's in the first part of 1980. Around this time, Steve McClellan was brainstorming ways to capitalize on an underutilized space once used as a cafe for the bus depot and for various functions during the building's time as a music club, including a game room, coat check, and storage.²²⁹ The Seventh Street Entry, as it was called, opened in March 1980 with a performance by Curtiss A. With a capacity of approximately 250, compared to the 1,550 people accommodated in the main room, the space would become a vital venue for bands that were not a big enough draw to headline the club's bigger stage.

Referring to Uncle Sam's, Riemenschneider notes that "concerts in the main room remained sporadic and elusive, but McClellan and his team did manage to bring in some big names" on those nights when live music was featured. Although not yet known as the international superstars that they would become within the next decade, a performance at Sam's by U2 on April 9, 1981, is considered another critical event in that era of the club's history. "It felt like we finally started rolling," noted McClellan. Longtime employee Chrissie Dunlap suggested of the era, "The Lor original music, but to me those bands would move on to the n



August 1987 music calendar for First Avenue and Seventh Street Entry.
(source: *Jason Wittenberg*)

suggested of the era, “The Longhorn [bar] was the new wave and birth of this era, bringing the original music, but to me those Entry years were really the more vital years. All those Entry bands would move on to the main room.”²³⁰

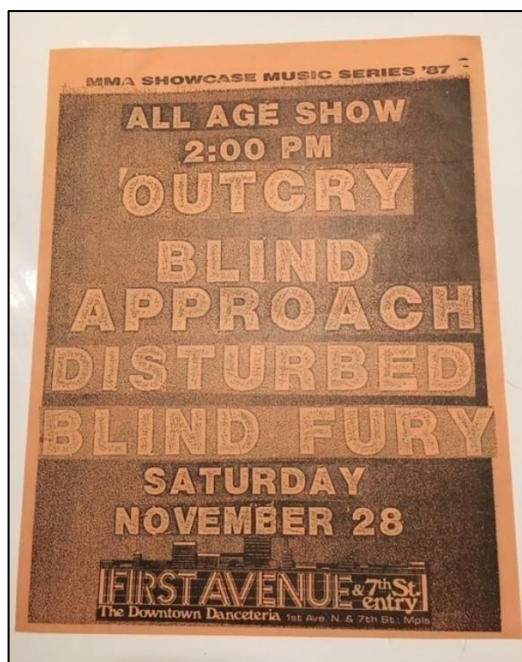
In March 1981, Prince performed at the venue for the first time. At this point, he was twenty-one years old and had already released three albums. His performances at the club helped to usher in a degree of racial diversity that had not been previously present at the club.²³¹ A performance on August 3, 1983, would be utilized for the “Purple Rain” movie and soundtrack, which ushered in a new level of attention paid to the club. (See section above for a more thorough documentation of Prince and the Minneapolis Sound.)

The name of the venue was changed to First Avenue on December 31, 1981. In the two years that followed, British bands that became well-known through MTV were prominent in First

²²⁹ Riemenschneider, *First Avenue*, 66.

²³⁰ Ibid., 73, 82, 83.

²³¹ Ibid., 85.



Flyer for a First Avenue concert in 1987.
(source: Jason Wittenberg)

Avenue's schedule, including Culture Club, Duran Duran, the Human League, and many others.²³² In the same era, hardcore punk bands were shifting to the main room from the entry, with Black Flag, an intense Southern California hardcore band, being an example of frequent visitors to the club.

In the mid-1980s, up-and-coming heavy metal bands frequently took the stage, including Metallica, Slayer, Anthrax, and Megadeth. Riemenschneider suggests that "for many '80s teenagers, the metal shows and especially those hardcore gigs became the gateway drugs that got them hooked on the dark and dingy venue." Dunlap referred to the 1980s by suggesting, "I don't think there was a better decade to be there, to be honest."²³³ The clubs national and international reputation as a premier venue for rock music—and other genres—had been well-established.

Jay's Longhorn in the 1980s

Riemenschneider notes that Jay's Longhorn "was still thriving...when the 7th Street Entry opened its door."²³⁴ Jay Berine's run as manager/owner and bands' interest in playing there were both wavering by 1981. The Longhorn was renamed Zoogie's in 1982, when the venue closed. Collins writes, "Although Jay's Longhorn . . . had faded from the scene, new clubs and bars emerged in its wake to host punk, indie rock, new wave, and hard rock acts. Duffy's, Goofy's Upper Deck, and First Avenue and 7th Street Entry became the new gathering places for musicians and fans yearning to hear and see something different."²³⁵ As an example of a band that played frequently at the venue in its final years, fifteen Hüsker Dü performances have been documented at Jay's Longhorn/Zoogie's, with the first in May 1979 and the final in November 1980—the final three while the club was called Zoogie's.²³⁶

Goofy's Upper Deck

A short walk from Uncle Sam's, Goofy's Upper Deck (Second Avenue North and Glenwood Avenue, demolished) frequently hosted punk/hardcore gigs in 1982 and 1983. The capacity of the venue was approximately 150 people.²³⁷ In addition to regular performance by locals like Hüsker Dü, Willful Neglect, and Otto's Chemical Lounge, the venue also hosted touring bands such as Black Flag, Minutemen, Government Issue, D.O.A., and Articles of Faith. In 1982, Reflex Records released "Kitten: A Compilation," documenting area bands that played Goofy's.

²³² Ibid., 127, 108.

²³³ Ibid., 135, 136, 144.

²³⁴ Ibid., 67.

²³⁵ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 5.

²³⁶ Hüsker Dü Database, accessed July 29, 2018, http://www.thirdav.com/hd_discog/dates.html.

²³⁷ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 298.

Content for the “Kitten” compilation was provided at Goofy’s on October 8 and 9, 1982.²³⁸ In *Complicated Fun*, Minneapolis punk scenester Lori Barbero explains that closure of the club took place following a riot when a club employee unplugged the sound system during a performance by Final Conflict, an early Minneapolis hardcore band.²³⁹ The mayhem apparently resulted in “100 frustrated fans, one smoke bomb, \$3,000 in damages, one dozen Minneapolis Police Department officers, one arrest, and one excessive-force complaint.”²⁴⁰

Duffy’s in the 1980s

After beginning to host rock music in the late 1970s, Duffy’s continued as a popular venue into the 1980s. Jay Berine (of Jay’s Longhorn) took on a role booking bands and managing the club. Hüsker Dü’s Bob Mould referred to Duffy’s as one of the few go-to places for his band and others. He indicated that the 7th Street Entry’s opening was “good timing . . . because the Longhorn was becoming Zoogie’s. There was also Duffy’s, . . . which was . . . well, it was Duffy’s, just different. And, other than that, there were not many places to play.” Hüsker Dü Database documents eleven performances by the band at Duffy’s spanning from April 1980 to March 1984.²⁴¹ Duffy’s closed in the mid-1980s and later re-opened as Norma Jean’s. Unfortunately, the venue was closed in 1991 after gunfire left a man dead. The building was demolished on November 3, 1997.

Mr. Nibs

Mr. Nibs (2609 Twenty-Sixth Avenue South, demolished), located adjacent to Duffy’s, was known as a popular Minneapolis location for heavy metal/hard rock. The area’s concentration of clubs contributed to the intersection around Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Sixth being dubbed “the Hub of Hell,” according to various online sources. A specific timeline of the club’s history has proven difficult to locate. While the most popular heavy metal clubs were located in Saint Paul (Ryan’s Corner) and suburban/outlying areas (e.g., The Iron Horse in Crystal, Dibbo’s in Hudson), record shop owner and local music historian John Kass notes that Mr. Nibbs “was Minneapolis’s ‘ground zero’ for metal, cover, bar-rock, and spandex bands” in the late 1970s and 1980s.²⁴² Mr. Nibs was destroyed by fire in 1989 and was rebuilt as a club named Mirage in October that year.²⁴³

Uptown Bar in the 1980s

After years as a local bar and blues-oriented club, the Uptown Bar (3018 Hennepin Ave, demolished) began hosting rock music in the 1980s, beginning with a performance by Curtiss A. Musician Craig Finn recalled seeing many bands at the venue and declared, “I think what I really remember about it is how often there was no cover to see great local and national bands. It really can’t be overstated how much that helped the Minneapolis music scene for so many years. It was

²³⁸ Andrew Earles, *Hüsker Dü: The Story of the Noise-Pop Pioneers Who Launched Modern Rock* (Minneapolis: Voyageur Press, 2010), 98.

²³⁹ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 30, 7.

²⁴⁰ Patty Dean, “PunkFunkRockPop,” *Minnesota History* 58 (Spring 2002): 29-39.

²⁴¹ Hüsker Dü Database, accessed July 29, 2018, http://www.thirdav.com/hd_discog/dates.html.

²⁴² John Kass, email to author, July 24, 2018.

²⁴³ Anderson, “Twin Cities Music Highlights,” accessed August 4, 2018, <http://twincitiesmusichighlights.net/venues/mr-nibs/>.

easy to take a chance on going to see a band you hadn't heard of before.”²⁴⁴ Performances in the 1980s included local and touring bands, including Laughing Stock, Mighty Mofos, Urban Guerrillas, and the Twin Cities performances in the late 1980s by Nirvana and Smashing Pumpkins, prior to both bands achieving international fame. Maggie McPherson booked bands at the club in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Whole Music Club in the 1980s

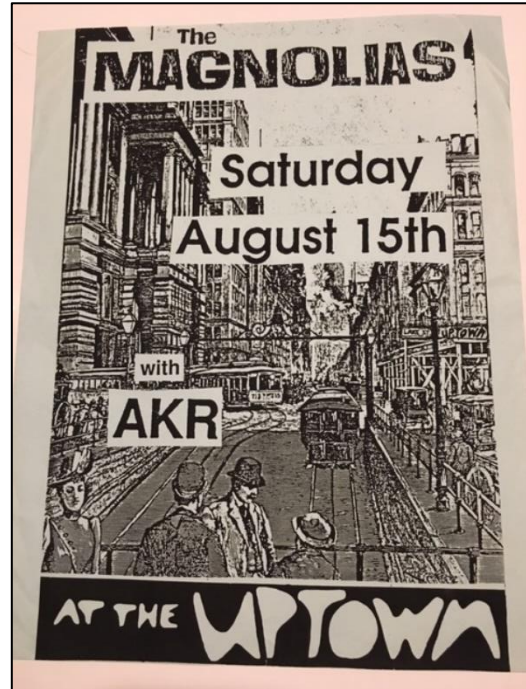
The Whole Music Club, a venue located in the basement of the University of Minnesota's Coffman Union (300 Washington Avenue SE, extant), started in the 1960s as “the Gopher Hole” and then “Whole Coffeehouse.” It hosted primarily folk-oriented music for a number of years before transitioning primarily to rock music in the 1980s. The rock/new wave era at the club kicked off with a performance in spring 1983 by local band the New Psychonauts. The Replacements²⁴⁵ and Loud Fast Rules²⁴⁶ played shows at the venue later that year. After a serious patron injury at a punk performance in 1986, the club went on hiatus for eighteen months.²⁴⁷ The Great Hall, also located in Coffman Union, also hosted occasional rock performances.

Avalon Theater in the 1980s

Hardcore punk gigs were held at the Avalon Theater (1500 East Lake Street, extant), starting in the late 1980s. The shows, which included local as well as national and international touring bands, were organized by a group calling themselves Sonic Warp Productions. This was apparently during a time where First Avenue was not hosting as many shows that were open to patrons of all ages, so the Sonic Warp staff stepped in to fill a void.

400 Bar in the 1980s

After serving as a bar for decades, the 400 Bar (400 Cedar Ave, extant) started hosting



Flyer for a performance by the Magnolias at the Uptown Bar. Year unknown.
(source: Jason Wittenberg)



Avalon Theater, 2018. A locally-designated landmark, the Avalon Theater hosted music organized by a group calling itself Sonic Warp Productions.
(source: Jason Wittenberg)

²⁴⁴ Chris Riemenschneider. “Thanks, Uptown Bar, We Had a Blast,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. October 30, 2009.

²⁴⁵ The Whole Music Club, accessed August 4, 2018, <https://sua.umn.edu/whole/about/history/>.

²⁴⁶ Enter the Soul Asylum, accessed August 4, 2018, <http://enterthesoulasylum.com/shows/1983/>.

²⁴⁷ The Whole Music Club, accessed August 4, 2018, <https://sua.umn.edu/whole/about/history/>.

music around 1978. Andrea Swensson noted that “the early ’80s would be remembered as the 400 Bar’s first musical heyday, and they served as a precursor for the rock ‘n’ roll boom that would soon follow.” The Jayhawks, Minneapolis’s premier country-rock group, made the 400 Bar somewhat of a home base. The group’s debut record featured a photo of the band at the club. Swensson suggests that “by 1987, a new scene was starting to develop at the 400. Bands like Run Westy Run, Trip Shakespeare, and the Widgets were regulars at the bar along with blues/R&B powerhouse the Butanes,” further noting that Golden Smog and Zu Zu’s Petals played their first shows at the 400.²⁴⁸

The Union in the 1980s

While perhaps best known for blues performances, the Union Bar (507 E Hennepin Ave, extant) hosted a number of rock bands throughout the 1980s, including the Phones, Flamin’ Oh’s, Obsession, and Slave Raider.²⁴⁹

The Minneapolis Armory in the 1980s

The Minneapolis Armory continued to host music, but somewhat sporadically. Rock performances in the 1980s included the Police and XTC. On November 3, 1984, the building hosted a performance by the Dead Kennedys—one of the best-known of the underground/DIY punk bands at the time—along with locals Hüsker Dü and Otto’s Chemical Lounge.

Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome in the 1980s

On a different scale altogether, in 1982 a new domed stadium opened in Minneapolis that served as the home turf of Minnesota Vikings football and Twins baseball. This followed the closure of Metropolitan Stadium. With the opening of the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome, the city now had an enclosed stadium that could host concert crowds of over 40,000 people. As a concert venue, however, the facility suffered from poor acoustics. Performances in the 1980s included the Beach Boys, Bob Dylan, Tom Petty, Pink Floyd, and the Rolling Stones.²⁵⁰ The Saint Paul Civic Center and Met Sports Center continued to serve as the primary, large-scale concert arenas in the Twin Cities through the 1980s.

Minneapolis Auditorium in the 1980s

As noted above, the Minneapolis Auditorium was not considered a leading music venue after the Met Center and Saint Paul Civic Center opened. The facility was torn down in 1989 to make way for a modern convention center.

Minneapolis and Twin Cities Musicians of the 1980s

New Wave Musicians in the 1980s

Several of the bands that made a name for themselves at the Longhorn in the late 1970s saw their local popularity increase in the 1980s. Local musician Johnny Rey suggested that three bands, in

²⁴⁸ Andrea Swensson, “The 400 Bar May Be Gone, but Its Stories Live On,” *Local Current Blog*, January 10, 2013.

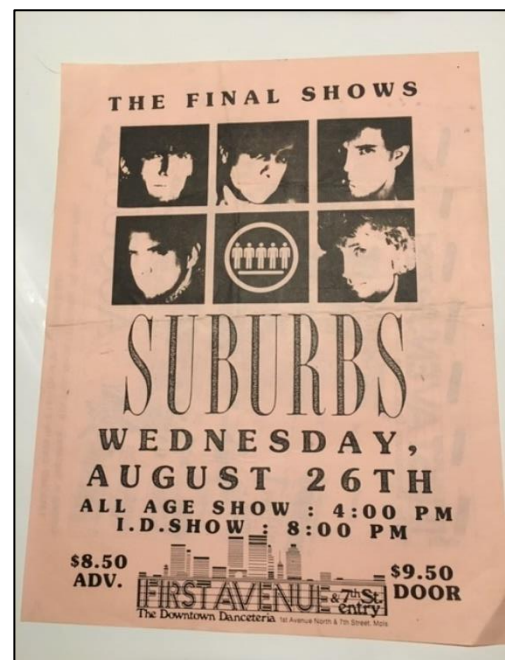
²⁴⁹ Penny Petersen and Charlene Roise, “Pay Your Dues at the Union: A History of the Union Bar,” 2015, prepared by Hess, Roise and Company for the Twin Cities Blues Society.

²⁵⁰ Erik Thompson, “The Metrodome’s Musical History: A Look Back,” *City Pages*, last modified December 27, 2013, <http://www.citypages.com/music/the-metrodomes-musical-history-a-look-back-6621099>.

particular, represented the zenith of the Minneapolis new wave scene: “It was the Phones and the Suburbs and the Flamin’ Oh’s. They were the huge things, the height of new wave.”²⁵¹

The Suburbs had a loyal regional following during the 1980s and released four studio LPs during the decade. In the 1980s, the group would go on to become the first Twin/Tone band to sign to a major label. Their first major label record, released in 1983, was entitled *Love is the Law*. The record’s title song became a relatively well-known hit for the group and would become an anthem related to the legalization of same-sex marriage in Minnesota in 2013, thirty years after the song’s release. Singer Chan Poling noted that the song was inspired by walking through Minneapolis and seeing “Love is the Law” written in graffiti “on the overpass that goes up to Hennepin over Lyndale.”²⁵²

The Suburbs broke up in 1987 after ten years as a band. The group reunited in the 1990s and again in the 2000s, releasing two more studio LPs and playing live locally and nationally as of the writing of this report.



A flyer advertising “The Final Shows” for the Suburbs, August 1987.
(source: Jason Wittenberg)

Another group of artists defied categorization and “were going even father out than their pioneering predecessors in defying the mainstream, incorporating elements of performance art, punk, jazz, funk, noise, and complex arrangements. Bands such as the Wallets, Things That Fall Down, 2i, Fine Art, Tetes Noires, Urban Guerrillas, and Warheads employed over-the-top theatrics, absurdist humor, even abrasive or confrontational aspects in their performances, which drew mixed reactions while challenging and intriguing audiences.”²⁵³

Hüsker Dü, the Replacements, and Soul Asylum in the 1980s

Three bands with punk roots came to exemplify Minneapolis’s 1980s contribution to rock music history: Hüsker Dü, the Replacements, and Soul Asylum (originally named Loud Fast Rules). The brief-but-crucial Jay’s Longhorn era gave rise to these groups. Musician Danny Amis stated, “I think the international impact that groups like the Replacements and Hüsker Dü had is unmistakable. Neither of those bands . . . would have happened if the Suicide Commandos and the Suburbs hadn’t been around. There is no question about that.”²⁵⁴

Hüsker Dü and the Replacement both played shows at the Longhorn near the end of the club’s existence as a punk-oriented venue. Although Loud Fast Rules did not play a gig at the club, the group’s singer, Dave Pirner, noted that bands that played Longhorn gigs made an impression on him, and his pre-Loud Fast Rules band played one show at the venue (by then called Zoogie’s)

²⁵¹ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 111.

²⁵² Jim Walsh, “Coming Soon: Love (Truly) Is the Law,” *MinnPost*, May 2, 2013.

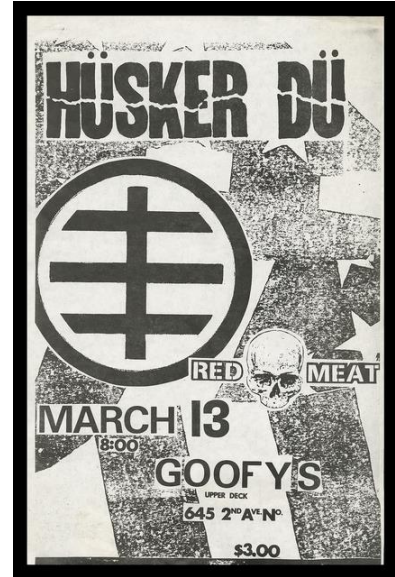
²⁵³ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 5.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 337.

shortly before it closed.²⁵⁵ Each of the three bands played numerous shows in the Seventh Street Entry in the early 1980s, as well as opening for touring bands in the main room. By the mid-1980s, Bob Mould notes that “Minneapolis was the ‘it’ city, and the buzz was deafening.”²⁵⁶

Hüsker Dü

Bob Mould, Grant Hart, and Greg Norton formed Hüsker Dü in 1979. The band originated in Saint Paul, where members either attended college or worked in record stores. Hart grew up in South Saint Paul; Norton in Mendota Heights; and Mould arrived at Macalester College from Malone, New York. Although their first three performances were in Saint Paul—the first two at Ron’s Randolph Inn (1217 Randolph Avenue, Saint Paul, extant) and the third at Cochran Lounge in Macalester College’s student union—the band subsequently played in Saint Paul only several more times during their career.²⁵⁷ Throughout 1979, the band played five shows at Jay’s Longhorn. In 1980, Hüsker Dü most of the band’s performances were at the Seventh Street Entry and the Longhorn/Zoogie’s, in addition to occasional shows at Duffy’s. They made their first out-of-state trek in 1981 when they performed three nights in a row in Chicago.



