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### Music on the Cusp

## *From Folk to Acid Rock in Portland Coffeehouses, 1967–1970*

The people with whom you share the suffering of sudden growth are linked in magical ways, and these can be the people who really know you best.

— Jon Adams

**FROM THE SIDEWALK, IT LOOKS** like nothing — just a door with a little sign above it. You go down some stairs and pay somebody fifty cents to let you into a low-ceilinged, murky room filled with about a dozen wooden wire-spool tables slathered with varathane. A homemade ceramic ashtray sits on each table. You go to the counter and get a bottomless cup of coffee for fifteen cents, then commandeer a table six feet away from the ten-by-twelve-foot stage. The room fills up with people and cigarette smoke blended with an occasional whiff of marijuana, incense, and burnt cheese. You hear the first notes on the guitar, the first unpolished, good-natured singing and the sweet harmonies, and you forget the funkiness of your surroundings. The music is playing, and you are right up close. 1

During the Beat era of the late 1950s, coffeehouses across the country were the refuge of poets, leftist theoreticians, and solo folksingers rendering traditional songs and new ones by such artists as Pete Seeger and Phil Ochs. Within a few years, coffeehouses were booking groups — both acoustic and electric — whose musical styles freely borrowed from genres such as surf music, the British Invasion, top 40, girl groups, and rhythm and blues; from jazz and "roots" styles such as Appalachian folk and Delta blues; and from protest songs in the Woody Guthrie tradition. Along with new incarnations of the blues and freshly minted singer-songwriters, a new set of hybrid styles emerged — folk-rock, acid rock, country rock, and jazz-rock. In Portland's own counterculture microcosm, a new generation of musicians embraced these innovations wholeheartedly, using them to forge distinctive styles, develop sophisticated techniques, and invent their own compositions. 2

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*Notary Sojac performs at Autzen Stadium, University of Oregon, in August 1970. The band included (from left): Will Herold, organ; Jim Lowry, bass; Mark Mower, drums (hidden); Tom McMeekan, guitar; and Steve Koski, guitar.*

Courtesy of Steven Riihikoski

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Yet, for all its explosive energy, the music of the 1960s counterculture, as it came to be known, did not maintain its oppositional power. By 1970, drugs and violence had dissolved the residual good feelings generated by Woodstock and the Summer of Love in 1967. The alternative music gradually became a new mainstream as the music industry and other corporate enterprises absorbed the new artists and their styles. **3**

While some Portland coffeehouses continued to flourish into the 1970s, the end of the era was in sight by the early years of that decade. Musicians and their audiences were getting older, and their music moved into bars and taverns.<sup>1</sup> The musicians who had been so closely connected in the late 1960s went their separate ways, most finding niches in specific genres such as country rock, bluegrass, jazz, and blues. By the late 1970s, eclecticism and eccentricity had fallen from favor, but the community of musicians who got their start in the 1960s heyday of musical pluralism went on to populate the club scene through the mid-1980s. Their inventiveness and camaraderie has been integral to Oregon's film, video, radio and television production, and music education into the twenty-first century. The quest for inspiration and authenticity did not take place in a vacuum; rather, it was embedded in the transitional moment between the established way of doing things and the emergence of a new oppositional culture. It was also strongly influenced by geography. **4**

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*The Kingsmen (from left: Mike Mitchell, Barry Curtis, Dick Peterson, Lynn Easton, and Norm Sundholm) perfected the brooding but well-groomed look in this 1964 photograph.*

Courtesy of Dick Peterson

**PORTLAND HAS ALWAYS** been considered something of a cultural second fiddle to its more populous rivals, Seattle and San Francisco. Nevertheless, Portland's position as a major stop along the I-5 corridor between the two cities has long made it an attractive addition to performers' West Coast tours. From the first stirrings of the counterculture, Portland musicians traveled to and from these larger cities, carrying values and ideas in both directions. There was an aesthetic ferment in the air, and Portland was in many ways as vibrant as its more celebrated neighbors were. 5

In mid-1960s Portland, the popular music scene was dominated by three local bands: Paul Revere & the Raiders, the Kingsmen, and Don & the Goodtimes. These bands, acknowledged masters of the so-called Northwest sound, were typical of groups that played during the garage-band era — from 1964, the year the Beatles spearheaded the British Invasion, to 1967, the year acid rock became popular.<sup>2</sup> Garage bands combined elements of surf music and 1950s rock-and-roll with the grittier side of British Invasion rock, such as the early Rolling Stones and the Animals. "The Northwest sound was massive," Kieron Tyler writes. "Rhythms pounded; guitars screamed; vocals were distorted by over-amplification. This music was meant to be played live to audiences ready to be whipped into a frenzy."<sup>3</sup> The Seattle Mayor's Office of Film and Music agreed, concluding that the Northwest sound, created by frustrated American boys resentful of the British Invasion, was 6

a savage rock aesthetic — fuzz-damaged guitars and angry singers who screamed came into vogue. Years later, bands from the Kinks to the Sex Pistols would acknowledge the influence of Northwest garage rock.<sup>4</sup>

Both the Kingsmen and Paul Revere & the Raiders had hits in 1963 with "Louie Louie," a song Richard Berry wrote in 1955. The incomprehensible lyrics of the Kingsmen's version in particular were presumed to be obscene.<sup>5</sup> In Portland, "Louie Louie" became such a cliché that for years many bands either parodied it or used it to revive flagging audience attention. This may help explain why the garage/Northwest sound, considered outré by the national mainstream, was itself derided as mainstream by some local Portland bands. 7



Courtesy of the author

Many high school and college bands imitated the presentation, instrumentation, and repertoire of the mainstream bands — generally one or two electric guitars, Farfisa or Vox portable organs, electric bass, drums, and the occasional saxophone player. The band members wore costumes ranging from Revolutionary War uniforms and top hats and tails to ornate marching-band-style uniforms. Ken Lomax, who attended Lake Oswego High School in the mid-1960s, was the original bass player in the jazz-rock band Total Eclipse and an early member of Sand, a 1960s and 1970s country rock band. He remembered that "each high school usually had one or sometimes more than one band, but most often just one really good rock band."<sup>6</sup> In 1968, KOIN-TV hosted a "Battle of the Beat" in which two bands a week — each accompanied by "Jet Set" teen go-go dancers Patti (nka Jehn) Benson and Rhonda Anderson — competed to win a recording session with Capitol Records, a major national label that already marketed the Beach Boys and the British group Badfinger. Participating local bands included the Renegades, the Torchmen, The Brougham Closet, The Happie, the Dark Ages, the Mystics, and the Mark 5.<sup>7</sup> **8**

Many young Portland musicians, however, craved something different. Steve Koski of the Warloks and Notary Sojac, both eclectic and adventuresome folk-rock bands, expressed a typical attitude toward what some called "clone bands": **9**

We played at a Meier & Frank battle of the bands once and we won by a landslide.... The other groups were what we called "rockashoo" groups, and we didn't actively make fun of them, but we thought, their daddy bought them all their amps and they kind of kicked their feet up like Paul Revere & the Raiders.<sup>8</sup>

Steve Bradley, guitarist with the classic Portland rock group U.S. Cadenza, shared Koski's good-natured disdain for the clones:

It was all that act, those uniforms, the three-cornered hat deal.... Papa Oo Mau Mau, Jolly Green Giant, Long Tall Texan, Louie Louie, Twist & Shout, white frat boy R&B kind of things.... I mean, it's cool that the Raiders and the Kingsmen are doing it because they invented that sound, but there's 100 other bands that are like carbon copies. It was just appalling. Get out of here with it.<sup>9</sup>



*Practicing in their Portland basement in 1965, U.S. Cadenza featured Steve Bradley, guitar (kneeling); Joel Ewing, bass (left); Ken "Turtle" Vandemarr, guitar (back); and Robin Smith, drums.*

