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Music in Syracuse: The Hidden Gem of the Snowy City

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Music in Syracuse: The Hidden Gem of the Snowy City

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at
Syracuse University

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Honors Capstone Project in Broadcast and Digital Journalism

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Abstract

This project explores the surprisingly thriving music culture in Syracuse, NY. In my years here, I have heard many students complain about the city and express that it has little to offer. My own experience contradicts that idea. I've found a thriving cultural community here, especially within the realm of live music. I was surprised to find such a thriving music scene when I had heard so many negative things about the city of Syracuse, so I decided to explore the paradox of Syracuse's reputation versus the reality. I entered into the Syracuse music scene with a camera in hand to find out how and why the community is thriving when the city itself is not.

Through a series of interviews and moments caught on camera, I found that the people behind the music scene are what keep it alive. Despite the weather and the location of the city, the people involved in the local music scene are committed to its excellence. I found three key elements that keep the music thriving: special initiatives designed to help local artists, an awards ceremony specifically recognizing talent in Syracuse, and incredible venues that allow for music to be heard. These parts come together to create an incredible music scene within an underrated and underestimated city.

Executive Summary

When you think about a city like Syracuse, you may think about the people and what they do; what are their hobbies and how do they spend their free time? Without a major metropolitan city nearby, the main activities remain in the city of Syracuse itself, but cities of this size don't always have viable cultural outlets for their citizens. What characterizes the activities of a citizen of Syracuse? What does the city of Syracuse provide to fulfill its citizens cultural needs? Focusing in on music specifically, I've delved into the musical options available for consumption in the city of Syracuse. My aim is to understand the musical culture here in terms of what is available to the average fan, what resources exist for artists, and what community exists for those who wish to be involved whether as music fans or artists.

By exploring the options for music consumption and performance in Syracuse, I hope to give some insight on the culture that exists here. Obviously Syracuse is a unique city in many ways, and music is just one of those ways. For better or worse, the music scene is one-of-a-kind. My finding is that, though Syracuse doesn't have the cache of a larger market like New York City or Atlanta, the musicians here tend to thrive regardless. In fact, their undying pride in the city of Syracuse music scene might be surprising to an outsider. My research explores that phenomenon through a visit into the history of the Syracuse music scene as well as an overview of the community that exists at present.

To take this snapshot of Syracuse's music scene, I conducted interviews with many local musicians, music fans, venue owners, educators, disc jockeys, and others involved with the development of the music scene. I also attended shows at local venues to get a first-hand understanding of the vibe of a local crowd. I also attended the Syracuse Area Music

Awards, also known as the Sammy's, because everyone who has ever been involved with local music was there. It was a celebration of the local scene and served to reinforce the idea that Syracuse's music scene is different than that of any other market. Before these events, shows, and scheduled interviews, I did my research to figure out each person's role, how they may have contributed to the local scene, and what they might know about the history and development of the scene. Each person I spoke to was able to explain some specific aspect of the local music scene, whether that be the venues available here, the history of the genres that are most popular locally, or the contribution of radio to the promotion of local artists. Another theme almost every person brought up was the singular ability of the city of Syracuse to incubate musical talent.

I spent anywhere from ten minutes to an hour with each interviewee speaking with them on camera and probing them for all they knew about the topic. I used a tripod to make sure my video was steady. I used high quality microphones pinned to the subjects' collars to ensure that I would capture clear audio even when there was a lot of background noise. I used special camera lights and internal camera settings to brighten up venues that tend to be dark and smoky so that the video would be as clear as possible. After each day of shooting, I went back to a computer lab and uploaded the footage onto an external hard drive. From the hard drive, I am able to pull the footage into a program called Adobe Premiere for editing. With all the footage loaded into the editing program, I start planning out the order of the film in a Word document. I go back and forth between the footage and the Word document to select soundbites from the interviewees and fit them into the overall script of the piece. Once I figure out what I want to use and in what order, I string together the clips in Premiere. I also select "b-roll," which is the video that you see when there isn't a person talking on camera. When selecting this b-roll, I have to be careful that

the video the viewer sees matches the sound they hear. This matching process is a time consuming part of editing because it involves making creative decisions about what to show and when, but it is one of the more enjoyable parts of editing for me.

