

Anarchy in the Punkive: Collecting the Stories of Punk Women and Creating a Local Punk

Music Scene Archive.

by

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**Abstract**

This thesis explores how the physical records that local music scenes created and hold onto create a historical footprint for music scenes and how these sometimes-unconventional records are legitimate archival records that represent a community's history. Using the Winnipeg local punk scene during the late 1970s to 1985, this project hopes to portray a vibrant glimpse of a musical community that took part in carving punk rock history in Canada. Looking specifically at the voices of members who participated in the first two all-female bands in Winnipeg using interviews and oral histories, this work captures personal experiences of aspects of being in a band during this time and being a part of the punk community in this city. Each chapter examines the Winnipeg scene specifically, what sort of records this community collects, and how their personal archives contribute to the larger historical location of music history. It then discusses the importance of community archives and how an archive can be recreated through mediation of community members and a archival repository. Finally, this thesis also provides an example of how this material can be incorporated into an exhibit using a local gallery as a template.

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Big thank you to me, who has made it through the last few tough years and to this kid who in their wildest dreams would have never thought they would be an adult in their 50s still writing about punk.

Music is life.

A special dedication to my friend Tim McFarlane, the punk rock boy I had crushed on for years in high school and to the wonderful man you became when we ‘grew up.’ You remained a friend through the years and over the distance. Your journey may be done in this world, and will I expect you to raise absolute havoc on your adventures in the next world. It was an honour and pleasure to know you in this life. I am truly blessed, and you will always hold a special space in my heart.

We have a lot of local punk legends and scene members over the last few years here in Winnipeg. May we forever keep telling their stories for a very long time to come.



*Figure 1: Me at 16, 1989, personal collection.*

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## Introduction

People change over the years, and you that is you never changes. Yesterday you were a kid, and tomorrow you'll be old, and you think you're the same person you were, despite all evidence to the contrary. But sometimes we play music that lets us be us then and us now and us still to come, and it's all worth it, every minute, every aching second, every gaping now.

Music slices you in time. - Neil Gaiman<sup>1</sup>

Music connects people all over the world. Music occurs in the everyday, whether you find yourself listening to it on a regular basis throughout your day, happen to hear a song you like in the supermarket, or come across a background song on social media – music occurs in the sphere of everyday life. Every generation grows up and is surrounded by different styles of music. A person's musical taste can help to identify them to the out-facing social world around them. Whether they are part of a larger subculture based in music and fashion or simply wearing band shirts, these cultural signposts assist in formulating social circles and communities of like-minded individuals. Within these larger subcultures (that often have stricter codes of appearance and behaviour), scenes exist that are more fluid in nature, not as code-based and can exist locally, nationally, or even globally. As Vadén, Riedel, and Torvinen state, “music is not only important, touching or moving, but it has specific meanings; it symbolizes, indicates, shows, guides our cultural practices, and so on; music clearly exceeds its own boundaries by reaching out to something that is other than itself.”<sup>2</sup> This is sometimes an unconscious act but can lead to formulating some special relationships that can last a lifetime. Music as a cultural form that attaches itself to social life has expanded post-World War II, as music became such a part of the

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<sup>1</sup>Alex McLevy, “Neil Gaiman wrote a lovely tribute to The Breeders for their new album,” *Newswire* (blog), *AV Club*, February 12, 2018, <https://www.avclub.com/neil-gaiman-wrote-a-lovely-tribute-to-the-breeders-for-1822925376>. Neil Gaiman who has always been a fan of the band The Breeders, wrote a short essay to help their release *All Nerve* in 2018.

<sup>2</sup>Tere Vadén, Friedlind Riedel, and Juha Torvinen, “Musical Meaning in Between: Ineffability, Atmosphere and Subjectivity in Musical Experience,” In *Music as Atmosphere: Collective Feelings and Affective Sounds*, ed. Friedlind Riedel, and Juha Torvinen. (Routledge, 2020), 45.

everyday and began to attach itself to individual and community means, through objects, memories, places, and people.<sup>3</sup> This can be seen in the various youth cultures that appeared after Second World War during the 1950s and 1960s in Britain for example, such as Teddy Boys, Rockers, Mods and Skinheads. The quotation from Neil Gaiman at the start of this chapter is taken from a short essay he wrote for the 1990s band The Breeders,<sup>4</sup> a band I really like and remember vividly, as their song “Cannonball” hit the charts in 1993, taking charge of the dance floors and instantly became important parts of many people’s life soundtrack at that time. As cultural theorist Will Straw believes, connection to music has been “long considered one of the most ethereal and abstract of cultural forms, music is arguably the one most embedded in the material infrastructures of our daily lives.”<sup>5</sup>

This project has been a true labour of love. When I started never would I imagine how many twists and turns would occur before its completion. Choosing to look at music and music scenes just made sense. For as long as I can remember, I have loved music and have been a part of a few different music scenes over the decades and thought this will be a great way to look at all the stuff I have collected and I am sure others have as well, and what do we do with it all? This project came to be during a global pandemic. Not only were there no live shows or tours to look forward to, but it made the idea of collecting stories from members of the local scene seemed impossible. To say this project has been a journey is very much an understatement.

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<sup>3</sup> Raphaël Nowak, and Andy Bennett, *Music Sociology: Value, Technology, and Identity*. (Routledge, 2022), 2.

<sup>4</sup> McLevy, ““Neil Gaiman,” <https://www.avclub.com/neil-gaiman-wrote-a-lovely-tribute-to-the-breeders-for-1822925376>

<sup>5</sup> Will Straw, “Music and Material Culture,” in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, eds. Richard Middleton, Martin Clayton, and Trevor Herbert. (Routledge, 2012), 227.

Thinking about the archives that music scenes collect made me realise that I had never considered that all the material I had saved through the decades of my music scene adventures would ever fit into a prospective career for me, let alone allow me space to participate in historical and archival associated dialogues surrounding this subject matter. I come to this research with a background in Cultural Anthropology and Sociology, trained also Indigenously, as I have a previous MA in Indigenous Studies.<sup>6</sup> I have been accustomed to look at subjects from various angles and how they work, while also recognizing details and understanding the societal importance placed within historical records. Both research paths however different they appear, centre around the human experience and telling stories that have not been told before and need to be.

The use of personal collections was integral to this project in that they possess the documentation of a life lived for both the individuals and the communities of their memories when it comes to being a part of music scenes. These collections are not static but are very fluid in their existence and in a sense are living entities as archival records. They are collected, forgotten, re-discovered, celebrated, and re-emerge periodically through one's lifetime. As an archivist these experiences have been integral to my understanding of the social depth that archival records hold. It enables a better understanding of how archives can be used to create a space for subcultures and localized scenes to represent their voices and showcase their relevant social histories authentically and accurately. The historical footprint of a local music scene is captured in the material that is collected (whether it is tangible or intangible) and the stories that

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<sup>6</sup> I looked at Indigenous contemporary art, and how memory and remembering can be used as a decolonizing tool to create space for Indigenous history and stories to be told, a term I called 'Visually Oral Storytelling.'

can be collected from scene members often reflect a rich tapestry connecting to memory and experience.

This thesis came out of my own interest of trying to figure out what to do with all the material both myself and people I know in various scenes, had collected over the years. I have moved through various music scenes growing up from my influences from abroad with family members, my attraction to the music of punk and participation in Toronto's early rave scene of the late 1980s and into the 1990s, the Shoegaze and Britpop scenes, and its early Hardcore scene. My music tastes vary greatly but I have never felt that my mixing of genres deterred me in participating in various scenes. It also grew out of having grown up in music scenes and having several family members involved in the original music/subculture scenes in Britain. To be a part of something so intrinsically connected to music, just made sense.

Music is an important part of Winnipeg's cultural fibre. As a photographer (who shoots a lot of local gigs), a mostly active participant in the local scene with friends that have been a part of many of the punk bands from this city, I can say that Winnipeg's punk scene is distinctive. Not originally being from Winnipeg, I did not experience any of the emerging punk scene here, or the hardcore scene that emerged alongside the punk scene in the 1980s and the 1990s. This does not mean that I was completely oblivious to the music coming out of this city from where I grew up in Southern Ontario. The historical knowledge and the social history of localized music scenes has in recent years, been brought back to life through collective action by members and enthusiasts in exhibits, reunions, documentary film, books, and online digital showcasing of personal records and 'memorabilia'. This research illustrates how the cultural records of music scenes are valid archival records and worthy of being recognized as a part of both Winnipeg's

local history and Canadian music heritage. It also highlights the importance of sharing and collecting the oral history of scene members as being a part of that historical record.

### Research Expectations

This project is only the beginning of collecting the voices and stories of local music scenes members, specifically the punk music scene in Winnipeg, Manitoba between 1978-1985. In collecting the stories from scene and band members from Winnipeg's first punk scene, a history can begin to form that shows the importance of collecting and sharing these memories and in turn, create a historical footprint of the local music scene. For this research, two women from the punk scene in Winnipeg, Margaret Fonseca (Ruggedy Annes) and Debbie Wall (The Wurst and The Ruggedy Annes) were approached to share their stories. These women still actively participate in Winnipeg's punk music scene, showing that the passion and sense of community does not end past the teenage/young adult stage for those who actively participated in its strong formation. These two bands, perhaps unconsciously, have influenced and laid the groundwork for future female musicians (of many genres) locally and nationally by forming a collective identity that was different from their male counterparts.

Andy Bennett states in his work on aging in scenes and popular music that the "cultural significance of popular music is no longer tied exclusively to youth and, for many people, the music that 'mattered' to them in their youth continues to play an important role in their adult lives."<sup>7</sup> That is all too often, this connection is allocated to a "nostalgic notion of popular music,"<sup>8</sup> where in fact the aging population who find themselves connected so deeply to the music and scenes of their youth.

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<sup>7</sup> Andy Bennett. *Music, Style, and Aging: Growing Old Disgracefully?* (Temple University Press, 2013), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Bennett, *Music, Style, and Aging*, 2.

My aim in this project is to create a strategy to promote music and local music scene history through their archival collections and create a discussion space for archivists. Whether it is in a community space, library, community exhibit, or a university special collection; discussion is needed to effectively produce archival collections that serve the community and the institution. Showcasing how the personal collections of music scene members, contribute to, if not shape, the cultural history of a music community on a local level.<sup>9</sup> Music-based material or ephemera, whether it is textual, audio/visual, or the story-bound histories of scene participants, all build a community archive and a historical record of music scenes. This method would require re-evaluating how acquisition of material is done, adapting the overall scope and purpose of these collections, and working very closely with the music scene members. The historical records created by music and music scenes are essential for music history. Drawing on theories of personal collections, cultural heritage, memory, and Do It Yourself (DIY) thinking, this research explores Winnipeg's early punk rock scene as a case study, as a space where music audiences/fans/band members construct cultural identities and engage with their musical memories through their DIY archival collections. Additionally, it will create an opportunity to effectively exhibit the material through public outreach, advocacy, and community participation.

### Research Methodology

This project is interdisciplinary in its approach. It uses experience and aspects from several disciplines such as popular culture studies, archives, sociology, anthropology, and musicology to create a localized history of a music scene. Qualitative in nature, this research combines ethnography (in a loose manner), personal collections (from participants and me), oral history recordings, participant observation, and community involvement. Just as the material

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<sup>9</sup> This would also occur on a national and global level, but for the purpose of this project I am focusing on a micro (local) scene and specifically punk in Winnipeg, Manitoba in its origins.

collected and the experiences of people participating in music scenes can be vastly different but at the same time similar, the modes of research to understand this material works in the same way.

I chose the oral history and life history approaches because I am interested in other people's stories. It is a powerful way to gain insight into the lives of community members and how they see themselves individually and as a collective. Those who are interested in cultural history and music heritage are drawn to the storytelling medium, often being artists and musicians themselves. It creates a space for research that adds to historical records, and it creates a space where participants remember their own scene adventures and find it relatable.

The reason for collecting oral stories examining music scene related ephemera or memorabilia was two-fold in its purpose. First, I wanted to start to collect the stories of women that participated in the scene from their perspective and in their own voices. Often women's voices at the local level of music scenes and communities are not collected (if at all) and I wanted to focus the importance of collecting women's stories. Secondly, I want to create a music archive for Winnipeg's diverse music scenes. Music itself and the memorabilia that is created from music and collected by people can be both an object and an experience. There are memories often tied to these tangible items and as we age these can be significant reminders of lived experiences. For many scene members, the material, the music, and the memories forge a strong relationship between the individuals and the items that they collect.

Having a foot in the door to the local scene while at the same time having no real close personal connection with the women and the other original members, placed me in an interesting position as a researcher and a scene participant. At times I felt like an imposter, and then instantly would feel part of the scene. I often live in contradictions with myself, but it is an

interesting position when you as the punk or scene member suddenly become the academic or researcher. This is particularly important when wanting to represent the communities as authentically as possible and at the same time not forget your own identity. Prior to the interviewing process of this project, any interaction and conversations that occurred between the three of us occurred in bars, usually accompanied with loud music and a lot of socialising. The initial interviews took place at the University of Winnipeg's Oral History Centre and were done in a professional setting. Having a specific space to conduct the interviews was for archival purposes ideal, as the interviews were recorded on archival quality equipment and in an environment that provided sound proofing and little outside noise. The recording of women's lives and specific histories has not routinely been of importance when constructing a historical record. Recovering the voice of women in the historical context and in archives often occurs when looking at private letters, literature and in personal collections and more importantly through their stories and experiences.

This project imagines how an archive can be created, what it would hold, and who would be involved in it. This archive or 'Punkive'<sup>10</sup> as I call it, will be made by the people that participate and involves a lot of DIY and outside of the box thinking. Adding the sociological aspect to this archival project, of how the mindset of collecting changes through time as scene members age "contributes new insights on popular music and aging, as to how popular music genres have become both lifetime soundtracks and cultural touchstones for many individuals as they progress through the life course."<sup>11</sup> Collecting the voices and records of people that are still actively engaged in the scenes from the start, carries with it rich personal collections.

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<sup>10</sup> This is a term I have been using throughout this process. I have searched and believe that no one else has used it prior.

<sup>11</sup> Nowak and Bennett, *Music Sociology*, 133.

### Where It All Began ... For Me.

Music has been a part of my life since birth and I could argue that it was a part of me before I even entered this world. I grew up surrounded by music and gratefully emerged in its various sounds. The first 45 single I ever got was Joan Jett and the Blackhearts' "I Love Rock and Roll" released in 1981 and my second was The Clash's "Should I Stay or Should I Go" (released the following year in 1982 when I was 9). I wished so much to be as cool as Joan Jett, I guarded that record as much as an 8-year-old could. That song, that sound, her intense energy, and her look, spoke to me in a way that nothing ever had before but the effect on me really has not changed. When I was a kid, I really wanted to be in a rock band. I wanted to learn to play instruments. I really wanted to be just like Joan Jett. I (unlike Joan) wanted to be a drummer and when I asked my parents to start taking music lessons, I arrived home after school to find my new instrument, an accordion. Not exactly what I thought would propel me into the world of rock mega stars and as a result, it did not last long. I never got my drums, probably to spare my parents the audio and mental grief they feared would take over their lives once I began.

Years later, I got a guitar at the age of 21, a beautiful red Washburn semi-acoustic, I wanted to play like the bands I loved. Although I never became proficient at my guitar (and now banjo acquired from my father), I did carry on with my love of music regardless of the long (and frankly) non-existent prospect of a rock and roll career start. I loved woman artists and loved songs that that were full of energy. Songs by the X-ray Spex, The Slits, Pat Benatar, Raincoats, Martha and the Muffins, and the Go Go's carried that energy for me and honestly, I had no clue who they really were or their cultural significance to the punk scene.

These early sounds really laid the groundwork for what was to later take over my world as a young punk (or at least my interest in that genre). My first experiences with punk were



*Figure 3: Photo from The Jazz Boat Film (1960), Photo of Carol and Bryan Humphrey. Personal Collection of Sharon E. Humphrey.*

through my family and namely through my cousins that lived in Southeast London, UK. My first visual of this movement was around 1980 at my uncle's house in Woolwich, where my first glimpse of what I would later know to be punk was a group of young guys, my cousins' friends, gathering in the back yard of his house waiting on him. Perhaps it was that moment subconsciously that made me feel that these were my people. As the decades have passed since its emergence in the mid-1970s in Britain, the idea of what punk is, has ballooned to include a plethora of sub-genres and it is not completely unheard of to hear bands like The Clash playing in the supermarket (the irony is not lost on those who know).

I come from a family who participated in infamous music scenes that were born out of post-World War II Britain. Musical variety was a staple in my house, everything from Classical, Jazz, Bluegrass, Swing, to The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, The Animals, Small Faces, Dolly Parton and so much more. My musical tastes as a youth were as varied and respectfully still are to this day and I thank my parents for that. My Silent generation parents unknowingly planted the seeds that have followed through my life, and I have held so tightly connected to them even

today. My parents dabbled in the Teddy Boys, Mods and Rockers of the 1950's and 1960s in London, they also participated actively in the Traditional British Jazz scene (even being in the 1960 film *Jazz Boat*). Shown below are some photographs from my family collection of my parents participating in the 'Trad' British Jazz scene in the 1950s and early 1960 London, UK. In Figure 3, my parents are participating as extras in the 1960 film *Jazz Boat*. Started in 1959 and filmed primarily on a river boat on the river Thames, my parents can be seen in these pictures along with 200 other extras at Chislehurst Caves in Kent.<sup>12</sup>



Figure 4: Photo from *The Lyceum Ballroom in London* (1950s), Photo of Carol and Bryan Humphrey. Personal Collection of Sharon E. Humphrey.

As Hilary Moore states in the book *Inside British Jazz*, “the adoption of New Orleans jazz in Britain represents not only a resistance to the loss of community and tradition (that Britain was facing after the Second World War) but an active searching for ‘home’ encompassing the most essential characteristic of that imaginative space; a sense of communion with the past, a sense of belonging and safety.”<sup>13</sup> Another image showing my parents

<sup>12</sup> “No Roll for Rock n Rollers,” *The Age*. 2 July 1959, 4. And Film Reviews, “Jazz Boat,” *Variety*, November 23, 1960, 20, <https://archive.org/details/variety220-1960-11/page/n237/mode/1up?q=%22rex+rienits%22> .

<sup>13</sup> Hilary Moore, *Inside British Jazz: Crossing Borders of Race, Nation, and Class*. (Routledge, 2007): 54.

participating in their scene at a west end jazz night at the Lyceum Ballroom can be seen in Figure 4.

My uncles were involved in youth culture scenes as well. My Uncle Micky was a Mod that participated in the Mod and Rocker skirmish on the May Bank Holiday weekend in 1964 in Brighton, which would

later be showcased by The Who's film

*Quadrophenia*.<sup>14</sup> My

cousins were all a part of the punk, post-punk,

scootering, and skinhead

scenes that appeared in the

late 1970s and 1980s in

London which set the stage



Figure 5: Photograph of my cousin Lee and his band Lovers of Magdelene (mid 1980s), Personal Family Collection of Sharon E Humphrey.

for a global fashion, music and ideological phenomenon and movement

that still fascinates to this day (and can be given credit for so much music, bands, and fashion today).

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<sup>14</sup> The Who's classic rock opera *Quadrophenia* directed by Franc Roddam in 1979, was the basis for this coming-of-age movie and depiction of the defiant, drug-fuelled mod subculture of early 1960s London. Specifically, it looks at the infamous Mod and Rocker riots that occurred in Brighton on a bank holiday weekend in May of 1964.

My cousin Lee was super cool, and I always looked up to him for his style and loved when our Nan would send photos of him. This photo above (Figure 5) is one that I got Lee to share with me of his band Lovers of Magdalene.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 6: Collage created by Shaon E. Humphrey of Charlatans (UK) memorabilia collected in 1993 and 2023 Toronto, Ontario. Photos and collage created by Sharon Humphrey.

In February of 2023 I spent a couple days in Toronto to see a couple of my favourite bands play, Ride and The Charlatans. These two UK based bands are a part of the shoegaze and early

britpop/indie genres of the late 1980s/early 1990s. That trip could not have come at a better time as it had been years since I saw a live act, let alone seen anyone from back home from the scene. Using several pieces from my personal collection of music scene memorabilia and specifically connected to the show I attended back in Toronto, I created a collage that contains material collected in 1994 and then again in 2023, just shy of thirty years later. The collage includes

<sup>15</sup> In asking him the name of the band he stated that they were ‘probably’ called Lovers of Magdalene’ at this point. Band members were (Front Row) Ash, Lee, Kieron, and Mark. In (Back Row) Whit (the singer funnily enough), Emma (Whit’s girlfriend, and Jenny (Kieron’s girlfriend). Photo courtesy of Lee James through Instagram conversation.

photographs from both years (taken in 1994 and then signed by the same members in 2023),<sup>16</sup> ticket stubs, a new tour signed poster (from both Ride and The Charlatans), set lists from both shows and a newspaper article from 1994 that I got the band to sign at the time.

That weekend gave me a lot to think about when it comes to the strength that music has and the local/regional/global scenes that come from and are created through music. Going back to Toronto for this specific show to see bands that I would have seen thirty or more years ago, really made me grateful for the experience that I did have when I was younger, that I did make those connections to other people, places, and music and that even though I had moved provinces and decades have passed, I did have a music scene to go back to and friends who still actively take part in them. We may be a bit greyer, a little less limber, and some even had their older children with them, but the collective moments we shared back then, and that night were still as special if not more so, because with age, we have gained an appreciation of that connection and what this music brings to us as individuals and as a community.

### Thesis Outline

The first chapter explores what music scenes are. It begins with an overview of scene theory, taken from the sociological approach as well as popular music theory. It is not a full undertaking of the theories surrounding scene theory, and even less for subcultural theory, but it is just to provide a context through which the reader can understand it as a cultural mechanism and to introduce the localized measure of music scenes and community. This thesis is looking specifically at a music scene in Canada and even more localized to Winnipeg, and to narrow the

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<sup>16</sup> Both Tim Burgess (Lead Singer) and Mark Collins (Guitarist) were very excited to see the photographs that I had brought with me. For them it was a blast from the past and they made comments on their youthful appearance and thought it was great that I had kept hold of them for so many years and were appreciative that I thought to bring them with me – not to mention travel from far away to also be there. Mind you there were some other fans there from Britain that had travelled over and were following them on this neck of their North American Tour.

approach further - the early punk music scene in the prairie city from 1978 to 1985. A summary of Canadian punk is discussed, along with a more concentrated look at the early punk scene in Winnipeg, Manitoba. There is not a catalogue of historical material written about the Winnipeg punk music scene, so a brief history will be shown by examining the material published through local Winnipeg newspapers, independent documentaries, interview material, and the writings of author Chris Walter. This section will incorporate the oral histories collected of two prominent women who started in the first two all-female punk bands in Winnipeg, Manitoba, The Wurst and the Ruggedy Annes (Margaret Fonseca and Debbie Wall). As a woman who grew up listening to the punk and new wave music of this time period (when these two bands were active in Winnipeg), it was extremely important to me to look specifically at collecting their stories. Both Wall and Fonseca still actively participate in the local punk music scene, playing in bands and very much supporting both old and new artists alike and living the punk way of life. They have substantial personal collections of the scene.

Chapter Two of this thesis discusses the historical documents from music scenes that are primarily documented through scene members personal collections. This chapter explores how these personal collections can be used to create a legitimate historical record for a local music scene. In turn creating (or at least thinking about it) a scene archive can be both enriching for those participating in the active collecting and can be informative for future researchers wanting to experience local music history. It shows that everyday objects and memorabilia that we as scene members hold on to throughout our lives can be completely representational as history. Discussions revolve around items of material collected by both women I interviewed, and will look at material such as ticket stubs, gig posters, fanzines, etc. that is often found in the hands of music scene participants. Collecting the stories of scene members is a method that can be

included into a personal collection. Lauren Istvandy's concept of The Lifetime Soundtrack<sup>17</sup> is be explored, placing it in relation to the material collected (archival records of scenes) by scene participants and how these archival artifacts become an effective representation of experience and memories of both individual and collective memory.

The third chapter looks at community archives and what space would be best appropriate to house, store, and exhibit these personal collections of a local music scene. The use of participatory archives is also of benefit to this as participation with the local music scene would be necessary in order to create an appropriate collection. It examines what other localized music scenes have produced to archive their music scenes, providing an examination of the core functions of archival theory. I present a new way of looking at these types of historical records by using a mix of a punk and DIY approach. The simplest definition would be doing an activity that a person does themselves on their own initiative from the ground up. Individuals are responsible for the construction of various aspects that occur within the scene. This can come in many shapes from organising their own shows, designing gig posters, creating merchandise, making their own recordings to sell, etc. In terms of music heritage, Baker states that the DIY approach to music heritage and collecting is when “popular music’s material past is managed, preserved, and curated by ordinary people in extraordinary ways.”<sup>18</sup> These extraordinary ways when approaching the personal collections and material of music scenes create rich cultural histories. Looking at collecting music scene archival histories in this way, working on the John Einarson fonds at the University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections, and my

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<sup>17</sup> Lauen Istvandy. *The Lifetime Soundtrack: Music and Autobiographical Memory*, (Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2019). Istvandy, Lauren. “The Lifetime Soundtrack: Music as an Archive for Autobiographical Memory.” *Popular Music History* 9, no. 2 (2015): 136–54. doi:10.1558/pomh.v9i2.26642.

<sup>18</sup> Sarah Baker, *Community Custodians of Popular Music’s Past: A DIY Approach to Heritage*. (Routledge, 2017), 3.

discussions with both Wall and Fonseca from a community perspective, a few possibilities are discussed in regard to establishing what would work for the Winnipeg punk community. These personal collections are so very much connected to both individual and community identity and memory and a mechanism needs to be created that allows these records to continue to act as live/active records and still be fully accessible by their owners. As Glen McGillivray states, “records are not always neatly kept; their historical importance is not always apparent to those responsible for disposing of them; that they’re found at all is often more a matter of luck, than that of good management and working with archives is ‘dirty work’ indeed.”<sup>19</sup> The historical record of punk music scenes is dirty work indeed and requires familiarity with the music, the scene, and the community who live in its everyday experience.

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<sup>19</sup> Glen McGillivray, *Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Memorabilia*, (Peter Lang Verlag, 2011), 11.

## Chapter One – Scenes and Winnipeg’s Local Punk Rock Scene

On July 16, 2020, the punk rock community in Canada was shaken by the news of the passing of Ken ‘Mr. Chi Pig’ Chinn from Canadian punk band SNFU. I first started to listen to SNFU in 1987. I was entering grade nine in high school (in a small Ontario town called Orangeville) and they were a constant on my Walkman, among other heavy hitters like Suicidal Tendencies, and D.R.I. (Dirty Rotten Imbeciles). Almost immediately after the news hit social media platforms Canada’s punk rock community started to post photographs and show posters from their own personal collection of memorabilia. Figure 7 below is one of the first bands I ever shot, SNFU when they played at the El Mocambo in Toronto, Ontario in the mid-1990s.



*Figure 7: Photograph of SNFU at the El Mocambo in Toronto, Ontario, mid 1990s, personal collection of Sharon E. Humphrey and taken by myself.*

Close friends, band mates, people who had only seen them play live, all had stories to share of the legacy this man and band held in the punk scene(s) in Canada. SNFU were amongst the first few bands I first started to shoot in the nineties.

Chi's passing, among others that have passed since then, made clear, the importance of documenting the contributions of local music scenes to Canadian cultural and music history. Those who participated in the 'birth of punk' and its first wave in Canada, are 60 plus, and many members of these local scenes never made it that far, losing battles to mental health, substance abuse, or disease. This is why this project is important. The act of sharing and collecting stories, showcasing the physical material in personal collections can only add to the cultural fabric of Canadian music.