Poster for Hüsker Dü concert,
1982

(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

After being passed over by Twin/Tone, the band, along with friend Terry Katzman, took matters into their own hands by forming their own record label, Reflex Records, to release their own records as well as records by other mostly local bands, exemplifying the hardworking, DIY spirit that the band would become known for in subsequent years. The label’s first release was Hüsker Dü’s single “Statues/Amusement,” which was recorded at Blackberry Way Studios and released in 1981. Tom Hazelmeyer indicated that the band was “hugely influential to all of us around in how they approached the whole undertaking of being in a band and getting things done.”²⁵⁸

After a 1981 tour of western Canada and the U.S. West Coast—a first for the band—Hüsker Dü returned to the Twin Cities after also playing shows in Chicago and Madison. They returned with a determination “to be the fastest band in the world,” according to Mould.²⁵⁹ Hometown fans were amazed.²⁶⁰ The band’s next vinyl release was a live recording of a show in the Seventh Street Entry, appropriately titled *Land Speed Record*. At this point, Hüsker Dü was definitely in the “hardcore” camp.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 149-150.

²⁵⁶ Mould, *See a Little Light*, 105.

²⁵⁷ Hüsker Dü Database, accessed August 5, 2018, http://www.thirdav.com/hd_discog/dates.html.

²⁵⁸ Earles, *Hüsker Dü*, 79.

²⁵⁹ Mould, *See a Little*, 57.

²⁶⁰ Michael Azerrad, *Our Band Could Be Your Life: Scenes from the American Indie Underground, 1981-1991* (Boston, New York, London: Little, Brown and Company, 2001), 166.

The band quickly released more material, both on their own Reflex label as well as on New Alliance Records, a label founded by members of the Minutemen. The band then signed with California label SST Records and released “Metal Circus,” which is where the band seemed to hit its stride with what would become its signature sound, and Mould suggests that the band “distanced ourselves from the sound and dogma of hardcore.”²⁶¹

By 1983, Hüsker Dü more regularly performed in First Avenue’s main room.²⁶² Over the next several years, the band’s musical output was considered legendary in terms of both the quantity and quality of the material released. They entered this period with ambitious plans to alter the musical landscape. The group worked on many of their songs in 1983 from a former church on Saint Paul’s East Side.²⁶³ Mould stated, “We’re going to try to do something bigger than anything like rock & roll and the whole puny touring band idea. I don’t know what it’s going to be, we have to work that out, but it’s going to go beyond the whole idea of ‘punk rock’ or whatever.” What it turned out to be was a 1984 double-LP called “Zen Arcade,” considered one of the most important underground records of the 1980s. The release “made Hüsker Dü a nationally known, critically respected band; it also expanded the music’s audience beyond the punk underground.”²⁶⁴

In 1984 and 1985 alone, the band released three LPs on SST Records, including the double LP “Zen Arcade,” and “New Day Rising” and “Flip Your Wig.” As Michael Azerrad wrote in his definitive book about 1980s underground music, *Our Band Could Be Your Life: Scenes from the American Indie Underground, 1981-1991*, “On many levels Hüsker Dü never let anyone catch their breath. The band’s songs were unbroken walls of speed and noise; in concert they played number after number without any breaks in between; they recorded new albums just as the previous one was coming out. The band was in a headlong rush toward a lofty peak, and it was hard not to get swept up in the quest.”²⁶⁵ Azerrad suggested, however, that “Hüsker Dü played a huge role in convincing the underground that melody and punk rock weren’t antithetical.”²⁶⁶ Jon Bream, in a 1987 article, noted that the band had released 82 songs since 1984, “a staggering output rivaled in all of popular music only by Prince.”²⁶⁷

The photo on the cover of “New Day Rising” was taken at Cedar Lake’s then-unofficial Hidden Beach, according to drummer Grant Hart.²⁶⁸ The beach is now an official swimming beach named Cedar Lake East Beach (2000 Upton Avenue South).

After being courted by major record labels, Hüsker Dü signed to Warner Brothers in 1985. A signing event was held at Nicollet Studios.²⁶⁹ The band would be the first among their

²⁶¹ Mould, *See a Little Light*, 103.

²⁶² Riemenschneider, *First Avenue*, 113.

²⁶³ Hüsker Dü Database, accessed August 6, 2018, http://www.thirdav.com/hd_images/msp_sites/church.html.

²⁶⁴ Azerrad, *Our Band Could Be Your Life*, 183.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 159.

²⁶⁷ Jon Bream, “Husker Du: Major TV Shows Help Band Climb Toward the Top,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 19, 1987.

²⁶⁸ Hüsker Dü Database, accessed October 8, 2018, http://www.thirdav.com/hd_images/msp_sites/hidden_beach.html

²⁶⁹ Jon Bream, “Husker Du Signs a Major Record Deal,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, November 15, 1985.

underground punk peers of this era to sign to a major label. This was a contentious decision among many of their fans who were committed to the independent/DIY ethic. Although the Replacements had already signed to a major label, the Replacements had not been as committed to the hardcore/do-it-yourself ethic. Mould acknowledged, “I felt particularly defensive about the move from SST to a major.”²⁷⁰ The band insisted that Warner Brothers gave Hüsker Dü complete artistic control. In a January 1986 column printed in *Maximum Rocknroll*, the premier underground punk fanzine in the United States, Mould felt compelled to defend the band’s decision.

According to Hennepin County property information records, Bob Mould purchased the house at 3507 Harriet Ave (extant) on June 1, 1986. Mould sold the home on January 1, 1989. The other two band members purchased houses outside of Minneapolis using some of their advance from Warner Brothers.

Hüsker Dü would release two records on Warner Brothers, in 1986 and 1987: “Candy Apple Grey” and “Warehouse: Songs and Stories.” Mould noted that Daniel Corrigan took a photo of the band, appearing on the back cover of the “Warehouse” record, “in the garden of Lakewood Cemetery.”²⁷¹

In 1987, the band played to major network television shows: “The Late Show starring Joan Rivers” as well as an episode of the “Today” show that took place on the plaza (along Seventh Street) outside of Hennepin County Government Center on May 20, 1987.²⁷²

Hüsker Dü would go on to release two albums with Warner Brothers, including another double LP, released in January 1987. Interpersonal struggles within the band have been thoroughly discussed and documented. Their final Twin Cities performance took place in the Seventh Street Entry—a surprising location given their popularity and stature at this point—on December 4, 1987. The band’s final performance took place December 12, 1987, in Columbia, Missouri. Bob Mould wrote a formal letter resigning from the band on January 28, 1988.²⁷³ A *Minneapolis Star Tribune* headline on February 26, 1988, featured the headline, “Rumor’s True: Hüsker Dü Is Through,” and noted that the band “disintegrated after nine often brilliant years.”²⁷⁴

The band’s final four records were recorded at Nicollet Studios and Hüsker Dü had office space in the adjacent building at 2535 Nicollet Ave (extant).²⁷⁵

The band left a substantial legacy, influencing a wide range of groups that followed, including many who enjoyed commercial success above and beyond the level reached by Hüsker Dü. As stated by Grant Hart, “At different times in the ’90s Hüsker Dü was referenced as an influence by anybody that wanted to have a pedigree. I don’t mean that immodestly, but if you wanted to

²⁷⁰ Mould, *See a Little Light*, 113.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 128.

²⁷² Jon Bream, “Husker Du: Major TV Shows.”

²⁷³ Hüsker Dü Database, accessed August 5, 2018, <http://www.thirdav.com/oddstuff/resign.html>.

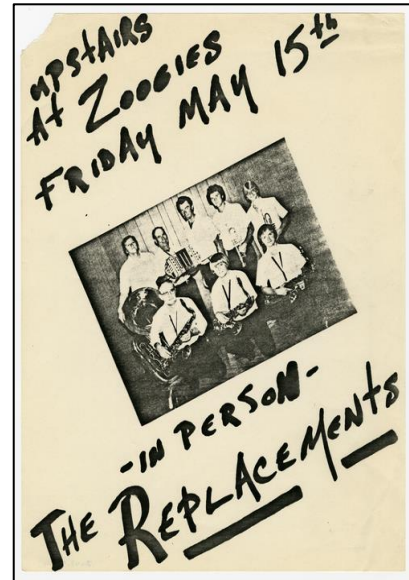
²⁷⁴ Jon Bream, “Rumor’s True: Husker Du Is Through,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, February 26, 1988.

²⁷⁵ Hüsker Dü Database, accessed October 8, 2018, http://www.thirdav.com/hd_images/msp_sites/nicollet_studios.html

be cool, you dropped the name Hüsker Dü in 1995 or whatever.”²⁷⁶ Mould and Hart had prolific solo careers, and Mould fronted a band called Sugar, which enjoyed success in the 1990s. Norton has played bass in bands somewhat more sporadically.²⁷⁷

The Replacements

Among their underground/punk rock peers, no other Minneapolis band has had their history analyzed, written about, and documented on film more than the Replacements. Formed in 1979, the band’s original lineup consisted of Paul Westerberg on lead vocals and guitar, Bob Stinson on guitar, Tommy Stinson (Bob’s younger brother) on bass, and Chris Mars on drums. While the Stinsons and Mars played in an informal band called Dogbreath, Westerberg heard the group’s sound coming from a basement (at 3628 Bryant Avenue South, extant) while walking home from work. The home was rented by the Stinson family. Sometime shortly after hearing the band from outside the house, Westerberg was brought to the house by a friend and was introduced to the members and joined shortly thereafter.²⁷⁸ At the time, Westerberg lived with his parents in the home at 4126 Garfield Avenue South (extant). Andy Sturdevant noted, “The story of the Replacements is deeply connected to the geographic and cultural landscape of Minneapolis in the 1970s and ’80 (sic). All four of the original members were raised in the city, and all within the same close-knit, working class neighborhoods of the south side.”²⁷⁹



Poster for The Replacements in concert, 1981
(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

In 1980, the Stinson family relocated to 2215 Bryant Avenue South (extant), a home that would become the group’s new practice space and the location where the band apparently recorded its first demo tape. The rooftop of the home would become famous as the location of the iconic cover photo for the band’s “Let It Be” LP, released in 1984. Sturdevant notes the band’s connections to Bryant Avenue and nearby streets like Lyndale Avenue South and Garfield Avenue: “It’s incredible how much of the Replacements’ story takes place in and around Bryant Avenue. If the Replacements were the Beatles and Minneapolis was Liverpool, Bryant Avenue would be choked with signs and historical markers pointing out heritage sites along the way.”²⁸⁰

²⁷⁶ Earles, *Hüsker Dü*, 229.

²⁷⁷ For those with a desire to dive deeply into a documentation of Hüsker Dü’s career, including performance dates, photographs, images of flyers, magazine articles, and much more, the fan site “Hüsker Dü Database” includes an incredible collection of material from throughout the band’s history as well as the post-Hüsker Dü music pursued by Mould, Hart, and Norton: Hüsker Dü Database: <http://www.thirdav.com/hddb.shtml>.

In conjunction with the 2017 release of early material from the band, Minnesota Public Radio produced a five-part podcast dedicated to the band’s history: “Do You Remember? The Life and Legacy of Hüsker Dü”: <https://www.thecurrent.org/collection/husker-du/>.

²⁷⁸ Mehr, *Trouble Boys*, 42.

²⁷⁹ Andy Sturdevant. “Raised in the City: Westerberg’s Walk – and Other Replacements South Minneapolis.” *MinnPost*, March 30, 2016.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

For a short time the group called themselves the Impediments. They played their first show in April 1980 at the Assumption Church School (address unknown). After being dismissed from the show for breaking the venue's prohibition on alcohol, and also being told they would be blacklisted in Minneapolis as a result, they became the Replacements.²⁸¹ They played their first gig as the Replacements at the Paradise Ballroom in the town of Waconia, approximately forty miles west of Minneapolis.²⁸²

In May 1980, Westerberg walked into Oar Folkjokeopus and gave store clerk Peter Jesperson a copy of the band's demo tape and hoped that they might land an opening slot at the Longhorn, where Jesperson was also a DJ. Jesperson was struck by what he heard on the cassette, telling friends about the band and also telling Westerberg that he would like to see their next live show and potentially sign the band to Twin/Tone after speaking with his partners in the label. Shortly thereafter, on July 2, 1980, they played Jay's Longhorn, opening for the Dads.²⁸³ They played the same venue again, on July 17, 1980. This eight-song set was taped—apparently the earliest live recording of the band—and can currently be found on YouTube.

Local publications noticed the Replacements almost immediately. Mehr notes, "The first published piece on the Replacements, a one-page feature in the local music monthly *Trax*, would appear in August 1980, barely three weeks after their Longhorn debut."²⁸⁴ Features were then included in publications like the *Minnesota Daily* and *Sweet Potato*.

The group's first appearance outside of the Twin Cities area, in December 1980, featured the Replacements opening for the Suburbs at a skating rink in Duluth.²⁸⁵

The band joined forces with Twin/Tone and entered Blackberry Way to record in July. After attempts to record at the Longhorn and Sam's, they returned to Blackberry Way in November and into early 1981 to record their first record. Jesperson became the band's manager around this time. The band's first record, *Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash*, was released in August 1981, shortly after releasing "I'm in Trouble" as a single. The record's cover photo, of a jumping Tommy Stinson, was captured at a Seventh Street Entry performance.²⁸⁶

The band's next release was a decidedly more hardcore punk release, an eight-song EP recorded at Blackberry Way and entitled *Stink*. The record's notable introduction includes audio of the Minneapolis police breaking up a gathering at the Harmony Lofts (now the Lee Lofts, 200 North Third Street, a.k.a. 280 Second Avenue North, extant). The police event took place on the fifth floor of the building on January 29, 1982, and was recorded by Terry Katzman.²⁸⁷ *Stink* was released in June of that year.

²⁸¹ Mehr, *Trouble Boys*, 52.

²⁸² Ibid., 52.

²⁸³ Ibid., 65-69.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 77.

²⁸⁵ Azerrad, *Our Band Could Be Your Life*, 204.

²⁸⁶ Mehr, *Trouble Boys*, 82, 92.

²⁸⁷ Jay Gabler, "The Replacements' 'Stink' Show: A True Story from Minnesota Music History," *Local Current Blog*, January 19, 2016, <https://blog.thecurrent.org/2016/01/the-replacements-stink-show-a-true-story-from-minnesota-music-history/>.

After releasing their next studio LP (*Hootenanny*) in the spring of 1983, the band's next LP would receive a great deal of critical acclaim. *Let It Be* was recorded at Blackberry Way and was released in October 1984. The same year, Hüsker Dü released *Zen Arcade* and Prince and the New Power Generation released *Purple Rain*. Thus, three of the most influential records of the 1980s came from Minneapolis musicians in 1984. All three made the Village Voice's Top 10 "Pop and Jazz" critics poll.²⁸⁸ "Let It Be" shows up on many "best of" lists among influential music publications, including Rolling Stone's list of 500 greatest albums of all-time. The album is recognized for its range, emotion, and humor. It would be the band's last Twin/Tone release, as they signed to Sire Records, owned by Warner Brothers.

As noted above, the record's cover photo was shot on the rooftop of the Stinson residence and band practice space at 2215 Bryant Avenue South. The photo was taken by Daniel Corrigan, a Minneapolis photographer known for documenting the local music scene. Corrigan was a long-time staff photographer at First Avenue and the Seventh Street Entry. Corrigan had completed an earlier photo session with the band at the University of Minnesota's Coffman Memorial Union. But Twin/Tone representatives did not want to use the shots from that session, resulting in the trip to Stinson house, where photos were shot indoors as well as on the roof.²⁸⁹ The rooftop photo gracing the cover of "Let It Be" would become an iconic shot of the band.

Several Replacements songs reference the band's experiences (particularly Westerberg's experiences) growing up and living in the Minneapolis, including "Raised in the City," "Hangin' Downtown," and "Run It."

The Replacements, in the early 1980s, frequently played the same venues where Hüsker Dü performed including the Seventh Street Entry and Duffy's. The bands occasionally played together, as did Loud Fast Rules/Soul Asylum. Chris Mars stated, about Hüsker Dü, "They took the stage and I'd never seen or heard that kind of speed or energy. I thought, 'Whoa, this is cool.' I liked it."²⁹⁰ Much has been written about an apparent rivalry between the Replacements and Hüsker Dü. Other Replacements shows in the early 1980s included some outside the regular music circuit such as the Goofy's, the Cabooze, Walker Art Center, Regina High School, Sons of Norway, and Loring Park.²⁹¹

The band would release four records on Sire from 1985 to 1990. The band's first major label release, "Tim," was recorded at Nicollet Studios. The record garnered critical acclaim. The song "Here Comes a Regular" represented a poignant Minneapolis connection, having been strongly influenced by "hanging out at the CC Club, the fact that we'd go there every day with nothing to do," noted Westerberg.²⁹² This would further cement the intersection of West Twenty-Sixth Street and Lyndale Avenue South as an influential epicenter of the city's music scene.

²⁸⁸ Dean, "PunkFunkRockPop."

²⁸⁹ Jim Walsh and Dennis Penu, *The Replacements: Waxed Up Hair and Painted Shoes: The Photographic History* (Minneapolis: Voyageur Press, 2013), 76.

²⁹⁰ Azerrad, *Our Band Could Be Your Life*, 205.

²⁹¹ Walsh, *The Replacements*, 147-149.

²⁹² Mehr, *Trouble Boys*, 183.

In Bob Mehr's thorough history of the group, a common theme is that the Replacements engaged in a great deal of self-sabotage, particularly at important moments in the band's career. One example came during a 1986 appearance on *Saturday Night Live*, which is often seen by musicians as an opportunity to gain exposure to a national audience. The appearance included Westerberg uttering the f-word and Stinson doing extensive damage to a hotel room during the group's stay in New York. *SNL* producer Lorne Michaels banned the Replacements from the show and the group would not appear on network television for several years.

Some level of disagreement with Twin/Tone led to another infamous Replacements episode in 1987. The band grabbed what they thought were master tapes of the group from Twin/Tone's office and proceeded to toss them into the Mississippi River "near the old Pillsbury Mill building."²⁹³ It turned out the tapes were not the original master recordings.

After years of no changes to the band's lineup, Bob Stinson was fired from the band in 1986. Longtime Minneapolis musician Bob "Slim" Dunlap took over on guitar. The February 1989 edition of *Musician* magazine featured the Replacements on the cover of the magazine with the caption "The Last, Best Band of the 80s."

Soul Asylum

As noted above, Soul Asylum had started their career with the decidedly hardcore name of Loud Fast Rules, forming in the summer of 1981. The name change reportedly came shortly before the release of the band's first LP. Interestingly, the First Avenue and Seventh Street Entry calendar for the month of September 1983 lists Loud Fast Rules playing the Seventh Street Entry on Sunday, September 18, and the re-named Soul Asylum playing on Tuesday, September 27. Reflecting on his early musical influences, singer Dave Pirner noted, "I heard the Ramones and realized that you could learn a song, practice it for five minutes, then play it with your friends and make it sound like music. That changed everything for me."²⁹⁴ In the same article, Pirner reminisced about learning to play guitar from Chris Osgood of the Suicide Commandos. Pirner attended West High School (southwest corner of Hennepin Ave and West Twenty-Eighth Street, razed) in Minneapolis and was one year ahead of Tommy Stinson of the Replacements.²⁹⁵

The group had signed to Twin/Tone Records in 1984. The band included singer/guitar player Dave Pirner (who had played drums for a stint during Loud Fast Rules), guitarist Dan Murphy, bassist Karl Mueller, and drummer Pat Morley. Morley, after the group's first record, was replaced by Grant Young.

Reflecting years later in a 1995 interview in *Guitar* magazine, Murphy recalled "what was really exciting was getting signed to Twin/Tone, because we were 20 year old kids. We were terrified to be in the studio making our first record."²⁹⁶

²⁹³ Ibid., 256.

²⁹⁴ Tom Beaujour, "Soul Survivors," *Guitar World*, August 1995.

²⁹⁵ Mehr, *Trouble Boys*, 110.

²⁹⁶ Tom Beaujour, "Sonic Reducer: Soul Asylum Guitarist Dan Murphy Assesses His Band's Rocky Recording Career with Disarming Candor," *Guitar World*, August 1995.

The band's first LP, released in 1984, was originally entitled, *Say What You Will . . . Everything Can Happen*. The second record was 1986's *Made to be Broken*. Both records were produced by Bob Mould and were recorded at Blackberry Way. For the next album released later the same year, *While You Were Out*, the band turned to Chris Osgood of the Suicide Commandos to produce what would be the third record on Twin/Tone before the group signed to major label A&M for 1988's "Hang Time."

Published works featuring the history of Soul Asylum are rare compared to the resources about Hüsker Dü and the Replacements. Thus, it is more difficult to locate information about important sites related to the band. More research is needed.

Other Minneapolis Punk/Hardcore Musicians in the 1980s

Many of the city's early 1980s punk/hardcore bands were documented through releases by Mould and Katzman's Reflex Records. This included two cassette-only releases in 1982 (*Barefoot and Pregnant* and *Kitten*). In addition to Hüsker Dü, the Replacements, and Loud Fast Rules, the cassettes included bands such as Rifle Sport, Man Sized Action, and Willful Neglect (from Saint Paul). Final Conflict was another relatively prominent hardcore band with a release on Reflex. Other Minneapolis groups from this era included Boy Elroy, Church Picnic, and Iron Fist.