Courtesy of Steven Bradley

Bradley never saw himself as a hippie in the sense of being "alienated from conventional society" and turning "toward mysticism, psychedelic drugs, [and] communal living," but he was drawn to places where more exotic music was featured — the coffeehouses.<sup>10</sup> Portland beatniks — following the darker, more intellectual group of escapees from conventionality in the late 1950s, whose esthetic and political values were derived from Beat Generation icons such as Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg — had been hanging out at places like the Wayout, a beatnik coffeehouse in the shadow of the Hawthorne Bridge, and the 13th Street Gallery, an art gallery in Sellwood (and later briefly at 226 Southeast Hawthorne next to the Wayout) that irregularly hosted live music and the first of Portland artist Gary Ewing's light shows.<sup>11</sup> They also mingled at coffeehouses near Portland State College (PSC) — the Café Orpheus, which later became Alice's Restaurant, and the Caffè Espresso. One coffeehouse denizen, filmmaker and music video producer Jim Blashfield, practiced his beat attitude with high school friends in the early 1960s at Caffè Espresso:

...we really wanted to be intellectuals and poets and we didn't know quite what that meant, so we'd go to the coffeehouses and we'd drink black coffee and we'd smoke loads of cigarettes and people would read poetry and we'd just really enjoy being there, probably over our heads and kind of intimidated, but still —<sup>12</sup>

By the time Steve Bradley started frequenting the coffeehouses a few years later, the scene had begun to shift. The Folksinger, located first on Southwest 10th Avenue across from the Multnomah County Library and then briefly on Southwest 13th next to the Crystal Ballroom, typically featured local groups such as the Great Pumpkin and the Tweedy Brothers, both of which experimented with blends of old-time folk, jug band, rock, and Indian raga music. Bradley enjoyed the variety:

You'd go to a coffeehouse and you'd see these cool folksingers, some of them were doing Delta blues and some were doing Peter, Paul & Mary and some were doing Sandy Bull, and Bob Dylan.... And there were bands just starting to show up at that time. It was the tail end of the bohemian thing....<sup>13</sup>

The Folksinger was run by Whitey Davis, who had ties to the San Francisco music scene, having managed the Avalon Ballroom and worked with Family Dog Productions there.<sup>14</sup> Davis not only encouraged local bands but also provided Portland's youth with opportunities to hear

cutting-edge and traditional artists such as jazz saxophonist John Coltrane and blues master Lightnin' Hopkins.

### DOWNTOWN COFFEEHOUSES, CONCERT, AND DANCE VENUES, 1965-1971



Map by Dean Shapiro

1. Agora, Koinonia House SW Montgomery and Broadway
2. Alice's Restaurant SW Broadway and Jackson
3. Café Espresso SW 6th and Harrison
4. Catacombs I First Congregational Church, 1126 SW Park
5. Charix 1216 SW Salmon
6. Civic Auditorium (now Keller Auditorium) 222 SW Clay
7. Crystal Ballroom 1332 W Burnside
8. Darcelle's 208 NW 3rd
9. Folksinger I SW 10th, across from county library
10. Folksinger II, Espresso III, Café Orpheus SW 13th, next to Crystal Ballroom
11. Pythian 918 SW Yamhill
12. Wayout Under the east side of the Hawthorne Bridge
13. 13th Street Gallery Sellwood, then 226 SE Hawthorne
14. 9th Street Exit Centenary-Wilbur Methodist Church, near SE 9th, Sandy, and Ash

Davis was dissatisfied with the hundred-person capacity of the Folksinger, and he shifted his business to the Crystal Ballroom. The ballroom, which had been a beacon for touring musical groups and their fans since its opening in 1914, was in decline by the mid-1960s. In January 1967, Davis and a partner made the Crystal a Family Dog enterprise — and the psychedelic heart of Portland — where he produced legendary shows by the Grateful Dead, Buffalo Springfield, and Janis Joplin, among others, until the ballroom closed in June 1968, to remain in suspended animation until it reopened in 1997.<sup>15</sup> The Pythian Building at 918 Southwest Yamhill, the Masonic Temple at 1119 Southwest Park Avenue, and Springer's dance hall on Southeast 190th and Powell were other well-known venues for increasingly countercultural dance events. **13**

**ONCE THE COUNTERCULTURE DEVELOPED**, the beatnik coffeehouses were doomed. Some, like the Caffe Espresso and Alice's Restaurant, tried to adapt to the changing times. Of all the privately owned coffeehouses, the Caffe Espresso was probably the longest-lived and the most influential, serving as a transitional space between the beatnik and hippie eras. The unlikely midwife was Walter Cole. In 1957, Cole had just finished his military service and was working at a Fred Meyer grocery store to support his wife and children. But he had an itch. He wanted to do something different, and the five-thousand-dollar parting bonus from the military was burning a hole in his pocket. One day, leafing through the *Oregonian* classifieds, he saw a restaurant for sale — Caffe Espresso, a little joint on Southwest 6th and Harrison. Coincidentally, the sellers wanted five thousand dollars. Caffe Espresso had been a humdrum little coffeehouse catering to the college crowd, but, Cole remembered, **14**

I could see when I had the first coffeehouse that I had to have something going on besides a few intellectuals in the corner that didn't have a dime to buy coffee with. I let them sit there, but I mean, it's like, come on. Something's gotta happen here.... And the only way to do that would be to bring in the younger groups.... The money was not to be made from the end of the beatnik thing....<sup>16</sup>

At first, Cole mainly booked acoustic folk musicians, and singer and auto-harpist Earl Benson was his house musician for several years, entertaining with a repertoire of raunchy, comic, and straight folk songs. Benson also played in two jug bands, the Sodgimoli Jug Band and Fourth Gear Rubber, whose repertoire was similar and whose acoustic ensemble character made a bridge between the solo folksinger and the electric rock band. Benson remained a fixture on the Portland music scene until his last popular band, the Sleazy Pieces, split up in the mid-1980s. **15**

In about 1965 — the year Bob Dylan appeared at the Newport Jazz Festival in Rhode Island playing an electric guitar and alienating many in the folk world — the scene at Caffe Espresso and the other beatnik coffeehouses changed abruptly.<sup>17</sup> Cole remembered: **16**

All of a sudden I started getting...rock groups coming in.... the garage groups. We had young groups come in, and then we got a younger crowd.<sup>18</sup>

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*This Cafe Espresso flyer from 1966 featured newcomer U.S. Cadenza, along with the jug bands P.H. Phactor, Great Pumpkin, and Melodius Funk.*

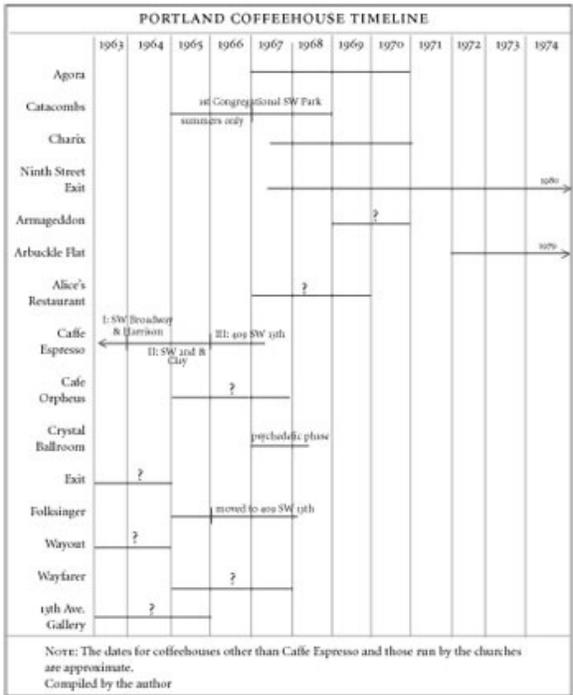
Courtesy of Gary Ewing

The younger crowd came courtesy of the post-World War II baby boom — the greatest population expansion in U.S. history.<sup>19</sup> It provided American popular culture, especially music, with vast numbers of eager consumers, ready and willing to support music made expressly for and by themselves.<sup>20</sup> 17