I believe this project will be a significant representation of the thriving music culture in Syracuse. I think the city tends to be underestimated in terms of cultural viability when, in fact, the music community is thriving. There is much more history to the local scene than meets the eye, and there is an entire community of people who care deeply about it. I have met these people, heard their stories, and felt their passion. Their passion is not just for music, but also for the city of Syracuse. Their pride in this city is beyond what I would have expected, and I am willing to bet that the passion I caught on camera will also be surprising to viewers of my film. I hope that viewers of my film on music in Syracuse will gain not only an understanding of the thriving culture that exists here, but also a respect for the local musicians and their supporters who have built such a successful music scene. Anyone who enjoys music at a local venue ought to understand the overarching cultural implications of the existence of such venues. I hope my film will enlighten its viewers, from the musically ignorant to the casual music fan to the diehard music aficionado. This thriving scene deserves to be known to the wider community beyond the hundred or so people who are already intimately involved.

My film will enlighten viewers about the music scene that exists just below the surface in the community as well as the local history that brought us to this exciting point.

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Chapter 1

Concept

This chapter will discuss the process of creating this long-form, news style piece. From the planning stages, through the filming process, to post-production, I will explain the methodology of addressing the topic of music in Syracuse. Tackling such a vast subject took a lot of planning and organization. I had the idea for the piece a long time ago, as soon as I noticed the disparity between what Syracuse is like and how it is perceived, but it took longer to figure out how I could portray this dichotomy on film. It was a learning process, in which my methodology and direction was changing with each new segment of filming. At first I was taking an approach in which I discovered the music scene through various venues, but when I started to speak to different venue owners and local promoters, I realized there was more to it than that. I realized that venues alone do not and cannot sustain an entire music community. That's when I figured out just how many people are constantly working behind the scenes to keep the music alive in Syracuse. In speaking with members of the local music scene, I discovered that the music culture thrives not only because of incredible venues that are willing to support local talent, but also because of the amazing music foundation that exists here. Once I saw the various initiatives that exist to support local music, I knew I had to include those in my piece. With the concept figured out, I was able to begin shooting in stages. After that was complete, I began the long editing and post-production process. In the following sections, I will describe all of the steps that led to the final production. I will also explain technical terms as they relate to filming and editing.

Approach

I approached this project like I would any other assignment for my Broadcast and Digital Journalism major. First, I found my story. With my idea in mind, I set about finding the right people to interview and the right aspects of the music scene to capture on film. Although it appears last in the film, the first segment I shot was the one at the Westcott Theater. Initially, I thought I would go through different venues as the crux of my film, but after filming at the Westcott, I had other ideas in mind. I saw just how much overlap exists in the music community. For example, the owner of that venue also produces shows for other local venues. Around the same time, I started to learn more about the Sammy Awards and the other programming that exists for musicians. As I began to discover these other aspects of the music community, I expanded my idea of what I would capture in my piece. After interviewing Dan and the general manager of the Westcott, I filmed the show that night and also came back another night for another show.

The next major event that I filmed was the Sammy's. First I attended the Hall of Fame induction ceremony at Dinosaur Bar-B-Que. I gained access through a friend of mine, Kristen O'Leary. I met Kristen in Loud and Clear, an organization that we are both a part of at Syracuse University. It's no coincidence that our shared club is a film and digital production company that focuses on music related content. When I shared with Kristen my plans for my Capstone, she was able to open a whole new set of doors for me. She lives locally, and her mother is heavily involved with the local music scene. She was able to give me access to the Sammy's, including both the Hall of Fame induction event and the actual awards ceremony. Once I was in the door at each of these events, I had access to every person that I could have hoped to interview. I talked to

anyone and everyone to gain as much information as I could about the local music scene. I was prepared with detailed questions, and I did my best to study up on who I would be talking to. I got more interviews over the course of a few days than I ever would have been able to if I was setting them all up individually.