Although not a hardcore punk band per se, the Magnolias were another group that generated a good deal of local interest in the 1980s, with Twin/Tone releasing three albums by the group during the decade.

Legendary DC hardcore band Minor Threat played their only Minneapolis show at an establishment called the Purple Hearts Club on April 26, 1983. A flyer for the event indicates that the venue was located on Lake Street, one block east of Bloomington Avenue. The specific address is unknown, and no additional information has been found about musical performances at this location. Minor Threat's contemporaries 7 Seconds, from Reno, Nevada, played their first of many Minneapolis shows at Saint Stephens Church Auditorium (2123 Clinton Ave, extant) in the early 1980s.

In the mid-1980s, the band Outcry opened for a number of touring bands and released a seven-song record in 1986 on Positive Force Records. The band was Minneapolis's 1980's contribution to the strain of hardcore music exemplified by groundbreaking bands like Minor Threat and 7 Seconds, noted above. Outcry handed the proverbial baton to Saint Paul band Blind Approach, who were frequent performers in the mid- to late 1980s, including many Sunday matinee shows in the Seventh Street Entry as well as opening for touring bands in First Avenue's main room. Blind Approach released two seven-inch records in 1988 and 1989.

Minneapolis Hard Rock/Metal Musicians in the 1980s

As noted above, many hard rock/heavy metal-oriented venues were located outside of Minneapolis's city limits. Popular local groups from this genre included Fairchild (who started playing in 1970)²⁹⁷, Dare Force, Slave Raider, Paradox, and Obsession. Later in the 1980s, as metal evolved to include more of a hardcore/thrash element, local groups included Powermad,

²⁹⁷ Keller, *Music Legends*, 109.

Coup de Grace, and Impaler. It has proven difficult to find written documentation of Minneapolis heavy metal music. More research should be conducted to document this genre.

Record labels

Twin/Tone Records in the 1980s

Twin/Tone Records had a prolific decade in the 1980s. “By 1984, Twin/Tone had released forty-one records.”²⁹⁸ The label relocated in the summer of 1984 from the house at 445 Oliver Avenue South to 2541 Nicollet Avenue, which already had an important role in music history. The label’s 1980s catalog included the Suburbs, the Replacements, Soul Asylum, Trip Shakespeare, the Wallets, and many others. A 1989 article suggested that the label’s top-selling release at that point was *Let it Be* by the Replacements, which had sold 100,000 copies.²⁹⁹

Reflex Records

Reflex Records, operated by members of Hüsker Dü, with assistance of several friends, released mostly local punk, post-punk, and hardcore records (and two compilation cassettes) from 1980 through 1985. Hüsker Dü released their first several records on Reflex. The first release listed the label’s address as a post office box in Saint Paul (zip code 55104), but Greg Norton noted that “Terry (Katzman) and Bob (Mould) lived in Minneapolis, so we did a lot of things there. Later releases included a Mendota Heights address that was the childhood home of Hüsker Dü’s bassist Greg Norton and where his mother continued to reside.”³⁰⁰

In October 1985, a major fire struck Oar Folkjokeopus. Bands rallied to play benefits for the record store. During this time, within months of the fire at Twenty-Sixth and Lyndale, Garage D’Or Records was started by Terry Katzman at 2548 Nicollet Ave (extant), right across the street from Twin/Tone and Nicollet Studios (former Kay Bank). The Garage D’Or web site notes that the store “hosted its first in-store all out marathon featuring Bob Mould, Lianne Smith, Jeff Waryan, Dave Pirner, Grant Hart and more.”³⁰¹

Amphetamine Reptile Records in the 1980s

Amphetamine Reptile started releasing records in 1986. Tom Hazelmyer started the label to release records by his own band. The first three of the label’s releases were for that band, Halo of Flies. (Hazelmyer had earlier been a member of the bands Todlachen and Otto’s Chemical Lounge, and also had assisted with Reflex Records.) In an email from Hazelmyer, he recounts that the earliest Minneapolis location of the label was his apartment at 2636 Lyndale Avenue South. By 1987, the label began releasing records by other bands, both local and national groups. The label, along with Subop Records from Seattle, became known as one of the most prominent purveyors of “noise rock.” The label released more than twenty records by the end of the 1980s. Hazelmyer notes that the label undertook an important expansion period when it shared space with Twin/Tone records (2541 Nicollet Avenue) in 1989.³⁰²

²⁹⁸ Collins, *Complicated Fun*, 211.

²⁹⁹ Jon Bream, “Atomic Theory to Wide Angle: A Guide to Local Record Labels,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 7, 1989.

³⁰⁰ Earles, *Hüsker Dü*, 76.

³⁰¹ Garage D’Or Records. <https://www.garagedor.com>.

³⁰² Tom Hazelmyer, email to author, April 17, 2018.

Blackberry Way Records

Blackberry Way, a popular recording studio noted above, was also a record label that released many records from the mid- to late 1980s by bands such as Swing Set, the Idle Strand, and the Oh's (formerly Flamin' Oh's).³⁰³

Susstones Records in the 1980s

Susstones Records is another of the many local music ventures operated by John Kass. The label was also founded by Ed Ackerson. Some of the label's earliest releases were of mod-oriented bands such as the Dig and the Funseekers. Other 1980s releases included Minneapolis groups such as Illiterate Beach, the Blue Up?, and the 27 Various.

Wide Angle Records

Wide Angle Records was not a purely rock-oriented label. A 1989 article noted the label specialized in "club music of all styles, including rap, disco, house, R&B and alternative pop."³⁰⁴ Among their many releases were Minneapolis groups Information Society and the Wallets.

Other

CC Club

The bar at the southwest corner of Twenty-Sixth and Lyndale was named the CC Tap shortly after the end of Prohibition in the 1930s. One owner would later suggest that the CC Tap was the best-known bar in the region. Musician Curtiss A noted that the bar was still called the CC Tap when his band started playing there in 1974. Partly because of the proximity to Oar Folkjokeopus, the club became a popular hangout for musicians in the 1970s and 1980s, including the Suicide Commandos, Skogie, Prodigy/Flamin' Ohs, Suburbs, Replacements, and Soul Asylum. Peter Jespersen suggested that many people moved to the immediate area to be near both the record store and the bar.³⁰⁵

Fanzines

Do-it-yourself publications called fanzines (or 'zines, for short) became a prominent way to share information among the music scene in the 1980s. Early Minneapolis punk 'zines included *Your Flesh*, *Urban Decay*, and *Uncle Fester*.

1990s

Rock music was given a jolt from an unlikely source in the early 1990s. The *Nevermind* LP by Nirvana became one of the top-selling records of the decade, propelled by its hit song "Smells Like Teen Spirit." This came from a band that had played relatively small venues when they swung through Minneapolis and other cities. Suddenly, major record labels were scouring the country looking for "the next Nirvana." They found others in Seattle, which became the center of gravity for the "grunge" era. While Minneapolis might have been a primary place for cutting-edge music in the 1980s, Seattle gained this reputation in the 1990s with groups such as Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, and Alice in Chains.

³⁰³ Bream, "Atomic Theory to Wide Angle."

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Olivia LaVecchia and Any Mannix, "The CC Club: An Oral History," *City Pages*, May 1, 2013, <http://www.citypages.com/news/the-cc-club-an-oral-history-6767513>.

Other groups with underground punk roots also rose to superstardom during the decade, including bands like Green Day and the Offspring.

Compact disc sales would continue to rise during the decade, peaking at the turn of the millennium before declining in favor of downloadable music and the 2001 debut of the iPod.

Music Venues of the 1990s

First Avenue/Seventh Street Entry in the 1990s

Little did people know that, in the late 1980s and into 1991, the “next big thing” would come from bands flying largely under the mainstream radar while playing Seventh Street Entry and other modest venues. By 1992 or 1993, the popularity of groups like Nirvana, Pearl Jam, and Smashing Pumpkins meant that those bands had outgrown even the First Avenue main room in a very short period of time. And other bands that “likely would’ve been exiled to the 7th Street Entry during much of the 1980s were filling the Mainroom in the early ’90s.”³⁰⁶

The club hosted a multi-day celebration of twenty years as a music venue. This included the final First Avenue performance of the Replacements—a surprise visit—on November 30, 1990.³⁰⁷

After Nirvana played twice at the Uptown Bar in 1989 and once at the Seventh Street Entry in 1990, they performed in front of a full main room at First Avenue on October 14, 1991, less than one month after the release of their landmark record, *Nevermind*. Their meteoric rise, fueled in part by MTV, ensured that it was their last show at the venue. Likewise, Pearl Jam played their final show at First Avenue on March 25, 1992, then moved on from the club due to increased popularity.³⁰⁸

In the meantime, First Avenue continued to host Soul Asylum—who had outlasted some of their best-known 1980s peers—and local groups like Babes in Toyland, the Jayhawks, Gear Daddies, and Semisonic.³⁰⁹

Babes in Toyland performed regularly at First Avenue in the 1990s, as well as occasionally returning to the Seventh Street Entry.³¹⁰ Reimenschneider notes that Babes in Toyland were “also part of a wilder noisier, more experimental breed of punk bands that made their home at First Ave and especially the Entry, bands that could not have hoped for much more of a commercial break than a record deal with Minneapolis’s noise-rock label, Amphetamine Reptile. Led by Tom Hazelymyer and Pat Dwyer, AmRep built up a roster starting in the late ’80s that included Cows, Hammerhead, Halo of Flies, and Janitor Joe, plus such out-of-towners as Unsane, Boss Hog, Helmet, and the Melvins.”³¹¹

Reimenschneider suggests that “paying the bills at First Ave remained a challenge through the 90s. Amid the vast commercialization of alt-rock during the decade, McClellan’s preferences for

³⁰⁶ Reimenschneider, *First Avenue*, 165.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 173.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 166, 170.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 172.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 179.

³¹¹ Ibid., 179-180.

touring shows veered more and more toward truly alternative options. In 1990s alone he booked an unusually wide and quite admirable array of world music and roots acts.”³¹² These groups did not prove to be financially lucrative for the club.

Foxfire Coffee Lounge

Near the end of the 1990s, a music venue called the Foxfire Coffee Lounge (319 First Avenue North, extant) opened on July 2, 1998. A 2017 *City Pages* article noted, “At a time when all-ages shows tended to take place on the U of M campus or illegally, in houses, the Foxfire not only booked burgeoning local bands but also national touring acts, many barely on the public’s radar but soon to blow up: the Promise Ring, the Dismemberment Plan, At the Drive-In, Death Cab for Cutie, Black Dice—even Papa Roach.”³¹³

The venue was a critical all-ages establishment during its brief existence, but turned out to be short-lived. “By the time it shut down on September 7, 2000, the venue had become an institution for its loyal knot of regulars.”³¹⁴

Uptown Bar in the 1990s

The Uptown Bar continued to feature live music throughout the 1990s. The establishment featured Cows (and many bands from the Amphetamine Reptile label), Oasis’s first U.S. tour, Flaming Lips, Goo Goo Dolls, L7, and many others.

400 Bar in the 1990s

A renovation took place at the 400 Bar, with a grand re-opening in January 1997. Swensson noted that “the three members of Semisonic were such regulars at the 400 that the bar ended up providing some inspiration for Wilson—even supplying him with a few of the lines in their most popular hit, 1998’s ‘Closing Time.’” The song—one of the most popular songs released by a Minneapolis rock band in the 1990s—was first performed at the 400 Bar.³¹⁵ The venue closed in 2012.

The Whole (and Great Hall) in the 1990s

The Whole and the Great Hall continued to host music at the University of Minnesota’s Coffman Union. The venue’s web site notes that in the 1990s, “The Whole has carved out a more ambitious niche, inviting national stars, They Might Be Giants, Soul



Entrance to the Whole Music Club in the lower level of Coffman Memorial Union, University of Minnesota, 2018. (source: Jason Wittenberg)

³¹² Ibid., 196.

³¹³ Michaelangelo Mattos, “An Oral History of the Foxfire, Minneapolis’ Fleeting and Beloved All-ages Rock Club,” *City Pages*, February 27, 2017.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Andrea Swensson, “The 400 Bar May Be Gone, but Its Stories Live On,” *Local Current Blog*, January 10, 2013.

Coughing, and Green Day to perform.”³¹⁶ The Whole was under renovation from 1999 to 2001 before opening again for musical performances.

Major Arenas in the 1990s

With the opening of Target Center (600 First Avenue North, extant) in downtown Minneapolis in 1990, the city had an arena similar in size to the Saint Paul Civic Center and Bloomington’s Met Center, putting it in competition with both. Concerts at Target Center can accommodate approximately 20,000 attendees.

Following the departure of the Minnesota North Stars hockey team, the Met Center closed in 1993 and was demolished in 1994. The Saint Paul Civic Center was demolished in 1998 and was replaced by the Xcel Energy Center, a new arena that opened in 2000 to host a new NHL hockey team, the Minnesota Wild. The Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome continued to host major concerts throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s. Target Center and Xcel Energy continue to compete for concerts as of the writing of this report in 2018. A substantial renovation of Target Center was completed in 2017.

Another footnote related to Target Center involves the arena’s close proximity to First Avenue and the Seventh Street Entry, located directly across the intersection. First Avenue management indicated that the two-year construction of the arena proved somewhat disruptive, as did the loss of inexpensive parking options.³¹⁷

Minneapolis and Twin Cities Musicians of the 1990s

Babes in Toyland in the 1990s

Longtime Minneapolis music fan Lori Barbero (drums/vocals), along with Kat Bjelland (guitar vocals), formed Babes in Toyland in 1987. After briefly performing with Cindy Russell and Kris Holetz, Michelle Leon joined on bass to form what most people would know as the lineup that would rise to prominence in the Minneapolis scene. Leon wrote of her experience at the first practice with her on bass, which took place on in the famous punk house known as Big Trouble House (1925 Colfax Avenue South, razed).³¹⁸

The Seventh Street Entry hosted the first Babes in Toyland performance on June 19, 1987. Treehouse Records released the band’s first single, “Dust Cake Boy,” recorded in Seattle in 1989. The band’s popularity started to take off in the 1990s, with Twin/Tone releasing *Spanking Machine*, the group’s first LP, in April 1990. Riemenschneider notes that the group’s shows inspired many more women to start their own bands.³¹⁹

Leon writes that “we play little bars, like Fernando’s on Lake Street, parties at people’s houses. We’re constantly on the calendar at 7th Street Entry—now as headliners—and grab weird

³¹⁶ The Whole Music Club, accessed October 14, 2018, <https://sua.umn.edu/whole/about/history/>.

³¹⁷ Riemenschneider, *First Avenue*, 172-173.

³¹⁸ Michelle Leon, *I Live Inside: Memoirs of a Babe in Toyland* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2016), 20.

³¹⁹ Riemenschneider, *First Avenue*, 177, 178.

opening slots at the Cabooze, which is more of a rocker/jam-band bar. We say YES to every offer.”³²⁰

In a December 20, 1990, article in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, Jon Bream indicated that the band “has evolved into one of the most enthralling bands on the local rock scene.”³²¹

In an interview in local fanzine *Another Pair of Shoes* (published by this author), prior to a Seventh Street Entry performance on March 10, 1991, the band spoke about their recent European tour, about laughing at having recently heard themselves on the radio, and about the advantages and disadvantages of potentially signing to a major label. The band appeared in a documentary film called *1991: The Year Punk Broke*, which included documentation of the group’s European tour.



Babes in Toyland outside of First Avenue and Seventh Street Entry, March 10, 1991.
(source: Jason Wittenberg)

The band’s next release, a 12” EP called “To Mother,” was issued by Twin/Tone shortly thereafter. The record was Number 1 on the UK indie charts for ten weeks. Then the band signed with Reprise for their next two (and final) studio LPs, *Fontanelle*, released in August 1992, and *Nemesisters*, released in 1995. The “Painkillers” EP was released between the two. Maureen Herman replaced Michelle Leon on bass in 1992. The band went through multiple bass players after Herman left the band in 1996. The band had been featured on magazine covers and had played major music festivals including the Reading Festival (1991, 1993, 1995) and Lollapalooza (1993).

Interestingly, the band was signed to Warner Brothers/Reprise by former Twin Cities (and then New York-based) music veteran Tim Carr, who indicated that his siblings had “written them off as unlistenable after seeing some of their early gigs.”³²²

The group disbanded in 2001 but reformed for shows that began in 2015.

The Replacements in the 1990s

Drummer Chris Mars stuck with the band until being forced out in 1990. Steve Foley took over on drums. The final Replacements LP, *All Shook Down*, was released in 1990. The band had been disintegrating. The final record was largely performed by Paul Westerberg and included session musicians who were not formally part of the band.

³²⁰ Leon, *I Live Inside*, 38.

³²¹ Jon Bream, “Babes in Toyland/Uptown Bar,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, December 20, 1990.

³²² Jon Bream, “Love ‘Em or Hate ‘Em, Babes in Toyland Are Rocking,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 2, 1992.

Before breaking up in 1991, the band's final Minneapolis performances included back-to-back nights at Orpheum Theater (910 Hennepin Avenue, extant) on February 6 and 7, 1991. Later that year, the band called it quits after a set in Chicago's Grant Park on July 4, 1991.

Each of the original members would go on to release records and perform either as solo acts or in other bands. Bob Stinson passed away at his Minneapolis apartment at 813 West Lake Street (extant) in 1995 at the age of thirty-five. In 2000 his family arranged to have a park bench dedicated to Bob Stinson. The bench is located on the west side of the Lagoon between Lake of the Isles and Bde Mka Ska, just south of the Midtown Greenway. Steve Foley, the band's final drummer before the 1991 breakup, passed away in 2008.

The band recorded two new songs for a 2006 retrospective on Rhino Records. The Replacements would release new material (albeit cover songs) in 2013 as a benefit for Slim Dunlap after Dunlap suffered a stroke. Further, the group also re-united (with Westerberg and Tommy Stinson as the only two original members) for live performances from August 4, 2013 (Toronto) through June 5, 2015 (Portugal). During this time, the group had one Twin Cities performance at Midway Stadium in front of 14,000 fans on September 13, 2014.

The band's legacy has been thoroughly documented in books and film. The group's influence and importance is now considered somewhat legendary. They influenced a generation of "alternative" bands. For example, Billie Joe Armstrong of Green Day suggests that seeing the Replacements changed his whole life.³²³ Lori Barbero noted, "I personally knew at least twenty people off the top of my head who have told me they moved to Minneapolis—from Pittsburgh, New York, California, Texas, Nashville—because of the Replacements."³²⁴ Given the band's habit of self-sabotage, it seems fitting that they would dissolve on the cusp of Replacements-influenced alternative bands selling millions of records. Among musicians born and raised in Minneapolis, Paul Westerberg's songwriting proficiency and cultural significance might be second only to Prince.

Bob Mehr's 2016 book, *Trouble Boys: the True Story of the Replacements*, is an incredibly thorough documentation of the band's history and includes a good deal of detail about Minneapolis sites that are relevant to the band's history. Some of those sites have been described and uniquely mapped by Sturdevant and Cannon.³²⁵

Soul Asylum in the 1990s

After having released two LPs on A&M in 1988 and 1990—their post-Twin/Tone years—Soul Asylum's *Grave Dancers Union* was released by Columbia Records in 1992. A November 1992 piece in *Rolling Stone* referred to Soul Asylum as a "band on the brink of stardom."³²⁶ That prediction proved accurate. Following the 1993 release of a video of the hit song "Runaway

³²³ Walsh, *The Replacements: All Over*, 28.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

³²⁵ Andy Sturdevant. "Raised in the City: Westerberg's Walk – and Other Replacements Sites in South Minneapolis," *MinnPost*, March 30, 2016; Kevin Cannon, "Raised in the City: The Replacements' Minneapolis," Tumblr. <http://kevincannonart.tumblr.com/post/97187132923/in-honor-of-the-big-replacements-show-on-saturday>.

³²⁶ Chris Mundy, "Seeking Soul Asylum." *Rolling Stone*, November 26, 1992.

Train,” the band’s popularity skyrocketed beyond what they or their other Minneapolis peer bands could have imagined a few years earlier.³²⁷

Grave Dancers Union eventually sold over three million copies. This placed the record among the all-time top-selling records by a Minnesota-born artist not named Prince or Bob Dylan. The band played at an MTV-sponsored inaugural ball for Bill Clinton at the beginning of his first presidency in January 1993. Later that year, in a *Spin* article, the band discussed their sudden fame, including its negative aspects. Quoted in the article, Pirner suggested, “All of a sudden, it became really difficult to order dinner at a restaurant because everybody was . . . nuts because Soul Asylum was there. That’s the first time in my life that it felt really different.” Guitarist Dan Murphy discussed how people joked that “Runaway Train” allowed members to buy houses. “It certainly changed things,” he noted.³²⁸ “Runaway Train” earned the band a Grammy for “Best Rock Song” in 1993. For a period of time, according to a 1993 *Minneapolis Star Tribune* article, the group’s popularity meant that they were now too big to play many of the Minneapolis venues that typically hosted Soul Asylum in the past.³²⁹ The band had recently made appearances on the “Tonight Show” and opened for Keith Richards in major arenas, including the Saint Paul Civic Center. Pirner participated in the 1993 groundbreaking ceremony for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland.