This chapter provides an overview of music scenes and looks at the early punk scene in Winnipeg, Manitoba from 1978-1985. Through the collection of stories as well as the material culture that goes along with music scenes can create a cultural and historical footprint for Canadian music history. To achieve this, various media sources such as newspapers (from that time), the writing of Chris Walters, documentaries and most importantly oral histories gathered from members in the local scene, Margaret Fonseca and Debbie Wall. Both women participated in two of the first all-female punk bands in Winnipeg, The Wurst and The Ruggedy Annes.

### Scenes and Subcultures

Will Straw describes scenes as a "cultural space in which a range of musical practices co-exists, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilisation."<sup>20</sup> Andy Bennett states that the

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<sup>20</sup> Will Straw, "Systems of Articulation, Logics of Change: Communities and Scenes in Popular Music." *Cultural studies* 5, no. 3 (1991): 368-388. doi:10.1080/09502389100490311.

term first appeared to be “widely used by journalists in the 1940s to characterize the marginal and bohemian ways of life of those associated with the demi world of jazz.”<sup>21</sup> Since that time the concept of scene has been used to describe a multiplicity of various groups, from music to film buffs, comic book enthusiasts, poetry locales, and more. Scenes are not solely centred on music. Scenes can often be connected to many social or cultural groupings of people you can have scenes sports literature and art scenes (to name only a few). Many other groups of people have scenes that are usually specific to their interests. When using ‘scene’ to explain a local music community, I mean it to reflect the pocket of specific individuals that share common interests (mostly) in a type of music, way of thinking, and often appearance. Unlike the stricter guidelines and social norms of subcultures, which have strict rules of dress, behaviour and social norms, scenes can open a movement up so you can see many different types of people (from a variety of subcultures) attending local punk shows and some individuals can and will often move in between similar styles of music.

Andy Bennett and Richard Peterson subdivide ‘music scenes’ into three categories: local, trans-local, and virtual.<sup>22</sup> These can be understood as the first, local scene, corresponds most closely with the original notion of a scene as clustered around a specific geographic focus. The second, trans-local scene, refers to widely scattered local scenes drawn into regular communication around a distinctive form of music and lifestyle. The third, virtual scene, is a newly emergent formation in which people scattered across great physical spaces create the sense of scene via fanzines and, increasingly, through the Internet.<sup>23</sup> For this research the terms local and translocal are most appropriate, as the study revolved around the local Winnipeg punk

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<sup>21</sup> Andy Bennett and Richard A. Peterson, *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal, and Virtual*, (Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), 2.

<sup>22</sup> Peterson and Bennett, *Music Scenes*, 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Peterson and Bennett, *Music Scenes*, 2004.

scene in its early days, and translocal in the way that these local bands would move from their local space and move into other geographic areas in the way of touring , which by default would engage other scenes in different cities to be a part of their music and by extension make lasting connections.

Scenes emerge from the excesses of sociability that surround the pursuit of interests, or which fuel ongoing innovation and experimentation within the cultural life of cities.<sup>24</sup> The challenge for research is that of acknowledging the elusive, ephemeral character of scenes while recognizing their productive, even functional, role within urban life. While musicians are clearly a central part of any music scene, other actors also play a key role, notably those who frequent venues, clubs, and bars to watch live music performances.<sup>25</sup> Scenes are elusive, but they may be seen, more formally, as units of city culture (like subcultures or art worlds), as one of the event structures through which cultural life acquires its solidity.

Music scenes do not hold an expiry date when it comes to age. This is not to say that everyone who was a punk in their youth continues this style of music or subcultural traits into their adulthood, that is up to the individual. Many leave it in the past, but many continue, into middle age and beyond. Bennett states that, “the cultural significance of popular music is no longer tied exclusively to youth and, for many people, the music that ‘mattered’ to them in their youth continues to play an important role in their adult lives.”<sup>26</sup> Participants could be members of a specific scene in their youth and move in to others, as you age through the scenes, this can create more paths into other experiences within that music scene (or similar), on a local/global/virtual level for social relationships and work. When looking at punk scenes, getting

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<sup>24</sup> Will Straw, “Cultural Scenes,” *Loisir et société* 27, no. 2 (2004): 411–422. For further reading on various music scenes by Straw see <https://willstraw.com/>.

<sup>25</sup> Nowak and Bennett, *Music Sociology*, 144.

<sup>26</sup> Bennett, *Music, Style, and Aging*, 2.

older in the scene can be understood in the way that an individual may not (necessarily) still be sporting their multi colour Mohawk that would have adorned their look in youth, but they would have carried on the punk way of thinking that they stood for starting out. Ageing did not prevent older scene members from participating in the scene. Rather, it necessitated finding new ways of staying active in the scene, ways that did not necessitate the physical exertion engaged in by younger fans. As Bennett states, “for many aging followers of rock, punk, dance, and other contemporary popular music genres, the cultural sensibilities they acquired as members of music-driven youth cultures have remained with them, shaping their life courses and becoming ingrained in their biographical trajectories and associated lifestyle sensibilities.”<sup>27</sup> What is evident across the research findings is that ageing music scene fans are legitimising their ongoing presence in music scenes using discourses of status and longevity, including knowledge of scenes over time and personal experience of key events in the histories of music scenes.<sup>28</sup> Creating cultural and societal responsiveness (relating to music) developed in youth, carry through to music scene members/ enthusiasts later years in other forms such as social activism, creative passionate careers, and still including elements of the music in their lives.

Early subcultural theory looked at youth subcultures mainly regarding criminal behaviour with two major schools carrying those methodologies. The Chicago School focused on deviant behaviour and juvenile delinquency and looked at how this behaviour was a byproduct of social problems in society. Building on this, the Birmingham School (The Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies – CCCS) applied their theories of deviance to the structural changes occurring in Britain post Second World War with the stylistic communities of working-class youth that

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<sup>27</sup> Bennett. *Music, Style, and Aging*, 2.

<sup>28</sup> Nowak, and Bennett, *Music Sociology*, 144.

were emerging (such as Teddy Boys, Skinheads/Suedeheads, Rockers, and Mods).<sup>29</sup> Since that time, post-subcultural theory and theoretical turns have emerged, where these subcultural communities are not just seen as deviant behaviour or something that is only experienced when young. Thinking of subcultures strictly as a youth phase is not always the case. Many (including myself) stay within this ‘subculture’ in varying degrees.

Subculture is simply a concept we use to describe a set of ongoing social relationships, and the meanings people give to the experiences and objects involved. Therefore, while we use the term subculture for ease of discussion, it may be more accurate to think of such phenomena as subcultural. Participation in and identification with subcultures is rational. Subcultures meet individuals’ social needs, provide leisure spaces, and form “safe” places for people who fall outside the norm. Subcultural participation provides strategies to experiment with identities, connect with likeminded people, and explore “taboo” subjects and activities. Subcultures vary however from specific scenes in that a subculture can be associated with appearance or fashion of a group of people where a scene can carry members from across different subcultures.

As this project is primarily concerned with the archives of music scenes, a debate of what is or is not subculture is not necessary beyond these brief comments. It is however important to note that many that still consider themselves part of a subculture, still actively participate in their community scenes (whether it be local, global, or virtual), either in bands, showgoers, or have

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<sup>29</sup> For further reading on Subcultural Theory: Blackman, Shane. “Youth Subcultural Theory: A Critical Engagement with the Concept, Its Origins and Politics, from the Chicago School to Postmodernism.” *Journal of Youth Studies* 8, no.1 (2005): 1–20. doi:10.1080/13676260500063629, Hodkinson, Paul. “Youth Cultures and the Rest of Life: Subcultures, Post-Subcultures and Beyond.” *Journal of Youth Studies* 19, no.8 (2015): 629–45. doi:10.1080/13676261.2015.1098778, Bennett, Andy. “The Post-Subcultural Turn: Some Reflections 10 Years On.” *Journal of Youth Studies* 14 (2001): 493–506. doi:10.1080/13676261.2011.559216., Hebdige, Dick. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. [New edition]. Routledge, 2003.

interests and careers that reflect their connection to the movements that they were a part of as younger people.

When punks use the term ‘scene’ they mean the active creation of infrastructure to support punk bands and other forms of creative activity; this means finding places to play, building a supportive audience, developing strategies for living cheaply, such as shared punk houses, and such like.<sup>30</sup> There is a tendency to avoid “subculture” because it presumes that all of a participant’s actions are governed by subcultural standards, while the scene perspective does not make this presumption.<sup>31</sup> Scenes are more fluid, a local scene for example can have several different subcultures participating within it. Additionally, individuals can move easily between different scenes.

### Defining Punk

Coming up with a single definition of what ‘punk’ is next to impossible. This is not to say that the British punk explosion or the style and music that came out in the USA during the 1970s, did not shape societies ideas of the movement as a whole. Creating one solitary definition cannot be done easily, particularly looking back over decades of the styles and scenes still occurring globally in its various evolutions. It is difficult to place punk into a single defined box and it should be observed as an umbrella term that includes an array of musical sounds and appearances. Andy Linehan, the curator of popular music at the British Library states that ‘punk

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<sup>30</sup> Alan O'Connor, “Local scenes and dangerous crossroads: punk and theories of cultural hybridity,” *Popular Music*, 21, no. 2, (2002): 225-236, doi:10.1017/S0261143002002143.

<sup>31</sup> Peterson and Bennett, *Music Scenes*, 3.

is not an easy thing to define, as with any type of music, people will say, ‘That’s punk’, ‘No, *that’s* punk’; some say punk died in a specific year, others say punk lives.”<sup>32</sup>

In looking at ‘punk’ as an umbrella term, many subgenres fall under this category. These include (but are not limited to): post-punk, new wave, new romantic, oi, hardcore, etc. and this is just the early years of its inception. Punk created a space for a new shift in music, for new sounds to be explored as well as new identities to be forged. As music journalist Simon Reynolds states “that the long ‘aftermath’ of punk running from 1978-1984 was way more musically interesting than what happened in 1976 and 1977, when punk staged its back-to-basics rock ‘n’ roll revival, and even in terms of its broader cultural influence, it is arguable that punk had its most provocative repercussions long after its supposed demise.”<sup>33</sup> Geographical location globally played a role, there are punk movements within Britain, America, and Canada that all started to formulate roughly around the same time, each providing various visual and audible examples in style and sound.

Punk is not a static genre; one only must listen to the artists of the 1970s that have been called the punk god fathers to see how even the sound changes regionally. Canadian bands such as Hamilton’s Teenage Head, Edmonton’s SNFU, and Winnipeg’s Personality Crisis, Ruggedy Annes; Toronto’s B-Girls, Curse, and Martha and the Muffins (to name only a few of many Canadian punk era bands), have a different sound from the British Sex Pistols, who are often seen as the punk of Punk. Even The Clash carry with them a whole different feel of punk where the sound is not aggressive and even incorporates reggae sounds into their range. UK bands The

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<sup>32</sup> Killian Fox, “Happy Birthday Punk: the British Library celebrates 40 years of anarchy and innovation,” *The Guardian*, March 13, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/mar/13/punk-1976-1978-british-library-40th-anniversary-sex-pistols-buzzcocks>

<sup>33</sup> Simon Reynolds, *Rip It Up and Start Again: Post Punk 1978–1984* (Penguin Random House, 2006), xii.

Slits, and X-Ray Spex (for example and certainly not limited to), have a different sound from America's Blondie, and in the early days of the Go Go's, they were considered part of this genre. Punk means different things to different people from strictly a statement of fashion to protest, or to the way of thinking for yourself and creative expression.

It is a lot to take in and often debates revolve around what is the 'real sound of punk.' Over the last few decades, the various sounds of punk have grown even wider and has become such a part of society that Las Vegas recently opened a punk rock museum and as mentioned in the introduction, it is not uncommon to hear a punk classic while grocery shopping. Could this be a result of many people that were involved in the earlier days of the subculture and its various scenes have just got older and many still listen to and hold on to the ideologies that punk allowed to flourish?

The definition of punk is different among members of the local scenes, time periods, and members themselves. A common thread I noticed while reading various interviews, in discussions with community members, and in my interviews, is that punk had more to do with your attitude, personal resilience and the passionate drive to be who you wanted to be and do things on your terms than it did on how you looked or if you listened to the 'right' music.

Fonseca, defined punk as being "the attitude of doing what you want to do and self-responsibility, realizing if you want to do something then you have to get the ball rolling and do it, make things happen. Not conforming, if you want to be doing something that somebody else looks upon as conforming, well, that's them, it's not you, it's about doing what you want to do."<sup>34</sup>

Wall shared a similar view of punk stating that it "is essentially what it is like no rules think for yourself, I mean it's more attitude than music. I think it's a mindset, where you question what's

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<sup>34</sup> Margaret Fonseca (Ruggedy Annes), interview with Sharon Humphrey, August 3, 2023, Oral History Centre – University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba: 31:41

presented to you and you live and express yourself according to your own values, not what everybody else thinks, and you just be proud of who you are and not be influenced by other people's criticisms.”<sup>35</sup> Both women also acknowledge DIY as being a part of the overall definition as well when making things happen with their music. Fonseca, being a very creative woman stated that that was a part of the scene for her as well since she is very hands-on with what she enjoys doing. She states: “I really want to do things hands on, and we were making our own posters, putting them up, booking our own gigs, touring, and not waiting around for a record contract to be offered to you.”<sup>36</sup>

Linda Andes’ “Growing Up Punk: Meaning and Commitment Careers in a Contemporary Youth Subculture,” presents a concept she calls the “punk career” which can be broken up into three parts and individuals can either move through each systematically, participate in only one stage but whatever the involvement; there is an awareness that there is a change occurring that redefines their meaning of punk.<sup>37</sup> The first stage in their respective “punk career” is that of *difference*, where the members of the community (taking from the documentary and the interviews) commonly acknowledged the feelings of being different from their peers during that time.<sup>38</sup> This difference is reflected in both an attitude, possible appearances and certainly music tastes. It is at this point of what drew a person to this community or got them into punk was established. Commonalities that punk offered them was a community of sameness (in some manner through connecting with like interested people) and common interests and an overall sense of belonging, all the while still being individual in their sense of identity can be seen.

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<sup>35</sup> Wall, interview, 1:49:55.

<sup>36</sup> Fonseca, interview, 27:07.

<sup>37</sup> Linda Andes, “Growing up Punk: Meaning and Commitment Careers in a Contemporary Youth Subculture.” In *Youth Culture: Identity in a Postmodern World*, ed. Jonathon S. Epstein (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1998), 212-231.

<sup>38</sup> Andes, “Growing up Punk,” 221.

The second stage is that of *rebellion*. It is in this stage that Andes believes the deviant association of rebellion comes into play in that members (of the punk scene) acknowledge that they are different and have identified themselves as being a punk. Deviance is just a part of this identification.<sup>39</sup> I would like to clarify that the deviance is not necessarily violent or law breaking but in fact it is more associated with deviance from the ‘norm.’ This can come in the way of listening to music your parents hate (and perhaps more so), not wanting to look like those who you see every day in society and what society deems respectable looking, acting, and associating yourself with things that shock the social networks you are a part of.

The third phase is *affiliation*.<sup>40</sup> This is the stage at which scenes are produced. In this stage visual attributes aid in social and group formation. This can be seen in hair styles and clothing choice. As Andes explains, “instead of judging their behaviour based on the reflected appraisals of ‘normal’ others, individuals begin to see themselves from the perspective of members of the subculture and then punk is defined as a scene, a community of social group of which one is or can become a member.”<sup>41</sup> This stage of the punk career fits into Bennett’s and Peterson’s breakdown of scenes into local, trans-local and virtual scenes in that members of these communities then see themselves not only in their local area but can associate themselves with others of the same in other cities, countries and online communities. Although each are unique, they all share attributes and common experiences.

The final step in Andes’ “punk career” is that of *transcendence*. In this stage, punks are not so concerned with the rebellion of the younger years nor making sure they fit into certain groups or trying to prove themselves. They may not dress entirely in punk styles or go to as

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<sup>39</sup> Andes, “Growing up Punk,” 223.

<sup>40</sup> Andes, “Growing up Punk,” 224.

<sup>41</sup> Andes, “Growing up Punk,” 224.

many gigs as they went to in previous stages. Some may abandon the look and scene all together, which in a lot of cases, is merely a part of growing up. Some members will stay with it, and it will continue throughout their life. Andes points out that punks during this stage “place the highest value on individual creative expression and take hold of the do-it-yourself cultural production.”<sup>42</sup> This is the part where the punk members of scenes, whether directly involved with the music creation or as fans, start to distribute their own culture through creative means such as local fanzines and putting on shows, if they felt this was missing from the mainstream production outlets. This stage, as I see it, is reflective in the punk way of thinking that is created during youth and that can be carried out through the participant’s life and this can be seen in their career choices, causes they fight and are passionate for, their creative endeavours whether through art or music, and perhaps even retain some of that sense of punk style.

Perhaps it is through the *affiliation* and the *transcendence* stages that the need to start collecting begins as well. Participating in more scene related activities; promoting shows, playing in bands, creating ephemera to sell and/or trade while touring, and you are networking both locally and nationally, if lucky, in the pre-internet world, globally. The need to hold on to memories while creating memories would be strong during these stages. I do not believe that these stages as Andes describes necessarily occur in a linear fashion, but they can happen quickly, sometimes all at once within a short amount of time, and some may not even get past the rebellion stage. This can explain the fluid movement that can occur as members from local or trans-local (discussed above with Bennett and Peterson) move freely participating in other scenes that revolve around the same music styles.

### Punk in Canada and Winnipeg ... A very brief overview

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<sup>42</sup> Andes, “Growing up Punk,” 226.

Decades before digitizing and online access, much of what was produced at the beginning or remembered from being there, is very much in danger of erosion if not already vanished. A lot of the history is pieced together from the few books written, various national news publications, oral stories from members of the community and looking through the personal collections of memorabilia of those who were in bands or participated in the scene. So why collect and honour the Canadian and Winnipeg punk scenes and history? It is easy, it needs to be. The members of these communities (across the board) are not getting any younger, none of us are. There are stories to be told; stories of social youth movements, of how music impacted and changed their lives, their participation in political and social movements made moments in history, and the moments that they can relive (even if partially) the energy that being part of a strong subcultural and scene-based community provided for them.

Punk in Canada had a different feel, a different sound than what was occurring in the UK with The Sex Pistols and really carved itself into the genre on a different level. Perhaps it had something to do with geography and the isolation that a city on the Prairies would give birth to. Canada is huge and its major cities are not close to each other, sometimes taking anywhere from 14 to 24 hours just to drive between. The terrains are different specifically once you are out west, the topography is flatter and depending on the time of the year, much colder. The eastern provinces are often easier to navigate, and you have better access to states like New York where legendary venue CBGB's was located and where many punk rock legends played and with greater population density, more scene participants would be available. I believe the distance factor is reflected in the 'down to earth' hospitality that many scenes share across this country.

Canada's first wave of punk bands — a period roughly delineated as the mid-to late 1970s up to the mid-1980s — was a scene defined heavily by geography and its retelling of authentic

life experience. The late Mitch Funk of Winnipeg's Personality Crisis answered in an interview that the uniquely Canadian sound was not only unique between bands and did not follow specific trendy sounds (popular music of that time). Funk described the sound as: "its well-rehearsed and a good heavy meat and potatoes sound."<sup>43</sup> Bill Stretch (Stretch Marks) when asked for a history of Canadian punk rock states that, "too much to explore in answering a simple question ... but if you combine boredom, cold weather, isolation and teenage angst you can see why Canadian Punk was legendary - DOA, SNFU, RIOT 303."<sup>44</sup> Dick Savage from the Stretch Marks, states that it could be seen through "work ethic and determination ... in the early scene there was no internet and long-distance calls were \$1.00 a minute and the mileage between the big cities and our winters; if you wanted to play you needed to travel (not by Air Canada) get in the van and go."<sup>45</sup>

The opening line in a 1979 *Winnipeg Free Press* article by Dave Haynes sets a warning exclaiming, "Mothers, hide your children. Punks are alive and breeding in Winnipeg."<sup>46</sup> Haynes statement clearly indicates society's idea of this movement that had landed in Winnipeg a few years prior. There are very few books that are specifically about Winnipeg (when looking at scenes or punk). Ex-Winnipunk writer Chris Walter, states in his book about Winnipeg band Personality Crisis that, "Winnipeg in 1977 was not the world-famous bastion of culture and arts

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<sup>43</sup> No Author, "Personality Crisis: Interview with frontman Mitch Funk," *Absolute Underground: Canadian Punk rock and Hardcore*, Vol. 17, no. 5, (August/September 2021), 32, [https://absoluteunderground.tv/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AU\\_101\\_web.pdf](https://absoluteunderground.tv/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AU_101_web.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> No Author, "Stretch Marks: Interview with Bill Stretch and Dik Savage," *Absolute Underground: Canadian Punk rock and Hardcore*, Vol. 17, no. 5, (August/September 2021), 40, [https://absoluteunderground.tv/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AU\\_101\\_web.pdf](https://absoluteunderground.tv/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AU_101_web.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> No Author, "Stretch Marks: Interview with Bill Stretch and Dik Savage," *Absolute Underground: Canadian Punk rock and Hardcore*, Vol. 17, no. 5, (August/September 2021), 40, [https://absoluteunderground.tv/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AU\\_101\\_web.pdf](https://absoluteunderground.tv/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AU_101_web.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> No Author, "City Punks Just Ape U.K.'s Angry young men." *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 21, 1979, 68. <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.uml.idm.oclc.org/ca/manitoba/winnipeg/winnipeg-free-press/1979/03-21/page-68>.

that we know it as today; the large majority of Winnipeggers were not ready or willing to embrace punk rock and as they watched television reports of the punk explosion in London and waited fearfully for the plague to spread to Canada”<sup>47</sup> and by the following year in “early 1978, the first punk rockers cautiously began to emerge from basements citywide as news of a musical revolution had finally reached their ears via TV and rock magazines.”<sup>48</sup>

In a *Winnipeg Free Press* article from November 1978, journalist Laurie Johnston reviewed a punk show at the Arthur Street Gallery.<sup>49</sup> Read today, it seems like something in a satirical publication, with its dry sarcasm and almost fantastical surrealism. She describes the show as having one constant, “a steady barrage of painful and woefully unimaginative sound.” That it is not perhaps the location (which she describes as a white box of a room completely devoid of furniture) and furthers her review by dismantling each band’s sounds and attire, and although she states that she gives credit to them for “expressing themselves musically, a review of the product shows, up to this point, it’s pretty bad.”<sup>50</sup> These three bands that she described rather colourfully, Lowlife, Discharge, and The Psychiatrists would turn out to be a few of Winnipeg’s most legendary punk bands, putting Winnipeg on the map for participation in this ‘new’ musical sound. In fact, it was these three bands that Sam Sutherland believes as being the trio that put the Winnipeg punk scene officially being noticed.<sup>51</sup> Their show in November of 1978 at the University of Manitoba was the first punk show in Winnipeg. Walter stated that the “bands were noisy, they were terrible, they didn’t know how to play, and the sound was the shits;

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<sup>47</sup> Chris Walter, *Personality Crisis: Warm Beer & Wild Times* (GFY Press, 2008), 3.

<sup>48</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 4.

<sup>49</sup> Laurie Anderson, “Unimaginative New Wave Music Sound Reflects Punk Rock’s Monotone Aspects,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 27, 1978: 27. <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.uml.idm.oclc.org/ca/manitoba/winnipeg/winnipeg-free-press/1978/11-27/page-45>.

<sup>50</sup> Anderson, “Unimaginative New Wave Music.”

<sup>51</sup> Sam Sutherland, *Perfect youth: the birth of Canadian punk*, (ECW Press, 2012).

but it was great; it was something completely new and you had this feeling that history was being made you know?”<sup>52</sup> For a lot of young people this was a moment that was long overdue. Bill Stretch (Stretch Marks) when asked what the early scene was like in Winnipeg stated that, “the Spud Club in Winnipeg transitioned from New Wave to Punk with seminal bands Lowlife, Le Kille and many other early pioneers. We didn’t get a lot of touring bands, so we created our own scene. Long winter nights, we put on our own shows, convinced other bands to play in Winnipeg, played house parties. We all contributed to making it happen.”<sup>53</sup> As Walter states about the band Personality Crisis, there “wasn’t many shows back then, and fans of the music couldn’t be choosy. In the summer, there might be three or four touring bands, and in the winter, it could be months between shows, Local bands organized their own gigs to make up for the shortage and it was here that the DIY ethic begun.”<sup>54</sup> The scene consisted of under age (all ages events) and venues (including halls) which cost money and that was if the venue itself were willing to rent their space for this new blasting musical genre.

For the locals that participated in creating the scene, a lot of hard work and preparation went into each show. They did it on their own and with low budgets. As Walters recalls, “from making the posters, to renting the hall/bar and the PA and sound equipment, to booking the bands – whatever needed to be done was handled by the bands themselves.”<sup>55</sup> Tudor in his *Winnipeg Tribune* article in 1979 stated that radio play was limited for punk and new wave and when it was played, the music played was from the larger artists such as Elvis Costello.<sup>56</sup> David

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<sup>52</sup> Sutherland, *Perfect youth*, 111.

<sup>53</sup> No Author, “Stretch Marks: Interview,”<sup>40</sup>, [https://absoluteunderground.tv/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AU\\_101\\_web.pdf](https://absoluteunderground.tv/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AU_101_web.pdf) page 40.

<sup>54</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 38.

<sup>55</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 38.

<sup>56</sup> Tudor, “Local heirs of punk trying to make waves,” *The Winnipeg Tribune*, February 01, 1979, <http://hdl.handle.net/10719/2801850>.

Farrell wrote that, “commercial radio has no vested interest in new wave music, that radio music must purr and tease its audience today to be successful, attracting a middle-aged housewife as well as a middle-class bopper, that familiar sounding music is the key to big audiences.”<sup>57</sup> Tudor noted however, that the sale of vinyl fared well when looking at other artists that were lumped into the punk /new wave genre such as Devo, The Ramones, and The Clash.<sup>58</sup> Ultimately, within this two-year time frame, both the punk and new wave scene and artists would be confined to what Farrell states as the “third-class bars and basement dives where the working-class kid can punk out undisturbed, and members never quite make enough money to see themselves out of their class roles.”<sup>59</sup>

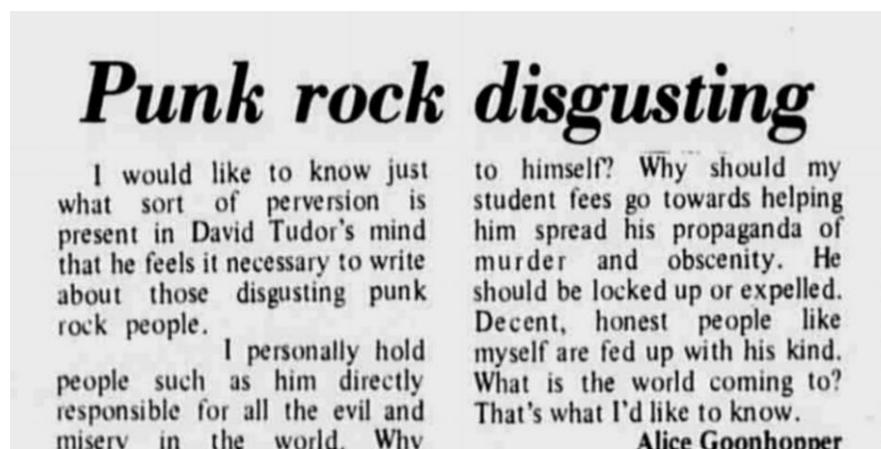


Figure 8: Editorial pages of the University of Manitoba's school paper *The Manitoban*. Volume 64, Issue 36, January 16, 1978.