Into this yeasty milieu came three new, nonprofit coffeehouses operated by churches: the Agora opened in March 1967 in the basement of Koinonia House, PSC's campus Christian ministry, on the corner of Southwest Montgomery and Broadway; the Charix opened on June 12, 1967, in the basement of First Unitarian Church at its 1216 Southwest Salmon entrance; and a year later, on July 4, 1968, the Ninth Street Exit opened at Centenary–Wilbur Methodist Church, near the intersection of Southeast 9th, Sandy Boulevard, and Ash.<sup>21</sup> The three coffeehouses were hippie scenes from the start. According to Earl Benson, "The main reasons in the demise of the Espresso [sic] were the Clarix [sic] and the Agora."<sup>22</sup> 18

Much smaller than the ballrooms, coffeehouses preserved the value of close proximity to the musicians, even as the music electrified and as people danced freely to it. In coffeehouses, it was easier for young musicians to connect on a personal level. They might have seen and heard each other perform at the Crystal or other ballrooms, but it was in these small rooms that they were able to learn directly from their more experienced colleagues, most of whom were only a year or two older (see [Table 1](#)), and to play with their peers, improvising accompaniments to each other's material. 19

PORTLAND COFFEEHOUSE TIMELINE



Note: The dates for coffeehouses other than Caffe Espresso and those run by the churches are approximate.  
Compiled by the author

The idea of church-run coffeehouses had been floating around the country at least since 1960, when the nondenominational Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C., opened the Potter's House coffeehouse. By 1966, the nation's capital had some eight coffeehouses run by religious groups — seven in Christian churches and one in a Jewish Community Center.<sup>23</sup> Learning about the Potter's House was what inspired Paul Libby to found the Ninth Street Exit.<sup>24</sup> College ministries also jumped on the bandwagon. Rodney Page, who was the PSC campus minister for Christian Church–Disciples of Christ from 1962 to 1970, said: "There was a movement in that time in campus ministry all across the nation to start coffeehouses because...it was a wonderful place for campus ministry to interact with students."<sup>25</sup> **20**



*This unusually elegant coffeehouse flyer for a Gordon Keane performance at the Agora on April 24 and 25, 1970, was designed by the artist "Ewen."*

Courtesy of the author

Coffeehouse culture allowed acoustic music to hold its own and evolve into new forms that paralleled the development of garage bands and the emergence of psychedelic bands. A new kind of folk music was created to support the civil rights movement and the antiwar movement, which was gaining steam as the Vietnam conflict intensified and baby boomers reached draft age. In keeping with the beatnik and jug-band traditions, hippies retained a strong interest in roots music, a term used to refer to "blues, gospel, traditional country, zydeco, tejano, and Native American powwow" that was played in communities across the nation but was not heard on radio or television.<sup>26</sup> Derivative pop groups such as the Kingston Trio drew heavily on the repertoire and attracted many middle-class young people to the existing and emerging genres.

21

Baby-boom musicians in Portland were directly exposed to a number of excellent folk musicians who comprised a loosely related group with connections to the New York and Northern California folk scenes.<sup>27</sup> As Ken Lomax recalled, "Portland had pretty good folk singing. A lot of good people coming through on the circuit. And these places [coffeehouses] provided a venue where kids could come and had open mike nights and so on."<sup>28</sup> Lomax's first instrument was a washtub bass, which he took to Café Orpheus to play along with the folk acts. Stew Dodge, who played electric lead guitar with the rock band U.S. Cadenza, polished his acoustic musicianship at the Folksinger: "I would get invited to come up and play a pretty nice flattop guitar and take my fingerpicks out and play backup guitar to the guy that was singing Gordon Lightfoot tunes."<sup>29</sup> After 1967, many folk musicians passing through Portland, including balladeers such as Mark Spoelstra and Larry Hanks and the quirkily brilliant guitarist Leo Kottke, made the Agora their major venue.

22

By the late 1960s, the national folk music scene had been transformed by singer-songwriters such as Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, and Paul Simon. They represented a new kind of musician — one who had studied the traditional repertoire but who wrote his or her own songs, sometimes directed at social movements such as civil rights and the anti-war movement but often introspective, poetic, and personal. Jon Adams, who played the coffeehouse circuit in the Bay Area before moving to Portland in 1967, remembered: **23**

In those days we had all these people, Tom Paxton, [Bob] Dylan, who [were] inspiring people to form bands and just do their own material, and that was very important. You had the Grateful Dead, you had Mimi and Dick [Fariña].... All that was encouraging people to create their stuff.<sup>30</sup>

Adams, whose mother's family was from Gresham, Oregon, was born in Berkeley, California, in 1939 and was the son of a Methodist minister. From playing at festivals and in Berkeley and San Jose coffeehouses, Adams knew Spoelstra and Hanks as well as Jorma Kaukonen and Paul Kantner, who later formed the Jefferson Airplane. He played often at the Agora. Local musicians flocked to hear him there, among them Cal Scott. "Jon Adams was like God to me," Scott recalled. "I would just sit and watch him play, and go, Geez, I wish I could do that."<sup>31</sup> Over the next several years, Scott achieved mastery of both acoustic and electric guitars, largely by absorbing the techniques, styles, and values of the other players he heard in Portland.

**THE BLOSSOMING OF PORTLAND'S** young musicians took place within the acute social unrest of the 1960s. There was a certain logic in a campus ministry and a working-class eastside church jumping into the coffeehouse business, given the salience of the Vietnam war among draft-age youth. But even the sedate mainline churches with large downtown congregations gave coffeehouses a try. Those denominations that belonged to the Greater Portland Council of Churches (GPCC), a decades-old ecumenical group, were moved to action by the increasing numbers of wanderers and homeless teens (including many teen runaways) and young adults who haunted Portland's downtown — an estimated thirty thousand people between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five.<sup>32</sup> In 1966, the GPCC created a community action program known as HUB-CAP to address the problems.<sup>33</sup> **24**

Many GPCC member congregations, especially the First Unitarians, embraced the idea of a coffeehouse, but it was definitely a stretch. The GPCC's major activity before the mid-1960s was an annual Sunday school teacher-training program, and its only previous social-action program had been supplying chaplains to juvenile jails and detention facilities.<sup>34</sup> The GPCC intended its coffeehouse to be an extension of an existing "listening ministry" in which sympathetic, approachable young people — called "streetworkers" — were deployed in places where their target populations congregated, primarily city parks.<sup>35</sup> The listening ministry was intended to do just that — to lend a friendly ear and provide information about social services.<sup>36</sup> **25**

GPCC's first coffeehouse was the Catacombs, located in the basement of the First Congregational Church at 1126 Southwest Park. For its first two years, 1965 and 1966, it was open only during the summers. In 1967, it was opened year-round two nights a week but then closed permanently that summer because of limited space. The GPCC coffeehouse idea transferred to First Unitarian, and in 1969 the GPCC's youth ministry office moved to Southwest 2<sup>nd</sup> and Hooker, next to Lair Hill Park. While it, too, was called The Catacombs, there was never an actual coffeehouse at that location.<sup>37</sup> **26**

With its second attempt, the Charix, the GPCC would be successful beyond its organizers' wildest dreams — and nightmares, when it brought unwanted scrutiny from the press, the police, and city government. While all the coffeehouses triggered suspicion and disapproval in Portland, the Charix became a lightning rod, and music was one of the reasons. As folk music gave way to folk-rock and acid rock, the sound level of performances was so high that it disturbed people in surrounding apartment buildings. Within a few months of opening, the coffeehouse was attracting eight hundred people a week, with weekend crowds sometimes reaching three hundred to five hundred people.<sup>38</sup> "The Charix operating committee," HUB-CAP reported in February 1968, "was not prepared for such immediate and sensational response on the part of the target group."<sup>39</sup> By late 1968, the Unitarians' idealism had soured. One adult involved in overseeing Charix called the coffeehouse "little more than an acid rock dance hall" — clearly the lowest of the low in his eyes.<sup>40</sup> **27**

National acid-rock bands such as the Jefferson Airplane and Big Brother & the Holding Company played electric instruments whose sound was often modified by various effects, including distortion and echo. Acid-rock songs featured extended improvised sections, and band performances were frequently accompanied by light shows. Of the bands studied here, the **28**