In 1994, the band had a song on the soundtrack for the movie *Clerks*. Dave Pirner formed a friendship with filmmaker Kevin Smith, who had been a fan of the band. Pirner oversaw the music for Smith’s 1997 film *Chasing Amy*.

Although the band’s 1995 LP, *Let Your Dim Light Shine*, went platinum, the group’s commercial success had peaked following the release of their previous record. The band released one additional record in the 1990s (*Candy from a Stranger*) before being dropped by Columbia Records. The group took a break starting in 1998. Pirner released a solo record in 2002. Soul Asylum’s next record would be released in 2006. Bassist Karl Mueller passed away from throat cancer in 2005. Replacements bassist Tommy Stinson played bass for the group for a period of time. After guitarist Dan Murphy left the band in 2012, Pirner has been the only original member remaining in the group, continuing to perform as of the writing of this report.

Arcwelder

Minneapolis group Arcwelder started under the name Tiltawhirl releasing their first record in 1990. The group changed its name due to a lawsuit from the maker of the Tilt-A-Whirl amusement park ride. The group released six LPs through the 1990s. The group released records on Minneapolis label Big Money, Inc., before switching to Chicago-based Touch & Go from 1992 to 1999.

Dillinger Four

Dillinger Four formed in 1994 and released three EPs and one LP in the 1990s. The group’s first LP, *Midwestern Songs of the Americas*, was recorded at the Terrarium, a Minneapolis studio.

³²⁷ Riemenschneider, *First Avenue*, 182.

³²⁸ David Peisner, “Wrong Way on a One-Way Track: The Oral History of Soul Asylum’s ‘Runaway Train,’” *Spin*, July 2013.

³²⁹ Jon Bream. “They’re Hot, but Can Soul Asylum Go Home Again?” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 5, 1993.

The band has released three more studio albums in after 2000. The group remains active in 2018, making them one of the most enduring Minneapolis punk bands. For the period of time that the band has remained active, they have released records and toured relatively infrequently. Nonetheless, some critics count them as an extremely influential band and note that “since D4 plays so infrequently these days, it’s not uncommon for people to travel from as far as Japan for a rare chance to catch them at some dingy mid-sized club.”³³⁰

Singer/guitar player Erik Funk, along with his wife, Gretchen, opened the Triple Rock Social Club (629 Cedar Avenue, extant). After opening as a bar/restaurant in 1998, the establishment expanded and began hosting live music in 2003, hosting local band Lifter Pull for its first show. The venue would become of Minneapolis’s most important live music clubs until closing in 2017.³³¹

The Strike

The Strike formed in 1993 and their mod-punk drew comparisons to UK groups like the Jam, the Clash, and Stiff Little Fingers. The group released a split EP with Dillinger Four and two EPs of their own, all in 1995 and 1996. Their first LP, *A Conscience Left to Struggle with Pockets Full of Rust*, was released in 1996 on a Chicago-based record label.

The members of the Strike relocated to Chicago in 1997, minus one of their guitar players, and became a three-piece. They recorded another LP in 1999—their final release—called *Shots Heard 'Round the World*.

Recording studios

Six Feet Under

Six Feet Under was a popular Minneapolis recording studio for local punk bands in the early 1990s, including Porcelain Boys, Hammerhead, Jonestown, and Halo of Flies. The studio was located in the Central neighborhood (address unknown)³³².

As recording studio owners have often been reluctant to advertise their specific locations—given the presence of very expensive equipment—it is difficult to find the addresses of many Minneapolis recording studios from years past. More research about Minneapolis recording studios is recommended.

Record labels in the 1990s

A 1995 *Billboard* article about regional independent labels noted, “Before Seattle became a dominant music force, there was Minneapolis. In a sense, many of Seattle’s biggest bands owe a lot of their influences to Twin City bands like Hüsker Dü, the Replacements, and Soul Asylum. These days, Minneapolis seems a little more subdued, but a closer look still reveals an active

³³⁰ Dan Ozzi, “In Dillinger Four We Trust: Three Days on the Road with America’s Greatest Living Punk Band,” *Noisey*. November 16, 2015.

³³¹ Jay Gabler, “Triple Rock Social Club Announces Plans to Close on November 22nd,” *Local Current Blog*, October 16, 2017.

³³² A summary of records recorded at Six Feet Under can be found here:
https://www.discogs.com/label/279157-Six-Feet-Under-Minneapolis?sort=year&sort_order=

music community. Significant regional labels include Twin/Tone, Medium Cool, Clean, Big Money, Prospective, Omnium, Amphetamine Reptile and East Side Digital.”³³³

Twin/Tone Records in the 1990s

Twin/Tone continued to release music throughout much of the 1990s. The label had also developed a relationship with many smaller local labels. Twin/Tone moved from 2541 Nicollet Ave to 2217 Nicollet Ave (extant) in 1993, where it remained for the remainder of the decade. Paul Stark noted that starting in 2002, the label “had no employees and was once again run out of my house” in Edina.³³⁴ Years later, the label essentially came out of retirement to release a new record by the Suicide Commandos entitled *Time Bomb*.

Amphetamine Reptile Records in the 1990s

Although the many of the records released by Amphetamine Reptile Records were unlikely to gain widespread commercial success due (in part) to their abrasive sound, the label did find significant success in the 1990s. The label signed and manufacturing and distribution deal with Twin/Tone. Success came most notably from Helmet, a band from New York. After selling more than 40,000 copies of *Strap It On*, the band’s debut LP released in 1990, the band’s song “Unsung” EP became somewhat of an indie hit. Then the group was one of the few to make a leap from Amphetamine Reptile Records to a major label, selling over two million copies of *Meantime*, their initial major-label release. Helmet’s success helped Amphetamine Reptile support releases by other groups.

Hazelmyer notes that the label’s offices moved to 2645 First Avenue South (extant) in 1992. AmRep Studios was constructed in the basement of the office building by Tim Mac, who had previously run Six Feet Under Studio.³³⁵ In 1998, after first establishing a location in Coon Rapids, Hazelmyer would open the first Minneapolis location of Grumpy’s bar at 2200 Fourth Street NE, which also became the home of Amphetamine Reptile Records the same year. The label largely stopped releasing records in 1998 but did release one in 1999 and one final release in 2000.



2645 First Avenue South, 2018. Amphetamine Reptile Records was housed in this building in the 1990s. A redevelopment of the site is proposed in 2018.

(source: Jason Wittenberg)

Some of the more well-known

Minneapolis-area bands to release records on Amphetamine Reptile included the Cows, Hammerhead, Janitor Joe, and Guzzard. Many of the groups on the label played frequently at the Uptown Bar and First Avenue and Seventh Street Entry. In addition to its music, the label became known for an emphasis on graphic design, developing a unique aesthetic. As an

³³³ Rick Clark, “Give Them One Good Region: Local Labels Congregate In Cities Where Talent Gathers,” *Billboard*, February 25, 1995.

³³⁴ Paul Stark, email to author, August 28, 2018.

³³⁵ Scott Cook, email to author, October 16, 2018.

extension of this interest, Hazelmyer would go on to open Ox-Op Gallery in 2003 (co-located with one of the Grumpy's bar locations at 1111 Washington Avenue South). A documentary film (*The Color of Noise*) about Hazelmyer and Amphetamine Reptile was released in 2015.

Big Money, Inc.

Big Money, Inc. was a Minneapolis-based record label that produced its first releases in 1989 and released records through 1995 for Minneapolis and Twin Cities-area bands such as Neomort, Black Spot, Rifle Sport, Arcwelder, Mickey Finn, and Run West Run. The label also released records from bands based in other parts of the country, primarily Midwestern bands.

Prospective Records

A retrospective double CD of music from Retrospective Records, ranging from 1987 to 1997, notes that the label focused on “the regional sounds of northern punk rocka rolla, garage psych, and shoegazey shimmers.” Referring to the label’s mastermind, the record’s liner notes state, “I don’t know many folks who have given more to their respective musical communities than John Kass and his menagerie of record labels and musical endeavors.” The label was housed in the same location as Twin/Tone Records and it released records by Minneapolis groups such as Swingin’ Teens, Bone Club, the Hang-Ups, Colfax Abbey, the Loose Rails, and Dylan Hicks + Three Pesos.

THD Records

THD records was founded by Jason Parker in the late 1980s, releasing two records in 1989, but the label was most prolific during the 1990s. THD released records by underground Twin Cities-area punk bands as well as several bands from other parts of the country and one band from England. The label was operated from a house, known by local scenesters as the THD House, in Minneapolis’s Seward neighborhood (2020 Seabury Avenue, extant). The label’s home was also home to a number of local punk musicians and others active in the punk scene. The home’s basement hosted live shows by local bands as well as underground touring acts. Local bands that released records on the label included Porcelain Boys, Bloodhound Gang, Quincy Punx, and Dillinger Four.

Susstones Records in the 1990s

Susstones continued to release music in the early to mid-1990s, primarily seven-inch singles.

Modern Radio Records

A 2012 *City Pages* article lists Modern Radio as a critical local label, explaining that “this terrific Twin Cities independent record label was founded in 1999 by Tom Loftus, and continues to churn out one bristling, inventive release after another.”³³⁶

1990s Underground Punk in Minneapolis

Minneapolis had a very active and musically diverse hardcore punk scene in the 1990s. The city had a reputation as a place where the scene was less factionalized than in other cities. Chad Anderson, singer/guitar player for the Strike, noted, “This was a scene where you’d play with everybody, a Dischord [Records]-style band followed by a Discharge-type band,” Anderson

³³⁶ Erik Thompson, “Top 10 Best Record Labels in Minnesota,” *City Pages*, September 24, 2013.

recalls. “If you wanted to play, you couldn't just pick and choose, you had to all get together and just do it.” This era of Minneapolis punk is well-documented by a compilation of local groups on a record called, *No Slow All Go*, released by The Daggers and Half-Mast Records in 1995. A *City Pages* article noted, “The record meant to show the world everything that sweaty, dingy Twin Cities basements had to offer.”³³⁷ The CD has thirty-two songs, with additional tracks on the double LP. Groups on the double LP included (among many others) Kung Fools, the Strike, Man Afraid, Oswald Armageddon, Dirt Poor, Quincy Punx, Threadbare, Dillinger Four, Bombsite, Misery, and Code 13.

Although some of the bands that represented this scene did play established clubs, many of the performances took place at relatively small places that were less well-known, including basements and unofficial/unlicensed clubs that were operated mostly by those with a passion for the music and the punk movement. These included the Avalon Theater, THD House (2020 Seabury Avenue, extant), Emma Center (3451 Bloomington Avenue, extant), Studio of the Stars (504 Cedar Avenue, extant), Bombshelter (2951 Bloomington Avenue, extant), the Scooby Don't House/Thirty-Fifth Street Entry (3500 block of First Avenue South; specific address not found), and Saint Paul's Speedboat Gallery (1166 Selby Avenue, extant).

The unlicensed punk venue known as the Bombshelter hosted bands from 1995 to 1997. In 2015, *City Pages* published a brief article detailing the colorful history of the club, including a 1997 encounter between show attendees and the Minneapolis police that essentially signaled the end for the club.³³⁸

On July 4, 1990, one basement performance in the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood likely holds the distinction of being the best example of a touring band playing a Minneapolis basement before eventually reaching the status of international superstardom. Green Day performed in what is described on a flyer as “Josh's Neat Basement,” located at 815 Sixth Street SE (extant). An interview in *Another Pair of Shoes*, conducted after the show, notes that the band recorded their “Sweet Children” EP that day at Six Feet Under Studio for Saint Paul-based Skene! Records.³³⁹ The band would play an official venue the next day at the Varsity Theater (1308 Fourth Street SE, extant), supported by local bands Bone Club and Porcelain Boys. According to a Green Day fan web site, the band's singer/guitar player, Billie Joe Armstrong, met his future wife, Adrienne, during this stop in Minneapolis.

Twin Cities-based record labels releasing underground punk material during this era included THD Records, Profane Existence, Havoc Records, Half-Mast, One Percent, and Skene!

Prior to the more widespread proliferation of the internet, do-it-yourself fanzines flourished in the punk movement. Local examples included *Profane Existence*, *Contrascience*, and *Another Pair of Shoes*. *Cometbus*, one of the longest running punk-oriented ‘zines in the world, was founded in Berkeley, California, but was based in Minneapolis while its author and creator, Aaron Elliott, spent a good deal of time in the city in the 1990s.

³³⁷ Zach McCormick, “The Strike Reunite for Extreme Noise's 20th Anniversary,” *City Pages*, April 2, 2014.

³³⁸ Tigger Lunney, “Better Know a Dead Venue: The Bomb Shelter,” *City Pages*, September 25, 2015.

³³⁹ *Another Pair of Shoes* #3, published July 22, 1990.

In the 1990s, *Profane Existence* was perhaps the world's best-known anarchist punk publication and record label. Founded by Dan Siskind in 1989, the publication started in 1989 and reached its peak in the 1990s before ceasing production in 1998, although the record label was re-established and currently lives on from a location in West Virginia. *Profane Existence* founder Dan Siskind noted that the magazine moved frequently and was located in nine different houses throughout the city when it was based in Minneapolis.³⁴⁰ During its two-and-a-half years at 1009 West Twenty-Sixth Street (extant), they hosted some local and touring bands in their house.

Extreme Noise Records opened on April 1, 1994, at 124 West Lake Street (extant) as a non-profit, collectively run record store focusing on hardcore punk music. The store relocated to a larger space, opening at 2524 Nicollet Avenue (extant) in January 1997. The store would move again, opening on November 1, 1999, to their current location at 407 West Lake Street. Each location has occasionally hosted live music. Since its inception, the store has been somewhat of a nerve center for the Minneapolis punk community, offering music, books, periodicals, shirts, and an annual flea market.³⁴¹

Volunteers from Extreme Noise sponsored a three-day Minneapolis Punk Fest, which took place June 28-30, 1995, at the University of Minnesota's Great Hall in Coffman Union. The event featured regional and national bands as well as many local groups such as the Strike, Quincy Punx, Dillinger Four, Misery, and Man Afraid.

A release in 2002 entitled *No Hold Back . . . All Attack* was meant to be a follow-up to *No Slow All Go*. The liner notes, written by Felix Havoc, noted that only two of the bands from the 1995 release were still active, and both were featured on the new record. Havoc referred to the early days of Minneapolis punk: "The seed planted at the Longhorn in '76 has grown into a might tree with many different branches and subgenres. But all of the bands on this compilation, no matter how different they may sound, embody the get up and go, do it yourself attitude of those early punk bands."³⁴²

This era of Minneapolis hardcore punk is captured in a hard-to-find documentary film produced by local filmmaker Patty Rhodes, entitled *Debasement Video Fanzine, Vol. 1: When We Play for Real*.

Radio Stations in the 1990s

Radio K

The University of Minnesota radio station known as Radio K began broadcasting in 1993. Although the university has a long history of broadcasting dating to 1912, documented on Radio K's web page, the newly named station established to an all-music format that included rock music and other genres using primarily student-led programming. After a three-year trial period, the university's administration determined in 1996 that Radio K would "be continued indefinitely and the University continue to provide financial support for the station."³⁴³ The

³⁴⁰ Dan Siskind. Email to author on March 20, 2018.

³⁴¹ For the history of Extreme Noise Records, see <http://www.extremennoise.com/history>.

³⁴² Felix Havoc, liner notes from record *No Hold Back . . . All Attack*, 2002.

³⁴³ Radio K web site, accessed October 8, 2018, <http://www.radiok.org/about/history/>.

station still broadcasts as of the writing of this report in 2018 on AM 770 and FM 100.7 and 104.5, as well as streaming online.

Rev 105

Rev 105, “Revolution Radio,” was founded in 1994. The station played alternative rock music and gave the local music scene a boost when it “consistently focused on local bands, venues and issues.”³⁴⁴ The station was purchased and the music format changed in 1997 amid low ratings that partly resulted from a relatively weak broadcast signal during part of the station’s tenure.

Conclusion

An article written by *Minneapolis Star Tribune* music critic Jon Bream in 1989 noted a variety of reasons for “the Twin Cities becoming a thriving music center in the 1980s,” specifically: Institutional support: Schools and cultural institutions supported and fostered an interest in music.

- Economy, ethic, and quality of life: Inexpensive rent was mentioned, along with work ethic and long winters that lead people to practice their music.
- Inspiring examples: Bob Dylan, Prince, etc.
- Live music: A plethora of high-quality performance venues.
- Receptive audiences: Minnesotans as “good listeners” and consciousness about the arts.
- Conservative radio: Locals don’t hear really good music on the radio, so they create it themselves.
- Black-music boom: The article notes that black musicians in Minneapolis merge a variety of styles.
- Open-minded musicians: Musicians here were not afraid of crossing boundaries to produce new sounds.³⁴⁵

If one accepts the above rationale for the thriving scene in the 1980s, some of the same arguments could perhaps be made for the area’s music scene prior to—and since—that time.

A 2018 exhibit at Seattle’s Museum of Pop Culture provided a slightly different list, noting the “Ingredients for a Thriving Local Music Scene.” That list included:

- Key individuals who act as a catalyst.
- Bands that create original music.
- Venues that provide places for bands to play.
- Record labels that document and distribute the music.
- Source of youth, particularly from schools or universities that sustain creative energy.
- Modes of communication, including fanzines, posters, and radio shows that expand the reach of the community.

The Minneapolis rock music scene featured these key ingredients during the latter half of the twentieth century and into the new millennium.

³⁴⁴ Scott Carlson, “The Music Stops for Alternative Station REV 105,” *Minnesota Daily*. March 12, 1997.

³⁴⁵ Jon Bream, “Why Here? Could It Be the Water? Observers Cite Some Reasons for Twin Cities Music Boom,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 7, 1989.

v. Latino Music

By Elizabeth Gales

Latino music in Minneapolis has a long, rich history that pulls from diverse backgrounds and includes genres from Tejano and Norteño to jazz, rock, and hip hop. The recorded history of the Latino community in Minneapolis starts in 1886 when the first permanent resident, Luis (Louis) Gabriel Garzón, arrived in the city. Garzón was a musician in the Aires Nacionales de México, which was touring in the region. He became seriously ill while in Minneapolis, stayed in the area to recover, and married local Clara Wagner. Over the next fifty years, Garzón played in various theater and community bands and orchestras. He founded the first Mexican grocery store on the West Side of Saint Paul, and also had an orchestra that performed at West Side social events.³⁴⁶

After the turn of the twentieth century, the number of Latinos in the state increased greatly as agricultural workers were recruited from the Southwest United States to work in the Red River Valley in the sugar beet industry. Many of these workers were Mexican and Chicano, and traveled back and forth from Minnesota to Texas and Mexico. Some families settled permanently in Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Historian Jim Norris noted that “Thousands of Mexicans came to the United States from 1917 to 1918 as part of a World War I temporary worker agreement between the United States and its southern neighbor. By 1920, large numbers of Mexican workers also worked in the meatpacking industries in Chicago, Minneapolis–St. Paul, Kansas City, and Omaha.”³⁴⁷ In Maya López-Santamaria’s *Música de la Raza: Mexican and Chicano Music in Minnesota*, she states: “The city’s [Saint Paul] Riverview district, later known as the lower West Side flats, soon became a nucleus of the Mexican community. Here they lived with friends and family and enjoyed the benefits of a tightly knit community, especially when times were tough.”³⁴⁸

As the Mexican and Chicano community has grown and developed, López-Santamaria notes: “Mexican music is a source of pride and identification for most Mexicans and Chicanos. The continuation of the music despite enculturation and changes in the lifestyles of Minnesota Mexicans has been marked by the perseverance of a culture that is simultaneously replenished by new arrivals to the state who have the music of home fresh in their ears. This interplay between ethnic maintenance and a consistent stream of newcomers has resulted in a vibrant, diverse, and flourishing gamut of Mexican music that contributes greatly to the cultural life of Minnesota.”³⁴⁹

³⁴⁶ Maya López-Santamaria, *Música de la Raza: Mexican and Chicano Music in Minnesota* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1999), 23; Jeff Kolnick, “Minnesotanos: Latino Journeys in Minnesota,” MNopedia, Minnesota Historical Society, accessed July 24, 2018, <http://www.mnopedia.org/minnesotanos-latino-journeys-minnesota>; United States Census, 1920 and 1930, accessed July 27, 2018, through Ancestry.com; “Louis Gabriel Garzon,” Find A Grave, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/86639611/louis-gabriel-garzon>; “Clara Wagner Garzon,” Find A Grave, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/86639593/clara-garzon>; Rodolfo Gutiérrez, HACER, “The Importance of Being Latino in Minnesota,” presentation 2011, accessed July 27, 2018, http://www.ebanexperience.com/uploads/5/6/8/7/5687864/eban_latinos_present_session_3.pdf.