Shown in Figure 8, an editorial from 1978 from the University of Manitoba's newspaper *Manitoban* of a very opinionated students views towards punk. Five

years later in 1983, writer Randall McIlroy in the *Winnipeg Free Press* stated that there was a genuine subculture here in Winnipeg and pointed out that there was in fact a scene “surviving and thriving within the city is a small but growing community of punks, young people whose desire for their own identity is linked not only to punk rock music but to a look, a culture

<sup>57</sup> Farrell, “Punk gives way.”

<sup>58</sup> Tudor, “Local heirs of punk.”

<sup>59</sup> Farrell, “Punk gives way.”

predicated on independence of tradition, seen not only in the strength of this community, but the harmony within it, estimating that there were a few hundred regulars.<sup>60</sup>

In comparing the sound of punk to other cities in Canada, *Manitoban* writer Tillman states that punk in Winnipeg had only so far “managed a feeble squawk” and claimed the city as the “‘behind the times capital’ of the world.”<sup>61</sup> He then asserts, “but never fear, the punks are here, and their music is based on a fast-driving rhythm simplicity and honesty, deleting the baroque embellishments which have crushed feeling and spontaneity; to make a long story short, it is basically fast Rock ‘n’ Roll in the noise rebellious transition of the genre.”<sup>62</sup> Walter describes the feeling of the music at that time in that it was “so powerful, so intense, that surely something great would come of it. No one knew exactly what would happen or where the music would lead, only that there had to be payoff somewhere down the line. Not necessarily a monetary reward, but recognition perhaps that what they were doing was valid. It wasn’t just a bunch of noise (these early days), this was something special.”<sup>63</sup>

Punk rock attracts the weirdos, the think outside the box types, the fringe of society and generally, as I learnt growing up in this scene and moving through similar music communities, it can hold a very special place for those who find themselves there. Walters states that, “punk fans in the unenlightened 80s, took a big chance every time they stepped out the door. The odds were high that headbangers in Trans-Ams would scream obscenities from car windows, and the decision would have to be made whether to flee or fight.”<sup>64</sup> Walter shares how being a punk in

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<sup>60</sup> Randal McIlroy, “Punks ... are people too,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 12, 1983, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.uml.idm.oclc.org/ca/manitoba/winnipeg/winnipeg-free-press/1983/11-12/page-18>.

<sup>61</sup> Tilman, “Is there Punk on Mars?,” *The Manitoban*, February 8, 1979, <http://hdl.handle.net/10719/1457063>.

<sup>62</sup> Tilman, “Is there Punk on Mars?”

<sup>63</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 72.

<sup>64</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 39.

the suburbs (where he grew up) and being out in the wilds of society firstly did not always work in your favour and secondly how this also in a way taught you skills for life. I resonated with this experience from my own youth as a punk in a small town. He describes that, “being a punk anywhere in Winnipeg was tough enough but in Windsor Park it was like having a bullseye on your back ... with a mohawk hair-cut and homemade ‘Fuck You’ shirt, he was a prime target for every Camaro driving, Zep loving, no-neck jock with a poodle haired girlfriend and a room in his parents' basement.”<sup>65</sup>

The late Walter Kot (Le Kille, Personality Crisis) stated: “for myself I never really felt like I belonged anywhere, now whether that was just me or whether you know, I don't know, the punk rock thing brought all these weirdos together from all over the city, weirdos in a loving way.”<sup>66</sup> Wall felt similar in saying, “I never felt like I belonged in school and everybody that I met in the punk scene felt the same so it's like we belong to each other. It is like kind of finding your tribe that's what it felt like you know, like these like-minded people and then maybe not always like-minded but open-minded you know.”<sup>67</sup>

Norm Simm (The Unwanted) described punk as the “need to express ourselves in our own ways,”<sup>68</sup> and he believes that “there was a lot of really positive things we learned about independence and how to embrace each other as individuals and how to accept people that are different.”<sup>69</sup> The late Jon Card (Personality Crisis), said that “punk rock was a really good way to do it yourself and just go no we're not going to do that, we're going to do our way.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Walter, Chris. *I Was a Punk Before You Were a Punk* (GFY Press, 2003), 49.

<sup>66</sup> Martin, Kathryn, dir. *Piss on You: Winnipeg's Early Punk Scene*. National Film Board of Canada/Winnipeg Film Group, 2015. DVD.

<sup>67</sup> Wall, interview, 41:03.

<sup>68</sup> Martin, *Piss on You*.

<sup>69</sup> Martin, *Piss on You*.

<sup>70</sup> Martin, *Piss on You*.

## Women and Punk Rock

The historical knowledge and social history of subcultures and the scenes can be seen in recent exhibits, reunion shows, online photographic galleries (of both subcultures/scenes and musicians/bands), television shows, and books primarily in the UK and the US.<sup>71</sup> On the Canadian side of things, there are, however few publications that look at specifically at Canadian punk rock and the local scenes that grew out of this music and even less material specific to female participation in the music scenes. *Perfect Youth: The Birth of Canadian Punk* by Sam Sutherland collects the oral stories of various members from scenes right across Canada and Sheldon Birnie's *Missing like Teeth: An Oral History of Winnipeg Underground Rock* looks at Winnipeg's hardcore scene in the 1990s by sharing the voices of those scene members. Chris Walter has written extensively on Canada's punk scene and major bands that have come out of it. Producing as well fact-based fiction that highlights city neighbourhoods and his own experiences as a young punk in Winnipeg.

Very little has been written about women punks in local scenes. This is not to say that there is a copious amount of material available, it just does not equal the amount being produced that looks at male fronted bands or men in music scenes. This does not mean that they are excluded completely from the written page, but it is only in recent years that more writing has been created focusing exclusively on women members, whether they are band members or just participating in the scene. Biographies and autobiographies can be found of British or American female punk bands such as *The Slits*, *X-Ray Spex* or the Riot Grrrl Revolution but small scene

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<sup>71</sup> McNeil, Legs, and Gillian McCain. *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk* (Grove/Atlantic, Inc., 2014). Savage, Jon. *England's Dreaming* (Faber & Faber, 2011). Savage, Jon. *Teenage* (Faber & Faber, 2021). Savage, Jon. *This Searing Light, the Sun and Everything Else: Joy Division: The Oral History* (Faber & Faber, 2019). Blush, Steven. *American Hardcore: A Tribal History* (Feral House, 2001). Azerrad, Michael. *Our Band Could Be Your Life: Scenes from the American Indie Underground, 1981-1991* (Little, Brown and Company, 2002). To name a few.

coverage is sparse. Helen Reddington's book *The Lost Women of Rock Music* provides both theory and interviews of women artists from both the UK and the US. British journalist, musician, and writer Vivian Goldman's book *Revenge of the She-Punks* is a feminist music history that looks at what makes punk a liberating art form or creative outlet for women. Maria Raha's *Cinderella's Big Score: Women of the Punk and Indie Underground* specifically looks at the women artists in punk that have been overlooked and how these women have created spaces for themselves in the scene. She, like Reddington and the books on The Slits or X-Ray Spex, are primarily centred around artists from the UK or the US. *Treat Me Like Dirt: An Oral History of Punk in Toronto and Beyond 1977-1981* by Liz Worth, contains segments of oral stories from the female participants of Toronto's punk rock scene including members from North America's first all-women punk band The Curse and members from the B-Girls. Sutherland's book devotes an entire chapter to the two Toronto based female bands (Curse and B-Girls) and discusses with them the important role of women in punk rock. David Ensminger's book *Punk Rock: 40 Years of Musicians who Built Punk Rock* (2021), looks at women's participation in the punk and hardcore scenes (globally) and how women were often excluded and regulated in these music scenes. The 1990s Riot Grrrl movement has been captured in Sara Marcus's *Girls to the Front: The True Story of the Riot Grrrl Revolution* (2010) and newly released *Rebel Girl: My Life as a Feminist Punk* by Bikini Kill/Le Tigre's Kathleen Hanna (2024) is a memoir that discusses her experience being in a punk girl band (Bikini Kill) and being a part of Riot Grrrl.<sup>72</sup> Although I have presented a list of material that has been written about women's participation in the punk and or hardcore scenes, these cover regions that include more popular bands and travel at a

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<sup>72</sup> The Riot Grrrl Collection can be found at New York University (<https://guides.nyu.edu/riot-grrrl/finding-aids>), Elizabeth K. Keenan, and Lisa Darms. "Safe Space: The Riot Grrrl Collection." *Archivaria* 76, (2013): 55-74. <https://uml.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/safe-space-riot-grrrl-collection/docview/2518894182/se-2>.

global level. When it comes to small local scenes, there has not been a lot written outside of university newspaper articles and occasional pieces in music magazines. This has only highlighted the need to capture the stories from the members within the subcultures and scenes themselves, particularly the women members who were there and experienced it first-hand, collected the posters, song sheets, and produced their own personal archives of music and scene related material. This approach provides trust and builds relationships with smaller communities that wish to preserve their particular records. One way of creating a record of women is by collecting their stories, allowing them to speak for their varied experiences. This can be done through collecting oral histories of women and their life stories both inside and outside the scene. Oral history is hard, and it is time consuming. Never having created oral histories before this, the experience pushed many boundaries in me.

Subculture theory (and much of what is written about scenes) can be criticized for excluding the experiences of young women by focusing primarily on subcultures populated by young men.<sup>73</sup> Laurain Leblanc in her study of women punks asserts that participants' subjective understanding of their involvement reveals a more nuanced understanding of resistance. She found that punk girls recognized the sexism in the punk scene, but still found meaning in consciously defying the "femininity game," dominant standards of feminine beauty and manners.<sup>74</sup> They might not always be challenging the structural disadvantages women face (such as wage discrimination), but these punk women still found personal empowerment in their resistance whether it was purposeful resistance or not. Wall in our interview recalled a show when her first band The Wurst played at the Marion Hotel: "the Marion was a bar to go to, really

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<sup>73</sup> Anita Harris, *Next Wave Cultures: Feminism, Subcultures, Activism*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 5.

<sup>74</sup> Louraine LeBlanc, *Pretty in Punk: Girls' Gender Resistance in a boys Subculture*, (Rutgers University Press, 1999).

early punk days, where it was a kind of an us-and-them kind of environment there because one side would be [throws arms up] us like the punks and the other side would be more I would describe as yeah, the redneck crowd, close to the pool tables. You know there was some tension sometimes, I remember walking past this one table, this guy says to me, ‘nice tits’ and I just said ‘well you’re a fat sack of shit,’ so I went up to dance and was near a pillar and the guy threw a beer bottle at me and missed but it smashed up on the pillar and had broken glass raining down.”<sup>75</sup> In the same story she recalls her friend also being groped by people at that bar that night and when I asked her if she felt actions such as those ever made her think that perhaps it wasn’t a good idea to be there she responded, “probably made you want to do it more. [laughs and we said it in sync], oh yeah for sure! You know it was it was something - it was something to be part of that, that blossoming scene.”<sup>76</sup>

In talking with the two women about possible themes (such as politics or feminism) that may have worked into the songwriting process, I asked Fonseca if they (Ruggedy Annes) had felt they were a part of a politically driven part of punk or if they sung about women empowerment and she responded that, “we weren’t writing songs as feminists, usually the songs we write affect everybody and we didn’t consider ourselves a feminist band, you know, it was sort of like, more like wanting equality for everybody, right? And we did touch on things like, Ruth had written a song called “G.I. Joe”, and Wall had written one called “Pretty Package”, which, as you know, her passion is animal rights, so we wrote about things we personally are involved with.”<sup>77</sup> Wall shared similar answer, when asked the same question and in our interview she specified that, “Margaret and I wrote a song together called “Pretty Package” which is uh all about factory

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<sup>75</sup> Wall, interview, 34:13.

<sup>76</sup> Wall, interview, 34:13.

<sup>77</sup> Fonseca, interview, 1:00:40.

farming.”<sup>78</sup> She then tells me that every year for her annual birthday party, she creates both a fundraiser and a show melding both passions together. She states that being able to meld the two together is extremely important for her, “they're fundraisers for different animal groups. so I'm always plotting and scheming, how can I use this to do this you know and but not losing sight of the fact that you got to do what's important to you for your heart otherwise you just lose yourself in constantly fighting for a cause, sort of thing, it's all got to kind of work together very organically, and mesh together, and that way you'll stay happy and you'll be in it for the for the long haul.”<sup>79</sup>

As Helen Reddington states, the “stereotype of young punk women in fishnet stockings with panda eyes, stilettos and spiky blonde hair”<sup>80</sup> does occur but that many women find connection with more of the punk way of thinking than on the fashion that media and cultural practitioners put out into the world. When discussing the different look of punk in Britain and then comparing it to Winnipeg, Fonseca, when on a trip in London “noticed in 1980, it was much more, say, severe looking, you know, punk fashion there; it was definitely ahead of Winnipeg, fashion-wise, but that was okay, they were getting into the whole punk scene.”<sup>81</sup> Walter in describing the fashion stated that, “the look (fashion) was less radical than it is now, partly because the clothing had to be made by hand and even band shirts were hard to come by some punks wore regular street clothes and did not feel obliged to dress the part; Punk, after all, was more about attitude and disdain for authority than it was about clothing.”<sup>82</sup> Discussing punk

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<sup>78</sup> Wall, interview, 1:48:26.

<sup>79</sup> Wall, interview, 1:48:41.

<sup>80</sup> Helen Reddington, *The Lost Women of Rock Music: Female Musicians of the Punk Era*, (Routledge, 2007), 2.

<sup>81</sup> Fonseca, interview, 1:08:37.

<sup>82</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 39.

fashion with Fonseca, she discussed how much personal creativity was a large part of what she wore.

I was always into a bit of everything. With the punk fashion, though, I really enjoyed, I do wear a lot of black. I am trying to move in into colour a bit more, I still have so many black clothes. I just love lace and leather and stuff. I had lace on my guitar for a while and fingerless leather gloves. I have a skirt at home I used to wear on stage sometimes, it was, cut up to here [gestures on thigh] and it goes up with a zipper here and then kind of opens up like that, and I love the skirt with chains going down here, between the legs, that kind of thing. Different things like that. I never did too much with my hair, as far as spiking or that kind of thing, it just wasn't for me. I like to design clothes or take something I bought and totally alter it, adding things to it, like jewellery, chains, lace and things, I like that.

In connecting punk back to her discussion on veganism, Wall stated that,

I never experienced anything like that (being shunned for being a vegan) but I hung around with punks you know so nobody gave a shit [Laughs] you know like there was nothing like that at all. There'd be times that you'd be maybe at the Albert and somebody walked in with a cowboy hat and you know it was nothing but if you tried walking in as a punk into a Western bar, um somehow I think there might be an issue with that [laughs] so that was that's probably my favourite part I think about just like the open-mindedness and yeah like the screw-up authority and like you see kind of see through it, you know just not like blindly following, carving out your own your own kind of a thing.<sup>83</sup>

It is really that simple, punk allowed an individual freedom of identity, and it allowed you to express yourself in a manner of different ways with the confidence to do so. When I asked Fonseca whether she felt that punk had saved her, like many had mentioned in other media sources, she said that,

I wouldn't say saved me, I would say it was a perfect thing that came along for me musically, because once I started hearing it, it was a perfect avenue, to be writing my music through. Like playing guitar and putting poetry to it and it was perfect that way. It

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<sup>83</sup> Wall, Interview (41:03) she goes on to say (discussing in-fighting within social justice groups) that, "I've always thought you know what you could learn people in the animal rights movement can learn something from the punks because I think the best shows to go to is when all the bands are different you know they're all doing their own thing but everybody's supportive of each other so I think that would be a good lesson for the you know the animal rights movement to learn and then conversely I've always like why aren't more punks vegan like once you start seeing through the you know the marketing and everything else like it's just like okay like it's funny like food is such an interesting thing."

was a great large tight music scene, and I still have lots of friends from there, Debbie and I are still very close. I've met like ... three of my long-term partners in that scene even.<sup>84</sup>

Some in the scene felt this and more. In revisiting Andes concept of 'punk careers' discussed earlier in the chapter, there was a feeling when talking with Fonseca and Wall that they had moved through Andes stages and had gracefully landed into the third stage. This can be seen in the way that they still very much participate in the local punk scene. As much as there is a contradiction in the individualism of members vs their participation in a community, Andes third stage of transmission is relevant. In her study of older women and their participation in punk scenes, Laura Way states that the punk attitude expressed by the older women came through with the "feelings expressed was that punk was a lifestyle and a state of mind,"<sup>85</sup> She describes that the "punk community was seen as a group for people all following a punk way of life, an alternative culture for those who felt that they did not fit in, providing an alternative to mainstream society and not following the crowd."<sup>86</sup> That through women "defining themselves as different and individual, the punk women created lifestyles for themselves that fitted into the punk subculture and provided them with a sense of belonging to complement their punk identity."<sup>87</sup> Both women, believed that they still had this punk attitude as they moved through their lives, that it called to the various pursuits they paid attention to, such as animal activism for Wall and ongoing creative pursuits for Fonseca.

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<sup>84</sup> Fonseca, interview, 1:11:02.

<sup>85</sup> Laura Way, "Playing A-Minor in the Punk Scene? Exploring the Articulation of Identity by Older Women Punks." In *Fight Back: Punk, Politics and Resistance* (Manchester University Press, 2016), 73.

<sup>86</sup> Way, "Playing A-Minor," 73.

<sup>87</sup> Way, "Playing A-Minor," 73.

### Women and Punk in Winnipeg

Fonseca and Wall were both born and grew up in Winnipeg. Music came to them in their early years as they were growing up in Winnipeg and from family influences. Both women were surrounded by music growing up and played various instruments. Their beginnings in the scene and their experiences represent a glimpse at not only a women's perspective in the scene but, their stories show how memories are constructed differently. While collecting their stories, they shared moments that they were both together for (such as playing shows and touring), but their experiences individually were different as they experienced these moments. This is one of the reasons collecting stories is important, especially for music scenes as you can end up having such a rich tapestry of lived moments from one event in time. In their opening introductions, they both described their younger years and their connection to music at that age.

Wall was born in the North End and is the oldest of four sisters. She remembered that music was always a part of their life growing up and that their father was really into country such as Hank Snow and Roy Orbison. Her house often had kitchen parties where her uncle would play accordion, and her grandpa played the guitar. She stated that she did take “violin lessons in grade five, which I thought could have translated more into fiddle music, but that lasted about as long as grade five did.”<sup>88</sup>

Fonseca has always lived in Winnipeg and has a large family. She also came from a very musical family and tells a story about her grandmother, “my grandmother lived in the Pembina Valley in southern Manitoba, and she used to ride a horse around and give piano lessons to different neighbours around there. She eventually moved to Winnipeg and got married. She

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<sup>88</sup> Wall, interview, 24:40.

taught my mom piano and she taught most of us how to play as well. So that was how the music started.”<sup>89</sup>

Fonseca and Wall’s introduction to punk came to them as teenagers and both while attending school. For both, it was when they were transitioning out of high school and just starting university. For Wall it was when she was attending pre-veterinary courses at the University of Manitoba, and it happened at the same time as her activist journey began. While at the Glen Lee Research farm, “there was a little calf there and I went up to say, “hi little calf” and they licked my face and I realized you're no different than the dog and I that's when I stopped eating meat so that was 44 years ago, it's gonna be 45 years I'll be turning 65 this year.”<sup>90</sup> For Fonseca, it was when she entered a commerce stream in University. After seven weeks she decided it was not for her. She explains, “I was in commerce and after about seven weeks, I was sitting there one day before exams, and thinking, I don't know, this isn't really what I want to do, I don't have to be in school anymore. So, I left. I started taking guitar lessons after that and shortly after that, was when I was discovering the punk scene in Winnipeg.”<sup>91</sup>

Wall was introduced to the punk scene in Winnipeg when her cousin took her to the Norlander Hotel to see a band called The Fuse in 1978/79 and she explains that,

it was the first time I had ever heard anything other than commercial you know they were playing like The Who, Joe Jackson you know just stuff that you know don't normally hear on the radio and it wasn't the music I got this really big crush on the biggest player ... [laughs] so thank you hormones and I just started going out to see these guys all the time because I was absolutely fixated on the on the bass player and I started meeting some people like Eddie Asselin and Jamie Pearson and Mitch Funk, like some folks that were into like this punk music that I've never been exposed to before. My first actual punk

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<sup>89</sup> Fonseca, interview, 19:04.

<sup>90</sup> Wall, interview. More information can be found on her candidacy page for Animal Protection Party (Winnipeg Centre), she joined Winnipeg’s first animal rights group in 1987 and to this day continues to fundraiser and build awareness for veganism, animal rights and educate on ethical agriculture and farming. For more please see: <https://www.youcount.ca/candidates/5428#/> and <https://www.humanefood.ca/canadas-shame-treatment-of-farm-animals/>

<sup>91</sup> Fonseca, interview, 21:39.

show was Lowlife, and they were playing at the Belgian Club so that was my first show.<sup>92</sup>

Fonseca's punk introduction came through her younger sister who was dating someone in the local band Discharge. She explains, "I started hearing the Jam and the Damned, and Elvis Costello. I started dating a guy who was in another early punk band in Winnipeg called Lowlife, that was Brad (Hrushka)."<sup>93</sup> Another moment for her happened the same year in 1980 when she went on a trip to England with her boyfriend, she explained "the punk scene was just totally magical then. There was so much happening and after hearing so much about it Brad and I went there as well."<sup>94</sup> She then lists all the bands that they managed to see on that trip and she was correct, so much music was occurring during that time in England (London) at that time,

they had like three bands every night at some bar around us, we saw, The Buzzcocks and The Straycats, The Jam twice in Brighton and got to meet them after and they were super friendly, like Paul Weller was super friendly. We saw The Pretenders, The Skids, Slade, and U2. U2 hadn't even made it here yet, but I could tell they were, very good. We saw a band called The Au Pairs that had two women and two men. They were very good, their encore was "Peace in My Heart" by Janice Joplin. She had that real strong, throaty voice. I bought one of their singles out there and it actually became one of our first cover tunes in the Ruggedy Annes; song called "Kerb Crawler."<sup>95</sup>

Her love for punk rock really took hold and at the time she was taking guitar lessons. Her teacher wanted to teach her a lot of notes, but she was adamant on what she wanted to learn. She told me,

I kept saying to him, I want to learn bar chords. I want to start playing, punk music mostly and down strokes, you know, fast punk music and I learned both from him and I moved on [laughs]. I was able to actually bring him one of my albums after. My solo one or Ruggedy Anne's, maybe I'm not sure. I was able to say to him, you taught me and, something came of it.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Wall, interview, 26:28.

<sup>93</sup> Fonseca, interview, 24:02-26:00.

<sup>94</sup> Fonseca, interview, 22:58.

<sup>95</sup> Fonseca, interview, 24:02-26:00.

<sup>96</sup> Fonseca, interview, 26:00.

## The Wurst

Winnipeg's first all-female punk rock band was The Wurst in 1979. This band consisted of four women: Allison Cain (guitar), Debbie Wall (drums), Margo McCall (bass), and Carolyn Shipley on vocals. Wall reflects in our interview on how the band started in a discussion at the House of Beep, when "Allison, she had approached me at one point and asked me if I wanted to play guitar in an all-girl punk band and I went yeah sure why not, because I sort of fiddled around with ... like I'd asked my dad about guitar. I had shown some interest but then nothing ever came of it."<sup>97</sup> After this it was another meet up at a show at the Granite Curling Club (beside the Osborne Bridge) that the conversation was again introduced, "she [Allison] had snuck in some gins and we were drinking some gin and she says 'hey do you want to play drums in an all-girl band?' and I went I don't know how to play drums and she's like yeah so what I don't know how to play guitar, and I went okay! [laughs]"<sup>98</sup>

Wall then describes when all four of them, with the help of some local other band members helped them figure out their instruments at the Spud Club. The Spud Club was located downtown Winnipeg, where Portage Place sits today, and it is where the band Stretch Marks had taken up living. Wall recalls, "we were gathered in a place called the Spud Club [The Downtown Theatre], some of the guys from the scene came and helped us sort out our limbs to help us learn our instruments and we played 'Louie Louie' over and over and over again [laughs] until we kind of got it and we played our first show nine weeks later and we even had an original or two 'Shit for Brains' which I wrote about a boyfriend [laughs]."<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Wall, interview, 28:52.

<sup>98</sup> Wall, interview, 28:52.

<sup>99</sup> Wall, interview, 29:41- 30:27.

When I asked Wall what sort of music they played as a band she stated that “we played “It's My Life” by The Animals that was one of the first songs that we learned, also “I Want to be Your Dog” (Stooges/Iggy Pop) “Shit for Brains” can't forget ‘Shit for Brains’ [laughs], yeah just kind of basic I mean, we were just picked up our instruments for the first time, so we kept it simple.”<sup>100</sup> She even joked later in the interview that when I start playing my guitar again that I could even write my own version of ‘Shit for Brains.’

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<sup>100</sup> Wall, interview, 48:01.



Figure 9: The Wurst: band photoshoot in cemetery 1980, photo by Gordie Agar, photo of Debbie Wall by Agar, live at C.O.F. Hall Nov. 1980 by Gordie Aga. From Debbie Wall's collection.

### The Ruggedy Annes

By the time Fonseca was taking guitar lessons, the formation of a band was already in her thoughts. In our interview she told me that she had initially advertised in the local newspaper and that was just how it was done back then. It was around this time that she says that she met Ruth (Markham) and stated that, “she was also in the punk scene; she was a bass player and looking to form a band as well. So, I met up with her and her friend Diane was playing drums. We were all at a similar level of knowing our instruments, right? Ruth and I wrote well together.”<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Fonseca, interview, 27:01.

Fonseca had a very specific sound in mind, she wanted to “to have a heavy edge to it, not a light sound or silly lyrics or anything; I wanted it to have some depth to it. And sound wise, I love the guitar sound of Black Sabbath, you know, that thick, warm distortion. And so, I eventually bought my amp and instrument to get that sound, like a Marshall and a Gibson SG.”<sup>102</sup> She came to discover that Ruth also had interest in writing serious thoughtful lyrics and that they both wrote poetry, so it fell into place and most of the songs started off as a poem.<sup>103</sup> Fonseca mentioned that they were not a band that just jammed or anything and that she had never really done much jamming with people, “I sort of create better on my own and then kind of present it to the band. That’s how I work, and we usually did that and both of us would come up with things and show it to each other, and Debbie would come in there and fill out with the drumming. Debbie started to write songs eventually to.”<sup>104</sup>

According to Fonseca the band formed in May of 1981, with herself, Ruth and Diane. They did some basement shows and in August of that year, they had their first actual show at the Zoo (previously called The Osborne Village Dance Hall) in the basement.<sup>105</sup> That show took all of thirteen minutes and played about six songs.<sup>106</sup> In June of the following year (1982), Diane had left the band. That was when Wall joined them as their drummer adding a heavier and tighter sound to their music. Then in 1983 Jake Moore joined as singer and in 1984, they started to do mini tours out in western Canada.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Fonseca, interview, 27:07.

<sup>103</sup> Fonseca, interview, 27:07.

<sup>104</sup> Fonseca, interview, 27:07.

<sup>105</sup> Fonseca, interview, 33:03.

<sup>106</sup> Fonseca, interview, 33:03.

<sup>107</sup> Fonseca, interview, 33:03.

