

VENUE PROFILE THE BELL HOUSE



LOCATED IN GOWANUS, Brooklyn, The Bell House was converted from an old 1920's warehouse to a two-room music and events venue in September 2008. The main space offers a 25-foot wooden arched ceiling, a 450-square-foot stage and unobstructed views from any part of the room. The performance space has been fitted with flying EAW Speakers, five monitor mixes, an Allen & Heath console and a lighting setup with a Hog 500 controller. Capacity for the main space is 350. Genres include folk, acoustic, alternative and indie pop. May performers include Vetiver and Papercuts, Crystal Stilts and Elvis Perkins.

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HANDS OFF MY MP3S NO DOWNLOAD TAX FOR NY

AN INITIATIVE to tax downloaded music was removed from the New York budget last month, keeping the state out of the stinky pile of more than 10 others that already have authority to jack up the price of your online shopping cart.

State leaders may have agreed with American Association for Independent Music (A2IM) President Rich Bengloff, who says, "given the current transformative period to digital in the music industry and the current economy, the last thing our community needs is an increase in music prices due to taxes being imposed on consumers, especially as it relates to the small business owners A2IM represents."

iTunes customers, however, will still have to face the new tiered pricing structure that did go into effect last month. Hits and selected classic tracks will now be \$1.29 instead of the standard \$.99.



FREE MUSIC EVERYWHERE, ALL DAY THE CITY COMES ALIVE

FOR ONE DAY, on June 21 – the first day of summer and the longest day of the year – New York's streets, parks, sidewalks, rooftops and cemeteries will become concert venues bursting with free music from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. in the form of Make Music New York 2009.

This year's edition will be the festival's third installment. It was conceived by Aaron Friedman, president and founder of the nonprofit group of the same name. "What we're trying to create is a holiday as much as a festival," says Friedman, who was inspired by France's Fête de la Musique, an annual music holiday which began in 1982. The French celebration has spawned offshoots worldwide, as more than 327 cities in 111 different countries held their own all-day music events June 21, 2008, including Cambridge, Mass., Miami, Dallas, San Francisco, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

MMNY's inaugural event in 2007 saw more than 560 free outdoor performances spanning the city's five boroughs – from a jazz celebration in the streets, to a tranquil folk procession in the park, to a rowdy rock set on the corner, and everything in between. Last year, a goth rock band performed in East Village's Marble Cemetery while some bands decided to play on bridges and rooftops.

Friedman, armed with a large group of volunteers, works to secure the proper permits in each of the city's 76 police precincts and establish a program of events. "It's definitely a different kind of concept," says Friedman, laughing. "It took a little while before bands were like, 'Wait? You mean we don't have to turn our press kits in?'"

Mass Appeal, a new addition to this year's festivities, will gather a huge number of musicians together to play a composition written for one instrument. According to Friedman, one such performance will feature 80 trombonists playing "Orbits," a composition written by the late composer Henry Brant that has been played only twice publicly.

Other events will mark their return from last year's lineup of performances and shows.

During the festival-cum-holiday's second annual showing, MMNY's organizers and its roster of punk bands ran into a problem: punk, when played properly, is loud, almost too loud for the city's sidewalks and streets. So naturally, 69 bands took over Governors Island, an uninhabited plot of land situated 800 yards from Manhattan near Ellis Island, and turned it into Punk Island. Bands even played on the ferry ride over and back. "They could be as loud as they wanted," Friedman says. "It was a punk paradise."

Adding to the island's atmosphere was Army Heritage Weekend, which featured a Civil War reenactment near the stage. At one point, one of the troop's drum and fife bands jumped on stage and joined in on one of the punk sets. "I guess that's the entire point of the festival," laughs Friedman. "We want to get all of these different genres of music and bands together for one day."

This year, Friedman says New Yorkers and festival goers will have a lot to look forward to, from Latin jazz block parties to grand piano concerts in the West Village, a plethora of indie rock bands in Williamsburg and Bushwick, and an Upper West Side symphony space. No matter what, if you're walking the streets of Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx or Staten Island on June 21, you're guaranteed to see any number of truly unique performances.



-Kevin Sirois
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