³⁴⁷ Quote from Jim Norris, *North for the Harvest: Mexican Workers, Growers, and the Sugar Beet Industry* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005), 64; Johannes Riedel, “Nicolás Castillo and the Mexican-American Corrido Tradition,” in *Circles of Tradition: Folk Arts in Minnesota* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press for University of Minnesota Art Museum, 1989), 71.

³⁴⁸ López-Santamaria, *Música de la Raza*, 3.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 6.

Maya López-Santamaria's *Música de la Raza* book and compact disc of recorded music provides a detailed history of the diverse music traditions that have been, and are still, performed across Minnesota. Most of the information below is summarized from this seminal work.

In the 1910s and 1920s, music was often performed by small, informal ensembles at house parties, bailes (dances), holidays, and momentous personal occasions like quinceñeras, weddings, and anniversaries. Members of the Chávez family, including Harrieta and José Chávez often played. Salvador Martínez and Jesús Gómez resided on the north side of Minneapolis but “would come to the West Side from North Minneapolis to play for the bailes and fiestas, or everyone would go to Minneapolis to play for an event there.” In 1922, the Sociedad Mutua Benéfica Recreativa Anahuac (Anahuac Recreational Society for Mutual Benefit) was founded on the West Side “aimed at uniting and assisting newcomers to the West Side as well as promoting the preservation of Mexican culture and celebrations.” The Orquesta Zaragosa, led by José Zaragosa, played at the first baile sponsored by the Anahuac organization. The orquesta was a string quintet with a guitar, tololoche, requinto, and two violins, and they played “romantic music of the early mariachi tradition,” which included rancheras, huapangos, fox trots, polkas, waltzes, and ballads. Another orquesta from Minneapolis led by Jesús Gómez also played at dances organized by Anahuac.³⁵⁰

The 1930s and 1940s saw a rise in popularity of the orquesta típica, often an eight- to twelve-person group that included strings and other instruments like piano, accordion, brass, and percussion. The Estrada brothers orquesta migrated between Texas and Minnesota, and performed in rural Minnesota for migrant families. They also played at dances and festivals in Saint Paul. Their violinist Nicolás Castillo remained in Saint Paul and became the “musical father of the West Side” writing corridos about Chicano life in Minnesota and forming his own orquesta típica to play fox trots, polkas, rancheras, corridos, and waltzes.³⁵¹

Creating New Styles

While mariachi and orquestas were still popular, the postwar period saw the introduction of newer forms of music from Central Mexico and the Caribbean, and also the blending of American music like big band with Latino traditions. Romantic boleros sung by internationally famous groups like Trío Los Panchos and the Padilla Sisters were popular in the late 1940s, and Las Hermanas Rangel, originally a trio with Eugenia, Genevieve, and María Rangel, formed on the West Side to perform boleros. The arrival of the mambo, rumba, cha cha cha, and danzón also inspired new groups, including Los Boleros, which performed tropical music at church events and at La Casa Coronado in Saint Paul. The leader was Augusto (Augie) García, and included Juan López, Dick Rowley, and Alfredo Capíz. Nicolás Castillo and other prominent musicians formed an orquesta Tejana known as Los Rumbaleros in the 1950s. The group “remade Mexican, Texan, and American favorites with large horn sections replacing the stringed instruments of earlier orquestas.” Eugenia Rangel was a part of Los Rumbaleros but founded her own group, Las Siete Notas in the mid-1950s. Eugenia played piano, Francisco “Kico” Rangel and Ruben Trejo were on sax, Frank Trejo on guitar, George Avaloz on drums, and Pete Debora on tololoche. The group performed a wide range of mambos, cha cha chas, and rumbas and were influenced by Latin jazz. García and the Rangels were part of a generation of Chicanos that had

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 25-27.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 17, 29

grown up in Minnesota and listened to both Mexican and American music. With musical knowledge passed down by older musicians, the younger generation began creating music that blended Mexican and American musical traditions, and created something new. Augie García and his group continued to evolve their music and recorded Minnesota's first rock and roll record, *Hi Yo Silver*, in 1955 (see section 4(d)iv "Rock/Punk/Alternative" above). García is widely considered the godfather of Minnesota rock and roll.³⁵²

The 1960s saw changes to the Mexican and Chicano communities in the Twin Cities. The West Side community was moved to higher ground to avoid persistent flooding in the early 1960s, and many of the families moved to other neighborhoods and cities. The federal government also ended the Bracero program in 1964, which limited Mexican fieldworkers migrating to Minnesota. More Chicanos and Texans migrated to Minnesota to work in the fields, and the new residents brought conjunto and Norteño music that was popular in Texas and northern Mexico. These music styles became popular in communities across the state. Local groups in the 1960s and 1970s included the Four Kings, La Tormenta, Los Compadres, Los Norteños, Los Huracanes del Norte, Alegría Familiar, and Los Mundiales. Members of the Rangel family and talented musicians like accordionists Lupe Jiménez and Jesse Ramos were part of this scene. "The innovations these groups introduced did not undermine the traditional appeal of their music nor the heritage it represented. Instead, they reaffirmed the *mejicanidad* (Mexicanness) of these Chicano musicians through the creation of new styles of Mexican music—despite their geographical distance from Mexico."³⁵³

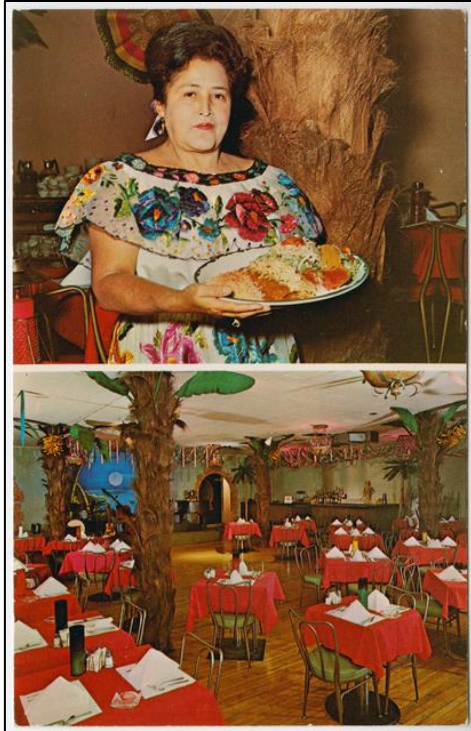
At the same time, López-Santamaria notes, "The dispersal of the West Side community brought a musical diaspora as well, and new bands formed representing different aspects of Mexican, Texan, Latin American, and American music. Bebop, blues, jazz, and rock and roll influenced young Chicanos who had begun to experiment with American music." In addition to Augie García, groups like The Four Cousins and The Jaymars played American rock and roll, rancheras, and Spanish rock. They also developed the "West Side Sound," which was influenced by rock, jazz, blues, soul, Mexican, and Latin music. Kico Rangel formed a twelve- to fourteen-piece Latin orchestra that performed merengue, samba, tango, cumbia, and mambo. Rangel may have been inspired by Tito Puente and other Latino musicians that were introducing Cuban and Puerto Rican music to American audiences in other parts of the country. Latin dinner dances were held at the Saint Paul Hotel and Thunderbird Motel in Bloomington.³⁵⁴

In the 1960s and 1970s, an important local Minneapolis venue for performance of Latino music was La Casa Coronado at 23 North Sixth Street (razed). The restaurant was run by Arthur and Elvira "Mama" Coronado and had started in Saint Paul around 1952 at 154 Fairfield Avenue East. It moved to 184 East Fairfield Avenue by 1954, and remained at that location until around

³⁵² Ibid., 30-34.

³⁵³ Quote from López-Santamaria, *Musica de la Raza*, 41-42; 39-41.

³⁵⁴ López-Santamaria, *Musica de la Raza*, 37-38.



Elvira Coronado and the interior of La Casa Coronado, 23 North Sixth Street, ca. 1965

(source: *Minnesota Historical Society*)

1961. The Coronados operated La Casa Coronado at 1113-1115 Washington Avenue South from 1960 to 1964 before moving to 23 North Sixth Street. The restaurant was at that location until it closed around 1980.³⁵⁵ Local bands including Los Boleros and Las Siete Notas performed at the Saint Paul and Minneapolis locations. The Coronados also hosted international acts. An advertisement in the December 31, 1970, issue of the *Minneapolis Star* featured Ben Pena “Vocal and Guitar Stylist” and the Manfredo Fest Latin-Jazz Trio from Brazil. “The tops in entertainment and authentic Mexican atmosphere are yours to enjoy Monday thru Saturday. Delicious Mexican foods prepared from Mama Coronado’s family recipes. Mexican and American cocktails and foods.”³⁵⁶

The restaurant participated in Minnesota Hispanic Heritage Week in September 1978. It hosted a banquet on September 10 to honor “Latinos who have excelled in their professions and contributed to their ethnic community” that kicked off the week of events in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Other Minneapolis events that week included an exhibition of Hispanic art at Coffman Memorial Union; Hispanic films, Mexican dance, and Venezuelan serenade at the Minneapolis

Central Library; a Hispanic fashion show at Twin City Federal Savings and Loan Association (801 Marquette Avenue); and “Mini-fiestas” with Latino music every day in downtown including bands at NSP Plaza, Hennepin County Government Center, and performers strolling and playing down Nicollet Mall from the library. The week was capped with a two-day Hispanic Fair at Minnehaha Falls that included performances by “a Spanish guitarist, Chilean and Latin jazz, Mexican and Latin music and Mexican and Latin American dance” and ended with a Mariachi Mass and picnic lunch.³⁵⁷ Zocolo, Los Tropicanos, Trio Flamenco, and Kico Rangel’s Band were some of the artists featured that week.³⁵⁸

The high visibility of Latino artists and culture in the late 1970s was likely inspired by the efforts of Chicano activists “to open spaces for Chicanos in the educational, political, institutional, and commercial sectors of American society.”³⁵⁹ This included the creation of the Department of Chicano Studies at the University of Minnesota in 1972 after organized efforts by the Latin

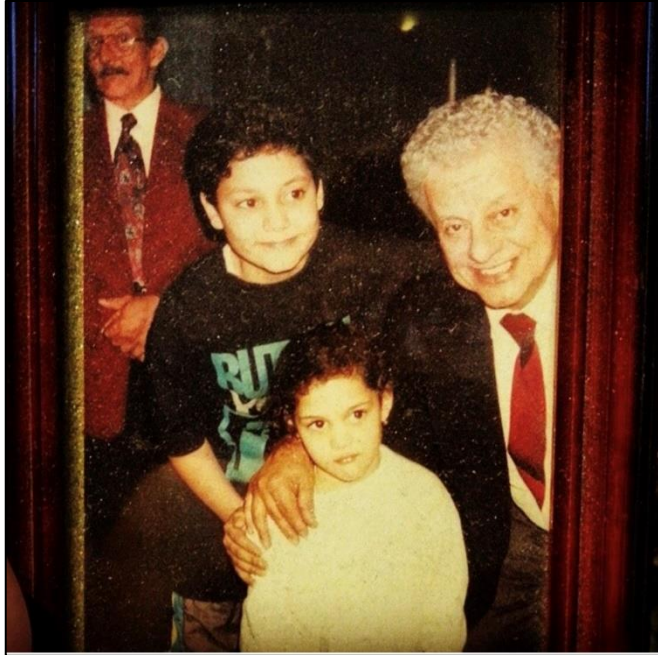
³⁵⁵ Minneapolis and Saint Paul City Directories, available at the Minneapolis Central Library Branch, Hennepin County Library.

³⁵⁶ López-Santamaria, *Musica de la Raza*, 30, 34; Advertisement for La Casa Coronado, *Minneapolis Star*, December 31, 1970.

³⁵⁷ “Latinos Celebrate Heritage Week,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, September 10, 1978.

³⁵⁸ Advertisement for Hispanic Heritage Week in Downtown Minneapolis, *Minneapolis Tribune*, September 11, 1978.

³⁵⁹ López-Santamaria, *Musica de la Raza*, 42.



Tito Puente with siblings María Isa Pérez and Harrel Pérez, and their grandfather Santiago Eugenio Vega-Vélez in Minneapolis, 1991
(source: *María Isa Pérez*)

Liberation Front.³⁶⁰ Chicano consciousness became more visible through the arts, and music was vitally important. López-Santamaria notes that musicians borrowed “from Afro-Caribbean percussion and Afro-American funk” to create “their own, often bilingual Chicano rock.” Local groups included the West Side Band, Extra Added Soul, Free-n-Easy, Sax-n-Souls, Los Jóvenes, Kilo, Café, and Fiesta. Eddie Gonzáles and the Chachos, Zarape, and Quien pioneered Tejano-groove music that might use the Hammond organ, conga drums, timbales, and accordions to perform Tex-Mex cumbias, polkas, rancheras, and Latin music.³⁶¹

Internationally recognized Latino artists also began playing in the Twin Cities more frequently in the 1970s and 1980s. Carlos Santana performed at the New City Opera House and Northrop Auditorium in 1973

and 1976, respectively. Tito Puente and Celia Cruz performed at the Guthrie Theater in 1979. Gato Barbieri, the Latin jazz musician from Argentina, was at the Guthrie in April 1982, and Tito Puente and his sextet performed at the “Basically American Music Festival” at Northrop Auditorium in June 1982. Puente and his Latin All-Stars would return to Minneapolis in 1985 to play at First Avenue, and he would open the Twin Cities Jazz Festival with Cruz at International Market Square in 1986.³⁶²

Puente’s work in the 1980s and 1990s to pass salsa music on to the next generation inspired Nuyorican artists like Marc Anthony and La India to continue the salsa tradition. Locally Latino music continued to be diversified by the arrival of Latinos from places other than Mexico and the Southwest United States. Macalester College in particular attracted Puerto Rican students and many settled in Minnesota after graduating. Local Latin band Orquesta Sabroson began playing salsa and Caribbean music in the 1980s. Sabroson would be the dominant Latin jazz band in the Twin Cities in the late 1980s and 1990s. In 1986, they were featured in the “Dance” column of

³⁶⁰ Chicano and Latino Studies Department, University of Minnesota, “History,” accessed October 31, 2018, <https://cla.umn.edu/chicano-latino/about/history>.

³⁶¹ López-Santamaria, *Musica de la Raza*, 42-43.

³⁶² Marshall Fine, “Santana Has Smoothed Out Its Rough Edges, Added Depth,” *Minneapolis Star*, March 21, 1973; Michael Anthony, “Another New Santana Band Plays at Northrop,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 19, 1976; María Isa Pérez, Minneapolis Music Context Project Steering Committee Meeting, August 28, 2018; Advertisement for Gato Barbieri at the Guthrie Theater, *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 11, 1982; Michael Anthony, “Puente’s Salsa Beat Wins Fans,” *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, June 18, 1982; Barbara Flanagan column, *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, March 15, 1985; Michael Anthony, “Latin ‘Royal Couple’ to Open Fest,” *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, August 8, 1986.

the newspaper for performing at the Majestic Ballroom in Cottage Grove. They also led the lineup for the Canterbury Downs Fiesta Weekend in July 1988 that included Mariachi Serenata, Michael Houser (flamenco guitar), and dancing by Zorongo Flamenco. They headlined the Main Stage of an International Festival at Riverplace and Saint Anthony Main in June 1990, and had also headlined a show at the Fine Line Café earlier that year.³⁶³

Puerto Rican artists also founded El Arco Iris Center for the Arts in 1993 “to create a community that empowers and inspires children and families through traditional Afro-Puerto Rican music, art, dance, and song.”³⁶⁴ For twenty-five years, the organization has utilized spaces in both Saint Paul and Minneapolis for education and performance. It has brought artists from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and other Latin American countries to teach Afro-Latino folklore, dance, and music. Touring companies have promoted Afro-Latino culture at festivals across the state including



Sabrosón director Enrique Mercado with salsa dancers Yasmin Lucas Rivera and Isabelle Torres- Pérez, no date
(source: *María Isa Pérez*)



El Arco Iris performing live Bomba and Plena music and dance at Todos Los Santos Caribe Fest, Lyndale Avenue and West Twenty-Eighth Street, 1997
(source: *María Isa Pérez*)

the Todos Los Santos Caribe Fest, which was held on the northeast corner of Lyndale Avenue South and East Twenty-Eighth Street. Artists and musicians from the local Latino community have donated their time and expertise to pass on cultural traditions to new generations.³⁶⁵

Changing Minneapolis

In the 1990s, a change in policies and a demand for workers led to a dramatic increase in the Latino population in Minnesota. In 1990, 54,000 “Hispanic” residents were recorded in the census. By 2013, over 270,000 Latino residents called Minnesota home. While the total population in the state had grown during

³⁶³ María Isa Pérez, interview with Elizabeth Gales, September 12, 2018; “Dance,” *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, April 25, 1986; “Events,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 7, 1988; “Nightlife,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, February 9, 1990; Advertisement for the International Festival, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, June 8, 1990.

³⁶⁴ El Arco Iris Center for the Arts, “About Us,” accessed October 31, 2018, <http://www.elarcoirismn.org/about-us.html>.

³⁶⁵ Pérez interview.

the 1990s, most of that increase was in the Twin Cities area.

During this period, many Latinos settled in south Minneapolis near Lake Street, making it an important cultural corridor. With the establishment of businesses like Mercado Central at 1515 East Lake Street, the corridor has also been vitally important in the economic development of the Latino community. Cultural events including Cinco de Mayo and Diesseis de Septiembre celebrations have been hosted on the street.³⁶⁶

The number of venues where Latino music is performed in Minneapolis have increased dramatically since the 1990s. Currently, the most prominent is El Nuevo Rodeo at 2709 East Lake Street. The venue started in an old International Order of Odd Fellows hall and expanded into a two-story commercial building to the east. El Rodeo was established in 2003 by Maya Santamaria, who continues to own and operate the venue. International Latino music acts have regularly played at El Rodeo, and DJ dance parties occur weekly. Recently, the musical acts have focused on Mexican and Mexican-American music, including Norteño, corrido, and ballado music from northern Mexico. El Nuevo Rodeo is currently the largest venue in the city dedicated to Latino music that is also owned by Latinos.³⁶⁷

Before El Nuevo Rodeo, Maya Santamaria booked acts at venues including the Quest night club and First Avenue. Victor Valens, the founder of Victor's 1959 Café in south Minneapolis, was also active booking international acts in the 1980s and 1990s. He helped bring Tito Puente and others to Minnesota. Other venues in the city have featured Latino music but have not been exclusively dedicated to the genre. In the past, these have included the Quest night club, First Avenue, Mill City Museum, and Midtown Global Market. Conga Latin Bistro is an important venue for Caribbean music and dancing in Minneapolis. Restaurants like Addis Ababa, the Loring Bar and Restaurant, and the now closed Babalu also hosted bands or DJs for salsa and tango dancing. Currently, venues in Burnsville and other outer-ring suburbs are hosting groups on a regular basis.³⁶⁸

Latino music in Minneapolis, and the Twin Cities region, continues to thrive. Tejano, Norteño, salsa, and conjunto are performed throughout the area, whether live at a venue or on one of the radio stations of the Latino Communications Network. Latino hip hop artists, including Los Nativos (Felipe Espinoza-Day and Jermain Ybarra) and María Isa, continue the tradition of melding musical genres to tell the stories of the next generation of Latinos in Minnesota.

³⁶⁶ Minnesota Compass, "Minnesota's Hispanic Population: 5 Interesting Trends," October 2014, accessed July 25, 2018, <http://www.mncompass.org/trends/insights/2014-10-02-hispanic-population-trends>; Katherine Fennelly, "Latinos, Africans and, Asians in the North Star State: Immigrant Communities in Minnesota," in *Beyond the Gateway: Immigrants in a Changing America: Migration and Refugee Studies series*, eds. Elzbieta M. Gozdziaik and Susan F. Martin (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2005), 8-10, accessed July 25, 2018, http://archive.hhh.umn.edu/people/kfennelly/pdf/immigrant_communities_in_mn.pdf; José Antonio Machado, interview with Elizabeth Gales, June 18, 2018; Mercado Central, "History," accessed July 28, 2018, <http://mimercadocentral.com/about-us/>.

³⁶⁷ Tom Horgen, "Nightlife Notebook: Is El Nuevo Rodeo Closing? Not So Fast," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, April 29, 2010; Manuel Rubio, interview with Elizabeth Gales, June 21, 2018; El Nuevo Rodeo, "Eventos," accessed May through July 2018, <http://elnuevorodeo.com/eventos/>.

³⁶⁸ Rubio interview; Machado interview; Pérez interview.

For Further Research

The Mexican-American Oral History Project at the Minnesota Historical Society includes seventy-four oral history interviews, including Arturo and Elvira Coronado, owners of La Casa Coronado. This collection might yield more information about music and Chicano cultural sites in Minneapolis.