When I asked how they got their band name, Fonseca stated that, “It’s really hard to find a good band name because I didn’t want something that’s really obscure. You know, you’d have to explain it to everybody every time you tell them what it is.”<sup>108</sup> She then read from an early interview where they were asked the same question, “I said Raggedy, said Ruth. I said Ruggedy, said Diane. And I said Annes, concluded Margaret (laughs). It’s as simple as that. But that was after tossing around, you know, so many names.”<sup>109</sup> Wall remembers that they had a competition to try to name the band with choices like, “Pink Steel is one and Slut Meat or something about that that’s pretty punk [laughs] I’m glad they chose Ruggedy Annes.”<sup>110</sup>

I asked Fonseca what kind of cover songs would you do, and she responded that she “really enjoyed bands like Joy Division, Bauhaus. So, we had done “Novelty” by Joy Division and “Dark Entries” by Bauhaus; it’s very hard, fast.”<sup>111</sup> She further discussed the music choices for the band and what she liked to play:

“Novelty “is a bit slower, kind of, “Dark Entries” is a real, in your face, downstroke, very, very hard song. That’s the kind of song I like to play on stage, you know, something that has energy to it, that kind of thing. We also did “Back from the Dead” by The Adverts, “Open Your Eyes” by The Avengers, “School Days” by The Runaways, “Desperado” by Alice Cooper. It’s a slower one, but I love that song, and I’ve seen him a couple times in concert, and he never does that one live. “Lovers and Fools by Rich Kids; “Damaged Goods”, which is on the solo album, by Gang of Four, and a song by Au Pairs, a band I mentioned from England, “Kerb Crawler.” So that’s some of the ones we did. One by Buzzcocks as well; it was sort of a lesser known one, and we tried it out. We tried practicing “Ballroom Blitz.”<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Fonseca, interview, 1:34:27.

<sup>109</sup> Fonseca, interview, 1:34:27.

<sup>110</sup> Wall, interview, 1:26:28.

<sup>111</sup> Fonseca, interview, 48:33.

<sup>112</sup> Fonseca, interview, 48:33.

### Being on Tour

Touring was and still is a major component of being in a band in Canada. Many friends' bands always have such rich stories from their tours whether it was travelling across Canada or internationally. Touring itself has changed a great deal with the internet and having access to instant communication when preparing a tour. Planning for a tour pre-internet took a lot of work, with phone calls (that were not cheap), sometimes letter writing, just to set up venue dates ahead of time. Sometimes friends in other cities would be the ones reaching out to their local spots to set up dates. Fonseca stated that "we saved up money from our shows, from recording and touring, that's how we did it."<sup>113</sup> Whether they are small local bands or a stadium band, being on tour is always a special element of band life.

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<sup>113</sup> Fonseca, interview, 27:07.



*Figure 10: Photographs of The Ruggedy Annes from Margaret Fonseca personal collection. Images include both Diane and Debbie as drummers. Locations include shows at Vimy Ridge Park Aug. 24, 1983 (photo by Lynn Suderman), show at The Royal Albert, The Doghouse June 3-4, 1983, Churchill High School March 4, 1983, Lions Telethon at Concert Hall Jan. 23, 1983, Warehouse Party Oct. 1, 1982, Plug In Art Gallery, The Last Movie (Downtown Theatre), and a house party at the House of Beep.*

We talked about touring as a punk band in Canada, and their stories were similar to those I've heard in the past of mayhem, vehicle breakdowns, sleeping in various locales, rationing food and the valuable connections they made along the way. Even the act of touring as local bands

involved the practice of DIY, particularly in a time where social media and the internet were not even a thought, and you were totally dependent on word of mouth and who knew who and where. As Wall states in our interview,

yeah these kids these days don't realize how lucky they got it with the internet, but yeah like trying to arrange something required like long distance phone calls and Mike Lambert, who has since passed away, was a good source, like he did a lot of you know promotion here in Winnipeg, so got a few connections from him trying ... man, I can't (remember), who did most of the arranging? Maybe ... I'm sure I did some of the phone calls and whatnot but yeah, setting up a tour we only went on one really big tour.<sup>114</sup>

In fall of 1984, The Ruggedy Annes went on a western tour that got them playing in Regina twice and then in Calgary and Edmonton as well.<sup>115</sup> The Ruggedy Annes released their only album in 1985 entitled *Jagged Thoughts* and it was released by an independent record label called Tab Records based out of Los Angeles (but had a Winnipeg connection working out there). In the summer of 1985, in support of their new release, they did a cross Canada tour, that first went out east to Quebec City, Montreal, and Toronto; circling back to the west hitting Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, and finally Vancouver.<sup>116</sup> The band then would make their way down to California where they would play shows in Long Beach and in Hollywood. All the members of Ruggedy Annes were in their mid-20's at this time. Wall recalls the relationship with Tab Records and the tour that supported the album release,

we had the record distributed through Tab Records (with some other Winnipeg bands did as well), that's how we sort of latched on to them as a as a label I guess, and there was a gal that had been assigned to kind of help promote us and we were under the understanding that there was going to be some shows set up in in the states and then it ended up that she kind of pulled the plug on that. So, we had already taken like had the two tours set up for ourselves across down to Vancouver and we thought, well why don't we drive down and see what's going on since we're already took the time off of work and everything, so that's how we ended up going down there.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Wall, interview, 1:36:12.

<sup>115</sup> Fonseca, interview, 33:03.

<sup>116</sup> Fonseca, interview, 35:12.

<sup>117</sup> Wall, interview, 1:36:48.

Fonseca's retelling of tour life has all those elements along with some misadventures, "on our second tour, the Western tour in 1985, we were paying ourselves five dollars each, for food. So, we somehow managed on that. I remember, I found a pair of earrings at a gas station, and I traded my food money for that. So, I don't know what I ate that day (laughs)."<sup>118</sup> She continues a time when they had car problems, "we had a couple of van issues, driving out west, a tire blew. It also happened between Toronto and Montreal, it had started to rain, so Ruth and her boyfriend Jeff hitchhiked ahead to get help, they walked four miles in hail, everything. We had borrowed a van from the Winnipeg band Stretch Marks, and it was set up perfectly for touring. You could pack in all the instruments underneath and then sleep on top of that."<sup>119</sup>

Vehicles breaking down is a very common theme on tour, but they do at times allow for good stories to be told. Fonseca described how the punk network stretched across Canada in the cities that they had played in, scene members are always willing to help others that are connected in similar scenes. On tour "they rarely stayed at hotels and usually stayed at friends, other bands homes, or their family members' homes. Even their trip to California was supplemented by a night at Ruth's aunt's place."<sup>120</sup> Travelling on a budget is key as a local band, as you cannot depend on making a lot from playing or if you have merchandise, from the sales of that.

When The Ruggedy Annes took their tour south of the border to California, the band had met up with the record company representative in Los Angeles, who had maybe set up a show for them to play with the band 7 Seconds, but no details were concrete, so they as a band took some time and headed to Venice Beach.<sup>121</sup> Fonseca describes the events that unfolded:

we were at the beach one day at Venice Beach and our girlfriend whose house we're staying at came running down the beach at around six o'clock and said, you got a phone

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<sup>118</sup> Fonseca, interview, 35:40.

<sup>119</sup> Fonseca, interview, 37:17.

<sup>120</sup> Fonseca, interview, 37:31.

<sup>121</sup> Fonseca, interview, 38:00.

call from Tab. You're playing tonight in Long Beach, with *7 Seconds*. And so, we rushed over there, it was this huge place. It was a hardcore show with about five bands. We were sharing instruments with people, we weren't on yet, Ruth and Jake were outside in the van and suddenly they, they announced and here's Raggedy Annes, you know, from ... wherever. Debbie and I went up on stage and started playing and Ruth and Jake heard us, so Debbie and I are up on stage playing ... Ruth and Jake came running in and joined us and we had about 15 minutes left to play; it was a short set and it was so much fun (laughs), so much chaotic energy in there. So, we are on stage and people are slam dancing and knocking into us and banging my guitar and everything and it was excellent (laughs). A lot of fun and we had lots of audience members coming up after and asking, 'where are you guys from?', 'What's the scene like there in Canada?' There was a lot of interest. Yeah, that was good.<sup>122</sup>

The band then went on to do a show the next night in Hollywood (Jake had set it up), another last-minute show at the Cathay de Grande. In talking about the Hollywood show, Wall recalled, "I was really glad that I was in the back and the drums instead of the front, I kinda felt bad for the other gals being up front, 'oh this looks kind of dangerous' up there (laughs) but that was that was fun, we were playing with this band called uh Love Tunnel."<sup>123</sup> Fonseca told me during the interview that she felt much more relaxed playing shows on tour, more so than shows they played locally in Winnipeg. She figured that it was because when the audience are people you do not know, you just tend to loosen up a bit.<sup>124</sup> Wall stated that, "we ended up playing a show in Hollywood which is kind of neat, but touring, I really enjoyed touring actually. I felt that that we got more support in other cities than we did in Winnipeg. It was fun to go and have people really enthusiastic and, had our first mosh pit at this show that we played in Hollywood; in the show that we played there."<sup>125</sup> I asked Wall if she ever had a favourite place they played and she recalled fond memories of when they played in Quebec and received a personal tour of the city from a local there that also played drums and spoke French, the language barrier did not hinder

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<sup>122</sup> Fonseca, interview, 40:34.

<sup>123</sup> Wall, interview, 1:39:28.

<sup>124</sup> Fonseca, interview, 46:28.

<sup>125</sup> Wall, interview, 1:36:48.

the tour of the city. She stated, “I remember that more than the show [laughs] and then I felt really bilingual because I wanted to get a black coffee so, I went you know went into whatever shop, ‘cafe noir’ and I got what I wanted, and I was just like wow look at me, so bilingual, ‘I play le drums you know’.”<sup>126</sup>

I asked both women if being in an all-female band ever had either bad repercussions or how they had simply just felt being in a band with no male members. Wall commented that “I think a lot of people came out because it was a novelty and then we kind of hoped that they would come back again because they liked the music.”<sup>127</sup> She further explains a few different situations both in local situations and while on tour through advertising:

I think was Paradise Garage and we were playing at Georgie's which is way down Portage and more of a rocker bar and I think they were having some sort of a battle of the bands or something, and we played and we're loading gear in and the door dude says ‘the girlfriends aren't on the guest list they have to pay to get in’ and I went I'm in the band and you wouldn't believe me [laughs]. I just like okay this is like a different world right? like that kind of that kind of attitude so I and it was some of the posters like they're my favourite one, (57:26) oh there we played each season Calgary and they had like the little calendar of bands playing and for Ruggedy Anne's ALL GIRL BAND you know [laughs] you don't see that anymore right but you know but like you said it was kind of like everybody kind of needs a shtick so if that was our shtick and I got people out that was fine but there was a really we played in in Quebec and then on the poster we had ‘Rock au Feminine’ [laughs] I love that!! because it was all French right?

### The Importance of Place to a Scene

One of the important aspects of a localized music scene is the idea of place. Not only is the physical space necessary for the establishment of music scenes, but they are also important for maintaining the community created by the scene. These places that may seem arbitrary to most, are parts of the collective and the individual memories of scene members. All of which add

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<sup>126</sup> Wall, interview, 1:39:28.

<sup>127</sup> Wall, interview, 55:13-56:06.

contextual layers to stories and create an archival landscape of music heritage history. For the punk spaces in Winnipeg, many of the original spots where it was one of the punk houses, venues, or record shops have all but disappeared. Gentrification of the city, houses plagued by no upkeep and time have been repurposed or torn down and for the several key record stores that used to exist here, they are all gone, leaving only Into the Music in the exchange and even that shop is relatively new when looking at the time frames for this specific paper. Place and a community space is integral to a scene within a city landscape. It creates locales for members.

In Jeannette Bastian's paper "Records, Memory, Space: Locating Archives in the Landscape,"<sup>128</sup> she presents some questions that felt important to look at when examining local music scenes and the records that are created from those scenes. Music scenes and place cannot be separated. Place is necessary for a scene to thrive. Place in a way becomes a geographic equivalent to an individual's identity as well a part of the collective identity. When looking at the concepts of geography, landscape, space, and a place; they cannot always be seen as separate ideas specifically when looking at it in a music-based context. Adam Krims looks at the ties between music, place and space in his paper "Music, Space, and Place: The Geography of Music" and believes that,

Landscape and place both emerge as interactions among locality, that cultural interpretations of that locality and the music that is discussed within it ... are not constructed but more importantly profoundly historical, merging from tensions and struggles that are constantly changing and inflected, at the intersections of time, space, and cultural struggle and that landscapes are also constructed musically.<sup>129</sup>

Stories collected and heard over time from band members and fans, as well as, the material from personal collections that tie into special locations throughout Winnipeg show how

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<sup>128</sup> Jeannette A. Bastian. "Locating Archives within the Landscape: Records, Memory and Place," *Public history review* 21 (2014): 45–59, <https://doi.org/10.5130/phrj.v21i0.3822>.

<sup>129</sup> Adam Krims. "Music, Space, and Place: The Geography of Music," In *the Cultural Study of Music*, eds. Adam Krims; Middleton, Richard; Clayton, Martin; Herbert, Trevor (Routledge, 2012), 162–170.

Bastian believes that, “records help to define our place within a landscape, ground our ability to locate ourselves in our communities within the larger topography and fuel our collective identity and sense of our cultural selves.”<sup>130</sup> As Walter states, “punk houses dotted the city, and most of them were called the ‘house’ of something or another, The House of Nar on Simcoe Street was among the punk enclaves”, including (but certainly not limited to) the punk house on Banning Street, The Stretch Pad (where members of The Stretch Marks lived), Warsaw Ghetto (practice house), and Fort Street punk houses.<sup>131</sup> The members of the Nostrils all left home at the same time and would move as a group, to the House of Noz (Furby Street) and quoting drummer John Jacobs (in remembering the House of Noz) in Walters book, that this specific locale, had a “relaxed atmosphere and they would tape newspaper clippings to the wall and write funny captions on them.”<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Bastian. “Locating Archives,” 47.

<sup>131</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 81.

<sup>132</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 43.

One of the ‘places of memory’ was the House of Beep. Like other punk houses, it provided a place to live for people and would on occasion be transformed into jam/gig spaces for the punk



Figure 11: Photograph of the House of Beep on River Avenue in Winnipeg, Manitoba by Sharon E. Humphrey, 2022.

banks that frequented the house. Not only does the house still exist but the multitude of historical memories that are gathered from scene members works exactly as Bastian describes.

This house still stands today as a functional lived in house on River Avenue and I wonder if its current occupants know of its immense importance to so many people in the

construction of cultural identity for the punks of Winnipeg. As Brian Tucker states, “punk places tend not to last long; punks come and go and typically wreck the place.”<sup>133</sup> Wall explains in

the *Piss on You* documentary, while standing in

front house on River Avenue that the House of Beep “once housed one of Winnipeg’s most infamous party houses. The whole show would kind of spill over to the House of Beep, and we had some pretty major parties.”<sup>134</sup>

Joanne Clarke’s article on the fanzine *Jett Set*, explains that there was a real lack of places and spaces that this music could find to play in. She stated that, “the sound of punk was a needed change to the music that was around at that time, and it was a protest against the hard rock music

<sup>133</sup> Brian Tucker, “Punk Places: The Role of Space in Subcultural Life,” *Punkademics: The Basement Show in the Ivory Tower* in, ed. Zack Furness (AK Press, 2012), 211.

<sup>134</sup> Martin, *Piss on You*.

and pop that was hitting the charts and bars.”<sup>135</sup> *Jett Set* Editor Gordon Agar explains “the music of punk is simply back to basics – simple lyrics and standard three-chord melodies, it is however loud, crude and raunch at its best and Winnipeg pub owners were saying no.”<sup>136</sup> Reporter Tillman stated that “no promoter or club owner here has yet shown the guts to deviate from the safe norm and give the punks a chance and though the bands believe that they can find their audiences among Winnipeggers, they need the exposure, the time, the place and some money to make it happen.”<sup>137</sup> This was exactly what the fanzines hoped to produce, a space to highlight and share the music scene in the city. “There was a sense of excitement at early shows. Everything was fresh and new and there was a feeling that anything could happen at them and despite many different factions and allegations the disenfranchised youth enjoyed a strong sense of empowerment and camaraderie”<sup>138</sup>

The Marion Hotel in St. Boniface was one of the first (and one of the only) venues to book punk bands. Conflicts often arose with the two different crowds that populated there. According to Walter it “had a PA system that was far superior to anything the punks were used to and some of the bands learned how truly awful they were for the first time through the monitors that actually worked.”<sup>139</sup> Being met with mixed fanfare at the Marion that had a regular clientele of daily drinkers, they did not take too well to this new sound and crowd it brought with it that suddenly situated themselves in their space.<sup>140</sup> Being one of the venues that would host punk bands because they were desperate for some money, Walters states that Winnipeg’s Le

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<sup>135</sup> Clarke, Joanne, “Jett Set ‘fanzine’ really taking off,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, June 12, 1980, <http://hdl.handle.net/10719/2860547>.

<sup>136</sup> Clarke, “Jett Set ‘fanzine.’”

<sup>137</sup> Tilman, “Is there Punk on Mars?”

<sup>138</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 39.

<sup>139</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 39.

<sup>140</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 38.

Kille played there in September of 1980 for a whole week of shows.<sup>141</sup> As Walter further describes, “the regular punks would come to the shows of the weekend but the crowd that would be in attendance during the weekdays were a mix of low-level drug dealers and foot bikers, who would roll beer bottles under the musicians feet giving way to several nasty encounters.”<sup>142</sup>

The legendary The Royal Albert started to book shows in 1980.<sup>143</sup> Other venues included the various punk houses, Wellingtons, and the Granite Curling Club just off Osborne Avenue. Some of the community run spaces that tolerated the early punks were the Belgian Club, Lithuanian Hall, St. James Hall, or the Desh Bhagat at 469 Magnus. Other venues that hosted the early punk shows in Winnipeg were the Plug in Gallery which put on the second punk show and the Winnipeg Art Gallery where Lowlife and Popular Mechanix played in 1979.<sup>144</sup> Other mentions were the Doghouse, and Le Rendezvous in St. Boniface. Halls were popular because they had space, minimal door security use and provided a sense of freedom. Remembering one of the halls that bands played in Wall explains how they would get around certain rules and use that DIY sensibility when putting on events,

There was the Eagles Hall, I think yeah but it was a lot more D.I.Y. like Matt Venet had called it ‘Gutters Bowling Team’ so he created bowling teams so that he could get liquor licenses for halls so kind of worked around the system that way. They used to have like a really ratty old bowling pin at the front you know when you’re paying cover to get in, yeah I put on a show once where they required a security guard and I got an uncle of mine just because he kind of looked like he could be one and there was no need for one, but there was a requirement for the show so just kind of played the game a little bit.<sup>145</sup>

One of the more popular venues was Wellington’s Cabaret which was in the basement of the St. Charles Hotel at 22 Albert Street in the Exchange (Figure 16). It is no longer open and has

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<sup>141</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 68.

<sup>142</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 48.

<sup>143</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 38-39.

<sup>144</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 10-11.

<sup>145</sup> Wall, interview, 33:07.

not been for quite a while. For the most part attendees behaved themselves but on one occasion when the attendees at the Royal Albert Hotel next-door had a lot of pent up energy (as that venue did not allow slam dancing), the crowd moved next door to Wellington's and Walter describes that the "drunken punk rockers tore up the brass railings that went around the dance floor to the sounds of Stretch Marks and Personality Crisis."<sup>146</sup> Over all Wellington's seems to have been a venue of choice and good memories for those in the scene. I moved here after its time in the spotlight, so unfortunately missed out experiencing that venue.



Figure 12: Photograph of where Wellington's used to be on Albert Street, Photograph taken by Sharon E. Humphrey, 2022.

Another location that scene members frequently discuss is the Spud Club. Winnipeg's first punk run venue was a defunct club where the band Stretch Marks moved into as a band where many live shows occurred both locally and bands that were travelling through Winnipeg in the early days of punk. Gordie Agar stated that "the Spud Club only lasted a few months but while it was there it was at least a place where bands could play instead of the typical house party."<sup>147</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Walter, *Personality Crisis*, 72.

<sup>147</sup> Clarke, "Jett Set 'fanzine,'" 20.

Unlike other communities that have, through many members, their own collections, or cultural archives; music scenes often do not have a permanent place to call their own where their records can be kept. With all the houses and venues that have had such a strong part in the early days of the Winnipeg punk scene, none can be used as a community centre of sorts. They are either torn down, closed or like the House of Beep – new tenants. Creating a space that community members can keep their records is discussed in the following chapters and hopefully this project will highlight the importance of starting a local scene archive.

Attendance is and can be a rite of passage for many, it can include those who are in bands and those who are merely fans of the music. The movement that occurs for those travelling from the suburbs to go to inner city shows carry the same narrative interpretations that band members that travel to play in different locales also experience. Each creating a space/place, even if temporary, that includes a re-establishment of a place, creating a sense of belonging, of home, and which contributes to their self and collective identity as punks and scene members. As someone who has been to a lot of shows in all sorts of venues from the dingy basement to the bars, stadiums, and dancing nonstop on a grassy hill while watching The Ramones play at an outdoor space, being a part of the act in the context of punk is unlike anything one can experience. This can be said about many music scenes and includes venues I attended for other scenes to which I was a part such as the early Britpop or Rave communities. For punk, it does not set out necessarily to change these spaces but to create spaces where scene or community members have a space that is theirs alone for those moments. As Brian Tucker states, “punk places can be seen as heterotopias of resistance that function as sites of subject-constituting

knowledges and practices; not as firm structures outside dominant power, but as ad hoc shelters in which members of a subculture can experience some semblance of freedom.”<sup>148</sup>

One location that came up during both interviews was the Downtowner (Downtown Theatre) which was located on Portage Avenue, where Portage Place Mall now stands. There are two YouTube movies for that title on YouTube. The first one is not related at all but does show Winnipeg’s downtown at that time and the show listing on its marquee.<sup>149</sup> The second movie is a recording of the show itself. This film however does not catch any visuals of The Ruggedy Annes but does have audio of them playing at the start.<sup>150</sup> Both are great to see for a Winnipeg perspective and to see some of the live acts at that time and to understand the mayhem that occurred at the end of that night. On the following page is the show poster for that gig at the Downtown Theatre before it was torn down. Fonseca recalls, “that was a fun night. You know, people were, like, tearing out the seats of the theatre and there were bikers there as, like, being bouncers and stuff.”<sup>151</sup> Wall told me a story of that night:

I've got this great poster that was when Portage Place got torn down there was what was called *The Last Movie*, and you can find that on YouTube but there was this theatre called The Downtown Theatre (363 ½ Portage ) where they used to show pornos and that's where they had it, here's the marque for the Downtown Theatre and so the Ruggedy Annes were the door crash 'Door Crash Special,' like they as soon as they opened the door we started playing, and in the what we were hauling our gear and I went into the projector room and there's this old posters called the, *The Erotic Diary of a Lumberjack: Shows All and Tells All in Colour*' and this was like a hand-painted big-ass poster, so I got that laminated like I took it and somebody said well that's gonna you know it's gonna

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<sup>148</sup> Tucker, “Punk Places,” 210.

<sup>149</sup> Tim Bradt, “My Winnipeg circa 1979-80: the Last Movie!” July 14, 2018, Winnipeg, Manitoba. YouTube Video, 11:21. <https://youtu.be/LpiiuBvrq1M?si=Eif67wBZJvr5SSe>.

<sup>150</sup> LaFarm, “The Lost Movie: 1983...Ruggedy Annes, Monuments Galore, Dub Rifles, The Nostrils, and Stretch Marks,” April 6, 2021, Winnipeg, Manitoba. YouTube Video, 24:09 <https://youtu.be/d9clsmMQLEc?si=-h3j81nBhVih4qlu>.

<sup>151</sup> Fonseca, interview, 2:19:28.

diminish its value if you do that I went not as much as just letting it crumble to dust, yeah, like these posters that I have and that's so great.<sup>152</sup>

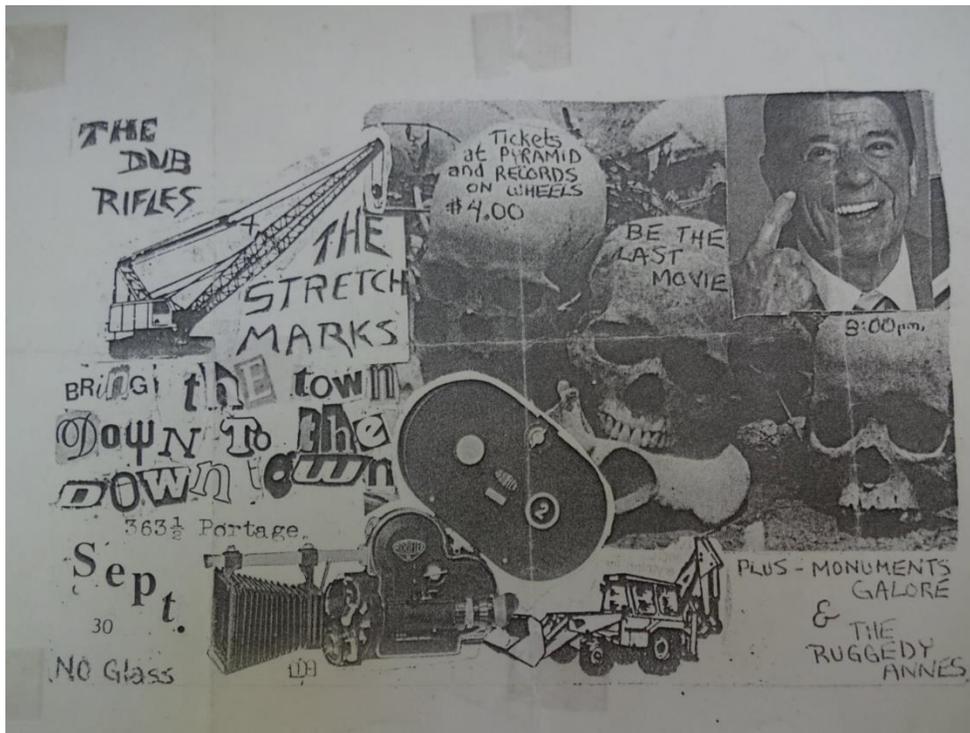


Figure 13: Gig poster for *The Last Movie* show at the Downtown Theatre Winnipeg, Manitoba. From Debbie Wall personal collection.

<sup>152</sup> Wall, interview, 1:29:10.

## Chapter Two – Scene Collections and What They Collect

*Q: Do you have a working definition of what constitutes a collection?*

*Collection/Archive,*

*Archive/Collection,*

*Collection/Bunch of Stuff,*

*a bunch of stuff that has survived the gnawing teeth of time, an assembly of materials that can explain something bigger than the sum of its parts.<sup>153</sup>*

“Why do you keep all this stuff?” ... is a question I hear a lot from others, my son and sometimes even myself. This ‘stuff’ can be found in boxes and contains a wide-ranging collection of my personal archives. The above quote from archivist Johan Kugelberg sums up the experience of collecting music memorabilia in its purest DIY approach. It is a bunch of stuff that has remarkably survived (by sometimes no fault of your own), the ‘gnawing teeth of time.’ As I look around my apartment, it is full of the most random objects and things, majority of them music related. Band posters on the wall, books, vinyl records and CDs everywhere, ticket stubs and set lists housed in frames, band photography of my own taken through the years, music flags that I have had since I was fifteen years old ... a few examples of my creative chaotic but somewhat orderly hoard of stuff. My once teenage bedroom has now evolved into a home, with all the space to hold all the things music and creative related. As Marjorie Kibby states in collecting personal music archives, “music is a complex example of compulsive acquisition because the objects remain in daily use, as well as having symbolic value; a music collection is at

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<sup>153</sup> Johan Kugelberg and Jason Camlot, “Situationist Stuff: Collection as Explanatory Accumulation.” In *Collection Thinking: Within and Without Libraries, Archives and Museums*, eds. Jason Camlot, Martha Langford, & Linda M. Morra, (Routledge, 2022), 120.

once an archive and a participatory practice.”<sup>154</sup> This material takes all shapes and forms and some of it is new and some, going back fifty years.

