



scene report

By Max. S

While the state of Delaware has never boasted a large or immediately recognizable punk and hardcore scene, it has been home to several talented bands over the years and this brief report intends to document them in print, as well as expound on some of our better scene related attractions. Given Delaware's close proximity to large cities such as Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York, it isn't hard to see great shows regularly or find like-minded people to cohort with, and this fact makes our own lack of resources, for right or wrong, far less critical.

Throughout the 1980s, Delaware featured a number of punk and hardcore bands, the most prominent being Rude Awakening, Your Worst Nightmare, the Stiffs, Infection and FVK/EMG. Local performance spots were largely relegated to basements and the odd VFW or fire hall, but several zines were in circulation and a hardcore themed radio show aired regularly on WMPH. Although none of these bands were as prolific or well known as their counterparts in places such as Washington DC and New York, and all would disband by the early 1990s, most of them toured, released music and received favorable write ups from *Maximum Rockroll's* Tim Yohannan and other leading zine writers of the time.

In 1991, Jade Tree records was founded in Wilmington by Darren Walters and Tim Owen and while not a locally-focused label, brought a new level of attention to the state by releasing music from larger East Coast bands such as Lifetime, Kid Dynamite and Jets To Brazil. Around the same time, a small but respectable local scene was developing with bands such as Jake and the Stiffs, Plow United and Boysetsfire, all of whom would go on to release several albums each and tour frequently throughout the decade.

Over the years, venues have come and gone, with most organizers citing noise complaints and police presence as their reason for closure, and the rapid gentrification of Wilmington and Newark has not helped either. An independent production company called Project Unity has been organizing all-ages shows in a variety of different genres for nine years at the Harmony Grange in Pike Creek (located at 3201 Limestone Rd, Wilmington, DE) and hold punk and hardcore shows on occasion. In the past, the hall has hosted bands such as the Soviettes, Smoke or Fire, and the Epoxies. From 2007 to 2009, an all-ages performance space known as The Spot was holding regular shows but since its closure, the main venues to see good shows from local and touring punk and hardcore bands are either at private houses or bars such as Mojo 13 in Wilmington (located at 1706 Philadelphia Pike Wilmington, DE 19809-1543: 302-798-5798) and Mojo Main in Newark (located at 270 East Main Street, Newark, DE 19711). Both venues are owned by the same people and have booked performances from the Queers, Pissed Jeans, the Ray Gradys, Star Fucking Hipsters, Morning Glory, Wombat In Combat and Mischief Brew.

The best shops to purchase music and the latest issue of *Maximum Rockroll* from are Rainbow records in Newark (located in the back of Switch Skate & Snow at 54 East Main Street: 302-368-7738) and Bert's Music and Video in Wilmington (located at 2501 Concord Pike: 302-478-3724). The longest running local zine, which ceased operations several years ago, was published

by a writer named Callie Morrisey under the name "Dotti Horror." Aside from sporadic one-offs from the local record label Madison Underground, zines are unfortunately not a thriving medium of communication here in Delaware and radio and web resources are practically non-existent.

Most of the better local bands here happen to lean toward classic, '77-styled punk rock and Ramones-esque pop with a few harder exceptions. Some of these include: the Headies, Tit Patrol, the Adelines, Ba-Durr, Hot Toddy & the Wilmington Wastoids, Tragic Johnson, Oh Shit!, Holy Dirt, Car Crusher, Turned Off, Stiff Middle Finger, Rant & Riot, and Angry Family. In 2008, Nathan Gray of Boysetsfire formed a new, more traditional punk band called the Casting Out who to date have released two albums and performed with a number of notable bands, including the Bouncing Souls and the Lawrence Arms. The band is currently on hiatus while Boysetsfire undertakes a series of reunion shows in 2011.

Politics and activism aren't common aspects of the scene here, so in the future it would be nice to see more local bands explore serious issues in their music, as well as place greater emphasis on hardcore for balance. It is also important for touring bands to make an effort in scheduling Delaware more frequently, as there are many people here willing and able to accommodate them. For more information on: Jade Tree records, Project Unity, Mojo 13, Mojo Main and all of the bands mentioned in this piece, please search them on Facebook.

Note: (photo of Rainbow Records courtesy of rainbow-online.com.)