Finally, I filmed the event at Funk ‘n Waffles to represent the many similar initiatives that take place in Syracuse. I read about this one online and contacted the event coordinators to make sure that I could attend and film the whole thing. I was recognized by several people there as the girl who was also filming the Sammy’s, which just goes to show that the people involved in music in Syracuse truly care about it- enough to show up at a relatively small event on a Thursday night.

With these days of filming under my belt, I set about the process of pulling my story out of the hours of footage. I sat and watched every single interview, all of the recorded performances, and all of the excess shots that I might need later during editing. I dug through each and every word said on camera to carve out the story that I wanted to tell about Syracuse. Pulling the best sound from the best interviewees, I lined each soundbite up into my editing software. I also transcribed them into my Word document. From there, I strung the bites together with my own voice, using words that I felt gave context and were meaningful. I always kept in mind that my interviewees were telling the story, not me. I was just there to help the story make sense. I put together the moving parts to create a cohesive image of music in Syracuse.

Technical Process & Terms

I rented all my equipment to shoot this piece from the Newhouse Cage. I used Sony NX5 HD cameras to shoot this film. I also used a tripod to make sure everything was steady and straight. I used several different microphones depending on the type of interview I was doing. I used wireless microphones that clip to the interviewees' collar whenever I had a formal sit-down interviews. For "man on the street" style interviews, I used a stick microphone, which is the kind that a reporter holds in their hand and can place in front of the mouth of the person they are interviewing. For natural sound or sound that was captured in a non-interview setting, I used the camera's built in microphone.

I recorded everything onto SD cards, which are small discs that you insert into the camera. After each day of shooting, I returned the camera to the Cage and brought back the disc to a lab in Newhouse. To read the footage from the disc, I had to rent a card reader from the Newhouse edit suites. Then, I inserted the disc into the card reader and inserted the card reader into a computer through a USB port. I also inserted my own hard drive into another USB port of the same computer. Then I dragged all the footage from the SD card to my own hard drive.

After my first day of shooting, I started a "project" in Adobe Premiere. Premiere is the video editing software that I used to create my piece. Starting the project involves setting up scratch disks and other settings which will basically ensure that the content is properly stored throughout the time that you use the file. After I started the project, I imported all of my first day's footage. For all subsequent shooting dates, I was able to import the new footage into the already started project. That way, I had all the footage from all the days of shooting at my

disposal within one Adobe Premiere file. By the time I was done shooting, there were hundreds of video clips in that project.

As I went through all the footage to select which soundbites I would use, I not only transcribed those bites into a Word document, but I also physically cut those pieces out from the entire clip and placed them into the “timeline.” The timeline in Premiere is where you put the clips in order to sequence them. The timeline is where all the editing of footage takes place. Once I had all the soundbites cut and placed into the timeline, my timeline was essentially a rough cut of how the film would look.

After I wrote the transitional lines that I planned to say between soundbites, I had to record my own voice to use within the film. This step involved going to another lab in Newhouse where there are computers with built in, high quality microphones. With those microphones and an audio editing software called Audacity, I recorded my voice tracks using the lines I had written into my Word document script. Then I had to export my voice tracks from an Audacity file to a usable mp3 file.

With the mp3 file saved onto my hard drive, I went back into the regular computer labs and uploaded the mp3 file into the Premiere document. From there, I was able to cut each line of my own voice and put it where it belonged among the soundbites in the timeline. Of course, this whole voice recording and cutting process had to be done again each time I made an edit to the script. Eventually, I had the soundbite and voice tracks just right.