María Isa Pérez, Pastor José Antonio Machado, and Manuel Rubio were critical to providing information on Latino performance spaces in the Twin Cities. Additional musicians and performers in the Twin Cities should be interviewed to help expand this context. Some initial artists to contact might include: Ricardo Levins Morales, Shai Hayo, Angel Maldonado, Felipe Espinoza-Day, and Brian Rossi. It is the author's hope that this section is revised and expanded in the future as Latino music grows and evolves in Minneapolis.

vi. Hip Hop

By Elizabeth Gales

While Prince Nelson and other young Minneapolis musicians were inspired by R&B, funk, and rock music to develop the “Minneapolis Sound,” at the same time in the Bronx, New York City, R&B took a different turn to inspire hip hop. Early pioneers in the genre, including DJs Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash revolutionized how records were played with advancements in sound-system technology. MCs rapped lyrics over the music and groups of MCs and DJs, or crews, developed. While the genre grew out of the African American and Latino communities in the Bronx, by the end of the 1970s, it had spread throughout New York City and along the East Coast. The first hip hop records were made in 1979, and the record *Rapper’s Delight* by the Sugar Hill Gang found international success. Although hip hop records were played everywhere in the country, the spread of the music outside of the New York region relied on individuals. Historian Mickey Hess notes: “Just as hip hop was born in New York out of a mix of Caribbean and Puerto Rican immigrants, American Southerners, and native New Yorkers, the story of many regional scenes across the United States often begins with someone moving to the area from New York. Symbiotically, New Yorkers brought hip hop culture with them as they traveled to other cities.”³⁶⁹

The development of Twin Cities hip hop started with Travis “Travitron” Lee, who moved to Minneapolis from Brooklyn in 1981 to attend the University of Minnesota. Historian Justin Schell notes that Travitron “brought not only records with him, but also the style of hip hop, the gold ropes, record-scratching, and nearly indecipherable show flyers with wildstyle lettering. Indeed, the histories of graffiti and break dancing intertwine with the history of rap in the Twin Cities, as they do throughout hip hop’s history.” While Travitron and other local DJs were soon performing at clubs like Oz, the Fox Trap, Daddy’s, Club Hip Hop, and Duffy’s, nationally known acts were also performing in Minneapolis. In 1981, Kurtis Blow performed at the Northgate Roll-Arena on Plymouth Avenue in North Minneapolis. Roller rinks in both Minneapolis and Saint Paul were important venues for hip hop in this early era, as were parks, community centers, YMCAs, and YWCAs.³⁷⁰

Duffy’s hosted Kurtis Blow and Grandmaster Flash in 1982, and the Seventh Street Entry also began holding “Club Wild Style,” which was “a weekly all ages hip hop afternoon.” As it did with artists in other genres, the Entry served as a space for local hip hop artists to hone their skills and reach wider audiences. Since the mid-1980s, First Avenue has hosted national hip hop

³⁶⁹ *Hip-Hop Evolution*, episode 1, “The Foundation,” directed by Darby Wheeler, Sam Dunn, Scot McFadyen, written by Rodrigo Bascunan, hosted by Shadrach Kabango, aired September 4, 2016, on Netflix, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80141893?trackId=13752289&tctx=0%2C0%2Ced9e4320c3fb68af3a0bcc79c97aaa8024704d79%3Aa31b559e113e3b2fb3c30fab8c075226fae4f8b9%2C%2C>; *Hip Hop in America: A Regional Guide*, ed. Mickey Hess, vol. 1, *East Coast and West Coast* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood Press, 2010), xvi. See also: Joseph C. Ewoodzie Jr., *Break Beats in the Bronx: Rediscovering Hip-Hop’s Early Years* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Jeff Chang, *Can’t Stop Won’t Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: Picador, St. Martin’s Press, 2005).

³⁷⁰ Justin Schell, “From St. Paul to Minneapolis, All the Hands Clap for This: Hip Hop in the Twin Cities,” in *Hip Hop in America: A Regional Guide*, ed. Mickey Hess, vol. 2, *The Midwest, the South, and Beyond* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood Press, 2010), 364-365.

acts including Run DMC, Public Enemy, The Roots, Wu-Tang Clan, Aesop Rock, and Ice Cube.³⁷¹

While live performances were crucial to spreading local hip hop in the early 1980s, recording music also became vital to reaching larger audiences. The first hip hop record made in Minnesota, *The Coldest Rap*, was produced by Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis with California-based MC Ice-T in 1983. Local MCs Kyle Ray and David “T. C.” Ellis released recordings not long after this. Radio DJs at North Minneapolis radio station KMOJ had been playing hip hop records in regular rotation when Travitron began hosting the first hip hop show, “The Hip Hop Shop,” on the radio station in 1984. KMOJ continues to be the leader in broadcasting hip hop music in the Twin Cities. KFAI is another radio station that began broadcasting hip hop, but was later to the game in the 1990s. The show “Strictly Butter” was cohosted by local MCs and DJs and provided a new voice for the local hip hop scene.³⁷²

Local crews of young DJs and MCs developed in the 1980s, and hip hop in the city was mostly divided into three areas: North, South, and Northeast. “The Micranots” formed out of two separate crews, and although the group only performed a short time in Minneapolis, other artists and producers who had worked with them stayed in the Twin Cities. Brent Sayers, known as Siddiq, was one who had worked with them and eventually organized regular hip hop nights that gave young artists the chance to perform. The Headshots crew was formed with artists who attended these events. Siddiq managed the group before it dissolved in 1995. Members of the group, Slug, Ant, Siddiq, and Spawn, created Rhymesayers Entertainment that year. As a record label, Rhymesayers has recorded music for several local and out-of-state artists of many races and backgrounds. They also started the Soundset Festival in 2008 to host local and national hip hop acts in the Twin Cities. Schell claims that “it was the success of Rhymesayers that made people take notice of the Twin Cities scene. Slug and Siddiq appeared on National Public Radio’s *All Things Considered* in October 1996 to discuss not only their own work, but also the current state of hip hop, addressing much of rap’s violent lyrical imagery and its increasing corporate control.”³⁷³

As Rhymesayers’ Atmosphere and other artists like Lil’ Buddy, Eloquent Peasants, and School of Thought developed in the late 1990s, places like the lunchroom at South High School and the Dinkytown neighborhood near the University of Minnesota became important areas for hip hop performance. “In 1998, Big Zach [MC] began the weekly Headspin series at Bon Appetit in Dinkytown, and soon afterward [in 2002] the weekly MC battle at the nearby Loring Pasta Bar.” DJ Syrum was also an organizer with the Headspin series. The scene around Bon Appetit was notable, according to Schell, and it was “the first time that all parts of the Twin Cities hip hop scene could come together peacefully in one place.” MC Combs [Big Zach] noted that “Dinkytown geographically is between the Southside, Northside, St. Paul, and Northeast and was easy to find right off a few major bus lines.” In the early 2000s, the Dinkytowner hosted a hip hop series called “The Hook Up” that was organized by MC Unicus. First Avenue also hosted the

³⁷¹ Ibid., 365, 386.

³⁷² Ibid.; Zach Combs, ed. Joshua Holmgren, *Headspin, Headshots and History: Growing Up in Twin Cities Hip Hop* (Saint Paul: No Static Records.com, ca. 2011), 56.

³⁷³ Quote from Schell, “From St. Paul to Minneapolis,” 366. Other information also from Schell, 363, 366.

first “Soundset” series in the summer of 1998, but it had a short run because of audience violence.³⁷⁴

Regular places to perform helped hip hop grow in Minneapolis in the 2000s. Schell claims that “many artists and groups saw the success of Rhymesayers, and began attempting to emulate it in their own work, as well as take advantage of the many doors that Rhymesayers had opened. Many local bars and clubs recognized the monetary potential for hip hop and began booking hip hop shows much more regularly, giving these newer artists valuable exposure. At the same time, national trends in hip hop’s popularity affected the Twin Cities.” While rivalries and conflict continue to exist in the local hip hop community, a “distinctive feature of the Twin Cities hip hop scene is the wealth of racial identities that make the music. While it may have started out mainly within African American subcultures in its beginnings, Latinos, Africans, Caucasians, Asian Americans, and Indigenous groups can all fall under the banner of ‘Twin Cities hip hop.’ Further, there is much greater openness to cross-racial collaboration, with many of the artists forming multiracial groups.”³⁷⁵

For Further Research

This context has not attempted to be the complete history of hip hop in Minneapolis, which is well-documented by books and articles. Instead, this section has summarized the history of hip hop artists, crews, and music labels through the year 2000 and focused on places where hip hop has been performed during that period. As hip hop in the Twin Cities continues to evolve, this context should be updated.

³⁷⁴ First two quotes from Schell, “From St. Paul to Minneapolis,” 379 and 366-367. Third quote from Combs, *Headspin, Headshots and History*, 102. Other information also from Schell, “From St. Paul to Minneapolis,” 379; Combs, *Headspin, Headshots and History*, 101-102, 163; María Isa Pérez, Minneapolis Music Context Project Steering Committee Meeting, August 28, 2018.

³⁷⁵ Schell, “From St. Paul to Minneapolis,” 367, 371.

5. Property Types

By Charlene Roise and Kristen Zschomler

Some venues associated with music, such as concert halls, are built for that specific function. Others emerge from locations with a compatible function—for example, a bar owner, looking to draw more patrons, adds a stage. Many morph from buildings with distinctly different uses: a hardware store is repurposed as a record shop, a hair salon becomes a recording studio, a bus depot is transformed into a nightclub.

These properties may host different types of music simultaneously (Orchestra Hall) or sequentially over time (The Depot/Sam's/First Avenue). Some have music-related uses today; others have moved on to other functions.

Music-centered businesses can be more transitory than other industries. This leads to issues with historic “integrity”—namely, how much “there” is still there. When properties no longer look like they did when they had music-related functions, it can be difficult to recognize that association. There can also be integrity issues with properties that maintain their musical function but have been extensively remodeled in recent years. Developing an approach for assessing the integrity of music-related properties will be a critical step in determining their potential for local historic designation. There might be justification for broadening the restrictive integrity standards of the National Register for Historic Preservation, which are typically the basis for local standards.

Minneapolis music properties can be significant for their broad association with history, association with an individual, for their design and construction, and for information potential. Due to this study's limited budget, the focus of the study was to identify the most prominent properties. However, the property types presented here allow for other properties to be evaluated under future studies, as resources become available. Through this initial, preliminary study, thirty Minneapolis properties were inventoried (see Appendix B). Further research will result in identification of additional properties associated with Minneapolis's music history. Four primary property types were identified.

- **Performance Venues:** properties where significant musicians performed live and in front of a camera. Subtypes include Concert Venues and Filming Locations.
- **Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Locations:** properties where significant musicians mastered song writing/composing, key instruments, dance/choreography, etc.
- **Recording Locations:** properties where significant musicians recorded songs and albums and mastered recording techniques. Subtypes include Residential Studios, Commercial Studios, and Concert Venues.
- **Distributing the Music:** properties where music was sold or played for free listening. Subtypes include Sheet Music Stores, Record Stores, Radio Stations, and Record Labels.

While some properties associated with music history are easily classified under their original purpose—such as Minneapolis's Orchestra Hall, which was specifically built to accommodate rehearsals and performances—other properties associated with Minneapolis music blur traditional lines. For example, Prince recorded his music in every house he lived in as an adult, at

live performances, and at professional studios. The Replacements, Hüsker Dü, and Soul Asylum all recorded at Blackberry Way Studios, located in a modest bungalow at 606 Thirteenth Avenue SE in Dinkytown. Instead of creating a “Studio” property type, therefore, they are grouped here as “recording locations.” Properties may also fall under more than one type. First Avenue could qualify under all three property types, and the lunchroom at South High School where the Rhymesayers movement began would be considered a Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Location, as well as a Performance Location. Therefore, the evaluation of individual buildings may involve consideration under any or all of the four property types and/or more than one subtype. The building’s original purpose, such as a school, church, bus depot, military armory, or residence, may be irrelevant to its categorization for its association with Minneapolis music history.

a. Just for Play: Performance Venues

i. Concert Halls, Clubs, and Cafes

Some music facilities, like Orchestra Hall, are purpose-built and live a long life fulfilling that role. More common, though, is the example of the Happy Hour Cafe, later known as Club Carnival and the Flame Bar, at 1523 Nicollet Avenue, built in 1938 as a major jazz club. As popular tastes changed following World War II, the club's focus turned to country-western music in 1955 and the building's Streamline Moderne aesthetic was muted with "wagon wheels around the bar and models of a cowboy and cowgirl over the front door." The club brought in national headliners like Mel Tillis, Dottie West, and Hank Snow and was successful for a while, but "by the early '60s the character of the neighborhood had deteriorated and the Flame's clientele had changed. Packs of motorcycles were often parked outside" and "the names of the Flame's performers became less impressive." By the following decade, its marquee promised "Hard and Soft Rock," "Old and New Blues," "Disco," and "Soul" as well as "Snacks, Dancing, Giant Drinks." The physical integrity of the property, from a preservation perspective, had become extremely questionable. As a writer observed in 1977, "To describe the decor—country-western laid over 1940s glamour, with shabby disco slathered over that—'eclectic' would be a kindness." In 1978, the city revoked the club's liquor license after a bust for prostitution, resulting in the bar's closure. The owners received offers to sell the property to other operators who wanted to reestablish a jazz club at the location as well as developers who planned to replace the building with new construction. The building apparently had a brief resurgence as a music venue but was eventually transformed into other commercial uses.³⁷⁶

More research is needed to identify potentially significant properties.

³⁷⁶ R. T. Rybak, "Owner of the Flame Bar Waits, Hopes to Reopen," *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 3, 1979; David Peterson, "Flame Bar: City Has Last Word," *Minneapolis Star*, July 25, 1980; Brenda Ingersoll, "Proprietor Keeps 'Flame' Glowing through All Changes," *Minneapolis Star*, May 12, 1977.

ii. Taking It to the Streets: Music Outside

By Stephanie Rouse

Since music began taking shape in Minneapolis, outdoor concerts have been a standard venue. As discussed earlier in *Music in Nature*, concerts were common in Bridge Square and the Lake Harriet Pavilion in the late 1800s. Some downtown buildings offered summer concerts on their roof gardens. There are four main categories of outdoor music that have evolved over the years: city parks, open air stadiums, rooftop gardens, and urban spaces.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has been running the popular Music in the Parks program since 1892.³⁷⁷ The concerts have been held at locations throughout the city including the Lake Harriet Bandshell (4135 West Lake Harriet Parkway, rebuilt in 1986), Minnehaha Park Bandshell (4801 South Minnehaha Drive, rebuilt in 1997), Father Hennepin Bluff Park (420 Main Street SE), Nicollet Island Pavilion (historically the 1893 Williams Brothers Boiler Works, renovated in 1988) and Amphitheater (40 Power Street), Bryant Square Park (3101 Bryant Avenue South), and Theodore Wirth Park (2500 Glenwood Avenue). Some parks, like Lake Harriet, have a long history with music, while music was introduced at others more recently. Music genres at these concerts vary greatly and include classical, rock, jazz, concert band, folk, punk rock, and more. What began as concert band concerts grew into a mix of genres representing all the phases of Minneapolis music.

The oldest music venue for outdoor concerts is Lake Harriet, dating back to 1885. Advertisements from this time showed open air concerts at the park, which were made popular by the easy transportation on the Minneapolis Street Railway Company lines. The company erected an entertainment pavilion in 1888 on private land west of the lake and hosted concerts there. In an agreement with the park board, the railway company built a new pavilion on the shore of Lake Harriet after the 1888 pavilion burned in 1891. The new pavilion was designed by Harry Jones, a Minneapolis architect and park commissioner, in the popular Pagoda style. After that pavilion burned, Jones designed a new pavilion, which was built in 1904 and leveled by a storm in 1925. Soon thereafter, a “temporary” bandstand was built east of the site of the old pavilion for \$4,000. It lasted sixty years until it was replaced in 1986 by the existing bandstand, designed by architect Milo Thompson. Built at a cost of \$5.5 million, the bandstand provides concertgoers views of the lake while listening to music.³⁷⁸

Beyond traditional bandshells, open-air stadiums offered opportunities to listen to music in nature. Parade Stadium (400 Kenwood Parkway, demolished), Minneapolis’s first public football stadium, was built just west of downtown in 1951. It was not used as an outdoor concert venue until the mid-1960s. According to historian David Smith, “Buffalo Springfield, Jefferson Airplane, Fleetwood Mac, and Blondie, among others, played there. Singer Melissa Manchester drew the stadium’s largest crowd ever—thirty thousand—in June 1979. The last big-name act to

³⁷⁷ Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, “Music and Movies in the Park,” accessed September 11, 2018, https://www.minneapolisparkevents.org/activities_events/music_movies/#group_3_656902.

³⁷⁸ Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, “Lake Harriet Park,” accessed September 11, 2018, https://www.minneapolisparkevents.org/parks_destinations/parks_lakes/lake_harriet_park/#group_3_13031.

play at Parade Stadium was Simon and Garfunkel in July 1983.”³⁷⁹ Concerns from neighbors over noise led to fewer and fewer concerts and the eventual demolition of the stadium in 1990.

Finally, the rooftop garden was an early source of outdoor musical entertainment. The first mentions of roof garden concerts were found in the early 1890s, with the Guaranty Loan Building (330 Second Avenue South, demolished) holding roof garden concerts in 1891.³⁸⁰ In newspaper articles from the early 1900s, the summer fad of rooftop gardens, which provided relief from heat, dust, and mosquitos, doubled as evening venues for concerts.³⁸¹ The Plaza Hotel was popular in 1906, along with the rooftop garden at the Lake Harriet Bandshell.

In the late 1900s, outdoor concerts moved from rooftops to the streets, becoming popular in bar and restaurant patios and temporarily taking over spaces, like streets, parking lots, and plazas, that normally served other functions. In 1984, Saint Anthony Main (115 Main Street, extant) offered a Jazz and Summer outdoor concert series and the Minnesota Orchestra gave free concerts in the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome parking lot.³⁸² The orchestra also played in Peavey Plaza (1101 Nicollet Mall, extant), adjacent to Orchestra Hall, which accommodated jazz, blues, rock, and other concerts as well.

Some of the above properties are locally designated and listed in the National Register. Often, though, their association with Minneapolis’s music history is not noted. More research is needed to identify potentially significant properties.

³⁷⁹ David C. Smith, “Parade Stadium, Minneapolis”, MNOPEDIA, accessed September 11, 2018, <http://www.mnopedia.org/place/parade-stadium-minneapolis>.

³⁸⁰ *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, June 23, 1891.

³⁸¹ “Society,” *Minneapolis Journal*, July 22, 1906.

³⁸² *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, June 29, 1984.

b. Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Locations

Musicians used a variety of properties for writing, practice, and rehearsal. These may include residential properties but also commercial properties like warehouses and professional studio spaces. More research is needed to identify potentially significant properties.

c. Keeping the Sound Around: Recording Locations

i. Residential Studios

Prince is the musician identified the most with residential recording studios. Studios were set up in other residential settings, and more research is needed to identify potentially significant properties.

ii. Commercial Studios

Sound 80 and the former Kay Bank Studio are examples of well-known commercial studio properties. More research is needed to identify other potentially significant properties.

iii. Concert Venues

With improvements in recording technology, concert venues could be used as recording spaces. One of the best documented examples is First Avenue, which was used by Prince to record several important tracks for the soundtrack to the movie *Purple Rain*. More research is needed to identify other potentially significant properties.

d. Bringing It to Market: Distributing the Music

Music has been distributed in countless ways as technology has evolved. The following subtypes highlight the most common ways music has been distributed in Minneapolis.

i. Sheet Music (Nineteenth-century Music Stores)

By Stephanie Rouse

Sheet music for vocals and small instruments was popular in the early years of Minneapolis as it was easy to transport and affordable.³⁸³ In Minnesota, the publishing of sheet music reflected “what was happening in other states of the Union. The output expressed the spirit of the times and reflected the culture of the day.”³⁸⁴ One such example of these compositions was “The Minneapolis Mill Disaster” written in 1878 to document the tragic explosion of the Washburn A Mill on May 2 of that year. Sheet music was published with artistic covers to capture the spirit of the artistic compositions within. An example is the “Ice Palace March” for the Winter Carnival, which featured winter scenes surrounding the ice palace.³⁸⁵

The Minnesota Historical Society’s *Collection of Songs and Music About Minnesota Places, Institutions, Businesses, and Themes* has an assemblage of sheet music dedicated to Minneapolis. A song from Hazel Bertram Butterfield written in 1940 is a tribute to “Minneapolis, the city of lakes and parks.”³⁸⁶ Another called “Summers in Minneapolis” was written in 1962. One of the earliest collections is the “Minneapolis Journal Waltzes” composed by Ion Arnold in 1890 followed in 1999 by Edmund Braham’s “Minneapolis Journal March.”

