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# When in Dome

THE CAMPUS COLISEUM  
BEARS A MYSTERIOUS  
BOOKING CURSE  
BUT UNC'S PAST  
REVEALS A HISTORY  
OF SUCCESSFUL CONCERTS

BY JACKIE RANDALL  
STAFF WRITER

**"T**he curse of the Dean Dome" might sound odd to some. But when taking a look at the facts, it seems to be more than mere superstition.

The Smith Center, hallowed home of the UNC men's basketball team since 1986, once played host to a litany of big-name concerts when the Tar Heels weren't playing, and usually beating, their ACC opponents.

Pink Floyd in 1987. Bob Dylan a year later on his "Neverending Tour." R.E.M. on its Monster tour. The Smashing Pumpkins at the height of their post-Mellon Collie fame.

Recently, though, the tide has turned.

There have been successes in recent years — but most of them haven't been at the Smith Center. Bruce Springsteen rocked out in 2003, but that was at Kenan Stadium. OutKast's fabled, aborted 2000 concert took place at Carmichael Auditorium.

The last group to roll through the Dean Dome was the Barenaked Ladies. In 2000.

Then began the cancellations. R.E.M.

was scheduled for a return jaunt to campus, but rescheduled for Raleigh's Alltel Pavilion. Hip-hop star Nas was looking to take his New York state of mind down south this April, but he canceled before the show.

So the question arises — is the Dean Dome cursed?

Given its size and location on campus, it would be expected that the University could readily and consistently draw in popular acts. But thanks to a more competitive marketplace and higher ticket prices, that's not always the way it works.

"In the '80s, the Dean Smith Center attracted some good bands," said Frank Heath, owner and manager of Cat's Cradle.

Things have changed since then.

Alltel Pavilion, for example, serves as a venue where students from the Triangle's three large campuses and other smaller schools can converge, increasing revenue while remaining accessible to those in college.

"I think that the Dean Dome has inherent problems with dealing with the Pavilion at Walnut Creek," Heath said.

N.C. State's new RBC Center has hosted a variety of big-name shows, though it tends to lean toward top-40 acts and older stars. The venue recently hosted Bette

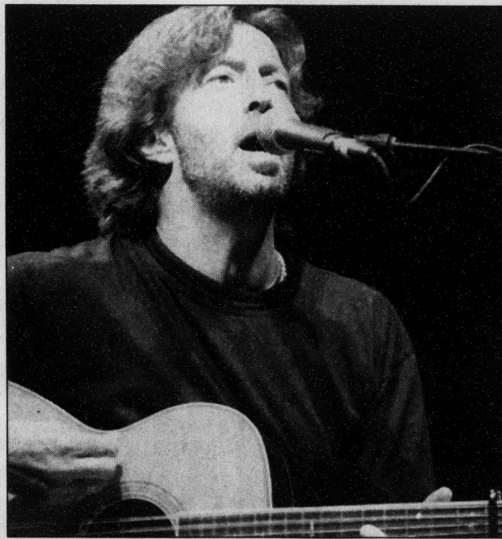
Midler and was able to attract an older demographic more inclined to pay for expensive tickets, said Don Luse, director of the Carolina Union at UNC.

Corporations have entered the fray as well. Clear Channel Inc. is now Alltel Pavilion's promoter, giving the venue a competitive edge it did not have in the '80s. With millions of dollars to attract bands and a promise of larger crowds, the pavilion trumps the Smith Center's big name chances.

"They have their hands in a lot more things," said Heath.

Heath also said the Smith Center now faces a sort of Catch-22. Because

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Once a stomping ground for big-ticket talent, the Dean Dome and UNC have had trouble in recent years. Acts such as R.E.M. (below) and Eric Clapton were among the last to see Smith Center lights.



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## Annals of UNC memory include high-profile acts

*Officials speak on  
landmark events*

BY KRISTEN WILLIAMS  
SENIOR WRITER

The Mamas and the Papas dealt with poor acoustics in Carmichael Gymnasium, so what was OutKast's problem?

Yes, canonized acts such as The Mamas and the Papas performed on campus, and they weren't alone. Despite the decline in the number of quality musicians and acts playing on UNC's campus in recent years, it once was a hotbed for major acts and festivals.

From Memorial Hall to Carmichael Gymnasium to the "Tin Can," campus was a major venue for touring artists, giving them the opportunity to cater to student audiences on their turf.

Martha Clampitt McKay, an alumna of UNC, is quoted as stating, "A simply mad, mad time is had by all on Jubilee weekend. An outdoor concert on that week-end turns the mall between South Building and the [Wilson] library into a sea of swinging cats. Holy Administration! It's great."

Her statement appears in "Light on the Hill: A History of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill" by William D. Snider.

Perhaps the explanation for the stronger history of music, more so than present day's lapse in on-campus music performance, lies in the acts themselves. Maybe OutKast and other groups have the gump-

tion to take risks artistically, but not to cater to fans for a cheaper price than Alltel Pavilion.

Don Luse has worked as the director of the Union since 1992, aiding in booking performance acts as well as musical gigs. While UNC students might look down the road to Duke University and note its success with campus performances from high-profile artists, Luse said that across the country, colleges are having a harder time booking acts than in the past.

"It's definitely a business and you have to understand that," Luse said. "This is the way artists make their living, so there is a market value to their talent and that's how they earn their living. It's not out of the goodness of their heart."

That might be true now, where many artists seem to bow to the almighty dollar, but groups that treated students between the 1960s and 1980s were still able to bank on performing on campus. While Luse helped bring acts such as Phish, The Roots and String Cheese Incident to UNC, these acts still pale in comparison to Duke's reigning in of Kanye West, Ludacris and Wilco in recent years.

Clearly though, the University of old had better luck in the performance department and current faculty were here to reap the benefits of bands and artists such as Taj Mahal, the Isley Brothers and Dionne Warwick, who graced Tar Heels with concerts in various campus arenas.

While some of the acts appeared

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