



# SATYRICON

A HISTORY OF  
PORTLAND'S COUNTERCULTURE



'Satyricon' dives deep into the counterculture of Portland's creative underbelly during the 1980's and 90's by taking a closer look at the old Satyricon nightclub, once located at 125 NW 6th Ave in the Old Town neighborhood. The 'Satyricon' features the Music, People, and Stories of Satyricon, including Quotes from the those who were there. Travel through the pages of this colorful (in many ways) and read about the people and performances of Portland's punk and grunge past.

# SATYRICON

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A HISTORY OF PORTLAND COUNTERCULTURE



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PORTLAND, OR USA

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**DEDICATED  
TO THE WILD,  
THE REBELS  
AND THE FREAKS  
WHO MADE  
PORTLAND WEIRD**

**I N T R O D U C T I O N**

In 1983, George Touhoullotis, a former taxi driver who acquired Marlena's Tavern at 125 N.W. Sixth Avenue in Old Town Portland and turned it into a nightclub, naming it Satyricon after the 1969 Federico Fellini film of the same name. Back in the day, the Old Town / Chinatown neighborhood had a seedy and dangerous reputation, characterized as a real shithole of a neighborhood with open drug dealing and knife/gun fights.

Many notable shows, incidents and events transpired at Satyricon in the 1980's-90's including Dave Grohl playing his first show with his post-Nirvana outfit Foo Fighters, Kurt and Courtney's first meeting, Courtney Taylor of the Dandy Warhols' first gig ever at the age of fourteen, and the site of a police riot.

\* CBGB was a New York City music club that launched careers of many legendary bands, including the Ramones, Joan Jett, the Misfits, Patti Smith, the Cramps, Blondie, and the Talking Heads A Brief History of Satyricon

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reopened as an all-ages venue in 2006. It officially closed in November 2010, and the building in which it was located was demolished in July 2011. The club was the subject of a 2013 documentary titled Satyricon: Madness and Glory. Satyricon was the longest-running punk venue in the western United States, and has been referred to by some journalists and historians as the "CBGB of the West Coast."<sup>1</sup>

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A Brief History of Satyricon

SATYRICON WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT CLUB ON THE WEST  
COAST, FROM THE LATE 80S THROUGH THE MID 90S  
... (TRES SHANNON)

IN THE  
BEGINNING

ART BY  
TRICIA HIPPS



ROMANCES  
STARTED  
ON THE FLOOR OF  
PORTLAND'S  
SCUZZIEST PUNK  
CLUB

It was love at first fight. At least, that's what the legend says. And Courtney Love.

**But it does make a certain, cosmic sense that one of rock's most doomed romances would start on the floor of Portland's scuzziest punk club—Satyricon, the mythologized Old Town rats' nest that was demolished in 2011.**

No one at Satyricon who saw the two tangled bodies grappling in front of the jukebox could've known what they were witnessing. At the time, the names Kurt and Courtney didn't mean much individually, and certainly nothing together. Within a few years, they'd be mononymously

fused, eternally knotted by tragedy and conspiracy theories. But in 1990—or '88 or '89, depending on who's talking—all it looked like was a dude from some Seattle band wrestling with that chick who used to dance at Mary's Club.

The specifics change every time it's retold, but the most frequently repeated version of the story, captured in the 2001 Kurt Cobain biography *Heavier Than Heaven*, places the date as Jan. 12, 1990.

**Six months after the release of their debut album, Nirvana was in town with their buddies the Melvins. Love, who was not yet in a band but was well-known**

**in the Portland scene, came with a friend to see the local opening act. She didn't much care for Nirvana, but she liked their frontman. When he walked by her booth after the show, she tried getting his attention with a sick burn—she said he looked like the singer of Soul Asylum.**

Cobain's response was to grab her and, tapping his experience as a high school wrestler, playfully pin her to the beer-soaked floor. He let her up and handed her a sticker as a consolation prize, and she left.

**And so began, in earnest, the courtship of the defining couple of the '90s.**

Given that the details are sourced from the most

unreliable of narrators—a dead man and Courtney Love—it's hard to parse truth from false memories. Love has admitted to fudging the facts over the years, changing the names of the bands on the bill that night and the nature of the comment that sparked their tussle, and even the year it happened. Other biographies, including Michael Azerrad's *Come As You Are*, published when Cobain was still alive, say that while the two first locked eyes at Satyricon, the flirtatious wrestling match happened later, backstage in LA.

Finding a reliable eyewitness, 30 years on, is almost impossible. One person who was definitely there that night, though, was Melvins drummer Dale Crover. And for whatever it's worth, he says the ballad of Kurt and Courtney didn't start in Portland at all.

"We were pretty close to all that stuff," Crover says, "and the people who write books and do documentaries never really talk to us, or don't believe us."

And why should we believe him?

"I was one of the only people there who was sober."

MATTHEW SINGER.



Still we were so close to the Northwest we wanted to go up there. There was this kind of funny big blond dude who had been hanging around us. We knew he was from Oregon. His name was Jackson Lee Haring which is a funny name for a Croatian. The only clue that he wasn't southern gentry was his big blond 'fro. He looked like he was from some lost tribe of Arab surfers. I remember asking Jackson if he knew of any venues in Portland or Eugene Oregon we could play. Jackson replied: "As a matter of fact I have a company that books tours in the Northwest. We were very fortunate to have been picked up by Venture Bookings agency. Their roster in the mid 80's reads as a who's who of influential artists of the late 80's and 90's. We were curious as to why we didn't go up to Portland and Seattle. I remember our agent saying something to the effect that it's just so far and the clubs are kind of shitty. Which in true at time. The only bands that regularly ventured up that way were hardcore punk bands or the old guard metal bands. BTW this goes a long way to explaining the development of Grunge.

I brushed the ash from his sweater. "You've never done this before" he looked at me blankly. "You've never booked a tour before" "Nope" He then begins to laugh. "You should be our manager".

I've been saving this one for Today since we Cracker/Theatre in Portland  
 Camper Van Beethoven are playing tomorrow at Aladdin  
 In April of 1986 Camper Van Beethoven had just returned from their first proper national tour. We started in the Southwest and made a loop around the country, through Texas, straight up to Minneapolis, across the northern Midwest to the northeast, down through the south and back to Santa Cruz. Conspicuously absent were any shows in the Northwest.

**H a i r s p r a y M e e t s  
 S a t y r i c o n —  
 T h e M u s i c a l**

By  
 D a v i d  
 L o w e r y

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Why does this post start with a picture of a can of Aqua Net?

About 6 weeks later we were playing a show in Corvallis Or. Our first Northwest tour. Jackson had come along on the trip. We were standing by our old 1978 Dodge Tradesman homemade conversion van. It was one of those rainy gray spring days in the Willamette valley. He had on a big piller green sweater. He was smoking a big fatty and some of the ash was burning in the pills of his sweater. He seemed oblivious to the fact it was raining. He

Well Aqua net is very useful if you want to set the following things briefly on fire while on stage: The drummers Cymbals, Victor Krummenacher's boot, the mic stand or a telecaster knockoff. You would spray a thin coat on your guitar and then you would put a match to it and you get a nice cool flame that would last 15 or 20 second It was important to do this while there was some crazy guitar solo, freak out or noise section in a song.