Despite the high volume of sheet music produced in the Twin Cities in the nineteenth century, it did not measure up to cities like New York, Boston, or Chicago which hosted hubs of music like Tin Pan Alley. It appear that sheet music sales in Minneapolis clustered downtown along Nicollet Avenue, with a proliferation of music stores opening in the late 1800s.

Of the music stores that have been identified, only one store—Schmidt Music (88 Tenth Street)—is still standing. The remaining music buildings, primarily clustered along Nicollet Avenue in downtown, were demolished in the late 1950s through 1970. Most of the buildings were constructed in the 1880s, with a few outliers constructed in the first decade of the twentieth century. Nineteenth-century music stores included Howard, Farwell and Company (707 Nicollet Avenue), Metropolitan Music Company (509-511 Nicollet Avenue), The Muse/Musical Advance (511 Nicollet Avenue), and the W. J. Dryer and Brothers Company (408-410 Nicollet Avenue).

³⁸³ James Taylor Dunn, “A Century of Song: Popular Music in Minnesota,” *Minnesota History* 44 (Winter 1974), accessed September 21, 2018, <http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHHistoryMagazine/articles/44/v44i04p122-141.pdf>.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Minnesota Historical Society, *Collection of Songs and Music About Minnesota Places, Institutions, Businesses, and Themes*, accessed September 21, 2018, <http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/lb000008.xml>.

ii. Shellac, Vinyl, Cassettes, CDs—The Rise and Fall of Record Stores

By Charlene Roise

The term “record stores” is applied generically to the retailers that came and went in response to changes in technology, taste, and real estate values. While a few, like Musicland, were large corporations, most were small, independent shops with only one facility or, at most, a few locations. Stores were occasionally free-standing, but were more typically in storefronts in older commercial areas, like Cedar-Riverside and Dinkytown around the University of Minnesota, and along streetcar corridors such as Nicollet and Lyndale Avenues.

In addition to music, the stores were sometimes “head shops” offering drug-related paraphernalia as well other merchandise such as T-shirts, jewelry, and books. They developed devoted followings. John Kass, owner of a twenty-first-century on-line vinyl retailer, recalled, “In my younger days, I spent a lot of time in record stores and head shops, from about 1973 to 2007. Sometimes I think I love the record stores more than the records themselves (and you know how much I love records). I still look/looked up to the store owners, weird and ornery as they are/were, they are my heroes. Hats off to ’em!” He compiled the following list of record stores in Minneapolis during that period:

Let it Be (10th and Nicollet, Loring Park, 7th and Hennepin), Oar Folkjokeopus/North Country Music (26th and Lyndale- Treehouse thrives here), Northern Lights (7th and Hennepin), Hot Licks (7th and Hennepin), Garage D’or (26th and Nicollet, Lake and Lyndale), Music City (7th and Hennepin), Wax Museum (Lake and Nicollet, West Bank, 7th & Hennepin downtown), Applause (various uptown locations), Pyramid (1st Ave and 5th St), Optic Nerve (Lake and Lyndale), Aardvark (Central and Lowry), Records on the Nile (35th and Cedar), Uneeda Records (22nd and Lyndale), Groove Monster (Dinkytown), Stone Bleu Ltd. Stone Bleu Too (38th and Grand), Hit City (Central Ave NE), Don Leary’s (St Anthony), Campus Record Shop, Hazen’s (33rd and E Lake St), Record Exchange (7 corners), Disc & Needle (1439 W. Lake St.), Backbeat Discs (25th and Hennepin), Bassment (E. Hennepin and 5th St NE, Lake and Lyndale), Cynesthesia (Karmel Blvd., 617 West Lake Street, 2901 Lyndale Av S), Da Sound Lab (42nd and Minnehaha), Digital City (Broadway-North Side), DJ’s Music Emporium (Grand and Lake St), Elite (Lowry and Central NE), Know Name/Your Store (Dinkytown), Positively 4th St (Dinkytown), Last Stop CD Shop (Dinkytown), New Avenue (Lake St), Nightfall (E Lake and 27th), Sursumcorda (1st Ave and 3rd St- downtown), Universal CDs (38th and Chicago), Wide Angle (45th and Nicollet), CD Station, Hit City (Central Av NE), Rock-it Records (three diff locations), Humble Sounds (50th & Bryant), CD Cellar (by Lake Nokomis), Record Run (Thomas Ave N-originally from Philly), Oblivion Record Shop (Cedar Av. north of Riverside-West Bank), Rising Sun (Harmon Av btwn 8th and 9th dntn), Soul Survivor (Penn and Broadway), Platters (LynLake, Cedar & Riverside- photo thanx David Beckey), Schmitt Music (they still sell instruments), Modern Records (15th and Nicollet), Record Lane (8th and Nicollet), F.U.G. Record Sales (North Lyndale Av.), Mr. Bojangles (37th and Stinson, NorthEast), Record Rarities (Aldrich and Lake St.), Dixieland Record Heaven, Third Stone Music (W. Lake Street), The New England (8th and Marquette), Title Wave (W. Lake St.), Wayne & Ron’s (Lake & 30th), Immaculate Contraptions (Franklin & Lyndale), Mr. Crown’s (38th St.), Spring Records, Sound Inn (Stadium Village and 18th & Nicollet), House of Records (Lake and

Nicollet), Lyndale Flowers and Records (Lyndale & 36th), Dee's Record Center, Get Records, Chicago Lake Records, Acme Record Shop, 7 E. 26th Street, Texas Bill Strength Record Shop (202 S. 10th St.), Earth (Lake & Nicollet), Kra-Mar Music (3939 Fremont Av. N), Majestic Music Shop (14 S. 7th St.), Gilbert's Music & Novelty Shop, 30 S. 7th St.³⁸⁷

Further research is needed to identify extant record shop properties, regardless of whether they continue to function as record stores, and to evaluate their significance.

³⁸⁷ John Kass, "List of Defunct Indie Record Stores and Head Shops," <https://gojohnnygojohnny.wordpress.com/2011/02/20/list-of-dead-indie-record-stores/>.

iii. Radio Stations

By Elizabeth Gales

Radio stations have been, and continue to be, vital to sharing music. There have been numerous commercial radio stations with broadcast areas that include Minneapolis. The following three stations stand out as non-profit organizations that have made critical impacts on many musical communities in Minneapolis.

KMOJ

KMOJ is currently located on the second floor of 2123 West Broadway Avenue. The non-profit, community station was founded in 1976, and originally occupied two units in the apartment building at 810 Fifth Avenue North in the Sumner Field project. The antenna was mounted on the roof of the high-rise building.³⁸⁸ A group of community residents, the Scarlet Fever Committee, identified problems in the community and looked for solutions. Interviewed in 1984, Reverend Ewald Bash noted that one problem was “the lack of communication between the Glenwood-Lyndale and Sumner-Olson housing projects, which were separated by the construction of Olson Memorial Hwy.” The station started on the AM band as WMOJ, with a reach of only a few blocks. In 1978, it increased its wattage and moved to FM as KMOJ. The wattage was increased again in 1983 to broadcast across the metro area.³⁸⁹

From its beginning, the station focused on black music and programming. As one program director and station manager explained: “The important thing is knowing our history, and the music is a part of that.”³⁹⁰ Everything from pop, blues, jazz, rock, soul, funk, reggae, gospel, and hip hop has been broadcast from KMOJ. All shows are community based and include interview and forum formats, in addition to playing music.³⁹¹

As the Sumner Field area was redeveloped in the 1990s, the station moved to the Glenwood Lyndale Community Center at 501 Bryant Avenue North. When that building was demolished in the early 2000s, the station moved to 555 Girard Avenue and then to a temporary location in Uptown 2007. In 2010, KMOJ relocated to its current home on West Broadway Avenue.³⁹²

KFAI

Fresh Air, Inc. filed as a nonprofit corporation with the Minnesota Secretary of State in 1973. The corporation had difficulty getting their license to broadcast after Minnesota Public Radio

³⁸⁸ Jim Fuller, “KMOJ’s Deacon: Blind DJ ‘Keeping It Live,’” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, November 14, 1982; “KMOJ’s History,” KMOJ website, accessed August 6, 2018, <http://kmojfm.com/wp/about-us/>.

³⁸⁹ Joelle Purvis, “Tiny Station Sets Big Goal: Unifying Area in North Side,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 28, 1984.

³⁹⁰ Tiffany Moore, “KMOJ Uses Popularity of Music to Preface Serious Programming,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 28, 1984.

³⁹¹ Moore, “KMOJ Uses Popularity of Music;” “Shows and Personalities,” KMOJ website, accessed August 6, 2018, <http://kmojfm.com/wp/shows-personalities/>.

³⁹² Kimberly Hayes Taylor and Wayne Washington, “Turmoil at KMOJ: Now You Hear It; Now You Don’t,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 3, 1994; Steve Brandt, “Hollman Renewal Leaving Some in Limbo,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, February 19, 2000; Charles Hallman, “KMOJ Resurrected in North Minneapolis,” *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*, April 23, 2010.

legally opposed the organization. However in 1978, KFAI finally succeeded and went on the air. The sixty-foot radio antenna was on the roof of the Seward Cafe at 2201 East Franklin Avenue. Organizers assembled everything from the transmitter, tower, tapes, and used tape recorders for about \$16,000. The primary coverage area extended about two miles around the transmitter. The radio's office was located in a loft at Walker United Methodist Church (also known as Walker Community Church) at 3104 Sixteenth Avenue South. Once the station was fully operative, daily broadcasting began at 6:00 a.m. with "Wake-up, Southside" and concluded with various jazz programs that started at 11:00 p.m. Starting shortly after the station's first broadcast, Willie Murphy hosted the first blues show on KFAI. The show ran for eight years.³⁹³

On January 9, 1984, KFAI began broadcasting from a 125-watt transmitter atop the Foshay Tower, which provided transmission within an eight-mile radius. In 1986, Fresh Air Radio moved into offices above the Butler Drug store at 1518 East Lake Street, less than two blocks from its original location at Walker Church. "Reports indicate that air conditioning was everyone's favorite new amenity."³⁹⁴

In the fall of 1991, KFAI moved into the Bailey Building at 1808 Riverside Avenue South. It was the station's first custom designed facility, with studios, a newsroom, a record library, staff offices, a kitchen, and a meeting area. On December 12, the station held an open house to celebrate the move.³⁹⁵

KBEM

The radio station KBEM is part of the Minneapolis School District's broadcasting education program. From the station's website: "The broadcasting education program that spawned KBEM was established at Minneapolis Vocational High School [1101 Third Avenue South] in the mid-1960s. The station signed on in 1970, carrying a widely varied checkerboard of programming. In 1983, it moved to new facilities in North High School [1555 James Avenue North] as part of the District's desegregation initiative and it continues to reside there today. Jazz music became the main programming focus in the mid-1980s and the station started to build a loyal and sizeable audience."³⁹⁶

The radio station is now "financially self-sufficient through listener donations, grants, partnerships, and business support, taking no cash subsidy from the school district. The Radio curriculum now teaches general professional and academic skills and media literacy through

³⁹³ Filing Number L-2, July 27, 1973; Minnesota Secretary of State website, (http://da.sos.state.mn.us/minnesota/corp_inquiry-find.asp?:Norder_item_type_id=10&sm=7); Bryan Peterson, "NFCB, KFAI and You," *Fresh Air Magazine*, January 1979.; Minneapolis Building Permit A43179, April 7, 1978; John Carman, "Station's Fresh on the Air," *Minneapolis Star*, May 12, 1978; "Programming Guide," *Fresh Air* [September? 1978]; Collins, *West Bank Boogie*, 122. Peterson was also pastor of Walker United Methodist Church from 1967 until his death in 1989 (Ted Jones, "Church and Civic Leader Rev. Bryan Peterson Dies," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 18, 1989)

³⁹⁴ Louise Strasbaugh, "It's My Column and I'll Cry If I Want To," *Fresh Air*, January 1984; "Outtakes," *Fresh Air*, April-June, 1987; KFAI website. Nichols also mentioned that the restrooms in the Butler Drug building were much more accessible than in Walker Church.

³⁹⁵ Minneapolis Building Permits B579112, April 4, 1991; and B581954, July 18, 1991; KFAI Web site; and "Open House for New Studio in Bailey Building," flyer, Minneapolis Public Library Minneapolis Collection files.

³⁹⁶ "A Brief History," Jazz88 website, accessed August 7, 2018, <http://www.jazz88.fm/connect/about/>.

project-based work on and off the air. The majority of students involved with the Radio curriculum and school-year **Jazz With Class** program attend **North High School**, but students from all around the city participate as reporters for the School News segment, and as summer employees through the Step-Up program.”³⁹⁷

³⁹⁷ “A Brief History.”

iv. Record Labels

Record labels, especially locally developed companies, have been important to the recording and sharing of music in Minneapolis. More research is needed to identify potentially significant properties.

e. Symbolic Significance

By Charlene Roise

Some properties do not meet traditional criteria for significance, but their cultural importance is established, often at a visceral level, by members of the public. This symbolic significance, much like the “Main Street” of Lewis Sinclair, is strong and should be acknowledged. Examples of this property type include the Purple Rain House and the Replacements House, both in South Minneapolis.

f. Advancing a Mission with Music: Churches, Schools, and More

By Charlene Roise

The University of Minnesota was a prominent influence in the Minneapolis music scene. From Classical concerts at Northrop Auditorium to folk happenings at Coffman Union's Whole Coffeehouse, university venues drew the public to the campus. Its curriculum trained performers and academics, and its students provided audiences for shows at theaters and clubs in Dinkytown, Stadium Village, the West Bank, and throughout the city.

Some private schools like MacPhail have been documented by other studies. Others have received less scholarly attention but have played an important role in providing instruction to professional and avocational musicians. Professionals also benefited from teaching classes, which provided an important income stream between gigs.

The West Bank School of Music epitomizes a grassroots music school that was an institution in the counterculture Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. Founded in 1970 by Warren Park, it was located for many decades in a former boardinghouse at 1813 South Sixth Street. While offering courses in fiddle, mandolin, banjo, guitar, and other traditional folk music instruments, the school advertised "competent musical instruction for every orchestral instrument and all folk, blues, jazz, rock and country instruments." It moved to 655 Fairview Avenue in Saint Paul in 2015 and closed three years later.³⁹⁸

Churches were another major place for musical events. In addition to featuring music in worship services, churches held concerts and festivals of secular as well as sacred music. These events attracted musicians and audiences from beyond the congregation.

These and other locations merit further study.

³⁹⁸ Advertisement for West Bank School of Music, *Many Corners*, March 1974; West Bank School of Music website, <https://wbsm.org/about/>.

6. Case Study: West Bank/Cedar-Riverside

By Elizabeth Gales, Kristen Koehlinger, and Kathryn Goetz

a. Introduction

The Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, also known as the West Bank, has a concentration of performance venues that have existing since at least the late 1960s. A reconnaissance-level survey of the neighborhood was conducted to determine if the performance venues are eligible for local designation. Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places was not assessed as part of this survey.

The surveyed properties are non-contiguous, or spread throughout the area and not located immediately next to each other. More in-depth research needs to be conducted, including researching the building permit history of each property to determine if they retain sufficient historic integrity to be designated.

b. From Snoose Boulevard to the Electric Fetus: Cedar Riverside's Colorful History³⁹⁹

The Cedar-Riverside area has long served as an entry point for new arrivals to the country and a low-rent housing district for university students. It had acquired a reputation as a first stop for new immigrants in the late nineteenth century, when a preponderance of just-off-the-boat Scandinavians and their ever-present snuff earned Cedar Avenue the nickname “Snoose Boulevard.”

The area was included in the original boundaries of Minneapolis. It was east of the commercial node that became the city's downtown, and not far from the lumber and flour mills that soon clustered around Saint Anthony Falls on the Mississippi River. By the 1860s, Scandinavian immigrants were pouring into Minneapolis, encouraged by railroads and other businesses eager to attract settlers to the frontier. A concentration of Scandinavians first formed near the Milwaukee Road Depot on Third and Washington Avenues, then gradually moved southeast down Washington. In 1880, five of the community's six Norwegian churches were in the vicinity of Cedar-Riverside. The area developed rapidly as it became more accessible by horse cars, then streetcars. In 1883, the Scandia Bank was erected at the intersection of Cedar and Riverside Avenues to serve the growing business and residential community. The location of the bank, in turn, stimulated the establishment of Scandinavian retail shops, grocers, service organizations, and entertainment venues along Cedar Avenue. “Beginning in the mid-1880s,” a historical report explains, “the Cedar Riverside area became noted for its abundance of saloons, theaters, and ethnic meeting halls.”⁴⁰⁰

As the immigrants became successful and joined mainstream society, they moved away from the densely developed area. Their place was taken by other ethnic groups. These new groups and the Scandinavians that remained sometimes had a harder time achieving the American dream.

³⁹⁹ Excerpted from the National Register nomination for “Cedar Square West,” Charlene K. Roise and Elizabeth A. Gales, Hess, Roise and Company, August 2010.

⁴⁰⁰ Norene Roberts and Lynne VanBrocklin Spaeth, “Historic Survey of the Cedar-Riverside Commercial Area,” August 1979, 11-29, prepared by Heritage Preservation Associates.

Housing in the Bohemian Flats area along the riverbank, which frequently flooded, was woefully substandard, and residences on higher ground also became more marginal as they aged and maintenance declined. The neighborhood's saloons and theaters began drawing a seedier clientele, further stimulating the flight of prosperous businesses and residents to other locations.

The Great Depression provided another blow. In *Social Saga of Two Cities*, an authoritative book on conditions in the Twin Cities in the 1930s, Calvin Schmid includes an annotated map of downtown Minneapolis and adjacent areas. The area north and west of the intersection of Cedar and Riverside is labeled "slum," while the neighborhood east of Cedar and south of Riverside is identified as "residential, lower middle class."⁴⁰¹ Things had not improved by 1949 when the city conducted a survey of blighted areas. A number of blocks in the Cedar-Riverside area were found to contain a substantial percentage of deteriorated housing.⁴⁰²

This was, from some perspectives, not entirely bad. By the 1960s, thanks to the nearby University of Minnesota campus, the area's coffeehouses, bars, and cheap housing attracted a bohemian culture exemplified by its most famous member, Bob Dylan, and its most infamous record/head shop, the Electric Fetus.

During an interview with Cyn Collins for her book, *West Bank Boogie*, Tony Glover reminisced about how the music spread through the bars on the West Bank. He stated that when John Koerner would play at the Triangle Bar, which was popular and crowded, Koerner would take a break, and "go across the street where it was quieter and more peaceful, to the Viking." The Viking saw how busy the Triangle was and hired Koerner to play at the Viking. During his breaks at the Viking, he went down to the 400 Bar for peace and quiet. Once again, this led to music starting at the 400. The live music idea spread throughout the West Bank.⁴⁰³

Willie Murphy's recollection of how the music spread through the West Bank is a little different than Tony Glover's. Murphy agrees that in the early 1960s everyone was at the Triangle Bar. The next bar in the progression was the Mixer's Bar, followed by the Viking, 400 Bar, 5 Corners Bar, and Palmer's Bar.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰¹ Conrad F. Schmid, *Social Saga of Two Cities: An Ecological and Statistical Study of Social Trends in Minneapolis and St. Paul* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Council of Social Agencies, 1937), 38.

⁴⁰² "South Minneapolis Area Surveyed for Blight," *Minneapolis Tribune*, September 30, 1949.

⁴⁰³ Cyn Collins, *West Bank Boogie* (Minneapolis: Triangle Park Creative, 2006), 61.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.

c. Properties Surveyed

221 Cedar Avenue

“Hans and Peter Simonson were the Norwegian immigrants who founded their milling firm in the 1870s. . . . In 1889, when the Washington Avenue Bridge was opened, the Simonson brothers erected a four-story corner-towered block at 221 Cedar.” The Augsburg Publishing House printed in this building in the 1890s, and the third floor “was used for Norwegian religious and social function for a number of years around the turn of the century.”⁴⁰⁵

“When constructed in 1889, the four-story Queen Anne styled Simonson Block at 221-225 Cedar Avenue was one of the most impressive architectural buildings in the Seven Corners area. In 1950, the fourth story, containing a highly decorative cornice, and the ornate tower were removed after a fire in the adjoining building.”⁴⁰⁶

According to city directories, in 1945, 221 Cedar Avenue was occupied by the Minnesota Grill. The restaurant remained at the location until the mid-1960s. By 1970 it was listed as Mixers Tavern and by 1980 it had become Sergeant Preston’s of the North. By 2000, the name had been shortened simply to Sergeant Preston’s.

245 Cedar Avenue

According to city directories, between 1946 and the mid-1950s, 245 Cedar Avenue was occupied by Nordtvedt-Blomgren Incorporated, a furniture company. By 1955, Underwriters Salvage Company of Chicago occupied the property. In 1965 the property was listed as vacant in city directories, but by 1970 the Theater in the Round was listed at the address. Theater in the Round continued to occupy the property until 2018.