Portland Zoo, Notary Sojac, and the Total Eclipse played acid rock. Lomax recalled how musicians perceived the virtues of the style:

I think we were just going along with the flow of rock & roll then, which was developing into this interesting art form, getting out of the formulaic hit record, 45 rpm kind of stuff and getting into long extended instrumentals....<sup>41</sup>



*Portland Zoo's Sharyle Patton and Peter Langston perform at Charix.*

Courtesy of Peter Langston

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**THE PORTLAND ZOO**, Portland's premier acid-rock band, was responsible for a good deal of the Charix's charisma, and it rapidly became the coffeehouse's "house band." The Zoo had an unusual origin. There are many ways to put a band together, ranging from careful screening and auditions to groups jelling out of open-mike nights and jam sessions, but among the strangest was the one regional blues guitarist and singer Tom McFarland used to form the Zoo. According to Sharyle Patton, who played rhythm guitar in the band, it all started with McFarland's debt to society: **29**

...he needed to start a band because apparently he'd gotten into trouble with the law about marijuana... Basically he was told if he got his act together and did something useful with himself they would not prosecute. So he decided to put a band together.<sup>42</sup>



*This Charix flyer from about 1968 announced the performance of Portland Zoo, "straight from the jungle."*

Courtesy of Peter Langston

Patton, a Reed college student, first met McFarland in about 1964 when she was renting the basement of a house whose upstairs was occupied by fellow student Lin Parkinson. One day, McFarland, visiting Parkinson, heard Patton singing while she was mopping her floor. He came downstairs and asked her if she wanted to play in a band. As Peter Langston remembered the story, McFarland completed the ensemble in the cafeteria at Lewis & Clark College: **30**

...Tom said, "'See that guy over there? That's my drummer.'" And they went over and introduced themselves and asked the guy, whose name was Larry, if he played drums, and he said, "No, but I've always wanted to." So they said, "Oh, ok, we'll borrow a set for you."<sup>43</sup>

According to Langston, McFarland drilled his recruits by teaching them the basic twelve-bar chord progression of blues music and making them play it in all twelve key signatures at every rehearsal.

The Portland Zoo found itself adrift when McFarland lost interest after a year or so, and they turned to Langston, another Reed student, for guidance. Langston had grown up in New York City and had played folk clubs on McDougal Street in Greenwich Village while he was in prep school. In Portland, Langston spent much of his off-campus time haunting the beatnik coffeehouses, especially the Wayout. It was typically dark and smoky, with little round tables and a very small stage. Langston played his first solo gig there, and it was enough to nudge him into a lifelong passion. He remembered that "being in college and playing music sort of made me a star. And I had always been the reclusive, introverted kid. So this was, you know, a sort of an epiphany for me."<sup>44</sup> **31**

Langston's style was characterized by speed, excellent technique, and a penchant for parody and silly stage business. His leadership made the Zoo a perfect embodiment of the times. The Portland Zoo was also one of the most intentionally political bands in the city. As Patton remembered: **32**

We had kind of a fairly loose rule that every fourth gig would be a benefit for something, whether it was the underground newspaper the *Willamette Bridge*, or a benefit for the runaway center, or for the Charix, or something. And we did a lot of antiwar benefits.<sup>45</sup>

Most baby boomer folk and rock musicians in Portland tended to be political and cultural fellow travelers rather than left-wing activists, with the draft lottery representing the most urgent aspect of the era's political issues for younger musicians. Those with low lottery numbers developed a variety of responses, ranging from conscientious objection (such as Cal Scott) to National Guard service (Bill Wyatt played in the Guard band, wearing a short blond wig to hide his long red hair at every duty session for his entire term of service).<sup>46</sup> **33**

As the 1960s wore on, the strains and conflicts between the so-called straight world and the counterculture did not ease. The Charix became one pole of a big problem facing the city: a high population of alienated and homeless teens, an influx of disaffected young adults, and an increase in recreational drug use.<sup>47</sup> The other pole was Lair Hill Park. The Lair Hill and Corbett neighborhoods in southwest Portland were among the most severely decayed in the city and were scheduled for redevelopment in the enthusiasm for urban renewal that hit Portland and other cities in the early 1960s. Along with the wholesale razing of decrepit houses, the city also expected to displace some twelve hundred dwellings and forty-eight businesses in the neighborhood surrounding PSC to make room for campus expansion.<sup>48</sup> **34**



*The Psychedelic Shop at 1325 Southwest Washington, photographed here on June 29, 1967, was a counterculture hot spot for the rock community, as seen by the coffeehouse flyers displayed on the window.*

OHS neg., OrHi 022772

Walter Cole's Caffe Espresso was one of the victims. Cole was paid five thousand dollars to relocate his business, and he reopened Caffe Espresso near the soon-to-be-remodeled Civic Auditorium at Southwest 2<sup>nd</sup> and Clay. Studio A, his basement jazz jam club, became an after-hours spot popular with local and touring jazz musicians.<sup>49</sup> But Cole had not moved far enough, and the new venue fell to the urban renewal bulldozer in 1965. Cole sold the business and bought the tavern at Northwest 3<sup>rd</sup> and Davis in Portland's Old Town, where he opened Darcelle's, a nightclub featuring female impersonators. **35**

**BY 1968, SAN FRANCISCO'S** Haight Ashbury district had declined from a seemingly idyllic countercultural community to a seamy drug- and violence-ridden eyesore.<sup>50</sup> In Portland, rumors spread that between 8,000 and 50,000 hippies were headed to the city, and officials and community leaders worried that Lair Hill would attract them that spring.<sup>51</sup> The horde did not materialize, but many locals continued to be disturbed by the influx of strangely dressed young people, whom they perceived as bizarre and threatening. City parks, especially Lair Hill Park, seemed to be teeming with hippies. **36**

Two establishments anchored the Lair Hill counterculture — the Psychedelic Supermarket, a head shop that sold drug paraphernalia at 2739 Southwest 1st, and the Merchants of Warm, a "hip'-oriented self-help agency" right next door.<sup>52</sup> The Merchants of Warm provided rudimentary counseling for alienated youth and the services of a medical doctor one day a week.<sup>53</sup> **37**

Because of their low rents and easy access to downtown, the Lair Hill and Corbett neighborhoods were popular with local musicians. Band rehearsals, jam sessions, and occasional recording sessions took place in the decaying Victorians, which had been built at the turn of the nineteenth century when the neighborhood was the first stop for many immigrating European Jews and Italians.<sup>54</sup> In the end, Lair Hill did not carry the torch of Haight Ashbury very far, in part because its preservation-minded homeowners organized to block the urban renewal plan and formed one of the first neighborhood associations in Portland history. The seedy slum was eventually transformed into a yuppie heaven and is now a historic district.<sup>55</sup> San Francisco influence certainly seeped into Portland's music subculture, however, especially through the north-south peregrinations of bands such as the P.H. Phactor Jug Band, an engaging roots-music ensemble from the Pacific Northwest with strong ties to the Northern California psychedelic scene; the Weeds, a proto-grunge band from Las Vegas led by Fred Cole that settled in Portland in 1967; and Dan Hicks, who with his band the Hot Licks practiced a sophisticated brand of energetic swing music he called "folk-jazz."<sup>56</sup> **38**

Lair Hill Park continued to be a flash point, and bands frequently played there without bothering to get city permits. Stew Dodge, who played with the Melodious Funk jug band and U.S. Cadenza, described their method: **39**

...a bunch of us would get together and we'd break into the Neighborhood House. There was usually a window open, you'd have to get a ladder to get up to it there and pull an extension cord in and plug it in, and then we'd set up a PA system and amplifiers and stuff out in the park until the cops would come and break it up.<sup>57</sup>