This chapter looks at the material that music scene participants collect in localised music scenes. These various forms of both tangible and intangible items are the historical footprints of participants in the music scenes both on the individual and the collective levels. These can be found primarily in personal collections of individuals who participated as fans and band members alike and these collections, although rough and most of the time not in a professionally organized manner, can be utilized as creating a substantial historical record for the community in which they find themselves. Collections such as these can be enriching not only for those who are active in the scene but can be very informative for people outside of the scene and for possible researchers in several disciplines looking to investigate local music communities. It creates a legitimacy for the everyday items that people collect and hold close to their heart - aiding in shaping their identity.

A way of looking at how music and memory is connected is by looking Lauren Istvandy's concept of the 'Lifetime Soundtrack' where music is very much connected to a person's autobiographical memory, this can be applied collectively when looking at the cultural pockets of scenes. She uses this in connection to the human relationships to songs and their lyrics. I found it useful in examining the personal collections of music scene members. Many people have personal archives or collections, without even knowing that it is an archival treasure. When it comes to the personal archival collections of individuals that are a part of and participated in music scenes, material that is collected vary from person to person and this is part

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<sup>154</sup> Marjorie Kibby, "Collect Yourself: Negotiating Personal Music Archives." *Information, communication & society* 12, no. 3 (2009), 428, DOI: 10.1080/13691180802660644.

of the uniqueness of the whole process. Numerous people have created archives of their own, storing them in boxes and crates in closets or hidden on shelves in the basement or garage. All these individual's personal record collections of local music scenes, that they were either actively a part of or observed from a far, provide a wealth of information that captures a specific geographical location and a moment in time. Louise Craven explains that "personal records, are also generated by people as part of the processes of living, working and leisure, individually and communally; these – letters, working papers, diaries, journals, sketchbooks, photographs such as those held in local history collections and community archives – may be deemed unofficial"<sup>155</sup>

Never in my wildest dreams would I think hanging on to all my old and new music memorabilia would become the subject of important archival research and how these old boxes of (rubbish) could in fact transform into being a part of the fabric of local and national music scene history. How can we as archivists accurately and effectively preserve Canada's music history? Personal archives of individuals that participate in local scenes create an archival body of knowledge that helps in the historical representation of localised music scenes. Some collections may have been personally curated by their owner, in frames on the wall, in albums, they connect them to their experiences and memories in the local music scenes they participate in. Some individuals may have specific collections from where they directly live, while others may have material, they collected over a lifetime of moving and or travelling across provinces/ regions/ countries etc. This material may contain diverse music genres or material that revolves specifically around punk and its various sub-categories. These records may also be oddly specific to only music zines, or only ticket stubs and show posters etc. As Laura Millar points out, "archivists should celebrate the creation of each new institution in society that captures,

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<sup>155</sup> Louise Craven, *What Are Archives? Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives: a Reader*, (Routledge, 2008), 56.

preserves, and makes available records and archives - and oral histories, and artifacts, and songs, and stories, and works of art, and other vestiges and relics: all symbols of society's desire to articulate its memories and safeguard its identity."<sup>156</sup> This is what makes these sorts of archival collections distinctively unique and possibly difficult to ascertain their function/purpose after their initial use of the objects has ended. Millar further states to "look to the creators of those tools, the holders of those memories, for guidance in their interpretation, mediation, and articulation, so that we may bring those individual memories into the light and share them for the benefit of all members of society."<sup>157</sup> This approach provides a trust and builds relationship with smaller communities that wish to preserve their records.

Records and tickets to shows were not cheap, especially as a young person. In a *Vice* article, Johan Kugelberg explains that "the days of record collecting before the internet were days when you knew what you knew, and you had what you had."<sup>158</sup> All this material amounts to the personal collections of scene and music related history. As Kugelberg explains in the quote below, his collecting was based on what he could get his hands on that was of interest to him, not for the purpose of monetary or archival value later in life. It was simple in its execution to merely share a common interest with friends. He states that, "I don't think I really collected until punk came along, and when punk came along, we were all so broke, if you bought fanzines or 45s or badges you could only get one of every twenty that you wanted. It was a communication

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<sup>156</sup> Laura Millar. "Touchstones: Considering the Relationship between Memory and Archives," *Archivaria*, 61, no. 61 (2006), 126. <https://archivaria.ca.uml.idm.oclc.org/index.php/archivaria/article/view/12537/13679>.

<sup>157</sup> Millar, "Touchstones," 126.

<sup>158</sup> Johan Kugelberg. "A Complication of 60s Teenaged Garage – Punk Rage Is the Best Album of the Year." *Vice*. January 30, 2015. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/wd4vxz/back-from-the-grave-is-the-best-new-music>.

tool between friends, where we would lend 45s to each other, make mixtapes and trade zines.”

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The archivist must make the acquisition decisions that would keep records in their storehouse, and this means assessing the archival value, which determines the evolution of the record. This brings up the concept of value. As archivists working in an institutional setting, we have various guidelines that we need to follow when looking at the material that people bring in to donate. Does it fit with our mandates? Are we able to enhance our collections by incorporating this specific donor’s material? What will its use and access be? Are there restrictions to any of it? These are all valid questions with potential donor’s records, however, as an archivist that is involved in music scenes, I often wonder that if someone was doing the intake and accessioning and did not have the knowledge or knowhow to understand the intrinsic details of some records that music scenes collect, that these rich histories would be lost.

Archives of the past often have often viewed official records and personal papers as two separate and very distinct categories. However, in archives today records (often thought in an institutional manner) and personal papers are combined, sharing a contextual relationship. The original style of archives was mainly concerned with records of notable people and important organizations/ events that would need to be saved to document those moments. 19<sup>th</sup> century archives were used primarily to construct and strengthen a national Canadian identity as institutional records were increasing and getting more complicated as the technologies of the

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<sup>159</sup> Anton Spice. “Let’s just gather the motherfucking artefacts: A Conversation with Archivist Johan Kugelberg.” *The Vinyl Factory*. January 27, 2017. <https://thevinylfactory.com/features/johan-kugelberg-interview/>.

time expanded.<sup>160</sup> Traditional archives told limited stories and preserved selected histories, they were seen as spaces of authority and power and access was limited to those in specific circles.

The traditional functions of archives need to be reinterpreted to contain all the multifaceted and complicated expression of societal memory, which can be missed if not seen as worthy of historical recognition. This is particularly true of records that are connected to personal collections of music scenes. Archival functions which include acquisition, description, outreach (to name only a few), need to adjust to include the multifaceted kinds of records that popular music culture and the scenes associated with them comprise. The meaning of records, changes intellectually as well as physically and can gain new meanings with each change whether it is part of their physical condition or from the people that have encountered the record over time, each moment and various contextualization occurs, adding participant voice to the provenance of the record.<sup>161</sup>

In a traditional archival sense, the “materiality of records was assumed to be largely disconnected to the records intellectual or informative value,”<sup>162</sup> however, over the last few decades the concept of the ‘record’ evolved and now is “evidence of the dynamic contextual milieu of their creation.”<sup>163</sup> Looking at the records of popular music or popular culture, challenges “institutional mission statements and collecting strategies and what is considered

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<sup>160</sup> Laura Millar, “Discharging Our Debt: The Evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada.” *Archivaria* 46, (1998), 103–146.

<sup>161</sup> Tom Nesmith. “Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives.” *The American Archivist* 65, no.1 (2002): 24-41.

<sup>162</sup> Ala Rekrut, “Connected Constructions, Constructing Connections: Materiality of Archival Records as Historical Evidence,” in *Archival Narratives for Canada: Re-Telling Stories in a Changing Landscape*, eds. Kathleen Garay and Christl Verduyn, (Fernwood Publishing, 2011), 136.

<sup>163</sup> Rekrut, “Connected Constructions,” 136.

‘important’ or historically significant and decides who gets to take up space or speak.”<sup>164</sup> What do we hang on to, what makes the cut? What we as individuals have collected and stored through the years tells a very colourful story of a cultural movement (whether we realized it at the time or not). I am aware of perhaps how little thought went into those moments when we decide to keep all this stuff in a box to possibly revisit later. Will Straw states, “music is arguably the most ethereal and abstract of cultural forms,” it is “embedded in the material infrastructures of our daily life.”<sup>165</sup> When it comes to music and the material culture created from it, I have learnt through the years, this practice not only benefited my memory triggers connected to people, events, and moments of the past, but it has created a space for other members of the music community to come together, recollect, compare, and share.

Personal archives/collections are how much of the material culture and history of subcultures and scenes are recorded, stored, and preserved. As Richard Cox states, “the personal archive is like the old cabinet of curiosities, where the odd and unique markers of past activities are gathered.”<sup>166</sup> He further states that “gathering and maintaining the documents associated with our lives and families may be similar to our efforts to learn to speak, read, and write, all functions that have something profound to suggest about our innate desire to possess meaning about ourselves, to be able to communicate that meaning to others, and , above all, to survive by leaving something behind.”<sup>167</sup> It is in a way preserving our own documentary heritage, telling, and mapping out and recording how we see and experience our world. Even if it is not something

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<sup>164</sup> Lutz, Christine A., Tara Maharjan, and Stephanie Crawford. “Going Against the Archival Grain: Case Studies of Pop Culture Archives of a Music Scene, Regional Zines, and Local Beer.” *Archives and records* 41, no. 3 (2020): 255.

<sup>165</sup> Straw, “Music and Material Culture,” 227.

<sup>166</sup> Cox, Richard J. *Personal Archives, and a New Archival Calling: Readings, Reflections and Ruminations*. (Litwin Books, 2009), 5.

<sup>167</sup> Cox, *Personal Archives*, 3.

that we initially set out to do, we wanted to perhaps have at least a trace of the experiences we participated in to look back on to remember fun times and to share it with others that may have had similar. To borrow a question from David Hesmondhalgh, ‘what is it about the role of music in people's lives that distinguishes it from the role of other experiences as a means of gaining pleasure, of coping with life, and of marking, passing or understanding time and space?’<sup>168</sup> Why is it so many years later we gain so much joy from items that found themselves almost forgotten, stored away in boxes in closets, basements, or garages? How do we start these collections? Could it be a matter of dumb luck or is there some premeditated thought put into preserving these sorts of personal records that you may want to look at one day in the future, or perhaps it is a bit of both. Yeo believes archivists should consider using evidence and information as two of the many affordances that records do provide to their viewers.<sup>169</sup> He states that “the representational view of records is multidisciplinary and embraces a wide spectrum of understanding.”<sup>170</sup> Records change intellectually as well as physically and have the ability to gain new meaning with each change whether it is part of their physical condition or from the people that have come in contact with the record over time, each moment and various contextualization occurs, adding participant voice to the provenance of the record.

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<sup>168</sup> David Hesmondhalgh, “Popular music audiences in everyday life” in *Popular music studies*, eds. David Hesmondhalgh and Keith Negus (Arnold, 2002), 119.

<sup>169</sup> Geoffrey Yeo, "Concepts of Records (1): Evidence, Information, and Persistent Representations." *The American Archivist* 70, no. 2 (2007), 315-343.

<sup>170</sup> Yeo, "Concepts of Records (1), 343.

Music Memorabilia is a broad category that can consist of anything from programs, flyers, ticket stubs, record albums, photographs, set lists, instruments, autographs ... the list can



Figure 14: Photograph of material from personal collection of Margaret Fonseca from Interview, August 2023.

relevant despite often contradicting each other. To maintain collective and individual memory, community members need control over their records' creation, access, use, sharing and interpretation.<sup>171</sup>

Archival records (and collections) are created as a means of conducting and/or remembering activities, they are created for pragmatic or symbolic purposes and work as

go on. The collections breadth and possibilities of an enthusiast of bands, singers or specific genres of music are endless. Memorabilia has come to have meaning through habitual reiteration of engagement with them (nostalgia for a great night out) and contributes to the construction of a culturally constituted world because they are a visible record of cultural meaning that is otherwise intangible. Records represent stories and meanings that are different for everyone, while relating to the same 'fact' or 'event', and all these perspectives are 'real' and

<sup>171</sup> Belinda Battley, Elizabeth Daniels and Gregory Rolan. "Archives as Multifaceted Narratives: Linking the 'Touchstone' of Community Memory." *Archives and Manuscripts* 42, no. 2 (2014), 155.

enablers and evidence of experience and activity, as aids to memory, and as artefacts.<sup>172</sup> As Laura Millar states, “archives are just one of many tools that societies use to create, sustain, and share memories: they are ‘vehicles of memory,’ particularly important in those societies more dependent on writing than on orality, or images, or rituals for the transmission of information and ideas.”<sup>173</sup> Each record can provide varied experiences, triggering memories and remembrance for those individuals or groups involved. Hobbs states that personal archives “contain the personal view of life’s experiences; they represent a departure from the collective formality and systemic organization found in other types of records; there is an intimacy in the personal archive does not present in the collective, corporate, formalized record-keeping system.”<sup>174</sup> This is true of the collections that scene members gather through their experiences with the music and the community of the scene, constructed over time.

Glen McGillivray in his book *Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Memorabilia* explores the hidden archives created through performance and how these records often are not seen as archivable. This also true of records collected by music scene individuals and communities. McGillivray explains, “that which is archived, if it’s to be archived, from a performance is a metonymic gathering of documents, recordings, props, models, costumes and so forth, and it is the people who archive these – the artists themselves, official archivists, family members, friends – who decide where such things will be ‘kept safe’, hidden and forgotten, or brought to light at a later date.”<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Adrian Cunningham, “Archives as a Place,” in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, eds. Heather MacNeil and Terry Eastwood (Libraries Unlimited, 2017), 351-376.

<sup>173</sup> Millar, “Touchstones,” 121.

<sup>174</sup> Catherine Hobbs, “Personal Archives: The Character of Personal Archives.” *Archivaria* 52 (2001), 127.

<sup>175</sup> McGillivray, *Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Memorabilia*, 16.

Cunningham believes that human beings are the sum of their memories.<sup>176</sup> The nature of their interaction with other humans, indeed their very identity, is determined by these memories. In observing this from the inside and being a part of this experience, there seems to be a strong voice of members that need and want to tell their stories of social youth movements, of how music impacted and changed their lives, their participation in political and social movements made moments in history, and moments that they can re-live (even if partially), re-experiencing in their memories the energy that being part of a strong music scene community provided for them.

The personal collector is “defined by the action: how we think, or how we eat, or how we keep records, determines the very nature, the definition, the identity, of who ‘we’ are; if we archivists are defined by what we keep, the obverse is true as well: we keep what we are. We create tools for appraisal and acquisition, but in turn, they make us, define us, become part of our identity.”<sup>177</sup> Richard Cox furthers this by stating that, “collecting may somehow extend from our desires to survive, connected to the hunting of other essential necessities for sustaining life.”<sup>178</sup>

Music is deeply intertwined with memories. For example, hearing a song from the past can transport you back in time, triggering the sights, sounds, and feelings of a specific event. This association between music and vivid autobiographical memory is intuitively apparent, but the idea that music is intimately tied with memories is what gives these everyday items of music scene memorabilia their social history and breathes life back into the collected objects. Personal papers serve the same purpose, as participants in music scenes, we tell our stories with other

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<sup>176</sup>Cunningham, “Archives as a Place,” 56.

<sup>177</sup> Terry Cook, “‘We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are’: Archival Appraisal Past, Present and Future,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 32, no.2 (2011), 173, DOI: [10.1080/00379816.2011.619688](https://doi.org/10.1080/00379816.2011.619688) .

<sup>178</sup> Cox, *Personal Archives*, 3

people in the scene as well as others in various locations and time zones, our families, and others we meet virtually. As the stories are told they tend to take on new meanings and add on to that records journey. Through the retelling of the stories, memories transform, and new layers are added to an already existing autobiographical life story.

One way of collecting music memories is through oral histories. Oral histories from participants of bands or music scenes creates a special variation of the personal archive. An aspect that can be found within personal archives is oral stories or the recording of a person's life story. Life stories not only reflect one's personality, but they are personality in and of itself, in addition to relating events in the life of a scene or community. Not only do tactile objects or music memorabilia, and photographs constitute a substantial portion of how we remember experiences of our music and scene past, but recording stories, from the mouths of those who experienced events and dynamics working within a scene add a texture to the experience that can only be felt through that first-hand participation.<sup>179</sup> Oral history is distinguished from other forms of interviews by its content and extent. Oral history interviews seek an in-depth account of personal experience and reflection, with time allowed for the narrators to give their story the fullness they desire. The content of oral history interviews is grounded in reflections on the past as opposed to commentary on purely contemporary events, even though when talking with both women in their interviews we moved back and forth between memory and matters involving now.

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<sup>179</sup> Martin A. Conway, and Laura Jobson. "On the Nature of Autobiographical Memory." In *Understanding Autobiographical Memory: Theories and Approaches*, eds. Dorthe Berntsen and David C. Rubin (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 55.

## Lifetime Soundtrack

Istvandy's concept of the lifetime soundtrack looks at the everyday practice that music has with the human experience. She argues that music acts as a powerful archive for storing individual experiences and emotions and how individuals connect with music on a biographical level, often associating specific songs/artists/lyrics with moments or periods in their lives, in turn creating their lifetime soundtrack. Istvandy describes this form of autobiographical memory as being, "an individuals' memories of their own personal experience and knowledge for events concerning the self that occur within their lifetime."<sup>180</sup> This requires a lot of self-reflection and can take up to a whole lifetime. I found this theory rather interesting in that it is accurate in its ability to have one's life story dictated by an artistic medium such as music. For myself it is how I judge time, distance, relationships, and if given a song, I can generally tell you what I was doing when it was playing or came out, to sometimes, ridiculous detail. Music is how I gauge my life story. As Dave Grohl of Nirvana and Foo Fighters fame stated in the introduction to his book

### *The Storyteller: Tales of life and Music:*

Miraculously, my memory has remained relatively intact. Since I was a child, I've always measured my life in musical increments rather than months or years. My mind faithfully relies on songs, albums, and bands to remember a particular time in place. From 70s AM radio to every microphone I've stood before, I could tell you who, what, where, and when, from the first few notes of any song that has crept from a speaker to my soul, or from my soul to your speakers. Some people's reminiscences are triggered by taste, some peoples by sight or smell, mine is triggered by sound. Playing like an unfinished mix tape waiting to be sent. Though I've never been one to collect 'stuff', I do collect moments. So, in that respect, my life flashes before my eyes and through my ears every single day. In this book I've captured some of them, as best I can. These memories from all over my life, are full of music of course. And they can be loud at times.<sup>181</sup>

So, if a song can have that much power, an object, or archival record dealing with music or a music scene, must be able to have the same effect. I found that it is indeed the case. When I look

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<sup>180</sup> Istvandy, *The Lifetime Soundtrack*, 4.

<sup>181</sup> Dave Grohl, *The Storyteller: Tales of Life and Music*. (Harper Audio, 2023), 3:34-4:54.

through my own personal collection, I am reminded of moments that I have had at shows, club nights, experiences with artists I admire. During the interviews with Wall and Fonseca memories came up and stories were told when going through their archives from the scene. It immediately connected me again to Istvandy's theory and how these songs, or for this purpose archival objects of memorabilia, are so connected to our identity construction and the story we tell as we move through life. She states that, "while personal memories are a part of a complex information storage system, they are highly influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which an individual finds themselves in the past and in the present."<sup>182</sup> That music "has become tied to events, feeling, and ways of being for those individuals, and is something that will continue to constitute part of their identity."<sup>183</sup> Millar states a similar sentiment in that "records are not memories, Rather, they are triggers or touchstones that lead to the recollection of past events."<sup>184</sup>

This exercise was (unconsciously) put to the test when interviewing both Wall and Fonseca, when they each took their collections out and spread them on the table, allowing me to rummage through them and them picking up items that triggered a memory and they would then follow it with a short story. Both women recalled moments in their lived experience that added to their lifetime soundtrack, directing me through roadways of band life and their lives outside of being in a band, always passionate and creative, often still connected to music in some manner. This way of thinking about memory relies heavily on human interaction with music.

Istvandy's framework for this theory is simple, the soundtrack is limited to music that the person has personally experienced and is tied to experiences in social and cultural settings

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<sup>182</sup> Istvandy, *The Lifetime Soundtrack*, 4.

<sup>183</sup> Istvandy, *The Lifetime Soundtrack*, 2.

<sup>184</sup> Millar, "Touchstones, 114.

that may or may not affect its connection to memory. It is connected to a range of emotions (good and bad) as life experiences often are. It can affect you at all ages, through youth and into adulthood, through your various stages of music consumption and technologies.<sup>185</sup> So looking at this in an archival context, collecting records that reflect a local music scene by fans and band members alike will likely have effects of those whose records they belong and to the public when exhibited. Bands hold an interesting space in this theory, as they are both creating memories for themselves as members of the bands (with those experiences) and creating the memories for their fans. In collecting the stories from these two women, hearing their experiences and perspectives, their life stories ran along side of their lifetime soundtrack and in doing so created a space where these music related narratives positioned themselves with an overall description of their identity.<sup>186</sup>

### The Act of Collecting

Not all personal collections will make it as part of an archive and through the mere act of collecting, a person does not automatically become an archivist. Often, the term collector does not even get used as the material saved serves no monetary value but is rather special to the collector, providing glimpses into one's life. These materials are often kept in a box, at the back of the closet, in a garage, or under the bed. I would not consider myself a collector per se, as I often associated that label with someone that will pay money for rare pieces of (preferred obsession) material. I have absolutely collected but I would say I have hoarded nuggets and created my collection through the actual experience of being there at the moments as they occurred. This material is gathered over time, out of a desire to preserve something regarding music's past as well as to recall the gatherer's participation with the music and with the scene.

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<sup>185</sup> Istvandy, *The Lifetime Soundtrack*, 7.

<sup>186</sup> Istvandy, *The Lifetime Soundtrack*, 15.

Obviously, to individuals these records are important - otherwise why do we keep them, even if they are at times, forgotten. Is it a matter of simply forgetting we have them? Felt that we have grown out of that stage? Or hoping that one day in the future we will fondly look through a reflective gaze and relive that memory? Or in some way, do we purposely collect these items as a part of a historical moment or moments to claim we were a part of them.

Our personal record keeping practices (whether we were aware that that is in fact, what we were doing at the time of putting items into boxes or drawers), results in a rich collection of material that is situated in a specific time and place creating both collective and individual memories. Personal collecting can seem quirky or frivolous, but it always reveals some deeper inner meaning to our lives.<sup>187</sup> The what and the why we hold on to this stuff and these things, that often lay dormant for years in boxes under the bed or in the back of closets. These personal collections, the archived material of our lives essentially relate to specific moments of participation in music scenes. So, what is it that makes the material that music communities collect so different than other archival records? It could involve the very items themselves and what they represent to their owner.

Although the primary function of music memorabilia such as ticket stubs, show posters, and set lists is publicity for the musical acts and the venues that showcase them, these objects (and others) are often maintained as memory triggers of a performance long after the show or event has ended. "Record-keeping is a 'kind of witnessing', on a personal level it is a way of evidencing the memorializing our lives- our existence, our activities and experiences, our relationships with each other, our identity, our 'place' in the world."<sup>188</sup> The social history of

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<sup>187</sup> Cox, *Personal Archives*, 4.

<sup>188</sup> Sue McKemmish, "Evidence of Me.... [Personal Recordkeeping]," *Archives and manuscripts* 24, no. 1 (1996), 29.

“things and their cultural biography are not entirely separate matters, for over large periods of time and at large social levels, that constrain the form, meaning, and structure of more short-term, specific, and intimate trajectories.”<sup>189</sup> There is a complex and fluid relationship between people, objects, images, and things. Social meanings and the sociability of objects question the ingrained assumptions that objects present.

When we look at local music scenes it is very much up to the communities and individuals themselves to collect and preserve their own historical identity. The forms of archival records that are collected in music scenes are not typically



Figure 15: Photograph of material from personal collection of Debbie Wall (pin she made for the band) from Interview, August 2023. The top left poster is the first punk show poster she made.

<sup>189</sup> Arjun Appadurai. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 36.

what would be found in personal papers, letters, and journals. Ephemera created within local (regional or national for that matter) music scenes that record the community's existence are typically created in a very DIY nature. When discussing finding an inclusive space for New York City's Hardcore music scene in the 1980's, Alan Parkes states that possibly "the most crucial element of New York Hardcore space revolved around DIY that ensured the scene relinquished any remnants of the society it defied."<sup>190</sup> This method not only aided in the creation of material such as band merchandise and local zines, but it transpired in the creation of the actual music; music production, promotion and distribution of bands and gigs (both local and on tour), being self-managers, and vinyl and cassette creation (and their subsequent promotion and distribution). Winnipeg's local punk scene at its start and peak, and as it merged into other punk genres worked in the same way. Examples of the material that is the historical identity of a community can be seen in the images earlier in this chapter as well as in Figure 15 and 16 from the collections of Wall and Fonseca, which shows a collection of posters advertising various The Wurst and Ruggedy Annes shows in Winnipeg.

The DIY method carries over into the way in which the local scenes collect their records over the years. One purpose of this work is to explore why individuals have sought to manage their personal records (sometimes over an extended period) that they collect regarding music and particular music scene histories. Why do we hang on to the ticket stubs, the show posters, song lists, etc.? Rethinking the notion of what an archive is, or can become beyond its typical alongside libraries, museums, and larger institutional structures is necessary when looking at the

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<sup>190</sup> Parkes, Alan. "Don't Forget the Streets: New York City Hardcore Punk and the Struggle for Inclusive Space." *Studii de istoria și teoria arhitecturii*, no. 3 (2015), 133–148.

material collected regarding local music scenes, music subcultures, and individuals' personal records. This sort of archive needs to be looked at through an interdisciplinary lens that can include history, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies (to name a few). Kate Eichhorn has stated that, “since the archival turn in the 1990’s, the elasticity of the concept has opened new avenues through which to question the authority of the archive while simultaneously legitimizing



Figure 16: collection of Ruggedy Annes posters from Margaret Fonseca personal collection

to rethink time, history, and progress against the grain of dominant ideologies but also as an apparatus through which to continue making and legitimizing forms of knowledge and cultural

non-institutional collections as important sites of research and inquiry.”<sup>191</sup>

Looking at archives in this newer light has shown that archives can create a “conceptual space in which

<sup>191</sup> Kate Eichhorn, ‘Archival Genres: Gathering Texts and Reading Spaces,’ *Invisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture* (2008). <https://doi.org/10.47761/494a02f6.93f3f522>.

production.”<sup>192</sup> Popular music memorabilia demonstrate the importance of these documents and artefacts, not only for enthusiasts that gather them but to the overall archival record of social memory (both individually and collectively) and cultural music heritage. What is and is not the “waste” of popular music culture are integral to the building of DIY and community sites of heritage for cultural memory.

Versions of popular music history are constructed through the collection and display of material culture. The social history of subcultures and localized scenes has in recent years, been brought back to life in exhibits, reunion shows, film, documentary, and television series, reissues of vinyl and concert t-shirts, and the incorporation of scene members ‘souvenirs’ from all these events into their private archive at home. Souvenirs and artefacts include, audio/visual recordings, photographs, posters, instruments, setlists, and ticket stubs. These exist in time and space and essentially are ‘things’ in so far as they are made, stored, used for specific reasons. They can be broken, relocated, discarded, and can pass through several different social interactions through their lifespan. Although the primary function of (for example) the ticket stubs has ended (gaining access to the venue), they are often retained as memorabilia of a performance long after the show has ended (in this case decades). They have however moved from an object with purpose and action to a thing that will sit in an album and be looked at occasionally. Their life has not ended.

Material or ephemera from its very creation, is made to exist and be used for a short time. For example, tickets allow entrance to the venue, flyers advertise upcoming shows, and setlists allow band members to see what songs they will be playing whilst on stage. The Society of

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<sup>192</sup> Kate Eichhorn, *The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order*, (Temple University Press, 2013), 10.