So that night at the Satyricon we were playing No More Bullshit, and in the crash and burn guitar stops. I was down on the floor spraying my guitar with Aqua Net. When

- 5 NO MORE BULLSHIT.
- No more bullshit
- No more bullshit
- No more MTV
- No more rock stars
- No more bullshit
- No more bullshit

3 was also oblivious to the fact that his sweater was on fire. I brushed the ash from his sweater. "You've never done this before" he looked at me blankly. "You've never booked a tour before" "Nope" He then begins to laugh. "You should be our manager".

4 I went for my lighter I dropped the can of Aqua Net which rolled towards the front of the stage. As I was coaxing the blue flame upward on my guitar A punker chick picked up the can of hairspray and started spinning in a slow circle spraying a cloud of hairspray onto everyone around her. I was of course oblivious of this until the 6 foot ball of hairspray drifted downward and intersected with the blue flame on my guitar. The resulting fireball burned off my eyelashes, most of my eyebrows and the hair on my arms. There were some cheers and a smattering of applause from the small crowd as if this was part of the show. No more bullshit. No more MTV. Yeah right. The next year we were on MTV an signed to Virgin Records. What a trip.

The bathroom at the Satyricon was an exact replica of the bathroom at CSGS.





# 1

**1 Like most significant moments in any local music scene—the grand occurrences** of life-changing music that changed everything—they happen on someone else’s watch. You might be basking in the glow of our current music scene (see Music Lead pg. 25), but that means you probably missed the La Luna days. And if you were there for those, you probably missed grunge. But if you experienced grunge, you surely missed the inspiring early days of punk. You can’t win. But we all have our own time, and when archiving an era, or a year—say, 1988—in a music scene as vast and expansive as Portland’s, let’s just assume you weren’t there. Because, lord knows, I wasn’t.

**2 So in order to capture the direction, style, and talent of Portland music circa 1988,** we talked to a wide array of current/former players in Portland’s music community. Our goal was not to summarize everything—there is no way we could do that given space limitations, or the generally hazy memory of the majority of our interview subjects—but instead we want to show that Portland music 20 years back was a lot smaller affair than it is today, yet no less inspiring.

**3 In 1988 MTV didn’t come calling for scene reports,** national bands didn’t pull up stakes and relocate here, and if there was going to be a Pacific Northwest musical explosion, it was destined to happen a few hours north in Seattle. Instead Portland was a vibrant little pocket of a music community, one that had fewer willing participants than the Emerald City, but still a deep commitment towards innovation throughout.

**4 In 1988, the highlight of this came with the Mayor’s Ball Too, a massive night of forward-thinking local music held in response to the more commercial leanings of incumbent Bud Clark’s Mayor’s Ball.** Booked by Dave Clingan (formerly of Rozzcocks Records and current owner of Crossroads Music) and held in the convention hall at the Memorial Coliseum, the event featured a local music murderer’s row of talent—Poison Idea, Smeigma, Hell Cows, Untouchable Krew (later know as U Krew), Nepal in Beach, Dharmma Burns, the Obituaries, Dead Moon, and tons more.

# 9

# 8

**5 “The powers that be of the Mayor’s Ball were shocked and appalled when 1,200 kids showed up to see this,”** says Mike King, longtime poster artist and former drummer for Hell Cows. “It was a big success and the following year a bunch of those bands were integrated into the regular ball, and we were asked to play. But we were convinced that they were going to pull the plug on us, so basically we just played 17 songs in a row, without any stops in between.” The success of the Mayor’s Ball Too proved that this once quaint underground music scene wasn’t going away anytime soon.

**6 Another landmark of 1988 in Portland music was the Northwest Hardcore** (and More) cassette compilation. Produced by Resist’s Ward Young, the compilation was heavy on Portland bands (the Obituaries, Wehrmacht, Final Warning, and more) but also noteworthy for featuring early material from the Melvins and Mr. Bungle. Mark Landers, who released the tape (“dubbed one at a time”) on his Media Blitz label (and who, also in 1988, hosted a cable access-esque program entitled “Who’s Who” that featured a hilarious interview with the bratty boys in Sweaty Nipples), explains the music scene 20 years back: “Kids were spoiled in the ‘90s, but back then, and now, they have something to actually rebel against.”

**7 In this pre-La Luna era (it was still the Pine Street Theater back then, run by Chris Monlux and Mike Quinn, currently of Monquul Presents),** the pulse of the Portland scene was generated by Satyricon. In the same spot as its current location—just a whole lot grittier—the club had just hit its stride by 1988 (it opened in 1984) and was fast becoming a beacon for the finest underground music and culture from Portland, and beyond.

**8 And while “beautiful” might be a debatable way to describe the questionable neighborhood at the time, or the club’s downright notorious bathrooms,** Touhouliotis is correct in summing up Portland’s music environment 20 years ago when he says “it had a lot of energy, a lot of power.”

**9 According to longtime owner George Touhouliotis (who closed the space in 2003, only for it to return a few years later under new ownership),** “[By 1988] We had matured, so to speak. The club took its own direction; it became a rock and roll club, a specific type of rock and roll with experimental, pre-grunge, and alternative music. It was kind of beautiful.”

# 8

## The Year in Portland Music

Odds are, you weren’t there.

By Ezra Ace Caraeff

I PLAYED SATYRICON THE WEEK IT OPENED. MY DAD DROVE US DOWN IN OUR VW BUS. WE LOADED IN THROUGH THE BACK DOOR, AND HE POINTED OUT THE NEEDLES: "DON'T STEP ON THOSE, KIDS, AND WATCH OUT FOR PIDDLE AND POO, IT'S JUST AS BAD." THAT WAS BEFORE AIDS. I WAS 14.

... [COURTNEY TAYLOR, THE DANDY VARHOLS]



# DEAD MOON LIVE AT SATYRICON



When Voodoo Doughnut Recordings launched in 2013, it specialized in limited-edition, doughnut-related seven inches. After releasing a year's worth of 45s that "enhance global doughnut awareness," 2015 marks a new era for the fried dough purveyors with the release of *Tales From The Grease Trap Volume 1: Dead Moon Live at Satyricon*.

Now specializing in remastered live recordings from Portland's legendary '90s," says label head Jay Rubin, Voodoo Doughnut Recordings is offering a taste of its first full-length album in the form of nine minutes of fiery punk rock from local legends Dead Moon.