In January 1968, the Portland police raided both the Charix and Lair Hill Park and made fifty drug arrests, triggering a spate of coverage by the *Oregonian* and the *Oregon Journal*. By August, the *Oregon Journal* was still running screaming headlines: "Parks Menace at Night — Church Group Accused of Hiding Runaways — Drugs Tied to Hippies."<sup>58</sup> The Police Bureau accused Gene Horn, the manager of the Charix, of harboring runaways and tolerating drug use and sales at the coffeehouse. City Commissioner Frank Ivancie pushed through an ordinance creating an 11:00 p.m. curfew for city parks to discourage hippies from loitering there. Other incidents added fuel to the flames, including the condemnation of the Barbur Boulevard house rented by Joe Uris, whom the *Oregon Journal* had dubbed the "nominal mayor of Portland's Lair Hill hippie district."<sup>59</sup> **40**

The conflict between the city, the hippies, and the churches raged through 1970, with unwanted media coverage focusing on the GPCC and the Charix. The Unitarian Church and GPCC's other member churches and congregations were increasingly uncomfortable with the Charix, both on financial grounds and because they did not want to endorse a lifestyle they considered unacceptable. After two and a half years of notoriety and a great deal of soul-searching, the GPCC and the Unitarians abandoned the Charix and handed over the youth outreach program to Koinonia House. Because of its affiliation with PSC, Koinonia House may have been more comfortable with protest and conflict, and it continued the outreach program through 1970.<sup>60</sup> **41**

In June 1968, as the Charix was colliding with local authorities, the Ninth Street Exit opened at Centenary-Wilbur Methodist Church. The Centenary-Wilbur community had changed since October 12, 1962, Columbus Day, when a furious and destructive storm knocked the steeple into the sanctuary, ripping a hole not only in the building but also in the congregation. A new sanctuary was fashioned out of the gymnasium, but the congregation was irreparably sundered. Guitarist Bill Wyatt, whose mother was the church's choir director, remembered that "the more fundamental and radical elements hung on and the dressier folks moved on."<sup>61</sup> **42**

Centenary-Wilbur rapidly became a major countercultural center, housing not only the Ninth Street Exit but also antiwar and draft-resistance groups, an organic food collective, a counterculture information switchboard, and gay liberation groups. In 1968, some eighteen social and political organizations operated out of Centenary-Wilbur.<sup>62</sup> During its twelve-year run, the Ninth Street Exit was the nursery for a variety of prominent 1970s bands, including the Sleezy Pieces, the heirs to the ebullience and eclecticism of the 1960s, and the wild jazz ensemble Upepo. But as baby boomers migrated to bars and taverns, the Exit slowly faded until it closed altogether in 1980. 43



*Members of Portland Zoo — (from left) Denny Jackson, bass; Sharyle Patton, guitar; Pat Coffey, drums; and Peter Langston, guitar — take a break from performing at Lair Hill Park, which they were doing in opposition of the new curfew.*

Courtesy of Peter Langston

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**WHILE THE FUROR OVER HIPPIES** and curfews, drugs and church politics swirled all around them, local musicians were focused primarily on the music and their relationships with each other. There were many interlocking friendships from before and during this formative period. For example, Cal Scott knew Bill Wyatt from high school Methodist church camp; Peter Langston knew Sharyle Patton from Reed College; Steve (Koski) Riihikoski and Michael Strickland knew John Hing from Tigard High School; Dave Storrs knew Ken Lomax from Lake Oswego High School. These connections were conduits for musicians from radically different social and economic backgrounds to mingle creatively for a few years before many of them took off in incompatible artistic directions. The early exposure to so many new influences colored their styles throughout their careers. 44

All the musicians studied here played at some or all of the three church coffeehouses, and some played at the commercial coffeehouses as well. Steve Bradley, for example, played at the Folksinger, the Charix, and the Ninth Street Exit; Cal Scott played at the Agora and the Ninth Street Exit; and Earl Benson played at the Caffe Espresso, the Charix, and the Ninth Street Exit.<sup>63</sup> 45

Whatever specific style was most attractive, many young musicians experienced epiphanies that drove them deeper into the mysteries and delights of the emerging styles. Among the most admired national groups was the Byrds, who had pioneered the style of playing electric guitars using acoustic guitar techniques, creating an ethereal yet potent wash of sound.<sup>64</sup> Chris Brandt, 46

rhythm guitarist for the Nazzare Blues Band, remembered:

...it was a very small step to get charged up with sort of electrified cross fusions into folk music. That felt absolutely natural to me. And I remember when I first heard the Byrds album, I flipped sky high, this was it. Much more so than the Beatles, the Stones or any of that. That's when I went, "Eureka! I've found it."<sup>65</sup>

Rock music was also drawing energy from the electric blues pioneered by African American musicians in Chicago such as Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters. While mainstream bands were using black idioms filtered through 1950s rock-and-roll and the British Invasion, the counterculture bands also took them directly from the Chicago bluesmen and, to some extent, the earlier acoustic Delta blues. **47**

Steve Bradley enthusiastically absorbed straight blues and the variants practiced by Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley, but he also took his cue from the Beatles. At age fourteen, when he had seen the Beatles on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, he said, they "presented a schematic of how to make a band."<sup>66</sup> The next year, 1965, he and several buddies from his North Portland neighborhood used the schematic to form the U.S. Cadenza, which played early Rolling Stones and Chicago blues songs. Although he was still in his teens, Bradley could already growl out a powerful and convincing version of Muddy Waters's "Hoochie Coochie Man." The band was soon in demand for school dances and what Bradley called "hippie dances" at the Pythian Building, the downtown Masonic Temple, the Midtown Ballroom, and the Crystal Ballroom. **48**

One of the ensembles devoted to straight-ahead electric blues in Portland was the Nazzare Blues Band. John Hing, the guitarist in the Total Eclipse, remembered hearing Mike Cross, Nazzare's lead guitar player: **49**

I'd stand in front of Mike Cross and just listen, because he played so clean, so melodic. To me, he didn't play as many notes as some of the other guys, but he was cleaner, more articulate and lyrical than any other blues guitar players. So I just [said], I'm going to learn how to do that.<sup>67</sup>

The Total Eclipse also played blues but channeled much of it through rock and jazz covers (songs that have been written, performed, or recorded by someone other than the performer). Starting out as a four-piece band whose repertoire included keyboardist Michael Strickland's songs, the Eclipse later incorporated Larry Pindar on bass, Mike Cross on guitar, and John Benson on alto saxophone. After the original drummer, Dave Storrs, left to go to the University of Oregon in Eugene, the Eclipse expanded into an eight-piece band with a powerful horn section.



*Playing here in about 1969, Dave Larsen, trombone, and John Jensen, trumpet, were members of the horn section that helped to define Total Eclipse's music.*

Courtesy of Mike Cross

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Pindar, who had moved to Portland from California to attend Mt. Hood Community College, and **50** Cross, who had moved to Portland to join a high school friend's band, brought a driving blues and R&B-inflected rock sensibility to the Eclipse. The two were versatile instrumentalists, easily switching from bass to drums to guitar to saxophone. Cross remembered tapping into African American music in his hometown of Wenatchee, Washington:

There was kind of an oddball harmonica player in Wenatchee who had been a mentor to me. I'd go over to his house and play the records I'd been listening to, among them Eric Clapton.... I was really taken with that, and he just thought it was just trash. "Why would you want to listen to that guy? He's just playing the cover of something by T-Bone Walker."...His album collection was just unparalleled.... So he kind of directed me towards going and listening to the original guy, as opposed to some white English guy covering it.<sup>68</sup>

In Portland, Cross passed on the favor to other musicians, including Hing, who recalled: "I heard all those guys [white guitarists] before I ever heard of B.B. King, and it was Cross that introduced me to the real cats, B.B. King, Albert Collins."<sup>69</sup>

The excitement triggered by the national stars may have been secondary to the power of **51** personal charisma. Chris Brandt, for example, described Mike Cross as "in another category from a person on this planet [like] myself.... He was the best of the best of the best." Brandt saw the gap between him and Cross as so vast (although the age difference was only three years) that he could not understand why one day Cross invited him to bring his guitar to a Nazzare rehearsal. As it turned out, Cross was auditioning him for the band — something inconceivable to Brandt — and he was floored when Cross offered him the job of rhythm guitar player.<sup>70</sup>

