

I love Minnesota music!

Written by Dom Minor, Insight News Music Critic
Thursday, 05 July 2012 21:12



Greetings class, today we will start things a little different.

We have a newcomer, and I'd like to give him a chance to introduce himself. He was born and raised in Minneapolis, like many of us were, then enjoyed a broad but brief stint in upstate New York. He's back and will be working with us from today forward. I'd like to introduce Dom Minor. And like that, class in session.

In the same way a new student accepts his novelty, I welcome the unacquainted eyes skimming Insight's Aesthetic Section. Hopefully this city, my new class, accepts the fresh outlook of an old "newcomer" so to speak. I would describe myself as an eager and wide-eyed music enthusiast, the nerd who devoted himself to musical knowledge until it became cool to know all the history of the trends and styles of today. I'll write about what I know and love. You guessed it, music.

I'll discuss how, through music, groups and individuals relate to each other, and explain how venues serve as a platform to explore sound with others. I'll share how someone with empty pockets can enjoy just as much groove as the pocket heavy. Music is important. It bonds cultures that can't share a spoken language, it provides strength and hope in dire situations and it also makes your booty wiggle. What's not to love about music?

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Class, it is endlessly interesting how music has evolved to what it is today. And, being that I have a wide-ranging musical taste, I am able to speak on multiple styles and genres. Admittedly, a bias is present for hip-hop, indie rock, and R&B; however, more styles exist and will not be ignored. From folk to funk, from gangsta rap to French pop, everything will be present and, with any luck, this my new column will serve as a platform to connect eager Minnesotans looking for new venues and thirsty musicians wanting to be heard.

This past week a free – yes free – musical event displayed a mixed bag of local artists for the crowd to enjoy.

Cedar Cultural Center was kind enough to open its facility to an intimate crowd of curious music heads. Radio station 89.3 FM, The Current, hosted “Local Current Live,” a free concert for Minnesotans to enjoy and support local music. Three artists’ sets rang out to the intimate crowd.

First at bat was the hip-hop collective The Chalice, who brought funk and dance to the audience. After the crowd was warmed-up, indie/kraut rock band Van Stee soothed the listeners’ aches and pains. Closing was songstress Chastity Brown, who left the listeners with smiles as radiant as one would have walking away from his or her first day at the spa.

The concert was provided free of charge thanks to the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment of the Minnesota Constitution in 2008. The event was family friendly, the crowd was intimate, and the talent was diverse. By the way, when I say family friendly I’m assuming the three tag-along children in the crowd were too young to understand the occasional explicit verse when they “slipped out.”

The band that left a lasting impression on me was Van Stee, which seemed like a mix between bands Neutral Milk Hotel and Kings of Leon. One of the group’s songs was about overcoming the obstacle of those who speak against one’s passion.

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“When people ask you to stop doing something that you truly enjoy; and want others to enjoy, it’s (crushing). Well I’ve tried to stop, and I can tell you, it’s impossible, so keep doing what you love,” said Charlie Van Stee, explaining the meaning of one of the group’s songs.

In toast to Charlie, I’ve been privileged enough to land this opportunity with Insight News, and am fortunate enough to agree with the members of Van Stee. I love music. It will be a part of my life until I no longer have breath.

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