American Archivists (SAA) defines ephemera as “materials, usually printed documents, created for a specific, limited purpose, and generally designed to be discarded after use.”<sup>193</sup> The definition further states that examples of ephemera can include, “advertisements, tickets, brochures, and receipts.”<sup>194</sup> SAA’s definition differentiates the collecting methods of repositories and individuals in that, “a repository may collect ephemera as examples of specimens. Individuals often collect ephemera as mementos or souvenirs because of their association with some person, event, or subject; personal collections of ephemera are often kept in scrapbooks.”<sup>195</sup> This connects to the importance placed on this material collected by some communities as we see in music scenes, queer, and Black community archives.<sup>196</sup> Stewart adds, the “souvenir (i.e., collections) offer both a measurement for the normal and authenticates the experience of the viewer.”<sup>197</sup> Interaction with records, through sight, sound, smell, and touch, impacts first-hand knowledge of historic technologies and puts the researcher or viewer into the place of the creator and previous users of the records.<sup>198</sup>

An example of this can be seen when looking at the following images. In my interview with Fonseca, we went through some of the items that she has collected over the years that had to

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<sup>193</sup> *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*, s.v. “ephemera,” by Society of American Archivists, accessed January 15, 2024, <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/ephemera.html>

<sup>194</sup> *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*, s.v. “ephemera,” by Society of American Archivists, accessed January 15, 2024, <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/ephemera.html>

<sup>195</sup> *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*, s.v. “ephemera,” by Society of American Archivists, accessed January 15, 2024, <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/ephemera.html>

<sup>196</sup> See X, Ajamu, Topher Campbell, and Mary Stevens. 2010. “Love and Lubrication in the Archives, or rukus! A Black Queer Archive for the United Kingdom,” *Archivaria* 68 (2010), 271-94.

<https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13240>. and Barriault, Marcel. 2010. “Hard to Dismiss: The Archival Value of Gay Male Erotica and Pornography,” *Archivaria* 68 (2009), 219-46. <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13238>.

<sup>197</sup> Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. (Duke University Press, 1993), 134.

<sup>198</sup> Rekrut, “Connected Constructions,” 135.

do specifically with The Ruggedy Annes. She still had the original ‘wanted ad’ that she had placed in the local paper when she was wanting to start a band, shown in Figure 17.<sup>199</sup>

Will Straw calls this specific material relating to music as the “material extension”<sup>200</sup> He describes these extensions as having two predominant tendencies, one that focuses on the

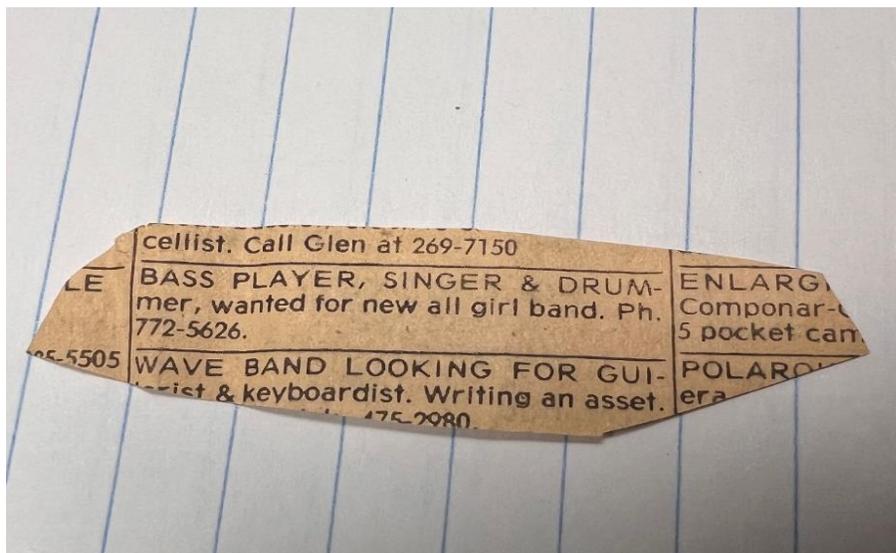


Figure 17: Photograph of material collected (newspaper ad for band), Margaret Fonseca from Interview, August 2023.

“greatest collective interest” that can be made up from all the material forms that enables music to become mobile (dispersal through digital and analogue means, practices of

listening and spaces), and secondly through aggregation – where the material is brought together in places of storage and collection.<sup>201</sup> Although the primary function of music memorabilia is publicity for the musical acts and the venues that showcase them or in the case of Fonseca’s ‘wanted ad’, the formation of a band, these objects (and others) are often maintained as physical triggers of a performance long after the show or event has ended. The social history of “things and their cultural biography are not entirely separate matters, for over large periods of time and at large social levels, that constrain the form, meaning, and structure of more short-term,

<sup>199</sup> Fonseca, interview, 27:01.

<sup>200</sup> Will Straw. “Music and Material Culture.” In *The Cultural Study of Music*, eds. Clayton, M., Herbert, T., & Middleton, R. (Routledge, 2012), 231.

<sup>201</sup> Straw, “Music and Material Culture, 231.

specific, and intimate trajectories.”<sup>202</sup> There is a complex and fluid relationship between people, objects, images, and things. Social meanings and the sociability of objects question the ingrained assumptions that objects present for us.

Millar states that, “our memories, and the records that remain of past events, are both only fragments of a vanished whole, that records are not memories but rather touchstones that trigger the recollection of past events.”<sup>203</sup> Many memories of events such as band gigs, specific shows attended, or the stories that come from those experiences, can often be lost or even a little foggy and the records themselves (whether a physical object or hearing a story or live recording) bring up memories and meanings are often relived when in the presence of that record. Learning a different reading of events or objects by different individuals, or even study when something may have been looked at or how often; their alternative narratives provide contextual knowledge.<sup>204</sup> This is seen in the previous chapter when both Fonseca and Wall discuss touring in their interviews and had different memories attached to the same event.

Application of social memory to the objects presents a complex interactive relationship depending on who was in possession or viewing the objects (or holding the memory). Photography works in this manner. As a band photographer, I attended gigs at various venues and photograph the bands that are playing, sometimes upon their request and others for the pure joy of the medium. The experiences of these photographs can be experienced differently from taking the photo, viewing it on a page in a book or screen, to holding it in a physical form. The

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<sup>202</sup> Arjun Appadurai. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 36.

<sup>203</sup> Millar. “Touchstones,” 114.

<sup>204</sup> Kiendl, “Toward a New Understanding,” 16.

context to which these images are placed would have an impact on how they are felt by the viewer.

According to Ala Rekrut the materiality of records are anchored in the social circumstances surrounding their physical creation and manifest in at least two ways: the physical background upon which the written text or images appear and the successive interactions between records and their multiple users across time.<sup>205</sup> Materiality of an object and its social biography cannot be fully understood at any single point in its existence but should be understood as belonging in a continuing system of production, use, meaning, and exchange.

Like all human activities, archiving our personal records is culturally bound and a product of its environment: all archival records, as a result, have their own story, their own context, their own histories ... These stories (or richly layered metadata, if you like) make the mere recorded artifact come alive, make the archive more robust, and more useful, thus offering to society the possibilities for adding subtlety, texture, nuance, and more accurate meaning to information found in documents, thereby enhancing their understanding. This is not subjectivity run amok, but subjectivity recognized, documented, and made accountable.<sup>206</sup>

In Katelyn Angell's article "Feminist Archives: Archiving GRRRL Style Now,"<sup>207</sup> she discusses that the collection method is very different than the methods used traditionally with records in the archives when looking at a group that involves several movements and identities that can cover generations of individuals within a community. In writing about the Riot Grrrl scene of Olympia Washington in the early 1990s, she states that it is "rare for archivists to ask people in their thirties and forties to donate their personal collections and moreover by collecting

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<sup>205</sup> Rekrut, "Connected Constructions," 136.

<sup>206</sup> Terry Cook. 'We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are': Archival Appraisal Past, Present and Future, *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 32, no:2 (2001): 178, DOI: [10.1080/00379816.2011.619688](https://doi.org/10.1080/00379816.2011.619688)

<sup>207</sup> Katelyn Angell, "Feminist Archives: Archiving GRRRL Style Now." *Feminist Collections* 31, no. 4 (2010): 16-19.

zines, concert flyers, and other temporal cultural artifacts, the Riot Grrrl collection is gathering and preserving materials generally unfamiliar to academia.”<sup>208</sup>

Archives are just “one of many tools that societies use to create, sustain, and share memories: they are ‘vehicles of memory,’ particularly important in those societies more dependent on writing than on orality, or images, or rituals for the transmission of information and ideas.”<sup>209</sup> Each record can provide varied experiences, triggering memories and remembrance for those individuals or groups involved. Records are created as a means of conducting and or remembering activities, they are created for pragmatic or symbolic purposes and work as enablers and evidence of experience and activity, as aids to memory, and/or as artefacts.<sup>210</sup> An example of this can be seen in a particular item found in music scene collections and that is through fanzines.

#### Winnipeg’s Music-based Community Fanzines

Fanzines (‘zines) are one of many physical pieces that can become part of a personal collection, and they can be an important record for collecting stories and history of (sub)cultural groups. ‘Zines are self-published periodicals that were very much a part of the DIY movement that is intrinsically woven into the fire of the punk scene and other small local community centred scenes (music or not). Lutz, Maharjan and Crawford have stated that zines are often “created exclusively by women, queer individuals, people of colour, and other marginalized groups.”<sup>211</sup> Fanzines are self-published and are often created as tools for social movements and

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<sup>208</sup> Angell, “Feminist Archives,” 16.

<sup>209</sup> Millar, 121.

<sup>210</sup> Adrian Cunningham, “Archives as a Place,” in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, eds. Heather MacNeil and Terry Eastwood (Libraries Unlimited, 2017), 351-376.

<sup>211</sup> Lutz, Christine A., Tara Maharjan, and Stephanie Crawford. “Going against the Archival Grain: Case Studies of Pop Culture Archives of a Music Scene, Regional Zines, and Local Beer.” *Archives and records* 41, no. 3 (2020): 263.

activism. They became a mode of communication and in some locales, played a very important role in the identity of individuals and the larger music community. This exclusivity does not mean that hetero white men do not or have not created them (I have a few, both music and sport related) that are created by men, but more often than not, zines have been the choice for the DIY social activist minded individuals that tend to be located at the margins of the societal norm. For the fans of the music, they provided a space and platform for them to showcase their ideas visually in a non-formal, creative, and sometimes chaotic manner. Zines can also be easy to collect for those who want to archive a material component of scenes. Easy of course if you can still find them, if community members have them in their collections, are bought second hand from sellers, gifted, or you make them yourself.<sup>212</sup> These DIY publications provides “the notion of resistance that remains a key element in the construction of a punk identity and fanzines are democratic in that they provide accessible forms for writing through their ‘anyone can do it’ production strategies.”<sup>213</sup> They are great resources for community history and providing a visual space for the voices of society members in the margins: “zines are inherently about representation: who gets published, what kind of stories are told, and whether those people and stories are relative of lived existence.”<sup>214</sup>

*Jett Set* and *So Alone* were two local Winnipeg ‘zines that grew out of punk DIY. In December of 1979, the fanzine *Jett Set* was created in a basement on typewriters and creative ambition. Three editors who created this publication were all students. Chris Allen, Gordon

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<sup>212</sup> I recently had my students create Decolon’zine’s, where the subject matter was a social issue that both tied into their Identity as Indigenous youth and a issue they were actively passionate about. Topics ranged from Policing in Indigenous landscapes, Indigenous identity politics in the North End, strength of Indigenous women, experience in Child and Family Services, stereotypes and film and fashion, to name a few.

<sup>213</sup> Triggs, Teal. “Scissors and Glue: Punk Fanzines and the Creation of a DIY Aesthetic.” *Journal of design history* 19, no. 1 (2006), 69.

<sup>214</sup> Lutz, Maharjan, and Crawford. “Going against,” 262.

Agar, and Rob Shaw, named this 'zine after singer Joan Jett and created it as a "magazine for the fans."<sup>215</sup> The 'zine (Figure 18) was started with very little cash and a group of volunteers and in the first issue, local bands Le Kille, the Nostrils and the Wurst were highlighted. *Winnipeg Free Press* writer Randal McIlroy makes note that although the "the first two issues are messy, do-it-yourself compilations of typed and handwritten stories, grainy

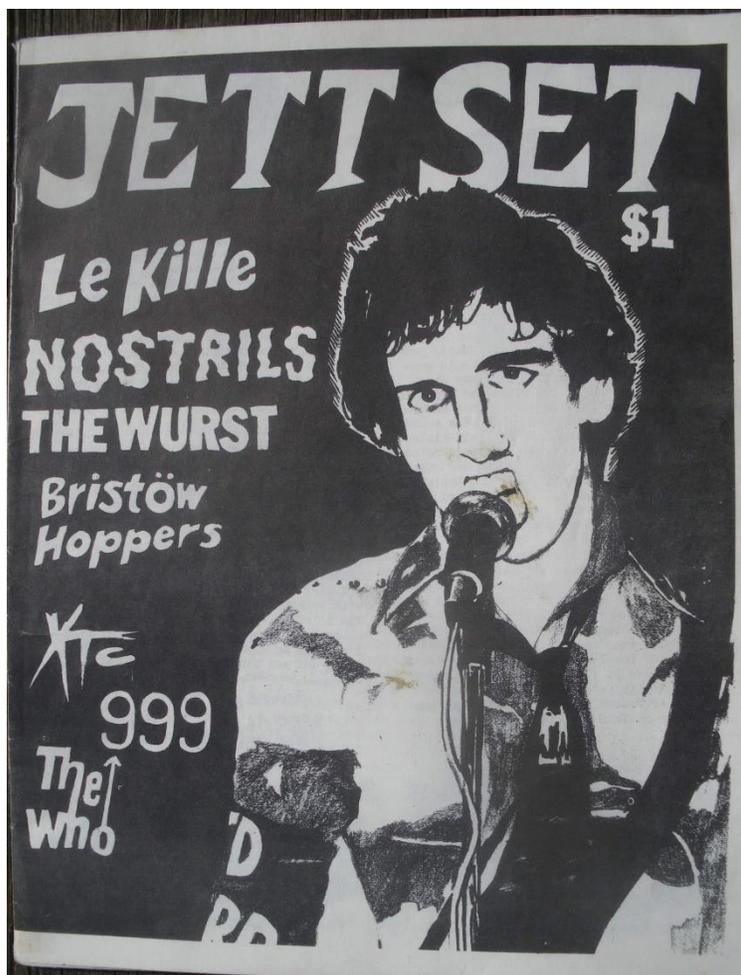


Figure 18: cover of the first issue of *Jett Set*, personal collection of Debbie Wall.

snapshots and crude graphics, it's the content that's important; *Jett Set*

is the only game in town for anyone who wants to read about Winnipeg's musical underground."<sup>216</sup>

The zine was sent to record shops in Winnipeg and then in a few larger Canadian cities. In Winnipeg alone, Clarke states that 200 were sold rather quickly, so in response to that 500 were distributed around Winnipeg of the second, more ambitious edition.<sup>217</sup> The editorial

<sup>215</sup> Clarke, Joanne. 'Jett Set "Fanzine" Really Taking Off'. *Winnipeg Tribune*, 12 June 1980, 20.

<sup>216</sup> Randall McIlroy, "Underground Punk View," *Winnipeg Free Press*, July 19, 1980, Pg. 161, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

<sup>217</sup> Clarke, *Jett Set*, 20.

threesome created this fanzine to have a space where people of like-minded musical tastes could have the latest in what was happening in their city. *Jett Set* for them was an “alternative publication to counteract the middle of the roads, live entertainment they were being forced-fed in the Winnipeg pubs.”<sup>218</sup> Gordon Agar stated that “what a better way to ensure we’d be entertained by the music we enjoy, than to promote the musicians ourselves.”<sup>219</sup>

The trio did not stop at the pages of the community fanzine, as they were putting their third issue together, they were in pre-production stages of a *Jett Set* television show on the local public access station called the *Go Show*. The trio, according to Clarke’s article, said that they were not into doing this project to make money from it but that the three of them felt that the fanzine was becoming a lot for them to

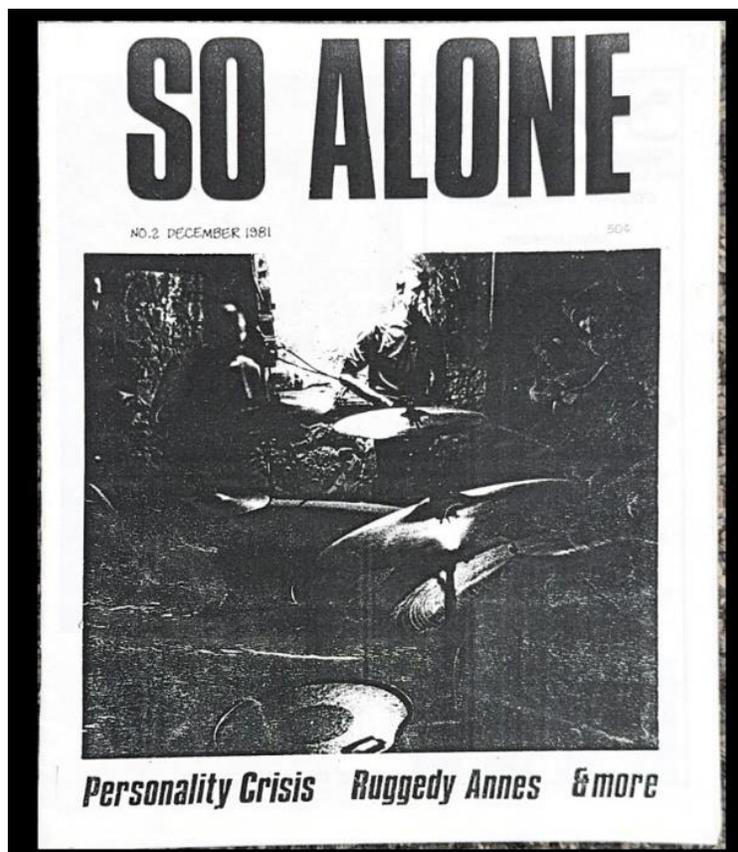


Figure 19: *So Alone Zine, Issue No. 2, December 1981*, gifted to Sharon E. Humphrey from Margaret Fonseca.

handle with the growing number of punk fans in the city and they wanted to expand it into a community effort.<sup>220</sup> According to McIlroy, the trio would invite a small group of people to the

<sup>218</sup> Clarke, *Jett Set*, 20.

<sup>219</sup> Gordon Agar in Clarke, *Jett Set*, 20.

<sup>220</sup> Clarke, *Jett Set*, 20.

show, where they would play records (having a rate the record feature), have live bands and dance. As Gordon Agar states in the article, “we don't want people just to sit and rot, we've only got room for 15 people or so, we want them all to make a lot of noise.”<sup>221</sup> The show was to highlight a sound that one would not necessarily hear in the pub or an auditorium, that the “raw, uncommercial material once labelled punk or new wave, currently open to personal labels and interpretation.”<sup>222</sup>

In the January 18, 1982, issue of *The Winnipeg Free Press*,<sup>223</sup> writer Randal McIlroy highlights another local punk zine *So Alone*. He stated that “now two issues old, (the zine) offers its own intelligent, heartfelt alternative, with lively, usually perceptive writing, lean graphics and a feeling of fun,” that “Winnipeg may yet enjoy a regular chronical of a music scene well removed from the well-oiled ranks of the heavy rocker and the velvet crooner; the aim and purpose of its beginnings were to follow local new beat music.”<sup>224</sup> In talking with Fonseca and going through some of her personal collection, we talked about the zine and how they were great for getting information out about the bands and discussed the issue that they had a full spread with lyrics and interview. She also gave me a copy (shown in Figure 19). Figure 20 is taken from the *So Alone* ‘zine and show how another textual item, gig posters, were shown in a collection format within the pages, illustrating the wealth of bands that Winnipeg had to offer at the time of its publication.

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<sup>221</sup> McIlroy, “Underground Punk View,” 161.

<sup>222</sup> McIlroy, “Underground Punk View,” 161.

<sup>223</sup> Randall McIlroy, “Alternative Music Scene Documented,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, January 18, 1982, Pg. 38, Winnipeg, Manitoba, CA <https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-free-press-jan-18-1982-p-38>.

<sup>224</sup> McIlroy, “Alternative Music Scene,” 38.

Another method that Winnipeg had in its arsenal of punk promotion was through a local cable access channel. Dan Pachet had a late-night public access cable TV show called *Alternative Rockstand* which reported on the local music scene.



Figure 20: page insert from the *So Alone* 'zine in Issue No.2, December 1981, given to Sharon Humphrey by Fonseca from her personal collection.

CBC writer Allison

Gilmore states that although at times it was very hard to get bands into the studio to tape when the show was recorded (early Sunday morning).<sup>225</sup> Gilmore discusses one episode in particular when a guest slept in and the interview was basically conducted with Pachet talking to an empty chair asking it questions, quoting him from the episode as saying, “we’ll get through this somehow,” he sighs, uttering what could be the unofficial motto of the cable-access years).<sup>226</sup> There is not a lot, if any, material that looks at the *Alternative Rockstand*, but various videos have been uploaded to *YouTube*.<sup>227</sup> Episodes are primarily of The Unwanted and Personality Crisis and this episode that Gilmore brings up is up on YouTube.

<sup>225</sup> Allison Gilmore, “Channelling Mayhem,” CBC News Entertainment, April 12, 2006, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/channelling-mayhem-1.628907>

<sup>226</sup> Gilmore, “Channelling Mayhem,” <https://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/channelling-mayhem-1.628907>

<sup>227</sup> Several episodes of *Alternative Rockstand* can be found on YouTube at the following accounts: [www.youtube.com/@lafarm1679](http://www.youtube.com/@lafarm1679), [www.youtube.com/@UXBPress](http://www.youtube.com/@UXBPress), [www.youtube.com/@ruthannecanfly](http://www.youtube.com/@ruthannecanfly)

Kathryn Martin the creator of the *Piss on You* documentary discusses Pachet and his show on a *CIUT* radio interview from 2015. She believed that Pachet was primarily into interviewing people but community members suggested that he take the interviews to the television screen and set up the show so bands could be both interviewed and play on a stage.<sup>228</sup> Martin continues that if Pachet did not do the show, that there would be very little live footage of the local Winnipeg punk bands at the time since audio visual equipment back then was so expensive and cameras were so big , they were not often used.<sup>229</sup>

While all memories are cognitive, literate individuals learn to rely to at least to some extent on the written word to document, express, and supplement cognitive processes.<sup>230</sup> The feeling or sense of autobiographical memory or a person's Lifetime Soundtrack generates continuity, it helps people to defend and maintain an awareness of their identity and to cultivate an appreciation of a former self in those phases,<sup>231</sup> these soundtracks can be used as a mediator for the creation of, for instance, generational identity for individuals and a community and can add to the communities archive. Records and ephemera, like 'zines and ticket stubs, supplement the Lifetime Soundtrack and act as memory touchstones.

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<sup>228</sup> Marji, "Women Takeover of Equalizing-X-Distort: Interview with Kathryn Martin," Shequalizing-X-Distort Show, *CIUT* December 6, 2015, by University of Toronto, Internet Archive, 1:59:59, <https://archive.org/details/EXD-15-12-06-SHEXD7>

<sup>229</sup> Martin, Shequalizing-X-Distort Radio show.

<sup>230</sup> Cunningham, "Archives as Place," 56.

<sup>231</sup> Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (The Free Press, 1979).

### Chapter Three: Community Archives and Local Music Scenes

Over the past twenty or so years, it has become increasingly common for museums and other cultural institutions to produce exhibitions celebrating, documenting, and interpreting the cultures, sounds, histories and experiences of popular music.<sup>232</sup> I believe this is from past/current music scene participants working within the cultural heritage fields and those members who are excited to remember moments of their past. The need to preserve artefacts of the recent past for future generations has been keenly felt in the field of popular music and there is a pressing need from enthusiasts to archive the remnants of popular music's material past to safeguard the national and the local histories of this important cultural form.<sup>233</sup> Popular music's past is enacted in the present through the space of community-based archives, museums, and music halls of fame.

Changing trends in the collection of personal records not only have an impact on issues dealing with private/confidential material, but they can complicate theoretical issues, and thereby present challenges at the nexus of theory and professional practice.<sup>234</sup> Records produced from popular music and the collections of individuals that participate in music scenes requires a shift in how archivists look at records. Popular culture collecting requires the archivist to be embedded in communities outside of traditional work hours,<sup>235</sup> to mix and mingle with people

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<sup>232</sup> Marion Leonard, "The Shaping of Heritage: Collaborations between Independent Popular Music Heritage Practitioners and the Museum Sector," in *Preserving Popular Music Heritage: Do-it-Yourself, Do-it-Together*, ed. Sarah Baker (Routledge, 2015), 19.

<sup>233</sup> Sarah Baker, *Community Custodians*, 5.

<sup>234</sup> Carolyn Harris, "Paper Memories, Presented Selves: Original Order and the Arrangement of the Donald G. Simpson Fonds at York University," *Archivaria* 74 (2012): 197. <https://archivaria-ca.uml.idm.oclc.org/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13411>.

<sup>235</sup> Christine A Lutz, Tara Maharjan, and Stephanie Crawford, "Going Against the Archival Grain: Case Studies of Pop Culture Archives of a Music Scene, Regional Zines, and Local Beer." *Archives and records* 41, no. 3 (2020): 265. doi:10.1080/23257962.2020.1810005.

outside their comfort zones or usual social interactions. As Kate Eichhorn points out, “what makes an archive a potential site of resistance is arguably not simply its mandate, or its location but rather how it is deployed in the present.”<sup>236</sup> The archivist can look for material or groups that could enrich their collections, Eichhorn states that it is also the role of the researchers “working both inside and outside of the academy to ensure that activist collections of all kinds continue to be activated in the present and for the future.”<sup>237</sup>

Developing a narrative around people’s collections, considering gaps into the narrative, and bringing out untold stories is a major part of the archival experience, particularly when working with communities. As Baker states, “enthusiast founded, volunteer led, community-based archives, museums and halls of fame are contributing to the public record of popular music’s material past.”<sup>238</sup> Grassroots heritage activities and organizations are conceptualized as ‘DIY’ institutions, a term coined by these two to describe a collective group of archives, museums, and halls of fame that work with music, that are started and run primarily by enthusiasts and volunteers, existing outside the dominant institutions of collection and display.<sup>239</sup> The DIY approach to the archival field and in the collecting of historical material of smaller and local communities, such as the punk scene community. Doing it yourself and working collaboratively go hand in hand with the punk way of thinking.

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<sup>236</sup> Kate Eichhorn, *The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order*. (Temple University Press, 2013), 160.

<sup>237</sup> Eichhorn, *The Archival Turn in Feminism*, 160.

<sup>238</sup> Baker, *Community Custodians*, 1.

<sup>239</sup> Sarah Baker and Jez Collins, “Sustaining Popular Music’s Heritage, Community Archives, and the Challenge of Sustainability,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 20, no.5 (2017): 447. <https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/13527258.2015.1041414>

## What are Community Archives?

Defining a community archive can be difficult, and it comes down to defining what community is and who is creating that definition. The concept of community archive is two-fold, in that you can have on one hand the archival repository (sometimes within an institution) that considers themselves to be a community archive or hold records that would align with the records of communities within a society. You then have the actual community itself and its members, who actively (or even passively) collect the records and history of their specific group. They are not trained archivists but still feel the need to become the keepers of historically relevant information. The histories and the information that come from this later description of community archives is as Andrew Flinn believes “not something to be underestimated or dismissed, as these kinds of archives along with its grassroots histories, seek to preserve and make accessible material that is usually not available elsewhere.”<sup>240</sup> What makes up community archives are the “grassroot activities of documenting, recording, and exploring community heritage in which community participation, control and ownership of the project is essential.”<sup>241</sup> Flinn describes community as “a group who define themselves based on locality, culture, faith, background, or other shared identity or interest, this can include a local focus or a much larger scale and can have shared focuses such as sexuality, ethnicity, and interest and it can include one or many of these.”<sup>242</sup> His definitions of what a community is (or can be), highlight the

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<sup>240</sup> Andrew Flinn, “Independent Community Archives and Community-Generated Content.”

*Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 16, no.1 (2010): 40.

<sup>241</sup> Andrew Flinn, “Community Histories, Community Archives: Some Opportunities and Challenges.” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 28, 2 (2007): 151–76. doi:10.1080/00379810701611936. Also in Stevens, Mary, Andrew Flinn, and Elizabeth Shepherd. 2010. “New Frameworks for Community Engagement in the Archive Sector: From Handing over to Handing On.” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16 (1–2): 59–76. doi:10.1080/13527250903441770.

<sup>242</sup> Flinn, “Community Histories,” 153.

complexity that surrounds the community archive. Just like a historical record, the definitions of who and what makes up a community are not fixed, they are fluid, and it is in this space of fluidity that rich histories are preserved and collected and ultimately can be shared. Flinn states one way of looking at this confusion is by the “extent to which the designation of ‘community’ is an external one as opposed to something that comes from within, and to what extent membership of the community is conceived of as being fluid, inclusive, and through choice as opposed to something more tightly defined and essentialized.”<sup>243</sup> Flinn discusses this in much of his work, as does Jeanette Bastian, that community is essentially a group of people that define themselves. As Bastian states, “community archives have existed ever since groups of people have felt the need to affirm themselves and their own identities within or apart from the wider society.”<sup>244</sup>

The community archive is not necessarily a physical location, it can be found in the archive that the community itself has collected. Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd have stated in the past that this association with an actual physical space is not what makes the history of that group of people; that what is important when working with community archives is that participation, control and ownership as well as the direction the archive will take, will be from the community itself.<sup>245</sup> Central to Flinn’s work is the upholding and importance of full participation and direction by the communities that have the interest of larger repositories (whether a library, archive, or museum) who wish to house their histories.

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<sup>243</sup> Andrew Flinn, “Archival Activism: Independent and Community-led Archives, Radical Public History and the Heritage Professions,” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* Vol. 7, no.2 (2011): 6. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9pt2490x>.

<sup>244</sup> Jeanette A. Bastian & Andrew Flinn, *Community Archives, Community Spaces: Heritage, Memory and Identity*, (Facet Publishing, 2020), xx.

<sup>245</sup> Flinn, “Community Histories,” 153. See also Mary Stevens, Andrew Flinn & Elizabeth Shepherd (2017) New frameworks for community engagement in the archive sector: from handing over to handing on, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 16:1-2, 59-76.

Community based archives can be highly rewarding for the community itself, the archivist, as well as outside participants and users. This type of archive creates a setting that allows the expansion of theory and movement to occur in creating a space of inclusivity previously thought to be held with the dominant society. Sheffield points out that community archives “grow out of the desire to collect documentary heritage that reflects our common identities, experiences, and interests.”<sup>246</sup> When working with people’s stories, their personal memories, and valued items, both a level of objectivity and subjectivity are needed, they are a part of what makes up identity. As it is, the records that are often kept by members of fringe communities often do not meet what many archival repositories deem as containing archival value, even if the community themselves hold the material as most valuable to telling their history.

Rebecka Sheffield has stated that, “community archives grow out of the desire to collect documentary heritage that reflects our common identities, experience and interests.”<sup>247</sup> She goes on to say that community archives essentially work outside of what society would usually consider heritage or record collecting sites of specific members of a society, what she calls “formal heritage networks.”<sup>248</sup> This can include “books, artwork, and other non-archival records that hold special meaning for the community.”<sup>249</sup> For those connected to music scenes, the records are varied and include tangible and non-tangible items of importance.

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<sup>246</sup>Rebecka Sheffield, “Community Archives,” in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, eds. Heather MacNeil and Terry Eastwood., 2nd Edition. (Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2017), 351.

<sup>247</sup> Sheffield, “Community Archives,” 351.

<sup>248</sup> Sheffield, “Community Archives,” 351.

<sup>249</sup> Sheffield, “Community Archives,” 360.

Community Archive as a Physical space:

The term community archive is used for both the grassroots collecting practice of societal members and can be used as a form of formal repository. Flinn states that the term “has not only been employed to define a potentially disparate range of activities going under many different names (community archive, independent archive, autonomous archive, ethnic archive, oral history archive, local history project) as something resembling a coherent community archive movement.”<sup>250</sup> Community archive collections can often be found in public libraries, university libraries or smaller local history centres. The scene community would have to have the ability to work alongside the archive in constructing their historical records. There may be more flexibility on how their records are taken in by the archive so that the material can be used, added to, and documents taken back if needed. Community archives can produce relationships where the archive and community members work together.

Personal collections are so very much connected to both individual and community identity, and memory and a mechanism needs to be created that allows these records to continue to act as live/active records and still be fully accessible by their owners. This is an archival project, but it cannot be stated enough that archives and archival records need to be approached in an interdisciplinary lens and one that provides societal and contextual knowledge.

Approaching this must involve the willingness to change and adapt the past and even current archival methods of looking at record keeping, what and who constitutes a legitimate archival record, and looking at it all in a holistic, multi-disciplinary manner. Looking archivally at this,

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<sup>250</sup> Flinn, “Archival Activism,” 6.

one must approach incorporation of these records with an interdisciplinary lens. As John Leland states in his *New York Times* article talking with Richard Hell, “the instinct to preserve one’s mundane papers involves a mixture of introversion and extroversion. It creates a public record of a private life, blurring the boundary between the two.”<sup>251</sup> Looking at the cultural remains of a subculture or scene-based music community reveals that there can often be difficulties in their definition/description, and how they are to be classified within the archive. This does not make them less valuable as primary sources for historical research (as found using newspaper clippings to construct a narrative of Winnipeg’s punk scene), but it provides a fresh and new knowledge source for researchers, fans, and the community itself.

These community created DIY spaces provide an outreach tool and enable archives to share with the public and educate a wider demographic that would not otherwise go into an archival institution. As Moser points out, “objects, texts, and audio-visual media work both independently and together to convey meanings and thus museum analysis is truly an interdisciplinary enterprise.”<sup>252</sup> Emotions connected to records play a role as well in the archive making process. This can be seen in a passion with one period of music, to a type of sound, other historical moments, or to a significant place, all which transport back to those moments.<sup>253</sup> Sarah Baker describes collecting members of popular music communities as the custodians of that community’s heritage and its materials. She states that it is “a role that involves finding the ‘treasure in the trash,’ the practices described by these DIYers make evident the complexity of

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<sup>251</sup> John Leland, “At Home with Richard Hell; Punk for Posterity.” *The New York Times*, January 1, 2004. <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/01/garden/at-home-with-richard-hell-punk-for-posterity.html>

<sup>252</sup> Stephanie Moser, “The Devil is in the Detail: Museum Displays and the Creation of Knowledge,” *Museum Anthropology* Vol. 33, no. 1 (2010): 23. [doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1548-1379.2010.01072.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1379.2010.01072.x)

<sup>253</sup> Paul Long, Sarah Baker, Lauren Istvandy and Jez Collins, “A Labour of Love: The Affective Archives of Popular Music Culture.” *The Journal of the Archives and Records Association* 38 (2017): 61-79.

the everyday decisions they navigate in their efforts to move items from a place ‘in-between,’ or ‘on the way’ to forgetting, and into the realm of memory.”<sup>254</sup> Nowak and Bennett further this by stating that,

popular music heritage involves a number of cultural intermediaries, from the critical role of curators in charge of organising and narrativizing exhibitions at museums and halls of fame, archivists who document popular music’s past and collect and organise material culture, artists, and/or their estate that lend or give particular objects, and the journalists, audiences, fans, and enthusiasts who express an interest in the preservation of popular music heritage.<sup>255</sup>

### What Makes a Punk Archive?

As discussed in Chapter Two, historical records of music scenes come in a variety of different media, in tangible and intangible forms. Formats of material such as textual, photographic, or audio-visual mediums, are common traits, however, the content, storing methods, and subject matter can be vastly different. Punk communities’ archival records resemble closely those records found in other marginalized or fringe communities such as the feminist, LGBT2S, POC, and Queer communities,<sup>256</sup> and as a genre allows space for to create inclusive communities within it, these can include persons of colour, queer and LGBT2S, creating new sub genres of ‘queer punk’ or Black hardcore and punk or Latina punk.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Baker, *Community Custodians*, 75.

<sup>255</sup> Raphaël Nowak, and Andy Bennett. *Music Sociology: Value, Technology, and Identity*. (Routledge, 2022), 158.

<sup>256</sup> See Ajamu X, Topher Campbell, and Mary Stevens, “Love and Lubrication in the Archives, or rukus!: A Black Queer Archive for the United Kingdom,” *Archivaria* 68 (2010), 271-94. <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13240>. And Marel Barriault, “Hard to Dismiss: The Archival Value of Gay Male Erotica and Pornography”. *Archivaria* 68 (January 2010), 219-46. <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13238> .

<sup>257</sup> For examples of community created archives that highlight the importance of these movements within the overall punk scene, take a look at: <https://nuestrostories.com/2022/10/latinaspunk-women-of-color/> which features the likes of The Brat, The Bags, and La Zappa; Reclaiming History: an Archive of Black Hardcore and Punk, which shows Hardcore mega band Bad Brains (and many others) <https://blackpunkarchive.wordpress.com/> ; and The Queer Zine Archive Project (QZAP) that looks at highlights those interested in the DIY publishing styles of queer communities through ‘zines’ <https://archive.qzap.org/>.

The collecting of music history occurs in many levels from the large-scale global buyers and sellers all the way to individuals personal boxed collections of localized scenes and experiences. As Baker and Huber observe, the aims of many DIY popular music institutions can closely align with the statements of purpose of more traditional heritage organizations in that they have a broad mission to create and maintain collections and make them publicly accessible.<sup>258</sup> By collaborating with the professional museum sector, independent practitioners can reach a larger audience and ensure the contributions of popular music are experienced more widely within public celebrations of culture.<sup>259</sup> Mechanisms need to be put in place that allow for the incorporation of participants personal archives and collections. DIY style institutions (for example pop up gallery/markets that small collectives create), reveal artefacts and stories that would otherwise be lost or remain hidden that significantly contribute to cultural music memory.<sup>260</sup> This DIY approach to heritage offers the people involved in establishing these grassroots institutions and the networks and communities of interest that form and are formed by them.<sup>261</sup>

This has its immense positives (as it produces a vibrant collection and rich history), but it can also be negative, in the way in which it is collected, used, and displayed. It can create drawbacks if the archival staff are not familiar with the initial communities themselves and in the not so pristine condition of many collections. As Turrini explains, “Punk was at the time

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<sup>258</sup> Sarah Baker and Alison Huber. “Notes Towards a Typology of the DIY Institution: Identifying do-it-yourself Places of Popular Music Preservation.” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 16, no. 5 (2013): 513-530.

<sup>259</sup> Baker and Huber, “Notes Towards a Typology,” 521.

<sup>260</sup> Sarah Baker, “Do-It-Yourself Institutions of Popular Music Heritage: The Preservation of Music’s Material Past in Community Archives, Museums, and Halls of Fames.” *Archives and Records: Journal of the Archives and Records Association* 37, no. 2 (2016): 174.

<sup>261</sup> Baker, “Community Custodians,” 4.

perceived as an ephemeral culture; its primitive, handmade, usually black-and-white, copier-produced flyers, amateurish home-produced fanzines, and simplistic three-chord music encouraged the notion that punk was indeed nothing more than a fleeting phenomenon; a cultural fad that would inevitably be co-opted and dismissed.”<sup>262</sup> So, finding a way in which these types of records can be brought into the archival space needs care.

These alternative narratives are being constructed through a historical lens, through the personal collections of scene members and enthusiasts. The danger that Wilkinson, Worley, and Street point out is that by “emphasising the theoretical is that it by turn neglects punk’s material history, the complexity of its politics and the experiences of its protagonists.”<sup>263</sup> Its traces are, however, found in the personal collections, oral histories, and the memories of participants and in the cultural productions (in the form of material records). Community engagement is key to its creation and often smaller local music scenes have a DIY approach and as far as punk goes, principles of anti-establishment and scepticism exist, creating a hesitation in handing over their personal collections to strangers working in institutions that are outside of their own communities.<sup>264</sup>

Punk is not necessarily dead, it is just living in boxes under beds, in garages and in the forgotten spaces of our homes and the archive should not be an extension of that, as punk itself is fluid and is still around in different forms and interpretations. The archive that works with punk

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<sup>262</sup> Joseph M. Turrini, “‘Well I Don’t Care About Oral History’: Oral History and the Making of Collective Memory in Punk Rock.” *Music Library Association* 70, no. 1 (September 2013): 59. [doi.org/10.1353/not.2013.0129](https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2013.0129).

<sup>263</sup> David Wilkinson, Matthew Worley, and Joun Street. “‘I Wanna See Some History’: Recent Writing on British Punk,” *Contemporary European History* 26, no. 2 (2017): 406.

<sup>264</sup> Caroline Daniels, Heather Fox, Sarah-Jane Poindexter, and Elizabeth Reilly. “Saving All the Freaks on the Life Raft: Blending Documentation Strategy with Community Engagement to Build a Local Music Archives.” *The American archivist* 78, no. 1 (2015): 255. [doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.17723/0360-9081.78.1.238](https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.17723/0360-9081.78.1.238)

needs to be engaging and continuous, as the punk genre and the scenes connected are moving in the same way. These historical records to connect to the punk that is happening today and should encourage the participation of past and current scene members ... active members, active records, active places.

Two points that Daniels, et al. present in their paper “Saving All The Freaks on the Raft,” is that people who are interested in their collections being a part of an archive, in a donor sense, have been “concerned with the handling, use, and reproduction of their collection materials and how researchers will access them”<sup>265</sup> and that the community “have not necessarily been willing to relinquish intellectual control over the items.”<sup>266</sup> These are legitimate concerns and must be recognized through the discussion process with scene members. The relationship between archival repository, archivist, and scene members must be done in an authentic manner and involves all member roles in that community, whether it is fans, promoters, or band members. One way this can be done is through “collecting a more inclusive historical record by using the internal elements of the community’s language rather than in terms and meanings of an external (archival) framework, a preservation and access policy that reflects the communities’ values.”<sup>267</sup>

Using a DIY approach involves a community as well as members solo efforts. One solo ‘citizen archivist’<sup>268</sup> is Ian MacKaye of Minor Threat and Fugazi fame. In a 2013 blog article for the Library of Congress, writer Butch Lazorchak considered Ian MacKaye a ‘citizen archivist’

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<sup>265</sup> Daniels, Fox, Poindexter, and Reilly, “Saving All the Freaks,” 255.

<sup>266</sup> Daniels, Fox, Poindexter, and Reilly, “Saving All the Freaks,” 255.

<sup>267</sup> Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor, and Mario H. Ramirez. “‘To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing’: Uncovering the Impact of Community Archives 1.” *The American archivist* 79, no. 1 (2016): 59. [doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.17723/0360-9081.79.1.56](https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081.79.1.56)

<sup>268</sup> According to the Society of American Archivists, a ‘citizen archivist’ is a member of the public who aids an archival organization by performing functions of the archive. They may have specialized knowledge of a particular subject or potential collection source, and their work is done outside of the archival repository using technology.

and stated that he thinks of “citizen archivists as the first responders of history, arriving early on the scene to gather, capture, describe, and preserve ephemeral artifacts of interest and helping to ensure that they survive over time to share with the future.”<sup>269</sup> To MacKaye, in an article by Paula Mejia, “the self-made archive is just another mode of expressing the ideals of punk: it’s about documenting his scene instead of waiting for someone else to do it for him.”<sup>270</sup> As this project works with physical records (and I am including both tangible and intangible material) and not digital, the archiving of these specific records could produce a roadblock as many organizations may not have the space or have the money to have someone work specifically with physical material. The ‘citizen archivist’ exists in all of us, those who for some reason or another, decided to start hoarding their adventures in scenes and the activities that went along with those (mis)adventures, and documented as we went. We, as scene members, and active participants in music enthusiasm, are the ‘first responders’ that Lazorchak states above regarding MacKaye.

Archival collections create knowledge and not all music scene records will be similar. Depending on the individual collecting the material, they could be very organized or they may all just be contained in a box, bin, or bag. Often the material is well used, not in pristine condition, and sometimes stored poorly and for this reason, music scene archives must be understood in the personal and socio-cultural frameworks to which they are created and emerge from. Social context is important to understanding the object itself and contributes greatly to the transference of the historical information contained within the record. Jessie Lynn, in discussing ‘zine

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<sup>269</sup> Butch Lazorchak. “Ian Mackaye and Citizen Archiving.” *The Signal: Digital Happenings at the Library of Congress*. May 8, 2013. <https://blogs.loc.gov/thesignal/2013/05/ian-mackaye-and-citizen-archiving/>

<sup>270</sup> Paula Mejia. “Punk Archiving: Ian MacKaye talks to the Library of Congress about his online Fugazi Museum and More.” *The Media*, Issue 3 (2013). <http://www.fvckthemedial.com/issue03/punk-archiving>

collections observes, “they are more than the object that you pick up and read through; they are practices constituted through the production and consumption of everyday narratives, both drawing from, and expanding on, the communities that they exist within.”<sup>271</sup> This encourages a deeper understanding of the social and cultural context surrounding the archival records both in its time of creation (such as the making of gig posters by bands) and its interaction with a collector (who grabbed it at a show and saves it), where its meaning, both socially and cultural can change over time (adding to an existing collection, or displaying as art in their home).<sup>272</sup>

### Losing Archives – Losing Heritage.

Material from music scenes can be lost, without ever realising its full potential as historical material. In Istvandy’s paper “How Does Music Heritage Get Lost? Examining Cultural Heritage Loss in Community and Authorised Music Archives,”<sup>273</sup> she points to a few interesting factors when looking at the collecting of music and how as the movement from and between private collections, community archives, and institutional repositories material can be lost. I find it useful as she investigates both tangible physical items and the intangible (stories, live performance), all of which would be created and kept in personal collections in varying degrees. She states that the “ephemeral nature of music means that it can never be truly preserved in material formats, though it may be sustained through cultural practices.”<sup>274</sup> The importance of safeguarding music related cultural practices is why having the ability to house

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<sup>271</sup> Jessie Lynn, “The Zine Anthology as Archive: Archival Genres and Practices.” *Archives and manuscripts* 41, no. 1 (2013): 53.

<sup>272</sup> Tom Nesmith. “The concept of societal provenance and records of nineteenth-century Aboriginal European relation in Western Canada: implications for archival theory and practice.” *Archival Science* 6 (2006): 351-360.

<sup>273</sup> Lauren Istvandy, “How Does Music Heritage Get Lost? Examining Cultural Heritage Loss in Community and Authorised Music Archives.” *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 27, no. 4 (2021): 331–343. [doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/13527258.2020.1795904](https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2020.1795904)”

<sup>274</sup> Istvandy, “How Does Music Heritage Get,” 332.

material in an archive or a special collection repository is a part of this safeguarding, and it creates a shared space for the community itself.

Damage and loss can occur if materials (tangible or intangible) are passed down to new owners, such as family members or friends as they may not recognize the materials' importance to the owner and to heritage overall.<sup>275</sup> The unique condition of music heritage as both tangible and intangible means that instances of loss are not always mutually exclusive from each other. Istvandy points out that the physical form of cultural heritage for music when it comes from the community itself can be at risk and can include the material that has been previously discussed such as ticket stubs, show posters, setlists, etc. These losses can be unintentional or intentional in nature and can affect both physical items as well as material that is intangible (such as audio/video recordings).

Istvandy provides broad actions that can have an effect in the loss of music heritage while in the possession of community custodians and she states that when looking at the knowledge keepers such as the living archives, they may not even realize their importance and knowledge to music heritage. Where she specifically looked at local jazz music communities, I have applied her findings to the personal collections of punk music scenes members. Many factors can occur with the physical material of music scenes. The records could not have been seen as valuable to the original owner or creator and may have been thrown away, the material could have been not preserved correctly (often the case) and not in ideal condition, or just out of human error where the material itself has lost its contextual knowledge – which can occur even at the archive level if the material has not been properly described or labelled. With intangible

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<sup>275</sup> Istvandy, "How Does Music Heritage Get," 335.

records, if not recorded or photographed, disappear. Problems can arise when material recorded from interviews, shows, demos or videos of the scene itself cannot be retrieved, if the holder of that information (the living archival record) passes away without passing over their knowledge, providing context to other material.<sup>276</sup>

A challenge for archival methods is to ensure that community members have awareness of and access to all the records that are of potential significance to them as well as transparency and authenticity. This quality and the association of music with experience and ideas of the past can be linked to music's role in the emotional identity of individuals. This role is derived from encounters with its physical, non-representational qualities as much as overt meanings manifest in lyrics, press reports or artist interviews, informing memory-making and its place in social interaction such as archive building.<sup>277</sup> It is often through these encounters with music souvenirs of the past that identities both collective and individual are formed and forged. As Stewart believes, the 'souvenirs' will not "function without the supplementary narrative discourse that both attaches it to its origins and creates a myth with regards to those origins,"<sup>278</sup> as it comes after the fact.

For many community archives, physical heritage often finds its way to the archive through the public approach, where collections, especially of deceased estates, are donated to the archive, but as I know and have discussed with members of the local scene, they would like to have a participatory relationship prior to that occurring, at the same time recognize that we are all not getting any younger.<sup>279</sup> Although Kibby's examination of personal music archives focuses on the collecting of digital music files, her analysis of music collections and the materiality of

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<sup>276</sup> Istvandy, "How Does Music Heritage Get," 335-336.

<sup>277</sup> Long, Baker, Istvandy, and Collins, "A labour of love," 61.

<sup>278</sup> Stewart, *On Longing*, 136.

<sup>279</sup> Istvandy, "How Does Music Heritage Get," 337.

those files through processing, categorizing, and accessing can be used to look at the materiality that music scene participants collect and house in their personal archival collections. Kibby states that the music-based archives often found in personal collections cannot be easily classified into categories such as “sacred object or the mundane,” that people’s overall relationship with music and those who feel deeply connected to it, find the movement in and out of the record’s life to be a fluid category, the records meaning can change depending on who is experiencing it at that time.<sup>280</sup>

This is absolutely the case when looking at participating in the local scenes (whether you are a member or not), it moves fast, it’s loud, involves a lot of social interaction and observation, and at times runs well into the early morning hours. This will require working closely with the donors of these records, complete transparency and authenticity and creating space to house their records, that are not only objects in a box but rather an ever-revolving display of who they are as individuals and as communities. These records are an extension of who they are, they are part of their identity. As Nesmith points out, “a record has likely been various things to the many people (across its full history) who have made it, or who have been involved in the social and technical processes of its inscription, transmission, and contextualization which have brought it to us as the object it is.”<sup>281</sup>

Recognizing this requires not only a shift in mandates and collection policies but also in how archivists look at the archival principles of fonds, provenance, and original order. This sort of historical record will challenge the activities of accession, its arrangement, description,

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<sup>280</sup> Marjorie Kibby, “Collect Yourself: Negotiating Personal Music Archives.” *Information, communication & society* 12, no. 3 (2009): 428–443.

<sup>281</sup> Tom Nesmith. “Reopening Archives: Bringing New Contextualities into Archival Theory and Practice.” *Archivaria* 60 (2006): 259–274.

preservation, and outreach/access. As Marjorie Kibby states, “music can be an object, but it can also be an experience; it can exist as a phrase heard from a passing vehicle, as well as taking a concrete form with cover art and liner notes in a purpose-built cabinet.”<sup>282</sup> Ketelaar expands on this when looking at the creation of collective memory saying that, “what we call collective memory is a cultural practice of constructing the self-image of a community. There is no single collective memory. Even if members of a group have experienced what they remember, they neither remember the same things nor do they remember in the same way.”<sup>283</sup>

Participatory archives often fall under the related terms of community archive or grassroots style archive. Participatory archiving in its simplest definition is that of participation, including all parties involved. Through the engagement of users, this form of archiving attempts to create new perspectives on and about collections, developing relationships with the community, exercising outreach opportunities (which may or may not include funding) and creating rich descriptive records. Baxter as quoted by Benoit III and Eveleigh, states that the “use of participatory models challenges traditional thinking of archival authority through the potential for introducing new voices that ‘muddy the network, reducing authority and authenticity, and perhaps, value.’”<sup>284</sup> Although not without its possible challenges, whether it is through trust of either /all parties, engagement with users, skill levels of participants, it is important to think about how this mode of archiving could work with a community like a punk music scene and a community archive to create a substantial and rewarding Punkive. This participatory engagement

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<sup>282</sup> Kibby, “Collect Yourself”, 431.

<sup>283</sup> Eric Ketelaar. “Archives, Memories and Identities.” In *Archives and Recordkeeping: Theory into Practice*. ed. Caroline Brown (Facet Publishing, 2014): 136.

<sup>284</sup> Edward Benoit III and Alexandra Eveleigh, “Defining and Framing Participatory Archives in Archival Science.” *Participatory Archives*, Facet Publishing, 2019, 7. They also quote T. D. Baxter, “Going to See the Elephant: archives, diversity, and the social web,” In *A Different Kind of Web: new connections between archives and our users*, ed. K. Theimer (Society of American Archivists, 2011): 286.

with the community, especially when looking at adding to or creating the description and context of the record is as quoted by Geoffrey Yeo in Eveleigh's chapter stating that, "opening description to user participation gives a voice to minority groups and marginalized communities, enables users to supply additional perspectives and differing opinions, and recognizes that final or definitive descriptions are never possible."<sup>285</sup>

Using Flinn's Community Archive Approach for Punk Archives and Punk Music Scenes:

If a community wished to hand over their records, this traditionally meant that the community would have to surrender control not just over the arrangement and description of their records, but also over their ownership and possible exploitation.<sup>286</sup> This is changing as more archival repositories are creating methods to work with the incorporation of collections into their spaces. One way that Flinn states to potentially bridge this relationship between the repository and the community is through sharing "the responsibility in the management of the collections with the source communities"<sup>287</sup> which would not only build and strengthen the relationship but create trust. Taking inspiration from Flinn's work and with his collaboration with Mary Stevens and Elizabeth Shepherd, the use of community archives being a valuable alternative form of knowing is a method that would work extremely well with the archives of punk music scenes. The success of institutions and repositories will depend on the complete engagement with the collectors of those communities, and it is of utmost importance that the archivists are required to be flexible and encouraged to be mediators between these two entities. Stevens, Flinn and

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<sup>285</sup> Alexandra Eveleigh, "Participatory Archives," in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, eds. Heather MacNeil and Terry Eastwood. (Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2017), 304 and she quotes Geoffrey Yeo "Debates about Description." in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, eds. Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil (Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2017), 102.

<sup>286</sup> Stevens, Flinn, and Shepherd, "New Frameworks," 61.

<sup>287</sup> Stevens, Flinn, and Shepherd, "New Frameworks," 61.

Shepherd believe, “adjusting priorities so that the passing on of skills and the sharing of knowledge between community and mainstream archivists becomes as integral to the latter work as ‘core’ activities such as cataloguing and description. Valuing the contribution of the bearers of alternative forms of knowledge.”<sup>288</sup>

There are a few ways in which this relationship and mediation can be affective. Archival repositories can support the community in securing the long-term future of their records through a variety of flexible custody arrangements, considering the concerns of the community in so far as their fears for the loss of their material and their identity. Loan arrangements can be made that allow the ownership of the community’s records to remain within the community control but then provide a space for housing these records on a term basis to ensure preservation of their history. Having ongoing collaborative feedback and discussions with community members, whether it involves quarterly checking or setting up a board to continually maintain communication and input to the repository. This form of an advisory committee that would be made up of archival staff and local community members would benefit from an access and outreach angle, could result in not only gaining more archival records but help in creating a space for the community members to showcase their history through exhibit and knowledge spreading to the larger public body. Tools can also be provided to the communities that the archival repositories which to collaborate with. This can be done though providing the community members the skills needed to maintain the records that they have collected and will collect.