Bill Wyatt was even less prepared for his entry into the rock and folk-rock music scene. By the **52** time he reached high school, he was steeped in the Methodist hymnal, church-camp folksongs, and classical music. After he started working the food counter at the Ninth Street Exit, he met the other musicians he eventually joined with to form the Sleazy Pieces in the early 1970s — Steve Bradley, Earl Benson, Rich Englund, Doug Downer, and Alaska (Don Matson). Wyatt recalled:

My influences were Earl [Benson] and Steve [Bradley]. I played Rolling Stones and Chuck Berry tunes for years before I ever heard the Rolling Stones and Chuck Berry do them. I wasn't exposed to the literature, I was exposed to these guys in this basement, you know?<sup>71</sup>

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*Total Eclipse band members Mike Cross (above) and John Hing play at Lewis and Clark College, probably in spring 1970.*

Courtesy of Mike Cross

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Of all the musicians in this study, John Benson seems to have had the most profound influence **53** on his colleagues.<sup>72</sup> Benson grew up in the Overlook area of north Portland near the University of Portland. His mother, who had been a big-band singer and tap dancer, encouraged her children's performing aspirations. From elementary school through high school, Benson was an accordionist in The Nomads with his younger brother Bobby and two schoolmates. By 1967, when Benson graduated from Jefferson High, where he played in a band called the Soul Masters, he was proficient on the saxophone and a master of improvisation who was steeped in both the white and black approaches to music.<sup>73</sup>

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*The Nomads, performing here in about 1964, were comprised of John Benson (playing accordion), his younger brother Bobby, and two schoolmates. Benson was one of the most influential musicians in the Portland music scene.*

Courtesy of the author

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Benson had a reputation as a brilliant eccentric. His sister Jehn recalled that in the late 1960s **54** "he looked like a wolf. He wore this long coat, and he'd have the Jesus hair and he drove my dad's old pink Cadillac with the fins on it, and he always had his horn with him." Dave Storrs said of Benson: "He got us even more into jazz.... Benson is my major influence.... Benson had everybody playing free for a little bit. That was the power of Benson." Strickland considered him "to be one of the greatest musicians that I ever got the privilege of playing with. I learned a tremendous amount about the whole, I guess I would call it a headspace, around music. Not so much technical, but how to approach it and different ways of looking at it...."<sup>74</sup>

Cal Scott traveled easily between the folk world and the jazz scene. In 1969, he was a nineteen- **55** year-old Lewis & Clark College student from McMinnville who was considering going into the ministry. The son of a high school music teacher, Scott played the piano, the trumpet, and the guitar and had been part of a jazz trio in high school. He took a summer social service job at the Charix, where he heard many local bands play and learned about the Sunday jams at Alice's Restaurant. The house band at Alice's Restaurant, which consisted of whoever showed up, was known as Ned's Tires, and the extended jam sessions gave rookie players the chance to trot out their heavily practiced licks and expand their improvisational skills. At the same time, they were checking out each other's gear, techniques, chops, influences, and repertoire.

Scott worked up the nerve to ask if he could sit in on trumpet with the band. Sure, man, they **56** said. Word soon got around that he was a "monster" trumpet player, and the Total Eclipse asked him to be their trumpeter. It had been a privilege, he remembered, "to hear these great players. And then that they would invite me to play with them was just a tremendous kick. Tremendous boost. I was really jazzed by that."<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, Scott turned the offer down. He was committed to finishing college. After earning a degree in psychology in 1972, he abandoned the idea of a religious career and joined the music scene in earnest. In the three years between Ned's Tires and his solo debut at Frankenstein's, a tavern at 737 Southwest Front, Scott had become a brilliant acoustic guitarist and an agile songwriter. Mike Cross remembered: "When I first met him he was a trumpet player, and I was surprised much later I went someplace and here he was playing guitar, and I had no idea."<sup>76</sup>

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**THE GRATEFUL DEAD**



**POORTY'S PEOPLE • U.S. CADENZA • NIGELLS  
TUES. JULY 18 AT 8 • MASONIC TEMPLE  
PRESENTED BY DIAMOND PRODUCTIONS**

*U.S. Cadenza opened for the Grateful Dead's first Portland show at the Masonic Temple, July 1967.*

Courtesy of Jim Felt

**FOR THE MUSICIANS** of the period, Portland's music scene of the late 1960s was a complex and rewarding environment. For a few short years in the late 1960s, the Nazarre Blues Band, Notary Sojac, Portland Zoo, Sand, Total Eclipse, and U.S. Cadenza rotated through Portland's ballrooms, coffeehouses, and festivals. The musicians, some of them still in their teens, were living the life that thousands of young musicians across the country dreamed of, opening for the likes of the Grateful Dead, the Doors, Country Joe & the Fish, Sons of Champlin, Charlie Musselwhite, and Steppenwolf. Along with folkies Jon Adams and Cal Scott, the local bands helped make the coffeehouse circuit a vital conduit of musical ideas and cultural values. 57

Despite brushes with fame and fortune, however, most of the young musicians who played in successful local bands seemed to prefer the Portland community to a chance at stardom. Sharyle Patton recalled being disturbed by how tired the touring bands always seemed: 58

We looked at the bands that were really trying hard to make it professionally and being on the road to make money and make the records, and I think Peter and I had a kind of a funny idea that we wanted to play the best possible music...but we weren't really interested in being rock stars... We didn't want to be on the road being pasty-faced and not getting enough sleep and having to deal with all the pressures of that.<sup>27</sup>

Inevitably, the musicians who were part of Portland's late-1960s music scene moved beyond the experimentation phase as they learned more about where they wanted to go artistically and their own and each other's limitations and ambitions. They also needed to think more about money, and to earn it they had to play in bars and taverns. In trading coffee-drinkers for listeners who drank alcohol, musicians traded the quality of their audiences for the quantity of venues. By the 1970s, there were more places to play and more bands to fill them; and most bands had to adapt their music to the reality that, for many, dancing had become more important than listening. One exception stood out. In 1971, the Ninth Street Exit was the scene of a gradual consolidation of loose jams that became the Sleazy Pieces. The Pieces, playing eclectic rock, folk, folk-rock, and Earl Benson's original songs, brought together many threads from the 1960s and continued to play together for a large and devoted following who both listened and danced to the band until the mid 1980s. 59

The late 1960s were not wholly utopian, of course, but musicians enjoyed a spirit of communion that was different from the circumstances faced by later generations of young musicians. Looking back, Cross recalled:

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In those days it wasn't competitive.... It was so much about the music and so little about commerce, that never got to become part of the equation. It was friendship dead-on right from the start. We were united in a musical adventure.<sup>78</sup>

That legacy still saturates Oregon's culture and media. Cal Scott's compositions are heard every day on Oregon Public Broadcasting in the themes for Oregon Field Guide and Oregon Art Beat. Michael Strickland built a multi-million dollar graphics business from illustrating ad copy for Import Plaza, and Chris Brandt is an internationally respected luthier and proprietor of the Twelfth Fret guitar shop. Dave Storrs has won accolades for his complex and quirky recordings and has taught a new generation of drummers about technical discipline and free improvisation. Steve Bradley is a songwriter, guitar teacher, and graphic artist. Ken Lomax is a skilled conservator of recorded music. Steve Koski teaches music at a Vancouver, Washington, high school, and Peter Langston runs an annual bluegrass music camp in Seattle.