Live from the defunct and demolished rock club Satyricon, the early '90s recording features the "husband-and-wife team of Fred and Toody Cole on guitar and bass, respectively, and Andrew Loomis on drums," Rubin says, and "the recording, from a single performance at Portland's revered Satyricon on April 16, 1993, captures Dead Moon at the peak of their bone-crunching powers. The audio, originally captured on an eight-channel analog cassette tape, was mixed and mastered in late 2014 by New York punk and hardcore producer Don Fury. The result is a fully functional time machine back to the most gritty and dangerous-sounding days of Portland punk rock."

Almost 22 years to the date, Dead Moon Live at Satyricon is due out on Record Store Day—Saturday, April 18—and is the first release from the label's "extensive archive of live recordings from Portland's heady early '90s," Rubin says, a time when Northwest icons like Nirvana and the Melvins, The Dandy Warhols and Everclear, The Wipers and Polson Idea (and even Dave Grohl's first Foo Fighters show following Kurt Cobain's suicide) graced the stage of a dingy, sweaty, hole-in-the-wall punk venue like Satyricon, which fit a mere 260 people.

Imagine how delicious it'll be on a doughnut. While you can scoot down to many indie record stores on RSD (as well as any Voodoo location) to score this live recording, Fred and Toody Cole will be performing live at Music Millennium at 8pm. That same day, "Voodoo Doughnut will also begin offering a Dead Moon doughnut featuring the band's infamous white-on-black (read: vanilla on chocolate) logo," Rubin reveals. Plus, he says, "Fans can also pre-order the release beginning on March 17 at VDR's online store."

"Although nothing is confirmed at this time," Rubin says, "future releases from the VDR early '90s archive could include recordings by bands such as Crackerbash, Hazel, the New Bad Things, Bikini Kill and—drum roll please—more Dead Moon!"

DON'T BURN THE FIRES

RUNNING AWAY. I KNEW I WAS WRONG  
I'S TRIED TO FIT IN WHERE I DIDN'T BELONG  
WEARING THEIR CLOTHES. PLAYING THEIR GAMES  
BEING A PART OF THAT URBAN DECAY  
DON'T BURN THE FIRES. I'M NEVER COMING HOME

WHEN THE MORNING SKY WAS COLD AND GRAY  
I COULD HEAR THE WHISPERS OF MY OWN MISTAKES  
THOSE WARNING EYES. THAT FINAL TOUCH  
NO ONE SEEMED TO CARE THAT MUCH  
SO DON'T BURN THE FIRES. I'M NEVER COMING HOME

AND WHEN I'D REACHED MY DESTINATION  
I THOUGHT SOMEDAY I MIGHT RETURN  
CAUSE DEEP INSIDE WAS THE NEED  
TO FEEL THE HOME FIRES BURN  
BUT A FALTERING VOICE MERELY WHISPERED  
MY NAME AS IF WE'D NEVER EXPECTED TO  
HEAR IT AGAIN. AND MY HEART GREW  
COLD TO THAT INDIFFERENT SOUND  
AS I SLOWLY LAID THE RECEIVER DOWN

# NIRVANA BOOTLEG

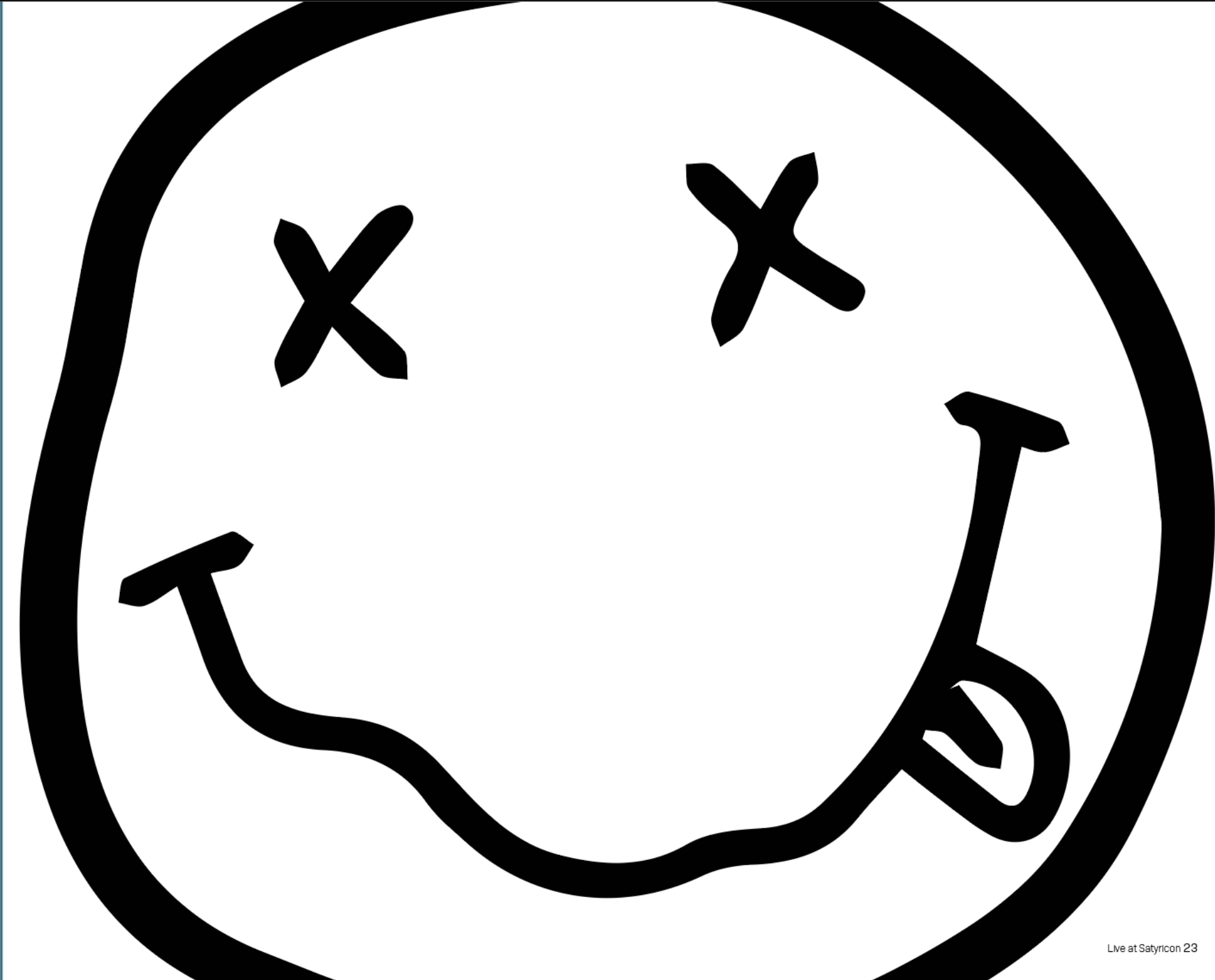
Live at Satyricon, 1/12/1990.