If you can picture the timeline at this point, it includes only sound when my voice is playing, but sound and video when someone I interviewed is speaking. The next step was to cover up all the blank parts with video. I also had to cover some of the parts when the

interviewee is speaking to make it look aesthetically pleasing. The footage that a journalist uses when no one is speaking on camera is called “b-roll.” When covering up sound with video, it’s important to choose appropriate b-roll. What the viewer sees must match what they hear, and what they see must make sense. In editing, I had to be sure not to break the space/time continuum by cutting from someone in one place to the same person somewhere else. Because b-roll has to look right, the editing process takes quite a long time at this point.

In my script, I notate “nat sound break.” This notation means that I am not speaking nor is anyone I interviewed. There is simply some natural sound playing. It is part of the creative process to decide when to include “nat sound breaks.” It’s a technique that journalists use to keep the audience engaged. It also brings in the environment and often complements the video. I also notated “nat sound break” when I used a segment of a performance.

This whole editing process is extremely time consuming, especially given the scope of the project. In fact, the project was so big that exporting the Adobe Premiere file into a viewable .mov file took nearly an hour. I had to go through the exporting process several times because of edits that I made during different drafts of the final project.

Chapter 2

Script

When you think of the city of Syracuse, you might think of the dreary weather... the businesses struggling to stay open...and a dilapidated infrastructure. But even amidst a depressed economy and a disagreeable climate, there's one flame that refuses to go out...

Nat sound break

The music.

For decades, the Syracuse music scene has brought life, energy, and passion to central New York. I set out to find out how and why music thrives in a city best known for its harsh winters. There are lots of factors, but a major one is community support. From panel sessions, to award ceremonies, to local venues, there is a strong foundation for aspiring artists in the community.

Check out this initiative designed to provide support for local talent.

This group took over Funk 'n Waffles downtown for an evening of musical education, but it wasn't your typical music class.

Nat sound break

Panels made up of key players in the local music scene talked to an audience of artists, students, and community members about how to make it in the biz.

Chris Baker gave some pointers from his perspective as a music and entertainment reporter for the *Post-Standard* and Syracuse.com.

Chris Baker/Music and Entertainment Reporter, Post-Standard and Syracuse.com

“I think the best way to get your music out there and to build fans is to just to play as often as you can and as many different places as you can. Don’t just be that band that plays Monday nights at the same bar every week. That’s cool; there’s nothing wrong with that. But, get out and play different places where you might find new audiences, people who go to whatever. Come play here, play Dinosaur, play Shifty’s, play Lost Horizon. Get out to as many places as you can and find new audiences by getting in front of them I think.”

Matt Dunn is a promoter for Syracuse Shows, a company that books local acts for local venues. He countered Baker’s point by advising artists not to oversaturate one market.

Matt Dunn/Promoter, Syracuse Shows

“If you’re playing a little too much it limits your draw ability. So when it comes to my specific events, if I have a local band that’s going to play one of my shows, I don’t really want them to play in the area a couple weeks before or a couple weeks after because then they look at my event and they’re just like ‘Oh I could just go see them another time,’ and there’s no necessary draw to specifically come to see that band on my show at that time.”

His advice for success is to be willing to work hard and promote yourself aggressively. He’s booked more than 500 local shows and is a huge supporter of local talent. But before he’ll agree to promote a group, here’s what he expects from any artist that he works with.

“I’ve got a lot of local bands that work their butts off for me. Then I’ve got other local bands that are just like ‘We’re too good for that.’ Well if you’re too good for that then I don’t really want you to play my shows because you’re telling me that you don’t want to do the work to get people to come out to see your band. Because I’m working my ass off to get people to come out and see your band, I expect you to do the same.”

Afterwards, there was an audience question portion, so that struggling musicians could benefit from some professional advice. And the event? Free of charge.

Panels like that one are not the only initiative providing support to local musicians. There’s also a huge annual event geared towards recognizing local talent... the Syracuse Area Music Awards, also known as the Sammy’s. This year, the event kicked off with an intimate Hall of Fame induction ceremony at Dinosaur Bar-B-Que. Inductees were honored for their contributions to the local music scene, or for their global success.

