

Diversions

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DIVE ONLINE ■ HAND IT TO THE BRITS ... Franz Ferdinand outdoes Death Cab at Duke ■ YOU DIE IN THE GAME ... 'Stay Alive' just shouldn't be ■ NOW WE DANCE ... 'Take the Lead' banks formula



DTH/PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY AMBRE TATE, PHOTOS BY LOGAN PRICE

Blood on the Dance Floor

TRIANGLE'S AGGRESSIVE MUSIC GENRES A MIXED BAG OF VIOLENCE, RELEASE

BY BRYAN REED, STAFF WRITER

It looks like the definition of a hole-in-the-wall bar.

There are stickers and graffiti on every wall, punctuated occasionally by a hole roughly the size of a fist. The floor is sticky with beer and sweat.

Basically it's the kind of place parents warn their kids about.

But for some, it is a home away from home. And they come in droves to see their favorite bands.

The music is fast, loud and intense. Singers are really more like screamers who jump around the stage like men possessed.

The fans seem equally crazed, fueled by the energy of the music and their adolescent rage.

Limbs are flying.

Bodies are flying.

The center of the room is filled with thrashing fans swinging fists and feet in chaotic but choreographed dance moves.

It's a typical night at most any hardcore, punk or metal show.

And to an outside observer, it might seem that a riot is about to break out. Because of its appearance and reputation, aggressive music — namely punk rock, heavy metal and hardcore — has carried the bad reputation of being violent music.

And there is fact to back it up.

The three genres have their fair share of violent incidents, which sometimes become almost legendary within the scenes.

The music presents itself as anti-commercial. Bands adopt gruesome, sometimes offensive, names and use morbid artwork for merchandise and album covers.

The lyrics are often angry, brutally honest and cathartic — sometimes gory just for the campy horror-movie fun of it.

"Any band with a harder or darker edge to it is going to use morbid artwork — it's just the style," says Tony Foresta, frontman for the Richmond, Va., thrash band Municipal Waste, which performed in Raleigh on Sunday.

The underground nature and presentation style of the music also contributes to its bad reputation.

"This is underground club music," says Travis Stimeling, a graduate assistant in the UNC Department of Music. "You have to go to the seedier side of town to see this music."

A coast-to-coast reality

Violence is a real problem for these music scenes.

Many shows have fist fights. Some even turn into full-fledged riots.

At British Invasion 2K6, an all-

day punk concert that took place in California in March, fights broke out that resulted in a stabbing. Fighting eventually escalated into a full-scale riot, with fires burning, cars overturned and mass vandalism.

There were no fatalities, but several people were injured.

In other parts of the country, organized "crews" have taken over the hardcore scene by intimidation.

A documentary titled "Boston Beatdown" was produced in 2004 to chronicle the violence of the Boston hardcore scene and the FSU crew.

FSU, which stands for "Friends Stand United," is sometimes called "F--- S--- Up" by its detractors because of its infamous presence in the scene.

"What I've heard, the FSU guys just go there to fight and they bring hammers and bats," says Zachary Tewell, a University sophomore and a fan of the music.

"It's just absurd."

Crews such as FSU do carry a presence in the scene, but they are not what most would consider an organized gang.

Justin Brown, a University freshman and vocalist for the hardcore band A Hero A Fake, says there are a lot of crews.

"If you really do piss someone off,

you will get beat up," says Brown, who has performed in Charlotte and the Triangle. "I prefer to go with a lot of friends because of that, but (the crews) don't go around beating people up for no reason."

Hitting close to home

While it's easy to dismiss aggressive behavior at shows as a big-city problem, there have been incidents in the Triangle.

One of the bands featured in "Boston Beatdown," Death Before Dishonor visited the Cat's Cradle last spring, opening for '80s New York hardcore stalwarts Agnostic Front.

The show — which drew fans from various scenes — featured blisteringly aggressive music and almost as many fights as songs.

It ended early with band members chastising the audience for misbehaving. Even so, the incident displayed the potential for violence some concerts have.

Another Cat's Cradle show headlined in November by the hardcore band Converge also erupted into chaos when fans rushed the barricade and actually fought with security guards.

"It was probably one of the strangest

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Glossary of Terms

Hardcore dancing - sometimes called "mosh fu" or "ninja dancing" because of its acrobatic style and maneuvers.

Headbanging - violent nodding of head, usually in time to music. Typical of metal music.

Mosh pit - release of aggression in communal environment that results in people colliding.

Skanking - dance that originated from ska music that involves alternately raising knees and elbows.

Straight edge - subset of people who choose to abstain from drugs, drinking, smoking and promiscuous sex.

Thrash - offshoot of heavy metal that combines the speed of punk with the heaviness of metal.

Circle pit - mosh pit that rotates in a counter-clockwise fashion, usually with people skanking.



DTH/PHOTOS BY LOGAN PRICE

Aggressive bands such as Municipal Waste (above), which performed in Raleigh on Sunday, cater to cathartic sensibilities.



Whether it's punk, thrash or metal, aggressive shows such as Sunday's often feature pits to let loose. Sometimes it's violent, but not always.



Crowd surfing, a longtime staple of rock 'n' roll, is popular at many aggressive shows. Most of the time, fans look out for those above.