## SET LIST

0:00 Scoff  
4:36 Floyd The Barber  
7:01 Love Buzz  
10:36 Dive  
14:34 Polly  
17:37 Big Cheese  
21:59 Spunk Thru  
25:40 Sappy  
28:49 Breed (Immodium)  
32:33 Molly's Lips  
34:44 School  
38:43 Been A Son  
41:00 Stain  
46:25 Heartbreaker (jam)  
47:34 Negative Creep  
50:39 Blow

POSTERART BY

DALE MOHRER



SATYRICON WAS NOT JUST ABOUT MUSIC, BUT IT WAS POETRY, MUSIC, THEATER, WRITING AND ART. "A FREE STAGE FOR ALL" IS WHAT GEORGE CALLED IT - TO WHICH ANYONE WITH ENERGY AND CREATIVITY COULD CONTRIBUTE.  
... ERIKA MEYER

**POSTER ART  
& MEMORABILIA**

LIVE MUSIC / PARTY / BAR  
**SATYRICON**  
125 NW 6TH (603) 243-2380  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97209



**THE TAD**  
15 YEARS

**RAWHEAD REX**  
5 MAR. 11  
THURS. 10 PM

**NAKED RAYGUN**  
EMERSON  
ENABLER  
809  
8999



**Wolf Gang**



**SHORT DOGS**  
GOV  
BAD LANDS THE FOGS

**JAN 6 FRI**  
THE WET SCENE

**Mud Honey**  
NIRVANA  
**SATYRICON**

**VALDINE**  
**B BERS**  
**AWHAMMER**  
**ERBALL**



Satyricon July  
\$6  
125 NW 6th

**WAYS**  
ABUSE  
NEIL'S SCHOOL OF  
Befriending Beings  
and Queer April 2nd  
SATYRICON 125 NW 6TH



**BOYS**  
**DUIO**  
**IDGET**  
**SATYRICON**



**SPARKLEMORSE**  
**VARNALINE**  
**PETTING ZOO**  
advance tickets @ OZONE  
**tuesday march**  
**SATYRICON**

**WEHREMACHT**  
THE RETURN OF  
**GRUD**  
IS AT THE DOOR  
ALL AGES  
SPECIAL GUESTS  
**SUN. SEPT. 4**

**CIRCLE JERK**  
**SATYRICON**

**NECROS**  
Poison Idea  
ADRENALIN (D)

**HELL COW**  
CITY BLOOD

**ADRENALIN (D)**  
Poison Idea



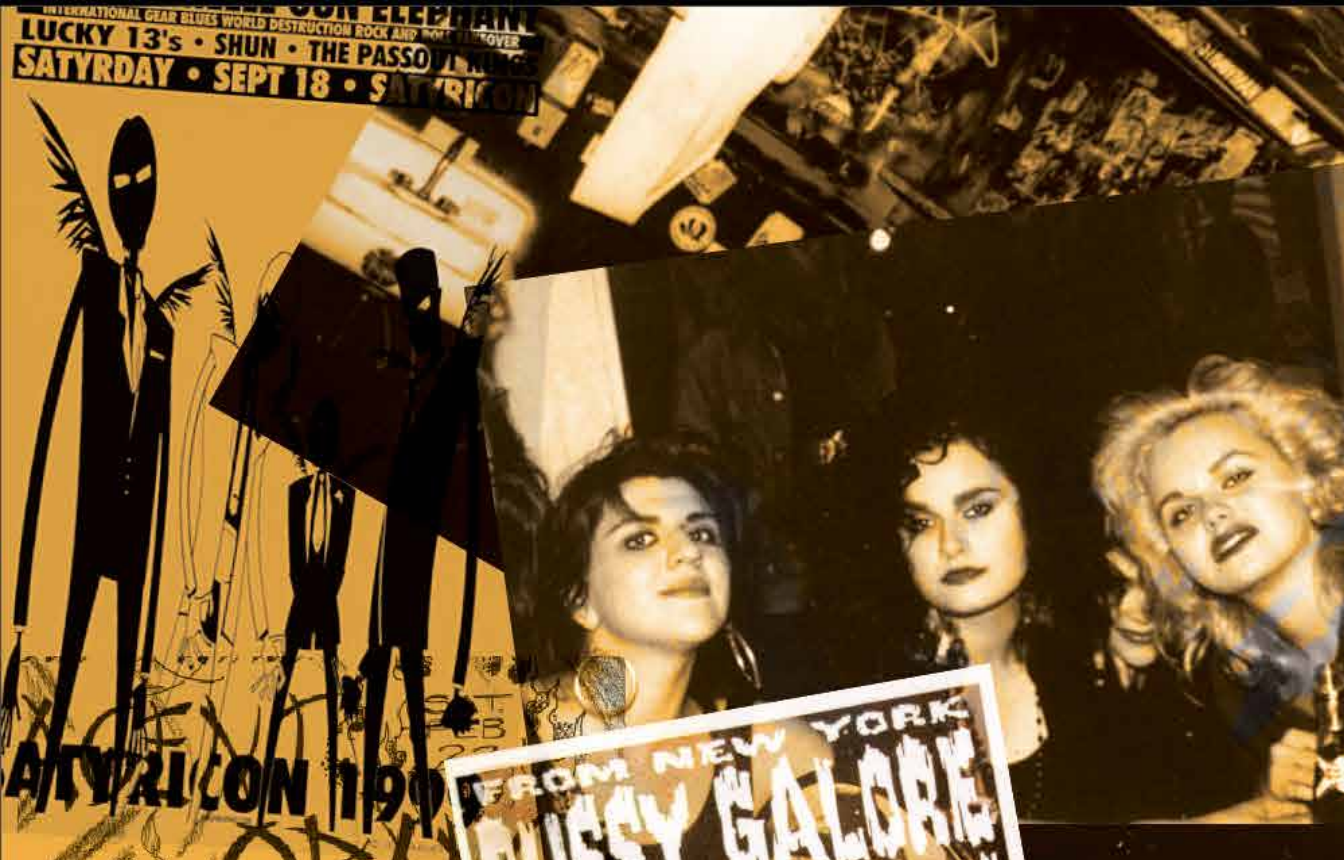
**NIRVANA**  
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**SATYRICON**



**die kreuzen**

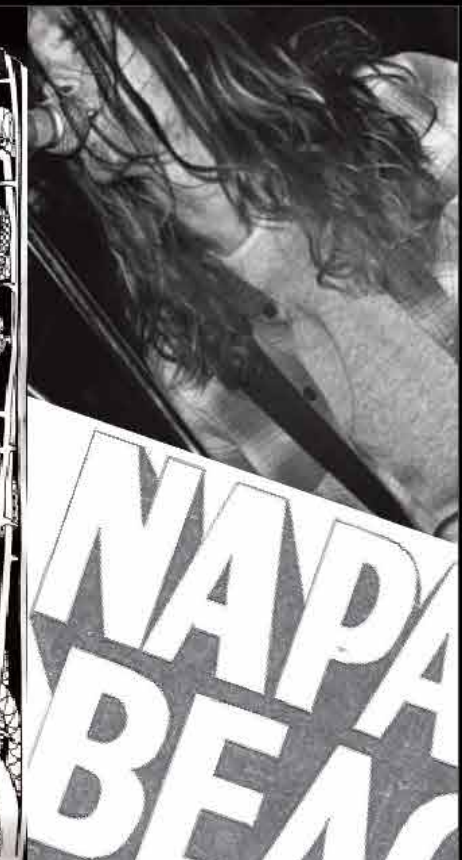


**18**  
**11**  
**11**  
**11**



maximo PRODUCTIONS

**NIRVANA**  
**HITTING BIRTH**  
**CAUSTIC SODA**  
**THRILL HAMMER**  
**ROGER NUSIC**  
FREE CHAMPAGNE  
**NEW YEARS EVE**  
**SATYRICON**