Among the VIP guests was New York State Senator John DeFrancisco, who agrees with me about the importance of a thriving cultural community.

John DeFrancisco/New York State Senator (R)

“The music and arts in this community is the heart and soul of Syracuse and Central New York.”

He went on to thank all of the Hall of Famers for keeping the music alive.

Arguably the most famous person in the room was Jon Fishman. When he was a kid Fishman was just a guy from Syracuse playing music in his dad's basement. He went on to be in one of the biggest bands in the world, Phish. But he gives a lot of credit to that basement, and to Syracuse.

Jon Fishman/Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient, Phish

“I am just so lucky and fortunate that I have gotten away with starting in my rainy dark city of Syracuse where I sequestered myself in the basement for years to plug away at this thing and then slowly move it out of my basement and make a living at it.”

He did more than make a living. Phish has been an active band for more than 30 years. And it's all thanks to the bad weather in Syracuse.

Or how about David Rezak, a professor in the Bandier Program at Syracuse University and a key player in the local scene. He was recognized as music educator of the year for inspiring a generation of music professionals.

David Rezak/Hall of Fame Inductee, Music Educator

“I'm proud and lucky to have had a small part in the music and songs of Syracuse.”

Each and every person honored had only wonderful things to say about the city of Syracuse, which for some of them, as musicians, is the place where it all began. Here's what some of the other winners and attendees had to say.

Loren Barrigar/Musician, Hall of Fame Inductee

“It’s a great music scene. There’s so many talented people and it can really inspire you. If you’re really working on your music there’s always a place in Syracuse to see someone better than you or maybe that inspires you. I was always encouraged, for being part of the local scene like I was for years, to go outside- go to Nashville and go to Austin and go to LA- and when you do that you realize Syracuse has some great talent of its own. I think it’s a pretty cool scene. Maybe it’s the cloudy and crazy weather that makes people go inward on their emotions. Maybe that’s it. But I just think there’s a lot of great, talented people here. I love my hometown, and I’m proud to be from Syracuse. I tell people every night no matter where I am in the world that I’m from Syracuse, New York and proud to be so.”

Dave Firsina/Host of “Soundcheck” Local Music Show on 105.9

“The best rock around can be found right in your own backyard. I’ve been doing that for 35 years and I totally believe it. Some of my best friends are musicians. I don’t go out to a bar unless there’s a band playing. I can drink cheaper at home. I love the music scene here and I’m just hoping that more and more people discover how good it is.”

(off camera) “What keeps Syracuse thriving?”

Scott Sterling/Musical Director at Dinosaur Bar-B-Que, Hall of Fame 2013

“Maybe because it’s the second cloudiest cloud cover in America next to Seattle. Maybe it just forces you to do different things. You don’t have any choice but the woodshed because you can’t go outside. So you sit in your room, you go down to the basement, and you play some music. Same thing that Fishman said. That’s what you do. And when you’re passionate about it you’re

going to find a way; you're going to make it happen. And the college- the colleges, you know, an influx of things. Going all the way back to the songs on the first Velvet Underground record happened on M Street. That's where Lou Reed went to school. The beginnings of what becomes the Velvet Underground are created in his mind on the Syracuse University campus. All kinds of people on the industry side and the playing side all filtered through this town at different times.”

So now that everybody is in agreement that the Syracuse weather is what's keeping the music alive, let's hear some.

Nat sound break

The Sammy's took place at one of Syracuse's iconic music venues, the Palace Theatre in Eastwood. There were performances, speeches, and, of course, awards. All of it serves to recognize the talent that exists in the city of Syracuse. A perfect example of that is the Works.

Nat sound break

The Works was a local rock band that was inducted into the Hall of Fame this year. After meeting as kids in the neighborhood, they played music together for eight years.

