

MUSIC

MUSIC SNOB?

No, Daniel Morrow, is more like a music hero on the Oxford music scene

BY TOM SPEED • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW WOOD



The Oxford music scene has been on the rise for years, sustained by a thriving community of local musicians and a plethora of venues that draw national acts. But lately, the community has been bolstered further by an enthusiastic endorser.

It started with a blog. Daniel Morrow, an Oxford software designer by day and musical fanatic by night, merged his talent and his passion with his blog, The Oxford Music Snob. The goal was to provide a comprehensive concert calendar. Five years later, that kernel has expanded into a media maelstrom that includes a well-respected video series, a radio show, a music festival and soon, a syndicated television show that will air on public broadcasting channels throughout the south. Through each of these endeavors, Morrow loudly champions the local music scene in Oxford.

It happened organically. Through his blog, he found that local bands didn't have quality videos available online. So in 2007, he founded Music In The Hall, a unique music performance/video series that takes place in the hallway of his Oxford Square office. Once a month or so the hallways are cleared and lined with folding chairs. Video cameras are brought in and two or three bands perform for a couple of hours. It's an invitation-only event, as the goal is to produce quality video footage as much as host a concert. The videos are available to members on DVD and online. Membership packages range from just a few dollars per month to larger contributions that designate "sustaining backers."

Since MITH began, Morrow has logged footage of local acts such as the Kudzu Kings, George McConnell, Young Buffalo, Rocket 88, Jimbo Mathus, Shannon McNally and others. Patterson Hood of the Drive-By Truckers recorded a special edition of MITH at Oxford's Bottletree Bakery.

But that's not all Morrow has up his sleeves. Through his blog and Music In The Hall, Morrow developed relationships with local musicians that helped him organize the Oxford Music Festival. Now in its fourth year, the goal of the festival is specifically to highlight local musicians. "Other festivals bring in talent from other places," Morrow says. "But we'll always try to make the Oxford Music Festival for Oxford bands." This year, the festival will collaborate with the Oxford Film Festival,

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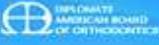
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promoting music events during the evenings after the daytime film screenings and hosting music-related discussion panels.

Morrow's skills have also landed him in a crucial role booking the Oxford Rhythm Revival. The annual festival benefits the The Oxford Medical Ministries Clinic, a non-profit that helps provide health insurance for the working uninsured.

Lately, Morrow has also taken over the Local Mail radio show on Bullseye 95.5 in Oxford. In that show, like on his blog and elsewhere, he highlights up-and-coming music in the area and plays selections by those bands. He'll soon add a video companion series so listeners can log on to get a taste of that week's offerings.

And most recently, the City of Oxford approved a grant for "Oxford Sessions," a television show that features musicians performing live in a studio. "Oxford Sessions" was conceived by former MPB Executive Director Marie Antoon, who is an Oxford resident. The show employs Morrow as its producer. Between performances, Morrow conducts brief interviews of the musicians for the show. A half dozen outlets are already on board for the show, which is set to debut in the fall.

In addition to all of that, Morrow helps spread the word via social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Regardless of the medium, Morrow says it is all about delivering good content. "Eventually you can get it out there in a million different ways," he says. "Video, audio, so many ways. But it all starts with the content."

Through these many avenues, Morrow has gone far beyond being merely a music snob and on to being an impresario in his own right. DU