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SELECTED PORTLAND BANDS*		
Band	Musicians	Style
Nazzare Blues Band 1967–1969	Mike Cross, lead guitar, b. 1948 Chris Brandt, rhythm guitar, b. 1951	Blues
Notary Sojac 1969–1974	Steve Koski, guitar, pedal steel, vocals, b. 1948	Folk-rock, acid rock, pop
Portland Zoo 1965–1971	Peter Langston, lead guitar, b. 1945 Sharyle Patton, rhythm guitar, b. 1944	Blues, folk-rock, acid rock
Total Eclipse 1967–1970	Michael Strickland, keyboards, songwriting, vocals, b. 1949 John Hing, lead guitar, b. 1950** Ken Lomax, bass, b. 1949 Dave Storrs, drums, b. 1950 Larry Pindar, bass, guitar, and saxophone, b. 1950 John Benson, saxophone, b. 1949 [interviewed Jehn Benson, John's sister]	Rock, jazz, blues
U.S. Cadenza 1965–1969	Steve Bradley, guitar and vocals, b. 1950 Stew Dodge, guitar, b. 1945	Rock, blues
Sleezy Pieces 1971–circa 1985	A "supergroup" including musicians from earlier groups: Earl Benson (jug bands), b. 1939 Steve Bradley (U.S. Cadenza) Bill Wyatt, b. 1949	Electric rock, folk, folk-rock, blues
Solo Performers	Jon Adams, b. 1939 Cal Scott, b. 1950	Folk Folk, singer-songwriter, jazz, fusion
<p>*All bands had additional members at various times; this table represents only those interviewed by the author. ** Hing is the younger brother of the renowned jazz saxophonist Kenny Hing Compiled by the author</p>		

These musicians' personal journeys were embedded in their generation's boisterous passage into adulthood and in the conflicts that tore at the fabric of American society in the late 1960s. To Portland's city fathers and community leaders, baby boom hippies appeared as a chaotic tide that threatened to overwhelm local resources and sap the city's goodwill. The church coffeehouses — established to assist, moderate, and channel the incoming flood — were inclined to support not only new music but also other emerging countercultural phenomena, such as the antiwar and organic food movements. Serving as magnets with which the churches attracted their clientele, the eager young musicians seized the opportunity to develop their styles, acquire the craft of ensemble playing, and take the risks necessary to fulfill their potential as artists. **62**

Portland's dark, smoky, and ephemeral coffeehouses were places where the personal met the political. Those modest settings both transformed the musicians' internal experience and enlarged the cultural space occupied by alternatives to mainstream American attitudes and practices. That creativity and energy, brought into focus, richly nourished the local community over the ensuing years. **63**

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In Oregon before 1973, the only places where live music could be performed by more than one musician at a time were establishments that had a cabaret license and that sold both food and hard liquor. Taverns serving wine and beer were prohibited from hiring multi-instrument ensembles, although there was no limit on the number of singers who could perform. Dancing was also prohibited. In 1973, when the legislature eliminated the distinctions between alcohol types with respect to live music, it multiplied many times over the number of establishments that could offer live music. See Oregon Liquor Control Commission Annual Report, 1974 Fiscal Year, 6, 12. Perspective on the legislation was provided by State Senator Ted Hallock, who sponsored the bill, in an interview with author, November 8, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Ann Johnson and Mike Stax, "From Psychotic to Psychedelic: The Garage Contribution to Psychedelia," *Popular Music and Society* 29 (October 2006): 413.

<sup>3</sup> Kieron Tyler in liner notes for *Northwest Battle of the Bands*, Vol. 2, Ace Records, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Seattle Mayor's Office of Film and Music, <http://www.seattle.gov/music/history.htm> (accessed January 15, 2007). The Mayor's Office credits the Experience Music Project ([www.emplive.org](http://www.emplive.org)) for this information.

<sup>5</sup> Memorandum, Detroit FBI office to FBI Director, May 25, 1965. FBI Freedom of Information Act Louie Louie file, 25, <http://foia.fbi.gov/foiaindex/louielouie.htm> (accessed January 29, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Ken Lomax, interview with author, October 26, 2005. Recordings and transcripts are in the possession of the author.

<sup>7</sup> "TV Show Offers Trip for Band, Weekly Honors High Schools," *The Clarke Press*, February 14, 1968, 7. Patti (nka Jehn) Benson is the sister of saxophonist John Benson, who played with the Total Eclipse. Jehn kindly loaned the author her scrapbook from the period.

<sup>8</sup> Steve Koski, interview with author, February 28, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Steve Bradley, interview with author, August 22, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Agnes, ed. *Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition*. (Boston: IDG Books Worldwide, Inc. 2000), 675. See also Hunter S. Thompson, "The 'Hashbury' is the Capital of the Hippies," *The New York Times*, May 14, 1967, SM14.

<sup>11</sup> Joe Uris, "Bohemia in Way-Out Coffeehouses," *Willamette Week/Fresh Weekly*, March 1, 1977; and "When the Long-Gone 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue Flourished," *Willamette Week/Fresh Weekly*, March 8, 1977; Earl Benson, "Portland's Coffee House Scene from 1957-1968," *The Ninth St. Exit Coffeehouse Newsletter*, 1 (June 1980): 1, 3; Uris, "A Generation Grows Up — to What?" *Willamette Week/Fresh Weekly*, March 28, 1977. For more on Ewing's intimate involvement with the Crystal Ballroom's psychedelic phase and 1990s revival, see Tim Hills, *The Many Lives of the Crystal Ballroom* (Portland: McMenamins Pubs & Breweries, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Jim Blashfield, interview with author, October 12, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Bradley interview.

<sup>14</sup> See Hills, *The Many Lives*. See also Mary Works Covington, "Rockin' at the Red Dog: The Dawn of Psychedelic Rock," DVD, 91 minutes, monterey media inc, [www.montereymedia.com](http://www.montereymedia.com), 2005.

<sup>15</sup> David Saslavsky, ed., "Crystal Ballroom: the Grand Reopening," [jambands.com](http://www.jambands.com), an online music magazine for fans of jambands produced by fans of jambands. <http://www.jambands.com/dec99/monthly/venue.html> (accessed January 12, 2007). See also Hills, *The Many Lives*.

16. Walter Cole, interview with author, June 23, 2005.
17. Richie Unterberger, *Turn! Turn! Turn! The '60s folk-rock revolution* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2002), 1–20.
18. Cole interview.
19. L.F. Bouvier, "America's Baby Boom Generation: The Fateful Bulge," *Population Bulletin* (April 1980): 1–36; Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, [www.dhhs.gov](http://www.dhhs.gov) (accessed June 18, 2006).
20. Valerie J. Brown, "Turnabout is Fair Play: Censorship of Popular Music in the 1950s" (M.S. Thesis, University of Oregon, 1991), 51–67.
21. Michael Horowitz, "Portland Youth Advocates' Contact Center Program (1970–79): An Idiographic Study" (M.A. thesis, Portland State University, 1981), 5, 25; Gene Horn, interview with author, July 20, 2005. Horn, who managed the Charix at its inception, says he derived Charix (which he pronounces with a hard "ch") from the Greek word "charis," meaning "grace."
22. Benson, "Portland's Coffee House Scene," 1; Earl Benson, interview with author, May 17, 2005.
23. Claudia Levy, "Church Coffeehouses Thriving Here," *The Washington Post, Times Herald (1959–1973)*, November 12, 1966, C5.
24. Paul Libby, interview with author, March 21, 2005. See also Sean Slattery, "July 4, 1968–October 11, 1980," *The Ninth St. Exit Coffeehouse Newsletter*, 1 (October 1980): 1.
25. Rodney Page, interview with author, June 27, 2005.
26. From "Into the Classroom — Tapping the Roots of American Music: A Teacher's Guide," Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), [http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs\\_arm\\_its\\_historical\\_background.html](http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs_arm_its_historical_background.html) (accessed January 15, 2007.)
27. For more on the New York-California folk scene, see David Hajdu, *Positively 4th Street: The Lives and Times of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mimi Baez Fariña and Richard Fariña*, (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2001).
28. Lomax interview.
29. Stew Dodge, interview with author, September 28, 2005.
30. Jon Adams, interview with author, May 10, 2005.
31. Cal Scott, interview with author, July 14, 2005.
32. Robert K. Menzel, *A Progress Report: HUB-CAP and Portland's Youth Subculture* (Portland: HUB-CAP Westside Church-Community Action Program, February 1968), 1. GPCC is now called Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.
33. Leonard Siegfried Nelson, "Social Action as Social Change through a Process of Insulation" (M.A. thesis, Portland State University, 1974), 3, 108–10.
34. Nelson, "Social Action," 3.
35. *Ibid.*, 3, 63.
36. Horn interview.
37. Horowitz, "Portland Youth Advocates," 4, 9.
38. *Fact Sheet on HUB-CAP* (HUB-CAP, ca. 1968); *First Unitarian Church Charix Committee Evaluation Report* (HUB-CAP, January 29, 1968), 1; Menzel, *A Progress Report*, 1.
39. Menzel, *A Progress Report*, 1.
40. Robert C. Shoemaker, Jr. "Memorandum to All Interested Persons," September 9, 1968, in author's possession.
41. Lomax interview.
42. Sharyle Patton, interview with author, February 6, 2006.
43. Peter Langston, interview with author, May 25, 2005. Patton's memory is substantially similar, but neither Patton nor Langston was present at the event.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Patton interview.

