

## Behind the rind: An inner look at the 'Peel'

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A feeling of anticipation fills the air during the hours before a major show. Everyone in the venue works hard knowing what needs to get done before doors open.

"We are selling tickets up until they are sold out. At some point during the day we print out the will-call tickets, rip some tickets, alphabetize them and get them ready for pick-up," said Robb McAdams, assistant manager at The Orange Peel.

People approach the box office all day itching to get their hands on a ticket to a sold-out show. Disappointed when none are left to be sold, most concert-goers turn around and head back home. Some stick around with a small glimmer of hope that something great will happen.

"I see a lot of magic happen out here. You know, somebody's buddy can't make it to the show and somebody grabs a ticket at the very last second on the way in. I pulled that in Atlanta a few weeks ago," McAdams said.

A friend of McAdams planned to meet him at a concert but did not have enough money for a ticket. The friend decided to wait in line to see what was happening. Someone who was in line had an extra ticket and gave it to McAdams' friend for free.

Located on the corner of Biltmore and Hilliard Avenue, the 67-year-old building has gone through multiple changes over the years, according to its official website. From Skateland Rollerdomo to R&B clubs, the building, now a concert venue and pleasure club, carries on as a landmark in Asheville.

Now empty, the venue will soon be at the maximum capacity of 1,050. The venue hosted around 200 events in 2016, according to its website. Few people see a show from beginning to end. Most see the performance, but so much more happens before doors open.

Before show time, each performer lounges in the dressing rooms. Weeks in advance, hospitality contacts the band tour manager for a list of accommodations the band wishes to have while at the venue.

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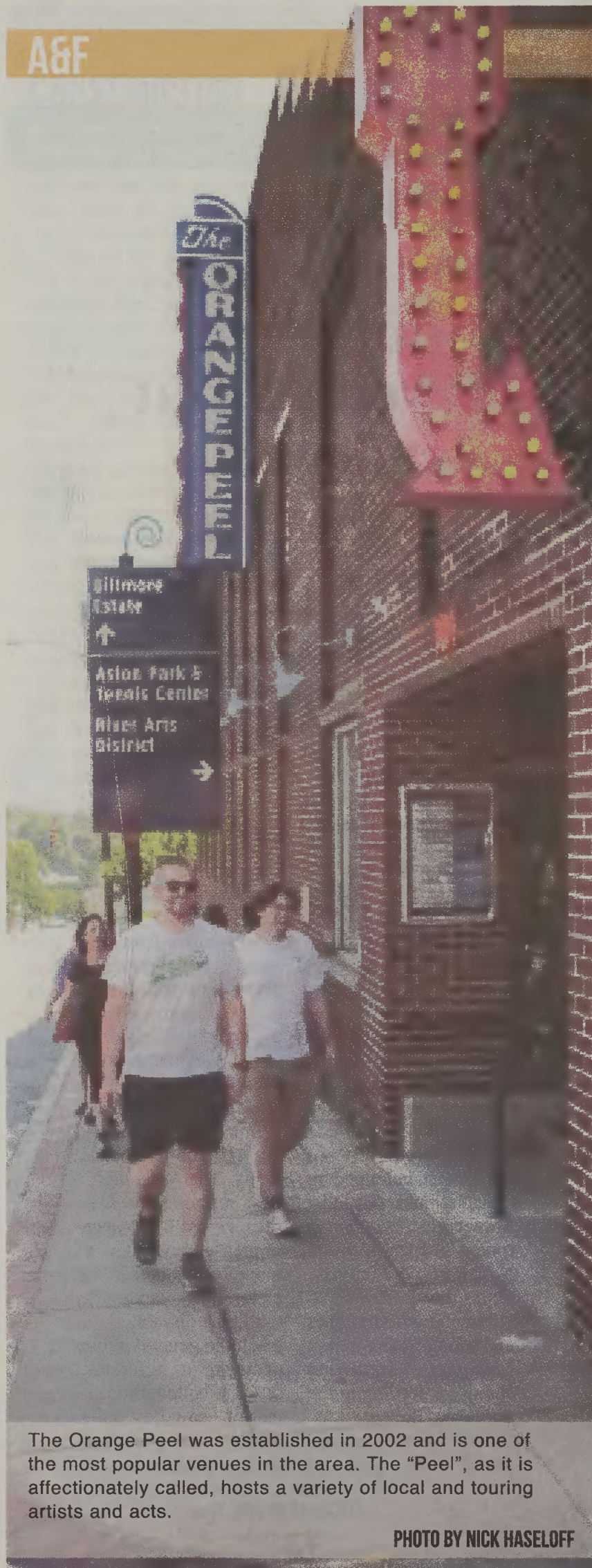
— **ROBB MCADAMS**  
ASSISTANT MANAGER

Blake Willis, artist relations coordinator at The Orange Peel, works with hospitality to ensure everything the artist requested is correct. Willis talks with the band and the tour manager to find out what grocery items they will need backstage for the day.

"You can get some pretty odd requests," Willis said. "Sometimes a band member has a favorite pair of leather pants that needs to be cleaned but does not trust any of the laundromats in the area. He handed them to me and asked if I would hand wash them for him. Obviously I would say yes, but I was freaking out going, 'Oh my gosh. How do you take care of leather? How do you wash leather?' because I don't want to mess up their favorite pair of leather pants."

A band or performer may arrive to the venue hours before sound check or even minutes before show time.

A few months ago, Noname played a show at the Orange Peel. With doors opening at 8 p.m., her band took an Uber from the airport at 5 p.m. Before then, there was no contact with the band, causing the staff to worry if the show



The Orange Peel was established in 2002 and is one of the most popular venues in the area. The "Peel", as it is affectionately called, hosts a variety of local and touring artists and acts.

PHOTO BY NICK HASELOFF

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