**SATYRICON 1991**  
FROM NEW YORK  
**RUSSY GALORE**  
**NAPALM BEACH**  
**HELL COWS**

*The Gloryholes*  
*Stitch & the Rape & the Specter*

**SATYRICON**  
FRI. JULY 21



**NAPALM BEACH**

BE THERE OR BE REMEMBERED  
AND HAVE YOUR  
WARDS BODY TANK  
TRUCK HERE AND  
THREE IN MY  
APARTMENT OR  
POSSIBLY BAKED.

**CRASH**  
**LANDING**  
**BLUDGEON**

**SATYRICON**  
125 S.W. 6  
**FRIDAY**  
**AUG. 16**

**WHITE**

DEPRIME  
DREAMS  
SEAN/BEULT  
BAST

New York

TOM  
FIVE  
GUITAR

ROE  
DIRT

**ZOMBIE**

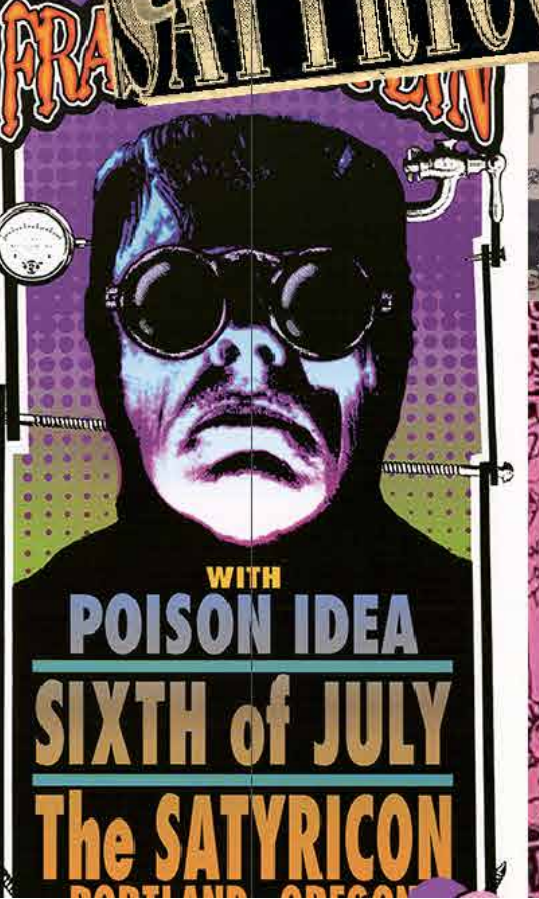
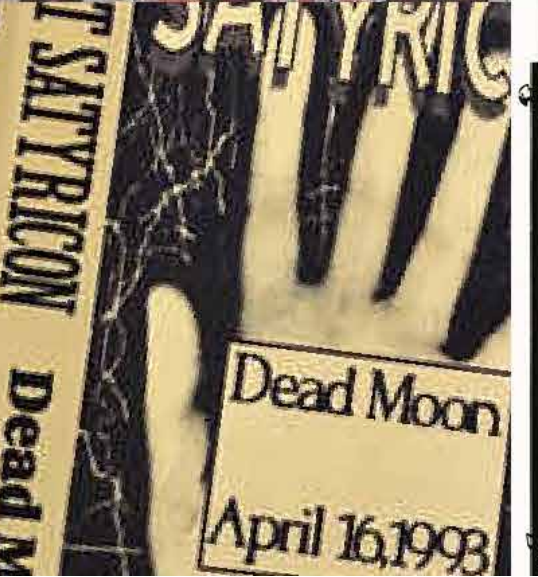
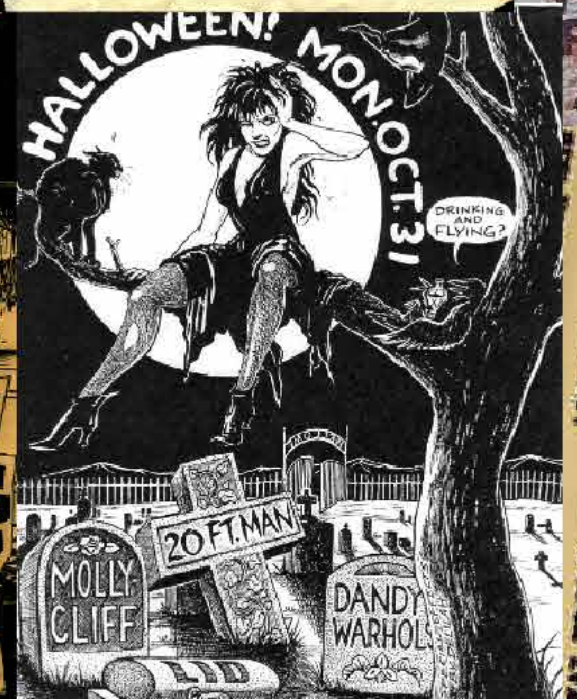
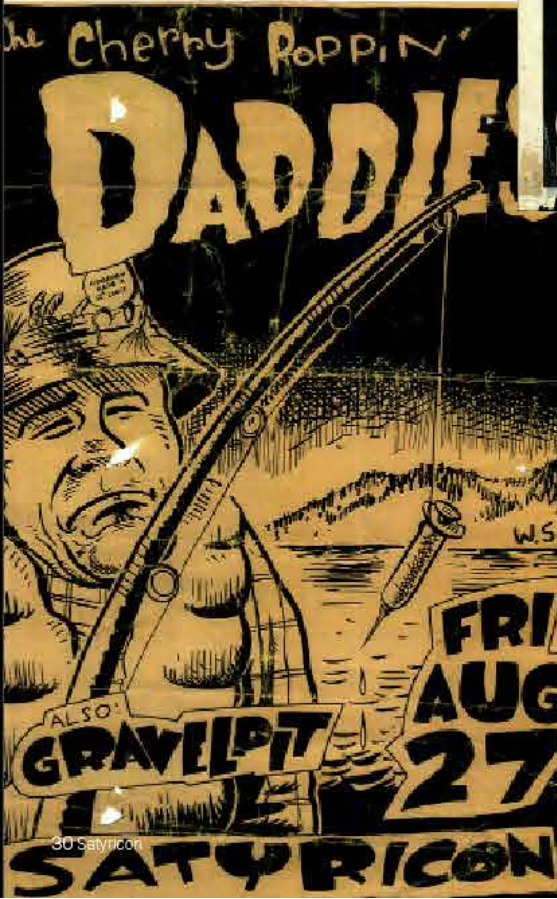
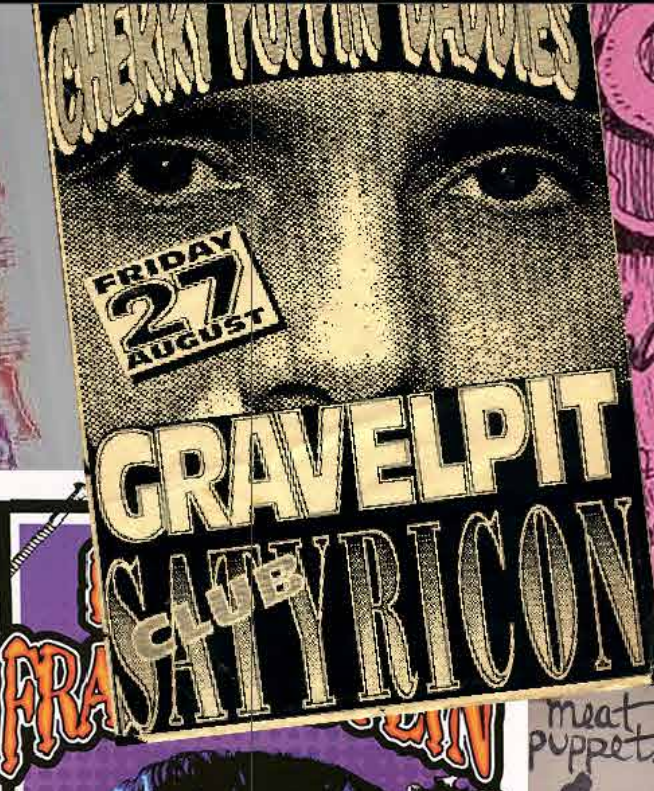
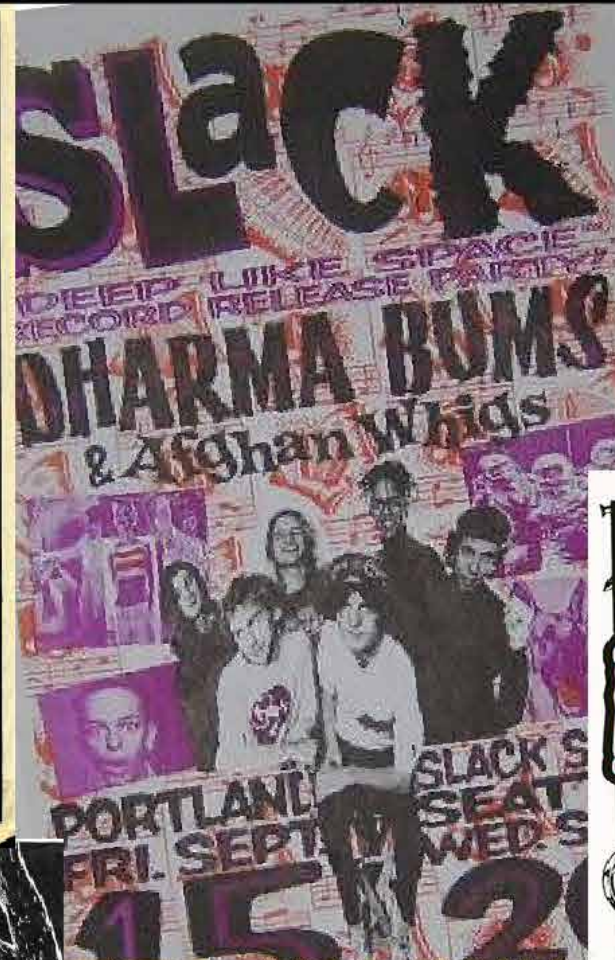
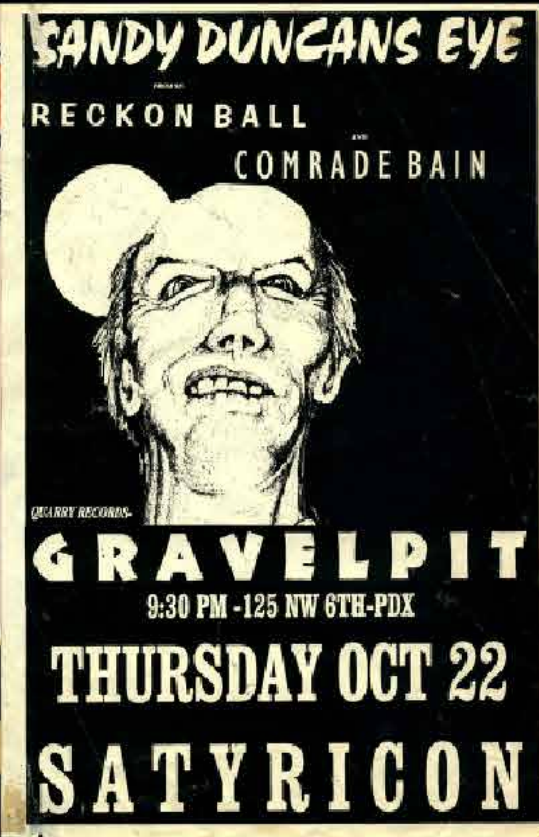
Seattle **MUD HONEY**

WMark Arm of Green River

fe. SF Witnesses  
**FRI MAY 20**  
**SATYRICON**

**SATYRICON**







SATYRICON WAS NOT JUST ABOUT MUSIC, BUT IT WAS  
POETRY, MUSIC, THEATER, WRITING AND ART. "A  
FREE STAGE FOR ALL" IS WHAT GEORGE CALLED IT  
- TO WHICH ANYONE WITH ENERGY AND CREATIVITY  
COULD CONTRIBUTE.... [ERIKA MEYER]

THE  
END of an ERA

Satiri Gone?\*

Satyricon 125 NW 6th Ave

It's just a building. In a dark, windowless cavern, it's got just the kind of

lighting environment that flatters pockmarks and heavy makeup. The bath-

rooms are crusted in graffiti and never seem to have enough privacy or

toilet paper. Satyricon has earned its stature by withstanding the throttle

of tough love; a brawling history that's grown into the very walls. But after

**“Physically, the entity of the club is going to be ‘as is,” says** 20 years of operation, its founder, George Touhouliotis, is relinquishing his

**Touhouliotis. “Obviously they have an idea about the place as** ownership, marking the close of a rich era in the Portland music scene.