- <sup>46</sup>. Bill Wyatt, interview with author, September 13, 2005.
- <sup>47</sup>. Ann Sullivan, "A Look at Alienated Youth: Ministry Workers Clash with Police Bureau," *The Oregonian*, March 19, 1969. Drug arrests had climbed steadily throughout the mid 1960s, from 69 in 1964 to 451 in 1968.
- <sup>48</sup>. Richard S. Soderberg, *Portland State College Urban Renewal Feasibility Study* (State Board of Higher Education, August 1, 1964), 12.
- <sup>49</sup>. Cole interview.
- <sup>50</sup>. "Wilting Flowers," *Time Magazine*, May 10, 1968.
- <sup>51</sup>. "Hippie Influx Estimates Said Too High," *Sunday Oregonian*, May 5, 1968, 31; Menzel, *A Progress Report*, 1; Joseph S. Uris, "The Lair Hill Park Neighborhood on Examination of the Phenomenon of Community Creation" (M.A. thesis, Portland State University, 1971), 73.
- <sup>52</sup>. Uris, "The Lair Hill Park Neighborhood," iii.
- <sup>53</sup>. James O. Long, "'Merchants of Warm' Cool to New City Ordinance," *The Oregon Journal*, July 12, 1968; Joe Uris, e-mail message to author, January 20, 2007.
- <sup>54</sup>. "Neighborhood House, Inc. History," Neighborhood House website, [www.nhweb.org/about-us/history.shtml](http://www.nhweb.org/about-us/history.shtml) (accessed January 17, 2007).
- <sup>55</sup>. Craig Wollner, John Provo, and Julie Schablitsky. *A Brief History of Urban Renewal in Portland, Oregon*. (Portland: Portland Development Commission, 2001, 20–21); League of Women Voters of Portland Education Fund, "Portland's Neighborhood Associations, Part I — History," October 2005 (revised December 2006), <http://www.lwvpx.org/leagueinfo/NAUpdatePart1.pdf> (accessed January 29, 2007).
- <sup>56</sup>. Pacific Northwest Bands, <http://pnwbands.com/phphactor.html> (accessed January 22, 2007); Joe Uris, "Bohemia in Way-out Coffeehouses," *Willamette Week/Fresh Weekly*, March 7, 1977; Mike Dugo, "An Interview with Fred Cole," <http://home.unet.nl/kesteloo/lollipop.html> and [www.subpop.com/bio/dead\\_moon](http://www.subpop.com/bio/dead_moon) (accessed April 21, 2007); Koski interview; Dan Hicks website biography, <http://www.danhicks.net/bio.htm> (accessed February 1, 2007); Steve Bradley, personal communication with author, ca. 2002. The core of the P.H. Phactor Jug Band consisted of Nick Ogilvie (guitar, harmonica), John Browne (guitar, harmonica), Steve Mork (bass, jug), Paul Bassette (drums, washboard), and John Hendricks (mandolin, guitar, kazoo, jug). Weeds landed a deal with a major record label, which changed the band's name to the bubblegummy "Lollipop Shoppe." Steve Koski of Notary Sojac toured with the band under that name. Guitarist Ken "Turtle" Vandemarr, who went to school with Steve Bradley in northeast Portland and was a founding member of the U.S. Cadanza, toured with Hicks and the Hot Licks for a number of years.
- <sup>57</sup>. Dodge interview. Neighborhood House was a settlement house built next to the park in 1905 to help the immigrant community "Americanize." See "Neighborhood House, Inc. History," Neighborhood House website, [www.nhweb.org/about-us/history.shtml](http://www.nhweb.org/about-us/history.shtml) (accessed January 17, 2007).
- <sup>58</sup>. Menzel, *A Progress Report*, 2; "Parks Menace at Night—Church Group Accused of Hiding Runaways—Drugs Tied to Hippies," *Oregon Journal*, August 16, 1968, 1.
- <sup>59</sup>. *Oregon Journal*, August 16, 1968; *Oregonian*, August 23, 1968; *Oregon Journal*, August 2, 1968, 4M.
- <sup>60</sup>. Nineteen seventy was the year of Vortex, Oregon's government-sponsored rock festival designed to deflect energy from downtown Portland during an American Legion convention. See Matt Love, *The Far Out Story of Vortex I* (Pacific City, Ore.: Nestucca Spit Press, 2004). After Vortex, even the campus religious community washed its hands of the project, and a group of people split off from Koinonia House and the GPCC to form Portland Youth Advocates, which remained active throughout the 1970s. The Arbuckle Flat Coffeehouse, which operated from 1972 to 1979, was a PYA program. I worked at the Koinonia House outreach center during Vortex and booked the music at Arbuckle Flat during its first year of operation. For further details on the PYA, see Horowitz, "Portland Youth Advocates," 12.
- <sup>61</sup>. Wyatt interview.
- <sup>62</sup>. Rande Wilmarth, "2 Churches in Same Building Pursue Contrasting Theories," *Oregon Journal*, July 12, 1968, 6J.
- <sup>63</sup>. These are just the coffeehouses at which they remembered playing or for which there is evidence in the form of posters or newspaper calendar listings; they all may have played at more places.
- <sup>64</sup>. Johnson and Stax, "From Psychotic to Psychedelic," 417. The Byrds' 1966 hit "Eight Miles High" is considered by many to be the first psychedelic rock song.
- <sup>65</sup>. Brandt interview.
- <sup>66</sup>. "The Losers' Club," a Pierre Ouellette film, (60 mins.) paravolve productions, 2004.
- <sup>67</sup>. John Hing, interview with author, September 15, 2005.

[68.](#) Mike Cross, interview with author, September 15, 2005.

[69.](#) Hing interview.

[70.](#) Brandt interview.

[71.](#) Wyatt interview. Wyatt may have been somewhat prepared for his role as Sleezy Pieces rhythm guitar player as a result of playing in a duet in high school and at Methodist church camps with Marty Howard. Howard, a gifted mathematician, would work out how to play a finger-picking song backwards while Wyatt played it forwards. Steve Bradley told the author that Wyatt was the best rhythm guitarist he'd ever played with (personal communication, ca. 2002).

[72.](#) No relation to Earl Benson.

[73.](#) See <http://www.emusic.com/artist/10562/10562734.html> (accessed May 9, 2007). While at Jefferson High School, Benson played with many talented musicians, including brothers Michael and Donald Hepburn and Bruce Smith. In 1972, they merged their group (less Benson) with a band called Franchise to form Pleasure, a funk/soul band that enjoyed a multi-album recording career and a number of national hits in the 1970s.

[74.](#) Jehn Benson, interview with author, February 15, 2005; Michael Strickland, interview with author, December 9, 2005; Dave Storrs, interview with author, March 16, 2006. Benson's time in the Portland music scene was short and intense. By the early 1970s, he was beginning to lose his hearing, and he quit playing altogether. Benson began building custom homes in the Bend area; but in May 1984, when he was in his mid thirties, he and his father died in a collision with a drunk driver near Ashland. *Oregonian*, May 2, 1984, D13.

[75.](#) Scott interview.

[76.](#) Cross interview. Scott eventually became a well-known film and video composer.

[77.](#) Patton interview.

[78.](#) Cross interview.

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