Edward Hamell/Member of The Works, Hall of Fame Inductee

“The rhythm section and myself were neighbors. The drummer also grew up on Woodvine right across the street from me and the bass player grew up on Hillsdale, which is the street- you could throw the guitars over the fence... and we did...and rehearse at his mom's house. We played probably 300 one-nighters a year. I mean, it was crazy what we did. The city of Syracuse is very

much like the city of Detroit. It is. And it is a very blue-collar town that has been I think economically devastated. It has a tenacity of spirit.”

Syracuse isn't strictly a rock music town. Joanne Shenandoah and her daughter honored their Oneida Iroquois roots in their performance.

Nat sound break

Joanne Shenandoah/Musician

“Here in Syracuse we have been gifted with some ancient culture, which is the Iroquois. And the Iroquois believed in music so deeply that they continue those same songs today. And so when you walk on different sacred lands and when you think about what happens to a person when they hear certain songs, how it transforms you, the same thing that happened to Hiawatha. We have Hiawatha Boulevard right here. So these beautiful songs actually transform the spirit. So I think in Syracuse, we live in an area where there's not much sun, and we live in an area where it's glorious in the summer. But we also live in a place where there have been some of the most amazing, creative people ever, I mean, that I know of in this city and I'm just honored to be part of one of those people who celebrate life and celebrate music and the wonders of our natural world.”

World music is also a growing part of the local scene. It was represented at the awards show, but perhaps not enough as the community would like. Etse has founded two world music and dance groups in Syracuse, but says the local scene isn't as thriving in those genres.

David Etse Nyadedzo/Founder of Akuma Roots and Adanfo Ensemble

“What we just saw, we have that band, in which we play, and I want to see even more diversity mixed together, because it’s been my dream to have some kind of world music orchestra, but it all needs support. It’s a great place to start. On the program, on the categories, I have not seen reggae, and I have not seen world music so I would like to see more stuff like that.”

Kingsley Pipim/Member of Adanfo Ensemble

“Our type of music is kind of slow here.”

But this Syracuse native has high hopes for the future of world music.

Joshua Williams/Member of Adanfo Ensemble

“I see them opening their orange hearts and bringing more diversity into our music foundation.”

Bob Halligan, Jr. is another Syracuse native who has gone on to major global success. He’s written songs for some big name artists.

“Kiss, Joan Jett, Blue Oyster Cult, Ted Nugent, Joan Jett- I said that.”

The list goes on and on. His songs have sold more than 30 million copies over the years. And while he did leave Syracuse to pursue his career in the big apple, he eventually came back to his roots.

Bob Halligan Jr./Sammy Nominee, Performer

“It’s a rich environment, and as we see from the Sammy’s tonight, Syracusans tend to stick together... because these winters create shared adversity. We have to stick together otherwise we’ll freeze stuck to a drainpipe or something. I meet more neighbors shoveling than I do mowing.”

Tim Fox has watched the local music scene flourish over the years from his position in the media. He stressed the value of an event like the Sammy's.

Tim Fox/Executive Producer of Bridge Street on NewsChannel 9 WSYR

“I think it’s amazing that a community like this can support an effort like the Sammy Awards and say thank you to the music community. This awards ceremony over the 23 or 24 years- however long they’ve been doing it-is kind of like a family reunion for all different genres of musicians, all different ages- people in their eighties and nineties down to high school students in bands that they put together. And it is amazing to see how close they all get together.”

And what, besides the weather, unites all these people to come together each year?

“I think music is a universal language and everybody feels it and everybody has a passion for it. It’s just the most terrific feeling you can imagine.”

We’ve established that Syracuse is basically an incubator for musical talent. And that the Sammy’s prove just how committed Syracusans are to the music.

“It’s the Syracuse music scene, I mean come on... It’s f*cking awesome!”

Now the last piece of the puzzle is ensuring that these artists have places where they can showcase their talent. What makes Syracuse is a well-rounded cultural incubator is the surprising number of venues that cater to local musicians.