**for what that will be, we're just going to have to wait and see.”**

The rumor mill has it that the club is being purchased by the Tonic

**Although a new ownership will inevitably mean changes, it's impos-** Lounge, although this is not technically true. Those involved in nego-

**sible to determine how pervasive the effects of the transition will feel to** tiating the sale are understandably reluctant to discuss anything until

**the average patron. But as far as posterity goes, the exit of its originator** the sale is final, and asked to have their names omitted. However, it

**means that, at least in spirit, Satyricon has concluded its first wave--two** will most likely remain a club space, probably even keeping the name.

**decades of influence. This coming weekend boasts a two-day farewell**

**bash, providing the opportunity to reminisce over the club's history and**

**its colorful contributions to the annals of the Northwest music scene.**

**Touhouliotis opened Satyricon in 1983, when the strip**

**of 6th Avenue just north of Burnside was a skid row, not**

**the bustling route for public transportation that it is today.**

*“Before the mall, there was a lot of Mexican heroin dealing activity*

*outside—it was a different scene altogether,”* Touhouliotis recalls. In these

early days, the scene inside the club reflected the rawness of the neigh-

borhood. *“Lots of fights, lots of people O.D.ing At one point the cops would*

*show up literally every night for about three months.”* Despite the tumultu-

ousness of the times, Touhouliotis remembers the club's earliest days most

fondly. *“The farther back I go into the history of the place, the better it gets*

*in my mind, because of the freshness of the time, and the energy I had.”* **Now-legendary bands such as Mudhoney and Nirvana**

**played the Satyricon. Courtney Love was a regular fixture,** Some of the deepest marks Satyricon made in the pop cultural conscious-

**until she was eventually 86ed for causing constant drama.** ness occurred as a result of having hosted bands that went on to influence

**“I liked her, personally,”** Touhouliotis grants. *“I thought she was basi-*

*cally very nice. I can't remember, they say she might have met Kurt Cobain*

*of the most recognizable names of 20th Century rock music scratched out*

*here--I guess she did. I didn't notice it. I mean, why would I notice that?”*

**In 1990, Satyricon made headlines in the local news as having experienced**

**a “riot,” which resulted in the club's license being temporarily confiscated**

**and landing its employees in jail. As Touhouliotis remembers, labeling it as**

**a riot was something of an exaggeration. The incident resulted from a minor**

**physical altercation Touhouliotis had when a plainclothes police officer inter-**

**rupted him while he was taking a leak in the parking lot, then escalated into**

**a police raid and multiple arrests. “But it certainly wasn't a riot,” he insists.**

Claiming to be “*the longest running rock and roll club on the West Coast*,” Satyricon is one of the landmarks that first put Portland on the national map of popular music. Since its inception, the club has been a constant bastion of the local punk scene, a tradition that carries on into the present. Legions of acts, from Dead Moon to Poison Idea to the Wipers, spring to mind as figures haunting the club’s rowdy history.

The local author Walt Curtis included Satyricon in his novel, *Mala Noche*, which chronicled his sexual adventures with Latino boys on the sleazy Portland streets of yore. Later made into a Gus Van Sant film, the book

further ensconced the club within Portland’s history. The recent, schlocky

chick-rock flick, *Down & Out With The Dolls*, again memorialized Satyricon on film, using it as one of the primary locations for its grungy saga.

well as its collaborations with organizations like Artists for a Hate Free America.

Over the years, Satyricon has become known among locals for its late shows and stiff drinks, marking many a Portland memory with inspiring, sweaty performances and satisfying hangovers. Still, the city and the scene have grown and developed, meaning that Satyricon has had to face increased competition from the newer clubs around town. Although it remains a hefty presence within the scene, it is less of a focal point than it was in its heyday.

Likewise, Touhouliotis has grown out of the business he says used to be a reflection of his heart and soul. Remembering the energy and enthusiasm he once threw into the club, he says that remaining the owner of Satyricon would feel like he was holding it back. “*You have to hang out*,” he says, “*you have to be there, you have to like it; you have to like the music, the people. To be part of it you have to get drunk with them, you have to fight with them. You have to roll on the ground in the mud with them And I’m no longer willing to do that.*”

Regardless of whether or not the space continues on as a rock club or changes its directional tack, its initial run of rock ‘n’ roll glory has wound to a close. Anyone who ever enjoyed a momentous night within its dark walls should

seize the opportunity to tip their hat to a club that’s made a significant mark on local culture. Hopefully, the venue will remain a key landmark for generations of artists and fans to come, ushering in future waves of creative energy. But until its fate is decided over time, we can join in for what might end up as a last hurrah.

**The two-night bash on May 9th and 10th will include performances from Pornstore Janitor, Flying Dutchmen, The Dark Places, and Warriors of Genghis Khan. Both nights are free of charge, so there’s little excuse not to pop in and breathe it in before anything changes. As for Touhouliotis, when asked if he’ll be joining in the festivities, he enigmatically replies, “Possibly possibly not.” He insists that the sale of the club is not a sad event, and seems to feel comfortable that passing the torch is the most appropriate thing for him to do. “Everything is cool,” he reassures. “Life is beautiful.”**

# Notorious

NEARLY 20 YEARS OF RAUCOUS ROCK AND ROLL MADE SATYRICON FAMOUS...AND INFAMOUS



"A block north of Starry Night, on the opposite side of the street, is the city's newest club, Satyricon. A long, narrow room that widens towards the stage at the back, it was once a horse stable and, more recently, Marlina's Tavern.... Though last week was Satyricon's first week in business, it's definitely worth a visit and a close watch in the coming months."

*-Willamette Week, March 12, 1984*

**There's classroom history. And then there's history made in dark, filthy, obscure rooms, on streets solid citizens fear to tread. Satyricon--dive bar, punk club, cultural pillar, Old Town institution, thorn in the side of Authority, unrepentant rock-and-roll throwback--saw and made a lot of the second kind over nearly 20 years.**

With a long-awaited sale reportedly pending, the club shut down last week--shows canceled, booking agents out, rumors and guesses about the future of 125 NW 6th Ave. swirling in the Portland music scene. According to George Touhouliotis, whose 18-year ownership made him as much a part of Old Town as his club, keys will probably change hands by May's end.

**Somehow, the abrupt (though presumably temporary) closure only seems appropriate. Satyricon never took the gentle path. The written record of the club's existence--which can amount to no more than 1 percent of the Whole Truth--is a florid tale of excess, controversy, creative chaos. And, yes, artistic greatness.**

It wasn't just that every band worth a half-cent in the Northwest played there, though that was true: Poison Idea and Napalm Beach; Nirvana and Pearl Jam; Golden Delicious and Dharma Bums; Dead Moon and whoever; the Epoxies and Point Line Plane and the Exploding Hearts and God Himself only knows who else

**"There were plenty of great shows and crazy times," recalls Ben Munat, who once booked the club. "Naked Raygun with Soul Asylum. Mudhoney with Blood Circus. Helmet opening for Tad, all the Unsane shows, all the Jesus Lizard shows, and so many more."**

## Two decades' of headlines:

**Satyricon License Threatened By Drug Bust.**

**"RIOT" AT SATYRICON.**

**Audience Dances Naked At Satyricon.**

**Courtney Love Passes Out At Satyricon.**

**Midnight Madness.**

**Satyricon's Dirty Dozen.**

**Police Sue Six Men Over Scuffle.**

**Whose Riot Was That, Anyway?**

*And, of course, one that could have appeared following every one of those stories and more:*

**Satyricon Back In Business.**

**The Oregonian**

It's safe to say very few 200-capacity clubs exert influence this profound and sustained on the underground and pop cultures of the nation and world. From a purely Portland perspective, however, Satyricon's true significance might lie in its sheer survival.