Newspapers in the late 1960s has the theater at two other addresses. In a 1969 article in the Minneapolis Tribune, it states that the Theatre in the Round has moved into the Bimbo’s building. The space was vacant at the time because Bimbo’s had closed after being damaged by a fire in 1968. Looking at the 1968 article about the fire, it states that Bimbo’s is at 237 Cedar Avenue. The city directories, however, have no listing for 237 Cedar in the 1960s or 1970s.⁴⁰⁷

Prior to the fire, a February 9, 1968, advertisement listed Bimbo’s at 243 Cedar Avenue and announced that “Chicago’s Greatest Show Group, the Mob” would be playing there Friday, Saturday, and Sunday night. The advertisement also stated that under twenty-one were welcome. Bimbo’s was known as “the teeny-bopper dance haven” and mainly had rock bands playing. Monday nights, however, Bimbo’s played “free old time movies.”⁴⁰⁸

320 Cedar Avenue

The building at 316-320 Cedar Avenue was constructed in 1891. According to city directories, in 1946 the property at 320 Cedar Avenue was home to the Holland Buffet. By 1950 H. F. Frehe

⁴⁰⁵ Roberts and Spaeth, “Historic Survey of the Cedar-Riverside Commercial Area,” 28.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 36-37.

⁴⁰⁷ Finlay Lewis, “Theatre in Round Seeks Liquor License,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 28, 1969; “Three Alarm Blaze Hits Restaurant,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 15, 1968.

⁴⁰⁸ Advertisement, *Minneapolis Star*, February 9, 1968; Brian Anderson, “Seven Corners,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, September 22, 1968; “Night Club Calendar,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 14, 1968.

beverages was listed at the address, followed by Lindy's Bar and Lounge in 1955. The 1960 directory listed the Holland Bar and Grill at the address. By the mid-1960s, Cesar's Tavern took over the address and stayed in the property until the late 1980s. In 1990, the Asmara Restaurant was listed at the property. The Red Sea was listed at the property in 2000 and was occupying the property in 2018.⁴⁰⁹

The Red Sea expanded into 316 Cedar, which had been a record store, the Wax Museum, in 1979. This portion of the building also housed the neighborhood's first "undertaking parlor," which opened in the 1880s and was run by Ole Byorum and John M. Gleason. In the 1890s, Henry Evanson opened a saloon in the building.⁴¹⁰

325 Cedar Avenue

The building at 323-327 Cedar Avenue was constructed in 1906. According to city directories, in 1946, 325 Cedar Avenue was listed as a part of the Eldridge Building, and during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s it housed a number of commercial properties. Only vacant apartments were listed at the address in the 1970 city directory and, by 1980, the Coffeehouse Extempore (located at 324 Cedar Avenue in the 1975 city directory) was at the address. The Coffeehouse Extempore remained through the mid-1980s, but the Golden Bowl Restaurant appeared at the address in 1990. The 2000 city directory lists a number of commercial tenants.⁴¹¹

In 1969, "Dakota" Dave Hull made his way to Minneapolis and the Coffeehouse Extempore because it was becoming a popular venue for folk music. When Cyn Collins asked him about the Coffeehouse, Hull said, "[It] was owned or financed by some church at one point. It was a youth hangout. They had sandwiches and coffee there. You could hang out there all night and not spend any money. Usually somebody would come up with a quarter for coffee if you didn't have any money." He also stated that "there were people behind it that weren't concerned about the music particularly, but the upshot of it was, it was a really, really wonderful germination place for all this wonderful music and some really good players to get started."⁴¹²

329 Cedar Avenue

According to city directories, in 1946, 329 Cedar Avenue was listed as the Blue Goose Cafe, which remained at the address until sometime in the mid-1950s. In 1955 the property was listed as the Hickory House, but sometime before 1960 it had become the Alibi Club. By the mid-1960s the address was listed as the Excuse Club. By 1970, 329 Cedar was listed as vacant and did not appear in the 1975 city directory. The New Riverside Cafe was operating at the address by 1980 and remained at the property until at least 1990. By 2000, the property housed the Grey Duck.

In October 1970, Mary DuShane played the grand opening of the New Riverside Cafe. Eddie Berger and the Jazz All Stars also played there during the 1970s.⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁹ Roberts and Spaeth, "Historic Survey of the Cedar-Riverside Commercial Area," 35.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 27.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 35.

⁴¹² Collins, *West Bank Boogie*, 109.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 91, 160.

400 Cedar Avenue

According to city directories, 400 Cedar Avenue was occupied by beverage vendor Mrs. Sarah Lilja in 1946. By 1950, the property had become Joe's Bar, but it became the Four Hundred Bar by the mid-1950s. Though the property was listed as vacant in 1980 directories, it appeared as the 400 Bar throughout the twentieth century.

In an interview for the book *West Bank Boogie*, Tony Glover stated the 400 Bar was a blues hangout." From 1980 to the mid-1990s, Bill Hinkley and Judy Larson played there weekly. When asked about playing at the 400 Bar, Pop Wagner stated, "It was like the Triangle, rowdy and fun." Wagner also remembered it as a place of camaraderie.⁴¹⁴

416 Cedar Avenue

According to city directories, in 1946, 416 Cedar Avenue housed Theo M. Nielsen Shoe Repair. Sometime in the mid-1950s, the property became the Cedar Theater, which was listed throughout the 1960s. In the 1970 city directory, it appeared as the Cedar Village Theater, but sometime in the mid-1970s it became the Minnesota Children's Theater. By 1990, however, the property was listed as the Cedar Cultural Center, which was occupying the property in 2018.

The Cedar Cultural Center at time would hold funerals for people such as Will Donicht. His was attended by many of the West Bank musicians.⁴¹⁵

The June Apple Musician's Co-op had a gig at the Cedar Theater where they would play before the first movie and between the first and second movies. June Apple Musician's Co-op was started by Pop Wagner and Bob Bovee in 1972. "That was an important step in the folk music scene on the West Bank" according to musician Mary Dushane. "It was to help promote each other. It was a folk music underground." Members of the co-op included musicians such as "Will Donicht, Bruce Menier, Bill Hinkley, Judy Larson, the Sorry Muthas, Dakota Dave Hull, and Mary Dushane's band Fool's Gold. "Train on the Island" was the record label owned by the co-op into the early 1980s.⁴¹⁶

500 Cedar Avenue

According to city directories, in 1946, 500 Cedar Avenue was occupied by beverage vendor Mrs. Lillian Woollery, but as early as 1950 the property was listed as the Palmer Bar, under which name it continued to operate throughout the twentieth century. The Palmer Bar continues to occupy the property in 2018.

The Jugband Battle started at Palmer's. Judy Larson, Bill Hinkley, and Will Donicht were talking one night at Palmer's and came up with the idea of the battle. They held the first battle at Palmer's and Judy Larson remembers it being packed and that people were sitting on the bar. The following year, they moved the battle to New Riverside Café.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 61, 75, 102.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 96.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 94-104.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 75-76.

Palmer's quit featuring live-music nights in 1981. Live music, however, resurfaced a few years later. In the early 2000s, Palmfest, a two-day music festival on the patio, started, featuring many local bands.

501 Cedar Avenue

In 1912, the Gluek Company owned 501 Cedar Avenue and Christ Sauser was the proprietor. According to city directories, the Five Corners Café Restaurant was operating at the address in 1946. The café continued to operate at the property throughout the last half of the twentieth century. By 1985, the establishment had changed its name to the Five Corners Saloon, under which name it continued to operate through 2000.⁴¹⁸

The authors of the 1979 survey of the Cedar-Riverside commercial area noted that “the ‘Five Corners Bar’ at 501 Cedar Avenue was constructed in 1903. It was two stories in height and constructed of brick. The curved northwest corner of the building, as well as its dentillated cornice, projecting brick parapet, and semi-circular window hoods, combine to make this one of Cedar Avenue’s most interesting architectural elements.”⁴¹⁹

521 Cedar Avenue

In 1890, John Kelly commissioned architect Carl Struck to design a two-story building for him at 521 Cedar Avenue South. Measuring thirty-one feet across the front and eighty feet in depth, it housed two storefronts on the lower level and apartments on the upper floor. Louis B. Asper operated a saloon here during the early 1890s. By 1930, the city directory lists Gronseth and Moe grocery store at 521 Cedar, but it changed to Horn and Olson Grocery by 1940 and then to Louis E. Olson grocery by 1955. S. L. Woolbeck Beverages was listed at 521-1/2 Cedar by 1940, but it was listed as Lucia E. Gubb tavern by the 1955 directory. All Hours Lock and Key Service was listed at 521 in the 1966 directory, but there was no listing for 521-1/2.⁴²⁰

On June 10, 1968, the Electric Fetus opened. In addition to selling records and paraphernalia on the first floor, the Fetus had a wholesale record and tapestry business in the basement. About the same time that the Electric Fetus opened, Stone Age Industries Boutique moved into the neighboring storefront (521-1/2 Cedar Avenue South). The boutique offered a variety of handmade items such as clothing, jewelry, and leather goods. By October 1969, the Electric Fetus had moved across the street to larger quarters at 514 Cedar Avenue South (demolished).⁴²¹

901 Cedar Avenue

According to city directories, in 1946, 901 Cedar Avenue was occupied by beverage vendor Oscar Pearson. By 1950, however, the property was occupied by the Golden Leaf Bar, which

⁴¹⁸ “Drink Shops Lined Up as Brewery Controlled,” *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, July 20, 1912.

⁴¹⁹ Roberts and Spaeth, “Historic Survey of the Cedar-Riverside Commercial Area,” 32-33.

⁴²⁰ Minneapolis Building Permit B22359, May 10, 1890; *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1946* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1946); *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1950* (Minneapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1950); *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1955*, (Minneapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1955); *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1960*, (Minneapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1960); *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1965-1966*, (Minneapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1965-66).

⁴²¹ Foley and Korsh, interviews; *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1967-1968*. (Minneapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1967 and 1968); Advertisement, *Minnesota Daily*, October 1, 1969.

would continue to operate at the property until at least 1985. In both the 1990 and 2000 city directories, the address was listed as the Whiskey Junction.

915 Cedar Avenue

The Gluek Brewing Company built a one-story brick “store” in 1902 at 915-917 Cedar measuring 22 feet wide, 70 feet long, and 20 feet high, with a basement. The architect is Christopher A. Boehme and the builder is F. E. Graver. At some point, the address was changed to 913.⁴²² In 1903, the Minneapolis City Directory shows a saloon at 913 Cedar Avenue, but by the early 1930s, it is listed as vacant. Morrie’s Bar occupies the storefront by 1935. The building goes through periods of occupation and vacancy until 1942 when Edward W. Rolph opens a bar at 913 Cedar. Rolph and then his wife Madeline run the bar until the early 1950s. In 1954, a classified ad lists 913 Cedar as The Black Cat Night Club. The address changed back to 915 Cedar by the 1960 directory that has “Bert Addison’s Beer Tavern” listed here.⁴²³ The 1971 Minneapolis City Directory is the first time the Joint appears at 915 Cedar. The Joint has continued to occupy this space since its opening.⁴²⁴

917 Cedar Avenue

In 1952, Ewing Distributors built a 45-foot by 110-foot concrete-block warehouse at 917 Cedar at an estimated cost of \$25,000. E. J. Becchetti was the architect. Ewing’s Beer Services was in the building until 1965 when the city directory lists the address as vacant. By 1970, Tool’s Product’s had moved into the warehouse. In 1973, Reliable Heating and Cooling occupied 917 Cedar. The Cabooze opened in this building in the summer of 1974. One newspaper account lists Wednesday, July 31, as the Cabooze’s grand opening. The opening featured the Friends Road Show, described as “a 13-member European troupe that combines rock and roll with mime, including jugglers, clowns, magicians and a fire eater.” The Cabooze has continued to operate in the building since 1974.⁴²⁵

⁴²² Minneapolis Building Permit B50681, February 25, 1902.

⁴²³ Minneapolis Building Permit B155255, November 28, 1921; *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1903* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1903); *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1935* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1935); *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1942* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1942); “Classifieds,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 11, 1954; *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1960* (Minneapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1960).

⁴²⁴ *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1971* (Minneapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1971); Blair Charnley, “Where the Young Elite Often Meet,” *Minneapolis Star*, July 7, 1971; “Nightclub Calendar Listings,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 22, 1971; December 19, 1971; May 26, 1974; June 2, 1975; August 26, 1977.

⁴²⁵ Minneapolis Building Permit B331501, October 27, 1952; *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1955* (Minneapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1955); *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1960* (Minneapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1960); *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1965-1966* (Minneapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1965-66); *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1970* (Minneapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1970); “Entertainment Calendar,” *Minnesota Daily*, July 31, 1974; “Mime With A Beat,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 28, 1974. Over the years, the Cabooze has celebrated various dates as its anniversary. One advertisement noted it had been in business four years as of October 22, 1979, but an advertisement a month later stated the bar would be five years old on that date (*Sweet Potato*, September 1979, and *Sweet Potato*, October 1979). In 1981, the Cabooze celebrated its seventh birthday on August 11 (*Sweet Potato*, August 5, 1981). A newspaper article claimed the bar was opened in 1973 (“Cabooze Gets It With Boogie—Even With Show-band Boogie,” *Minneapolis Star*, September 30, 1975).

1501 South Fourth Street

According to city directories, the City Fire Department Engine Company Number Five occupied the building at 1501 South Fourth Street in 1946. The property remained a fire department until the late 1960s. The 1970 and 1975 city directories listed McCosh's Book Store at the address, but by 1980 the property was home to the Center for Community Action, an environmental group. The Mixed Blood Theater took over the property by 1990 and, as of 2018, still occupies the building.

1813 South Sixth Street

"The West Bank School of Music (WBSM) was founded in 1970 by Minneapolis musician Warren Park to be a community-focused music education center." Many West Bank musicians used the house as a place to live, such as Mary DuShane and Gordon "Pop" Wagner. Wagner would make the trip from Ashland, Wisconsin, where he was attending college in the late 1960s, and play multiple days on the West Bank, sleeping on a couch at WBSM.⁴²⁶

Eddie Berger taught at WBSM. In his words, he was "one of the first cats that ever taught there."⁴²⁷

In 2015, WBSM moved from the house at 1813 South Sixth Street to an old school building in Saint Paul. WBSM closed in March 2018.⁴²⁸

1822 Riverside Avenue

In 1897, the Gluek Brewing Company bought Lot 38 of Meldal and Sunde's Subdivision, and in October 1899, the company obtained a permit to construct a triangular, two-story brick saloon and flat at 1822 Riverside Avenue. By the 1912 Sanborn Map, the saloon is known as the Triangle Bar, but the name does not appear in the city directory until 1946. It continues as the Triangle Bar until August 1976 when it is sold and transformed into the Ole Piper Inn. This lasted until June 1977 when an advertisement announces the grand opening of Oscar B. Lykes. Oscar B. Lykes remains in business until May 1985 when the Triangle Bar reopens. Starting in 1987, the city directory lists the Triangle Bar at 1822 Riverside Avenue but no telephone number is listed. This continues through 1990 directory, but in March 1990, a building permit is issued to convert the restaurant into an outlet store that sells clothing. In August 1992, the Triangle Building Partnership LLP, purchased the Triangle Bar Building. Shortly after purchase, renovations began to convert the building into office and commercial uses. The building still serves this function in 2018.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁶ "About Us," *West Bank School of Music*, accessed August 7, 2018 <http://wbsm.org/>; Collins, *West Bank Boogie*, 94, 99-101.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁴²⁸ WBSM website.

⁴²⁹ Minneapolis Building Permits B5576, December 19, 1885, and B22369, May 10, 1890; Hennepin County Deeds Book 357, page 589, recorded October 19, 1897; Minneapolis Building Permit B44505, October 19, 1899; Sanborn Map Company. *Insurance Maps of Minneapolis, Minnesota* (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1912) <http://sanborn.umi.com.ezproxy.hclib.org>; *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1946* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1946), 1582; *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1976* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk Directory Company, 1976), 378 (reverse directory section); Hennepin County Document No. 4226187, August 12, 1976; Hennepin County Document No. 4226189, August 12, 1976; "Ole Piper Inn" (advertisement), *Minnesota Daily*, November 24, 1976; December 3, 1976; "Oscar B. Lykes!" (advertisement), *Minnesota Daily*, June 24, 1977; "Oscar B. Lykes" (advertisement), *Minnesota Daily*, June 27, 1977; *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1985*

1829 Riverside Avenue

In 1912, the Minneapolis Brewing Company owned 1829 Riverside Avenue and D. G. Eckerstrom was the proprietor. According to city directories, 1829 Riverside Avenue was occupied by the Viking Bar in 1946. The establishment continued to appear at the address in city directories through 2000, and, as of 2018, still occupies the building.⁴³⁰

The Viking Bar closed in August 2006, “a victim of the city’s smoking ban, according to the owner Mike Nelson.” Live music was played at the Viking starting in the late 1970s, and performers “played in a booth until the stage was built in the early ’80s.”⁴³¹

Reminiscing about watching his father, Papa John Kolstad, play in bars on the West Bank, Andrew Kolstad said, “I saw the way . . . the Viking bar and other bars in Cedar-Riverside neighborhoods serve the same function as a gathering place, a community center.”⁴³²

The last performer at the Viking was Willie Murphy. Cyn Collins quoted Murphy in her book, *West Bank Boogie*, about the closing. He said, “It was sort of the last stand of the West Bank that had music like there was so much of in the old days. . . . It’s a real icon in the neighborhood. . . . It’s really sad. The real soul of the West Bank was youth counterculture, and its disappearing.”⁴³³

After ten years of sitting vacant, the Viking opened again in May 2016. Willie Murphy was not the first performer in the newly renovated bar, but he was the first Saturday night performer in the “Legend Series.”⁴³⁴

2901 Twenty-Seventh Avenue South

According to city directories, 2901 Twenty-seventh Avenue South was occupied by the Schooner Bar in 1946. The establishment continued to appear at the address in city directories through 2000, and, as of 2018, still occupies the building.

The Schooner Tavern’s website states the it “has been providing musical entertainment in an intimate, South Minneapolis setting since 1932.”⁴³⁵

(Kansas City, Mo.: R. L. Polk Directory Company, 1985), 357 (reverse section); John Habich, “Stringing Us Along,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 25, 1986; *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1987* (Kansas City, Mo.: R. L. Polk Directory Company, 1987), 363 (reverse directory section); and John Habich, “Just Bopping Along,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, January 19, 1987; *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1988–1989* (Kansas City, Mo.: R. L. Polk Directory Company, 1988), 389 (reverse directory section); *Minneapolis City Directory, Minnesota, 1990* (Kansas City, Mo.: R. L. Polk Directory Company, 1990), 365 (reverse section); Minneapolis Building Permit B571327, March 28, 1990; Nelson interview; Penny Petersen, interview with Scott Beers, April 24, 2008, at his office; Minneapolis Building Permits B591662, August 13, 1992, B592026, August 24, 1992, and B630974, July 3, 1996.

⁴³⁰ “Drink Shops Lined Up as Brewery Controlled,” *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, July 20, 1912.

⁴³¹ Collins, *West Bank Boogie*, 168–169.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁴³⁴ Chris Riemenschneider, “The Viking Bar Reopens This Week with Music and Food on the New Menu,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 24, 2016, <http://www.startribune.com/the-viking-bar-reopens-this-week-with-music-and-food-on-the-new-menu/380663281/>.

⁴³⁵ Schooner Tavern website, accessed August 6, 2018, <http://schoonertavern.com/>.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The history of music in Minneapolis includes many musical genres and property types. This study attempted to provide basic information on several genres over a long period of time. It is the hope of the project team that the genre information can be amended in the future as more information comes forward and as time passes.

Section 5. Property Types will benefit from additional research in the future. The project team was unable to develop identifying characteristics for all of the property types in the limited amount of time available with this study. Information already present in the report could be used to develop these characteristics.

The reconnaissance-level survey in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood has identified properties that should be considered for local designation as a historic district. While some of the properties may have significance individually, many would only be eligible for designation as part of a larger group. More research on the properties is needed before local designation. The contexts included in this report could serve as a starting point for a designation study.

Several individual properties were surveyed at the reconnaissance level. Most of these properties are potentially eligible for local designation but will require additional research and evaluation as part of a designation study.

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9. Appendices

a. Spreadsheet of Properties Associated with Minneapolis Music

Information on this spreadsheet has been compiled by City of Minneapolis planning staff during the course of this project.

b. Survey Sample Criteria and Survey List

The considerations that were used to select the sample of properties for reconnaissance survey. Includes a table with the survey properties, and a table with already designation properties.

c. Dearly Departed: Demolished Properties

This spreadsheet identifies properties that had ties to Minneapolis music but have been demolished.

d. Deep Dives: Genres and Properties

Relevant studies—including the reconnaissance survey forms produced by this project—will be compiled in this section (e.g., a multiple property documentation study on Prince, an intensive-level inventory form for First Avenue, reports on the Triangle Bar and Electric Fetus). The appendix will be expanded over time as additional studies are identified and prepared.