The Westcott Theater is just one of them. On the night I visited, it was only the third time that the headlining band had ever performed. Talk about supporting emerging talent!

Dan Mastronardi is the owner of the Westcott Theater, and he says that about a third of the acts they bring are local. But they also manage to get major touring acts.

Dan Mastronardi/Owner of the Westcott Theater

“We created a great music culture with what we do here and the other venues that we produce events at in Syracuse.”

“That’s what we’re set up to do. We’re set up to do live acts. National, regional, local. We usually mix local with regional. Regional with national.”

By mixing and matching local bands with bigger acts, the local guys gain precious exposure, which is just another way that venues like the Westcott Theater help to develop local talent.

Charley Orlando books shows for another venue, Funk ‘n Waffles downtown. He thinks there’s plenty of room for improvement in Syracuse.

Charley Orlando/Talent Buyer, Funk ‘n Waffles Downtown

“As far as talent, heads and tails above most places As far as scene... working on it. That’s what we’re doing right now. It needs a lot of help. The fans have to support it, and the venues have to support it, and the musicians have to support it.”

Venues, awards ceremonies, and helpful sessions all come together to create a nurturing environment for aspiring musicians. Talented people and a dedicated community of supporters make a sturdy foundation to keep the music alive. Perhaps music isn’t the first thing that comes to mind when you think of Syracuse, but the thriving scene is a hidden gem within this cloudy city on a hill.

Chapter 3

Conclusion

The vivacity of the Syracuse music scene might be surprising to an outsider. Most people only think of snow and cold when they hear Syracuse, but there's so much more to the city than that. In addition to the other cultural wonders here, the live music scene is alive and well. Thanks to a huge community of supporters, including musicians, fans, and those involved in live music production, the scene is able to thrive despite the conditions of the climate and the location of the city. Those who are involved in the local scene are deeply committed to it. Their passion is inextinguishable, and they wouldn't choose to be anywhere else.

The main factors that I found to be contributing to the success of the local scene are initiatives designed to support musicians, events tailored to recognize local talent, and venues that cater to local musicians and fans. With these elements serving as a strong foundation, music thrives in the city of Syracuse, despite the reputation of the city and its overall economic state.

As one local musician said, Syracuse has a tenacity of spirit. The passion for music is refuses to be extinguished despite the challenges facing the community. In fact, Syracusans take the cold and use it to their benefit. Many people in the local scene credited the cold for their commitment to pursuing music because being locked indoors forced them to practice their trade. In the long run, the weather pushed them to be better musicians.

These factors along with the passion of the local community make Syracuse's music scene thrive with such a ferocity that most outsiders would not expect. There is an almost shocking disparity between how the outside world perceives Syracuse in terms of culture and life and the reality of how alive and incredible it really is.

Sources Consulted

Chris Baker/Music and Entertainment Reporter, Post-Standard and Syracuse.com

Matt Dunn/Promoter, Syracuse Shows

John DeFrancisco/New York State Senator (R)

Jon Fishman/Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient, Phish

David Rezak/Hall of Fame Inductee, Music Educator

Loren Barrigar/Musician, Hall of Fame Inductee

Dave Firsina/Host of "Soundcheck" Local Music Show on 105.9

Scott Sterling/Musical Director at Dinosaur Bar-B-Que, Hall of Fame 2013

Edward Hamell/Member of The Works, Hall of Fame Inductee

Joanne Shenandoah/Musician

David Etse Nyadedzo/Founder of Akuma Roots and Adanfo Ensemble

Kingsley Pipim/Member of Adanfo Ensemble

Joshua Williams/Member of Adanfo Ensemble

Bob Halligan Jr./Sammy Nominee, Performer

Tim Fox/Executive Producer of Bridge Street on NewsChannel 9 WSYR

Dan Mastronardi/Owner of the Westcott Theater

Charley Orlando/Talent Buyer, Funk 'n Waffles Downtown