**In 1984, there was no Pearl District, no River District, no Chinese Garden, no MAX. Instead of a sedate old folks' home, Satyricon's neighbors included a shady grocery store (later bombed) and a corner dive bar longtime Portlanders still remember with a shiver. Instead of Fellini, dolled-up rockers and living ghosts from Old Town's street scene jostled around a gyros counter oh-so-accurately named Eat or Die.**

A partial, random list of clubs Satyricon outlived might read: Starry Night, X-Ray Cafe, Key Largo, East Avenue Tavern, LaLuna, EJ's, the 13th Precinct, 17 Nautical Miles, Last Hurrah, Eli's, Rockcandy, Cafe Omega, the Scream. While the city and scene mutated around it, Satyricon sailed on--left for dead, rediscovered, reinvented, revitalized and written off all over again more times, by more generations of scenesters, than anyone could ever reckon.

**(An Oregonian article titled "What Happened to Satyricon?" said: "Drop by the bar any weekend night...and you'll find some regulars there. They still show up... but some keep asking themselves why." This article appeared on Feb. 17, 1991.)**

In perverse testament to the grotty grandeur of the club's earliest days, you can still catch veterans bitching about the 1996 renovation of the club's façade and original interior, and Fellini's advent. "That place has been for nothing but yuppies for years," declared a (possibly delusional) colleague of mine last week--a sentiment, for better or worse, only a Portlander could hold.

**In fact, Satyricon's glory and curse was that it never changed colors. The club moved from being an outpost of artistic radicalism to, too often, a bastion of old-school reaction. In recent years, booking agents came and went, and other clubs seized different little chunks of an ever-more-fragmented, complex music scene.**

Still, whether or not the evening's entertainment included anything "cutting edge," you could count on Satyricon for something memorable, maybe even epic. Any given night just might ascend to scene folklore, taking its place among the 1,001 Satyricon Tales: legends, events half-remembered and much embellished, undying rumors.

**Did Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love really wrestle in front of the jukebox the night they met? Were you there when Portland Organic Wrestling's Harvey Hardcock flogged Oregon's boxing and wrestling commissioner on stage? What's your preferred version of the "Satyricon Riot," the Keystone Kops-go-to-Attica incident of April 29, 1990, sparked by an overzealous lawman named Rocky?**

These stories weave together to form the city's secret history. So many chapters of that saga unfolded on 6th Avenue between Couch and Davis, you can't help but wonder what's coming next. An era may be over at Satyricon, but somehow it seems one of Old Town's most infamous addresses is worth a close watch in the coming months.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES CITED OR CONSULTED FOR THIS PEEDE COME FROM THE OREGONIAN AND WILLAMETTE WEEK  
FEATURING WORK FROM JOHN GOSTON, MARTY HIGLEY, FRED LEESON, RICHARD MARTIN, KEITH MERRER, PHIL  
STANKORD AND STUART TOWNSEND

# SATYRICON

## Madness And Glory

**Portland's punk palace gets immortalized on film**

In 1983, a magical shithole opened on Northwest 6th Avenue in Old Town. In the 27 years that followed, Satyricon grew into Portland's CBGB, an epicenter for freaks and art-damaged weirdos of all musical stripes, not just within the city but also for the entire West Coast. Three years after it was finally shuttered and demolished comes a new documentary, Satyricon: Madness and Glory. WW spoke to its director, Mike Lastra of the band Smegma, a Satyricon regular, about the club's legacy.

**WW: Did Portland's music and arts scene have a place like Satyricon before the club opened?**

Mike Lastra: There was the Blue Gallery and a smattering of other clubs that opened and closed, but it was certainly when [owner] George [Touhouliotis] opened that place, and the fact it was open for 27 years or something, that really made it the hub. It wasn't long ago that this was a one-horse town. It's hard to believe, the way it is now, but it was pretty bleak, so this became the watering hole, the central meeting place for cross-pollination.

**The documentary focuses on the bands that played there through the mid-'90s, but Satyricon was open until 2010. Did its capital decline as Portland got bigger?**

It actually closed [temporarily] in 2003. Part of that was twofold. One, people were getting bored of playing there. There were new venues. And plus, Satyricon wasn't home to one genre-specific style of music and activities. Later, when there were other clubs, it was like, there's this metal club over here, and unplugged over here. In the last few years, I'm not sure if it overtly changed, but it became known as a metal club. It seemed like it was never going to be the same after that first closing.

**The end of Satyricon was seen as the death knell of old Portland culture in general.**

People don't realize how screwed up it was before 1979. The only way you got into clubs to play as a band is if you were doing covers. And after the doors were open and shown it could work, Satyricon showed it could have lasting power. It grew like a tree, and the tree gave fruit to all these people to go, "Let's do our club." It served its need in its time, and now things are different. When I play downtown, it blows my mind. Like, my God, you can walk along the street and hear music pouring out of this door and that door. Back in the day, they'd roll up the street at 7 pm.

**What did you learn about Satyricon from doing this documentary?**

I didn't realize how important it was to some people. I went there, but I never smoked cigarettes or enjoyed drinking booze at all. I wasn't a clubber, per se. But as I talked to people, the way they described it was their home away from home, the clubhouse. I didn't realize it was that important to so many people, and not just a handful.



## **Contributing Writers and Magazines / Newspapers**

**Romances Started on the Floor of Portland's Scuzzlest Punk Club** By Matthew Singer - Willamette Weekly

**Hairspray Meets Satyricon — The Musical** By David Lowery [www.davidlowerymusic.com](http://www.davidlowerymusic.com)

**1988: The Year In Portland Music** by Ezra Ace Caraeff - Portland Mercury

**Dead Moon 'Live at Satyricon'** by Chris Young - Vortex Magazine

**SatyrIGone?** by Marjorie Skinner - Portland Mercury

**Notorious** By Zach Dundas - Willamette Weekly

**Satyricon: Madness And Glory** By Matthew Singer - Willamette Weekly

"Long before Portland was "Kept Weird", the mystical, magical and seedy Satyricon set the bar for what would help define Portland's proud counterculture. 'Satyricon' beautifully explores the rich history and influence that the club on an entire region."



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**"A through history of Portland's underground music and performance culture"**  
*John Smith—The Oregonian*

*"A delightful, sometimes disturbing view into what became one of the most influential music clubs in America."*

*Marjorie Skinner—Portland Mercury*