

Nowhere left to

Local venues struggle to find a balance between making money and supporting the vibrant music scene

GO!



DTH FILE PHOTO/GARRETT HALL

“It’s a very tough industry to make ends meet. You’re always walking the line between paying ... bills and closing the doors.”

DEREK POWERS, CAT’S CRADLE MANAGER

BY NICOLE BOBITSKI
STAFF WRITER

Chapel Hill and Carrboro always have been known for their diverse music scene. Music experts predicted that the area would be the next Detroit or Seattle, branding its own name on the newest significant movement in music.

Earlier this year, Rolling Stone named Chapel Hill the fourth best college music town in the United States, specifically noting it as a source for the '90s indie-rock movement.

But there have been signs that even the best of the best can face problems.

Recently, some local music venues have suffered from a combination of factors that have them wondering if they will be in business come next year.

Go! Room 4 must make \$6,000 in earnings during the next few months to stay in business as a result of back taxes, licensing fees and money owed to publicity companies.

“It bums me out that this place might not be here in six months,” said Go! manager Michael Triplett.

The entertainment industry is an ever-turbulent roller coaster — reasons for venue trouble range from high rent to a trend of widespread disinterest in live music.

“It’s a very tough industry to make ends meet,” said Cat’s Cradle manager Derek Powers. “You’re always walking a delicate line between paying the bills and closing the doors.”

This appears to be a trend with most non-chain businesses. “Small businesses have to work 10 times harder to make it sometimes,” said Virginia Knapp, director of external affairs for the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce.

But local industry insiders say there isn’t a definite answer for why some venues do well and some are scraping by from month to month.

“If someone knew the answer, there wouldn’t be as many clubs

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(Above) Cat’s Cradle has become a premier venue for local and national acts.



DTH FILE PHOTO/GARRETT HALL

Karen O, wild singer of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, pours angst-driven emotion into a recent performance at Cat’s Cradle.



DTH FILE PHOTO/BRIAN CASSELLA

The now-extinct local hip-hop group Sankofa, fronted by Creem MC, was a staple of the Chapel Hill scene for years.



DTH FILE PHOTO

Ben Folds Five got its start playing a variety of local venues in Chapel Hill.



DTH FILE PHOTO/KIMBERLY CRAVEN

Carbon Leaf often plays some of the smaller venues in the Chapel Hill area.



DTH/GARRETT HALL

Atmosphere, a hot name in hip-hop circles, brought a crowd to the Cradle.



DTH FILE PHOTO

The rock group Superchunk has gained national acclaim from its local roots.