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The Scene

Continued from Page 17

good music does too," he said.

Theresa Connor, a Chicago resident visiting Omaha, said she was surprised with the local music scene.

"I didn't expect such a good environment for music before I actually saw it, but Omaha really isn't all that bad," she said. "I've seen a lot of good bands here."

"Contrary to the opinion of most out-of-towners, Omaha is not a farm town," she said. "I'd say it's more of a punk town."

Hometown support is important for success. Members of the Lincoln-Omaha music scene said the two cities are a nurturing environment for developing bands.

Mike Keeling works at Duffy's Tavern, 1412 O St., where many local bands play. Keeling called Nebraska audiences "supportive."

"That's what has made it possible for bands such as Mercy Rule to make names for themselves," Keeling said.

People are going to the bars anyway, Sommerich said. Bands just need to appeal to those people, he said.

"The key is to get people who just go out to the bars to drink interested in what original bands are doing," he

said.

But talent, venues and hometown support do not a successful scene make. What else could an ambitious young band ask for?

Money, Sink said.

Few people want to invest in local bands, he said. That lack of funding hinders the area's bid for national success, Sink said.

"If somebody with money was interested, he could make more money with the talent available in the Omaha and Lincoln area," he said. "There's just a capital shortage."

Young people could give financial and moral support to new bands, but Omaha and Lincoln have few places for under-21 audiences. Access to that high school-aged audience and to their wallets could boost many local bands to more widespread success.

Omaha concert-goer Emily Perkins said she catches all the all-ages shows she can.

"There are a lot of good bands here, we just need more places to show it off," Perkins said. "Then we could become a pretty big city for music."

Steve Moeller of Omaha agreed with Perkins' sentiment.

"I think giving the younger people in Omaha the opportunity to support bands will only help the scene," he

said.

If the center of the country were also center stage for the country's music scene, bands, fans and the local businesses would reap the benefits.

Rod Finch said at a December Mousetrap concert that the rest of the country had a lot to learn about Nebraskans.

"We're not all farmers," said Finch of Omaha. "I think that's what having a good music scene tells the rest of the country."

A few local bands are already spreading the word and the music.

Kevin Gude, guitarist for the Lincoln band Throttle, said bands with record deals and national followings have given other bands hope for their own success.

"You can see the success of bands like Mercy Rule and the Millions," he said.

National recognition for the rest of the scene is possible, Gude said, but it might take a few years.

Some fans like Finch don't want Lincoln and Omaha to become the next big music scene.

"It would be cool to see a band from Omaha or Lincoln really make it big," Finch said, "but I'd also like to keep the best bands just for us."

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