Mary Stevens with Ajamu X, and Topher Campbell discuss this in their work with the Black queer archive called the rukus! archive project.<sup>289</sup> This project was an artist led endeavour

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<sup>288</sup> Stevens, Flinn, and Shepherd, “New Frameworks,” 72.

<sup>289</sup> X, Campbell, and Stevens, “Love and Lubrication,” 271- 294.

and was about making available the voices and artistic material that related directly to the Black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities that are in the UK. As Ajamu X states in conversation in the article, “I like the idea of something big, a lot more flexible and more fluid, otherwise the creativity is lost. For me the notion of an institution also sounds quite serious, although at the same time we are building an institution but in a different kind of way, around another kind of model ... An artistic sensibility is woven into everything.”<sup>290</sup> Showcasing community archives is important to a group’s collective heritage. The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives collection in Toronto (ArQuives)<sup>291</sup> consists of male erotica and pornography that is critically important to gay male documentary heritage and that collections value goes far beyond its intended purpose extending to one that is highly informational for both the community, archival repositories, and the public.<sup>292</sup>

In my interview with Wall, we talked about what material she has collected over the years such as “ most if not all of the posters she made, as well as set lists, and the Wursts logo that she created, noting that it looked like a girls bum for the ‘W’,”<sup>293</sup> as she showed me a button that she created (see in Figure 15 in the previous chapter). While looking through the material she brought to the interview, she remarks on the age of it all and states that, “at the time when you keep it you don't even think of that; you just kind of hang on to it just cuz, then you get to a point, like wow this is like this is some pretty cool stuff, this is history and you know when my demise comes and when somebody goes through my things ... I think it's super important that it

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<sup>290</sup> X, Campbell, and Stevens, “Love and Lubrication,” 289.

<sup>291</sup> This archive was created to help in preserving and collecting the records of LGBTQ2+ people in and around Toronto and nationally across Canada. For more on this archive, see their website at <https://arquives.ca/>

<sup>292</sup> Marcel Barriault, “Hard to Dismiss: The Archival Value of Gay Male Erotica and Pornography.” *Archivaria* 68 (2010), 219-46. <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13238>.

<sup>293</sup> Wall, interview, 2:05:05

gets preserved like this for another 40 years so people can go holy shit! I can't believe this ... this is 100 years old! Yeah, it's quite amazing, I think it's pretty neat.”<sup>294</sup> In both the conversations I had with Wall and Fonseca, the importance of these records being preserved for others to learn from and share in a local history was important for not only those who participate in the scene (from the past, present, and future) but for creating a space and opportunities for these records to live.

#### Examples of Punk Archival Collections:

There must be mechanisms put in place for archival institutions, whether it is a community run centre or part of a special collection in a larger archive, to be constructed to allow music scene members to have fluid movement with their records, so that they can still use/view them and add to them when necessary. The best way I can think of this would be like the idea of a security box that you find at the bank. Members of music scene communities should not have to give up parts of their identity (which is so connected to these types of records) nor pass away before an archive can house their records. Following this it would be imperative that archives should not only be looking at well-known musical artists historical records but records (whether it is scene members or smaller scale musical artists) at the local, regional, and national level, equally important in their rights to be preserved. Lutz, Maharjan, and Crawford state that “pop culture collections challenge institutional mission statements and collecting strategies; what is considered ‘important’ or historically significant; and who gets to take up space or speak.”<sup>295</sup>

Archival collections of punk related material can be found in small libraries and university spaces throughout North America, whether it is the Vancouver punk scene at Simon

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<sup>294</sup> Wall, interview, 2:05:05.

<sup>295</sup> Lutz, Maharjan, and Crawford. “Going Against the Archival,” 255.

Fraser University,<sup>296</sup> or the localised social media sites such as Instagram that showcase local cities and communities' photographs and other textual material. Three collections that I have chosen to look at have substantial records count, and all look at varied geographic regions in the USA. The University of California at Los Angeles Library's Punk Collection collects records of the various scenes in Los Angeles County starting in the mid 1970's to the present day. They work closely with their communities in a collaborative manner and collect material from various participants within that scene such as "musicians, photographers, filmmakers, promoters, producers, record labels, artists, writers, venues, spaces, and fans. It is our mission to inspire and facilitate the discovery and research of punk cultures. photographers, journalists, filmmakers, promoters."<sup>297</sup> Within their scope of what they look for and accept is "materials that document the histories and stories of spaces that speak to marginalized punk communities of colour, feminist punks, queer punks, Riot Grrrls, and punks with disabilities. Within these communities, genres of interest include Afro-punk, queercore, Chicana/Latina punk, art-punk, straight edge, hardcore, avant-garde, and experimental punk."<sup>298</sup> The library research guide for this collection outlines that they are committed to an anti-oppressive approach that covers both inside and outside the LA/Hollywood punk narrative.<sup>299</sup> The guide provides various zines, textual material, and photographs that are available in digital form in specific collections and each collection has its own finding aid. These collections are available both online and in person which aids in the

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<sup>296</sup> "Vancouver Punk Rock Collection," Simon Fraser University Library and Special Collections, accessed August 20, 2024, at <https://digital.lib.sfu.ca/vancouver-punk-rock-collection>.

<sup>297</sup> "UCLA Punk Music Collective, Punk Music and Culture," University of California Library and Special Collections, accessed August 20, 2024, at <https://www.library.ucla.edu/collections/library-special-collections-punk-archive/>.

<sup>298</sup> "UCLA Punk Music Collective, Punk Music and Culture."

<sup>299</sup> "Punk Music and Culture," UCLA Library. Research Guides. <https://guides.library.ucla.edu/punk>.

outreach available to and by the community, as well as the collections access to the public, scene members and researchers.

The second punk collection is that of the DC Punk Archive located in Washington D.C., a collection that focuses on a genre of punk in a specific location, the D.C. area. The DC Punk Archive was created in 2014, and its scope is made to be broad as to capture the many stories that this large period has produced.<sup>300</sup> This collection also looks at punk history and material related to 1976 to the present day and the harder more aggressive sounds of DC Punk. They document music and musicians, venues, record shops, radio stations, houses and tours that are related to the D.C. scene. The collection includes “photographs, published materials (books, zines, and articles), sound and video recordings (vinyl records, tapes, CDs, live performances, demos, oral histories, and interviews), and ephemera (fliers, posters, set lists, letters, and tickets).”<sup>301</sup> Through the University of Maryland Libraries, the DC Punk Archive have their collections and finding aids and a box listing available. This archive has its collections organized into seven series which include, Fliers and posters, Photographs, Recordings, Ephemera and realia, Publications, Correspondence, and digital files; as well as related materials by name of donor.<sup>302</sup>

The final punk related archive is The New Brunswick Music Scene Archive (NBMSA) located at Rutgers University Archives and Special Collections in New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA. This collection was created in 2015 and was to document the music scenes that New

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<sup>300</sup> “DC Punk Archive,” DC Public Library, accessed August 20, 2024, at <https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A236691>.

<sup>301</sup> “Overview of Collections in The People’s Archive,” DC Public Library, accessed August 20, 2024, at <https://www.dclibrary.org/research-learn/overview-collections-peoples-archive>.

<sup>302</sup> “D.C. Punk Collection (Collection 0364-SCPA-DCPUNK),” University of Maryland Libraries: Archival Collections Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library, accessed July 4, 2024, at <https://archives.lib.umd.edu/repositories/4/resources/1748>.

Brunswick was popular for by housing an active collection that is mainly made up of donations of material. This specific collection has also created a theory of ‘a scenes approach’ to creating and maintain a local scene archive. Using an adapted version of documentation strategy, Christine Lutz has created a “relatable and effective approach that can build upon the common local music archives’ use of documentation strategy in developing, appraising, and conducting outreach that emphasizes relationships, memories, and meaning making among scene participants; pays careful attention to inclusivity; and emphasizes the importance of cultural spaces, physical and virtual.”<sup>303</sup> This collection works with material from 1981 to the present day, and is divided up into nine record series, which include: Flyers and Posters, Set Lists, Publications, Fritch Clark and The Last Bastians of Rock, Press Clippings, Ephemera, New Brunswick Music Scene Archive (founding material), Photographs, and sound recordings.<sup>304</sup> In using the scenes approach to creating an archive, Lutz believes that invites a range of scene participants to interact with elements of the scene in a way they may not otherwise. It offers a holistic view of a locate that includes creators, spaces, and fans- the diverse goings on in the given place.”<sup>305</sup>

### Exhibiting Archival Material Relating to Local Music Scenes

As Baker, Istvandy and Nowak believe, during a time when popular music histories are being represented in an over overabundance of cultural forms, curators are attempting to capture audience through a nostalgic retelling of various generational experiences of music history through narrative, rather than the conventional and traditional use of museum modes and models

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<sup>303</sup> Lutz, Christine A., “Making a Scene A Scenes Approach to a Local Music Archives,” *The American Archivist* 85, no.1 (2022): 269. <https://doi.org/10.17723/2327-9702-85.1.268>

<sup>304</sup> “New Brunswick Music Scene Archive,” Rutgers University Archives and Special Collections, Finding Aid View, accessed July 15, 2024, at [https://archives.libraries.rutgers.edu/repositories/11/resources/391/collection\\_organization](https://archives.libraries.rutgers.edu/repositories/11/resources/391/collection_organization)

<sup>305</sup> Lutz, “Making a Scene,” 269.

of representation.<sup>306</sup> The exhibiting of heritage, artefact, manuscripts, documents, the unique, the rare and the wonderful, is a crucial part of the educational mission of many cultural institutions. Exhibiting material and the inclusion of popular music within museum exhibitions “provoke a number of debates about historiography, representation, and the as critics of value.”<sup>307</sup> Museums are designed to present collections and tell stories about the significance of the objects contained within them, museum exhibitions are typically seen as providing opportunities to see ‘treasures’ from times long gone, or as useful educational aids for informing the public about science, culture, and the natural world.<sup>308</sup> “A distinguishing feature of museums is the value they accord – and that is in turn given to others – to their collections and the material they exhibit.”<sup>309</sup> How history is written and communicated, of whose history is voiced and whose is silenced,<sup>310</sup> museums are places where sacred belief systems are confirmed on the basis of hierarchies valuing one culture over another, where dichotomies are created, maintained and enforced through art or artefact, style vs period, high and low and dominant or marginal – this is where society’s values and beliefs have traditionally been established.<sup>311</sup>

An exhibit or collection that incorporates popular music and music scenes must be both developed and executed differently than other presentations of stand-alone archival and artefactual material. Moser states that the role of the attendees with how the displays of an

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<sup>306</sup> Baker, Sarah, Lauren Istvandy and Raphael Nowak. “Curating Popular Music Heritage: Storytelling and Narrative Engagement in Popular Music Museums and Exhibitions.” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 31, no. 4 (2016), 375.

<sup>307</sup> Leonard, “Constructing Histories,” 147.

<sup>308</sup> Moser, “The Devil is in the Detail,” 22.

<sup>309</sup> Leonard, “The Shaping of Heritage,” 19-30.

<sup>310</sup> Lisa G. Corrin, “Mining the Museum: Artists Look at Museums, Museums Look at Themselves,” in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, ed. Bettina Messias Carbonell. (Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 381.

<sup>311</sup> Corrin, “Mining the Museum,” 381.

exhibit are displayed “can never be underestimated,”<sup>312</sup> that it is the “way audiences engage with the displays and how they reflect upon these experiences plays a part in how the subjects represented in displays are defined.”<sup>313</sup> This is very true when looking at this subject matter being placed in a museum or gallery context. Leonard states that “the curation of popular music artefacts cannot stand in for or be detached from, the sonic and bodily experience of music and the emotional and social ways in which it is experienced in time and space.”<sup>314</sup> Leonard furthers by stating that “while the material culture of popular music offers a vista on cultures of production, mediation, consumption, creativity, and sociality, it is also something of a silent witness.”<sup>315</sup>

Beyond looking at what is physically on display, it is necessary to consider all the details of the display environment in which collections are presented.<sup>316</sup> The exhibition space provides a means for attendees to experience varied responses. Looking at the records materiality would bring about not only intellectual/cognitive responses but could trigger sensory responses to the viewer such as the feel or smell and the emotional experience that sometimes accompanies those. Museums must consider the infrastructure and value systems that generated prejudicial practices to begin with and use this self-study to change daily practices in programs, management, and governance.<sup>317</sup> The increased number of museums engaging in the exhibition and participation of popular music for their content is part and parcel due to developments in the role of museums in today’s world or ‘new museology’. As Leonard states the “changing emphasis within the museum sector on outreach, social inclusion, and engagement, has arguably made museums

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<sup>312</sup> Moser, *The Devil is in the Detail*, 30.

<sup>313</sup> Moser, *The Devil is in the Detail*, 30.

<sup>314</sup> Leonard, “Constructing Histories,” 152.

<sup>315</sup> Leonard, “Constructing Histories,” 148.

<sup>316</sup> Moser, *The Devil is in the Detail*, 24.

<sup>317</sup> Corrin, “Mining the Museum,” 383.

more receptive to displays of and engagement with popular culture.”<sup>318</sup> Recently the Canadian Museum of Human Rights had an exhibit *Beyond the Beat: Music of Resistance and Change* where various artists and genres were displayed showing the fundamental role that music has had in social and political transformation and change throughout the last few decades, everything from hip-hop, Indigenous artists, and folk artists (to name a few). Included in this was a section dedicated to punk and the work of D.O.A. and Bikini Kill and the Riot Grrrl movement of the 1990s.

Narrative based curatorial practices are an important part of the community based or the DIY archive experience. In regard to the representation of popular music heritage and historical representations in whatever format it is presented (museum, gallery, a local tour, or pop up exhibit, even incorporation into a performance) has, as Nowak and Bennett state, a common objective and that is to “transcribe the musical experiences and legacy in different contexts with the aim of successfully communicating the cultural importance of these to the audience.”<sup>319</sup> Focus on material authenticity and community participation and engagement, differs from the traditional role of museum design and curatorial practices, where often the object is behind glass and labelled and does not always the human contextual knowledge. It does not have an opportunity to explore the records further, as an archival exhibit can achieve. Once the exhibit is concluded and items put away, researchers or people interested in the records can access the records later. This method of connecting cultural importance and allowing the audience to be immersed in the life of the record, allows for the telling of individual stories as well as a collective experience for attendees, participants, and future researchers. In popular music displays, these “narratives can take three approaches: story-based, concept-based, and object-

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<sup>318</sup> Leonard, “Exhibiting Popular Music,” 173.

<sup>319</sup> Nowak, and Bennett, *Music Sociology*, 160.

based.”<sup>320</sup> All three approaches work to create a space of storytelling to both exhibit and maintain cultural memory. Story-based involves a guiding narrative that maps out the stories that are to be played out in the exhibit and the relevant artefacts that aid in illustrating that story or stories.<sup>321</sup> For example, in creating an exhibit that highlights punk music in Winnipeg, once the various themes were identified and finalised, objects to represent that story would then be used to emphasise that.

Objects are secondary in the concept-based approach in that they support more of a niche theme that is presented in the exhibit,<sup>322</sup> where the objects are used to illustrate the aspects that comprise it. Looking at an example of punk music scene in Winnipeg and through using a visual gallery example to illustrate how this could be possibly achieved (I have chosen local art gallery The Graffiti Gallery as a spatial reference), this could be further developed to look specifically at a specific block of time, to narrow the focus of the exhibits subject matter. Winnipeg has a large punk and hardcore scene over several decades, so by limiting the scope, the action of collection and acquisition of relevant artefacts would then be able to transpire. Finally, the object-based approach, consists of creating narratives that highlight the historical, biographical, and cultural significance of objects.<sup>323</sup> In displaying specific objects relating to music the curator contributes to the object’s stories and its biography. So, the focus does not just display objects that have a history, or a biography attached to them (which perhaps has changed over time), the museum, through a narrative-based design, actively participates in the objects meaning and materiality.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Baker, Istvandy and Nowak. “Curating Popular Music”, 369-385.

<sup>321</sup> Baker, Istvandy and Nowak, “Curating Popular Music,” 373.

<sup>322</sup> Baker, Istvandy and Nowak, “Curating Popular Music,” 373.

<sup>323</sup> Baker, Istvandy and Nowak, “Curating Popular Music,” 374.

<sup>324</sup> Baker, Istvandy and Nowak, “Curating Popular Music,” 375.

Caswell, Cifor, and Ramirez’s concept of ‘representational belonging’, can be used in both the community archive and in how that community chooses to display their material and presence in an exhibit. When applying it to local music scenes and specifically the punk scene, this concept shows “the ways in which community archives empower people who have been marginalized by mainstream medial outlets and memory institutions to have the autonomy and authority to establish, enact, and reflect on their presence in ways that are complex, meaningful, substantive, and positive to them in a variety of contexts.”<sup>325</sup> Caswell asserts that “community archives can serve as powerful forces against symbolic annihilation<sup>326</sup> by collecting a more

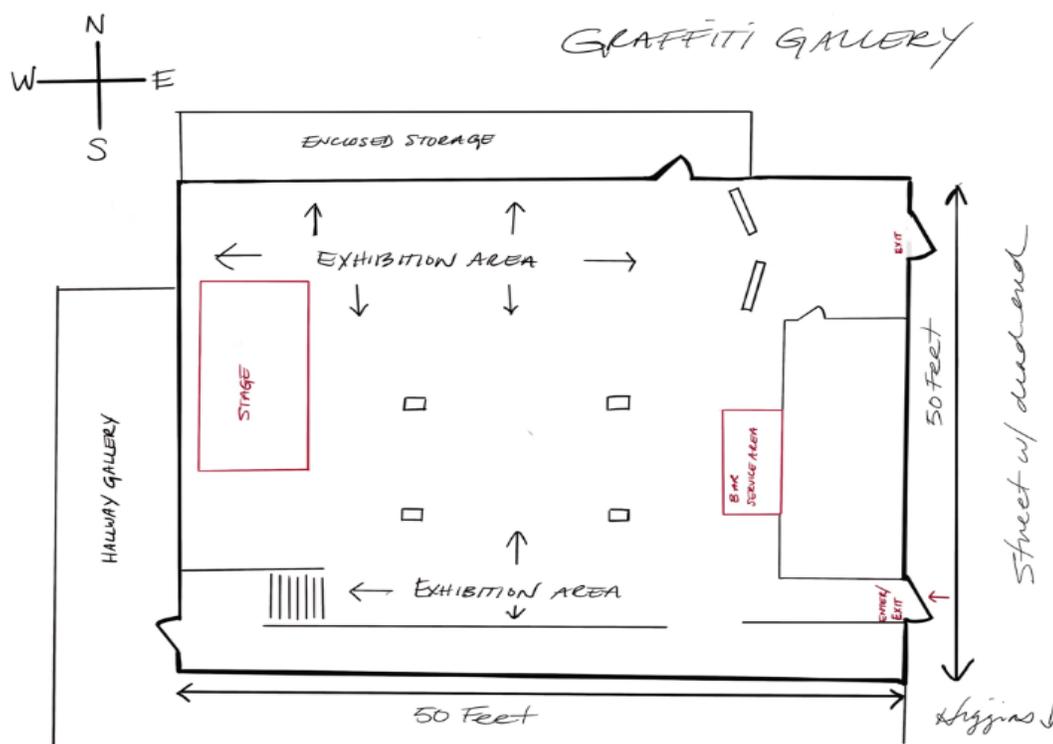


Figure 21: Proposed Exhibit Space Floor Plans. Graffiti Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba

<sup>325</sup> Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor, and Mario H. Ramirez. “‘To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing’: Uncovering the Impact of Community Archives 1’.” *The American Archivist* 79, no. 1 (2016): 57. <https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081.79.1.56>.

<sup>326</sup> Caswell, Cifor, and Ramirez, “To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing,” 59. And Michelle Caswell, “Seeing Yourself in History: Community Archives in the Fight against Symbolic Annihilation,” *The Public Historian* 36 (2014): 26–37. Caswell revised the term ‘symbolic annihilation’ to describe how members of marginalized communities feel regarding the absence or misrepresentation of their communities in archival collection policies, in descriptive tools, and/or in collections themselves.

inclusive historical record; using language emic to communities to describe those records and creating preservation and access policies that reflect community values.” by mainstream media and archives to reflect community values.”<sup>327</sup> By “empowering members of communities that have been ignored or misrepresented by mainstream media and archives to realize ‘I am here,’ ‘We are here,’ and ‘We belong here’ Community archives have a profound impact on those individuals and communities whose histories they document.”<sup>328</sup>

An exhibit space such as the one shown in Figure 21, would be an appropriate venue to exhibit a narrative style display of popular music and Winnipeg’s punk scene. As to not overwhelm the exhibit (space, material, and patrons) however, the second idea of concept-based display would be best for the space provided as well as for attendees and donators of the exhibit. Narrowing down the scope of what would be showcased would provide the audience with a greater experience and an overall experience. This space would be set up to house both spoken word, and samples of oral histories from those who participated, as well as musical acts to accompany the chosen theme. As this investigation into exhibit display and archival records is a part of a future project that will display a specific genre of music (Women’s Punk in Winnipeg during the late 1970s and early 1980s), exhibiting material in a manner that is in an establishment about a group that has historically been very anti-establishment, location is key to it being successful. The gallery is not a part of a major institution and is run by artist and community orientated people, some of which have moved within this scene or variants of other marginal subcultures. It is an intimate space, large enough for various media to be presented but small enough that attendees can engage and participate in the experience of the memory making.

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<sup>327</sup> Caswell, Cifor, and Ramirez, “To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing,” 59.

<sup>328</sup> Caswell, Migoni, Geraci, and Cifor, “To Be Able to Imagine Otherwise,” 20.

As Mosser points out, “large spaces can be seen as more impersonal, focusing on the presentation of grand authorities’ accounts, while small galleries offer ‘stories’ that can be engaged with on a more personal and questioning level.”<sup>329</sup> The plurality of voices of those participating and attendees would help in creating a rich telling of cultural history in a familiar exhibit space.

As a result, this creates an archival exhibit that is based on human stories from those who the stories are based. This paper has briefly scratched the surface of music memorabilia as being part of cultural heritage and historical archival record. It presented how this sort of material can be exhibited and examples of how it can be done in a practical manner. Archival material such as music memorabilia “were meant to do their work over and over again and to be seen both in an intimate setting and by strangers – making things visible – but at the same time invisible about the relationships, emotions, and memories they carry ... the ultimate goal is nothing less than immortality,”<sup>330</sup> it has “little to do with recalling the past, it is always about looking ahead toward that terrible, imagined, vacant future in which we ourselves will have been forgotten.”<sup>331</sup> We want those moments to be remembered and live on forever, whether it is for us individually or for the community.

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<sup>329</sup> Moser, *The Devil is in the Detail*, 25.

<sup>330</sup> Geoffrey Batchen, *Forget Me not Photography and Remembrance* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 96.

<sup>331</sup> Batchen, *Forget Me not Photography*, 98.

## Conclusion

Punk archives are relatively new as archives go and they live within the larger community archives understanding. Members of music scenes are the keepers of these historical papers and artefacts, usually stored away under beds, in closets, or garages. These amateur archivists, provide an opportunity to take a glimpse into a community not often looked upon in the public's eyes as a 'respectable bunch'. These records were perhaps never thought of as something that would one day be necessary to connect the dots of their historical importance. I think of all the records and collections that have been lost over the decades through various ways and it just makes the urgency that much greater to look at local scenes within the cities we live. This thesis will not be the end of the collecting of stories or materials that related to punk scenes in Winnipeg, if anything it is only the beginning. Punk, in its over nearly 50 years of existing, has been interpreted differently by everyone that has touched it. Many sub genres of the style has also taken form over that half century and will continue to do so. Through my correspondence while doing this project, I met many amazing people and made connections to others that would be interested in having their stories recorded so that they are not lost, and in the end have a place that their important collections can be kept and enjoyed for years to come.

The creation of a local punk archive is a grassroots operation and in true community archive spirit, is collected and maintained from the community itself. It is the community who will decide how their stories and legacy be kept and told, so that others in the future can learn and admire the trails that these amazing folks blazed for us in the beginning. The two women I interviewed, Debbie Wall and Margaret Fonseca still play in bands and Fonseca often makes an appearance playing in Wall's band the Gramma Llamas. They still have stories to tell, songs to write and stages to conquer. Wall, during our interview recalled that,

at the house party it was a House of Hosers, they're still naming those houses yeah, I had a couple of young guys just come up and say hi and thank me and just like wow you know that that's really nice just how do you even know you know who I am? So that that kind of means a lot, but you never know how you may be planting seeds and I know that from both the animal rights world and from the from the music world and sometimes the best thing that you can do is just be the best you that you can be and hopefully you're setting an example and people go 'hey I kind of like that'.”<sup>332</sup>

I hope that this work will inspire archivists to think outside their box and think about ways they can incorporate music scene community archives into their repositories. If not the space (as space is a contention at some places), at least be able to reach out to these communities and offer to help them with their record maintenance and preservation. The communities already have the outreach and access portion with their live bands and the many connections they have both locally and from afar. Learning from the work of Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd, along with Christine Lutz, Sarah Baker among others and being able to create a situation where both the community and the repository can work together to tell the music scenes history can be done.

Oral history collecting is hard work and takes a lot of practice, I am far from an expert in this field but what I got out of the experience will be lifelong. Although my oral history was more conversational, that is how it works with some communities and the getting to know you is how we figure out those people around us and who we want to be able to work with. I look forward to honing my skills and having a lot more conversations with the local punk community here. These records have value and have enjoyed a long tradition of being how memories are made and passed on and where great stories emerge from.

I am currently working on a music related collection at the University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections and this project has helped me look deeper into the mechanics

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<sup>332</sup> Wall, interview, 1:06:33.

of processing a music collection. This specific project, the John Einarson collection, has taken some getting used to as there is a mix of different record types, all connected to the music history of Winnipeg through the 1950's to now, in so far as rock artists. I constantly wonder what the stories are behind some of these photographs I see of the early days of The Guess Who members or Neil Young as a very young man playing in several different bands during his years here. It was very interesting to see that even in the 1960s that bands swapped members and often the spider web of connections between band membership is never ending and can cover great distance, much like it does today with bands that I know.

During our interview, Wall said something to me that upheld my want to make this project larger and come to fruition. She said, “you know, like a lot of people in the scene now they don't know, people probably aren't even aware of the history, so thank you for doing this you know, and kind of bringing it to life a little bit.”<sup>333</sup> That is exactly it, bringing it to life, these are living records, records that can keep going and growing to really create a music history for Winnipeg (and perhaps beyond). What initially grew out of me wondering what I would do with all the stuff I have collected over the years has transformed into connecting and collaborating with like-minded individuals that share the same hopes for the treasures we have saved throughout our lives and dig out from under our beds. Members of the original punk scene here in the city are getting older and sadly we have lost too many over the last few years – people that meant a lot to others and to the scene itself. They never had a chance to record all their stories, so it's time to start now. None of us are getting any younger!

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<sup>333</sup> Wall, interview, 1:06:33.



*Figure 22: Debbie's band Gramma Lammas with Margaret at The Park Theatre Friday, May 13, 2022, for A celebration of the lives of Walter Kot, Cyndi Funk, and Mike Lambert! Photography taken by Sharon Humphrey.*

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