

A DJ is performing at a club, illuminated by blue laser lights that create a grid pattern in the background. The DJ is wearing a dark t-shirt and headphones, and is positioned in the lower-left area of the frame.

UNDERCURRENT

HARTFORD MUSIC & ARTS

SUMMER 2026

ISSUE NO. 001

**CLUBLAND
OASIS:**

S M O K E
P U B L I C
H O U S E

**ALL-STAR
RAVE
SUNKEN
SUITE**

R E V I E W
P R E V I E W

S U M M E R
**COMIC
C O N
SEASON**
HARTFORD
G U I D E

MID WEEK
PARTY
**DANCE
GAVIN
DANCE**

MUSIC FEATURE

**TURNTABLIST
LEGENDS
ROB SWIFT &
MISTA SINISTA**

+MORE

+ Local Lifestyle ~ Fitness ~ Martial Arts

THIS
SUMMER...

THE QUACK
IS BACK!



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Mohegan Sun August 7-9 2026**



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+Where to Find Comics, Where to Dance,
Where to Work Out

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Published by
Unstable Studios
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The logo for UnderCurrentT features three stylized, white, wavy lines above the text "underCurrentT" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The background of the logo is a dark, solid color.

underCurrentT

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UnderCurrentT Magazine
issue 001
summer 2026



Cover Dedication DJ Dan 1968–2026

Cover Photo:
DJ Dan at 2024 Smukken Suite

six days a week worldwide. His club hit “Needle Damage” pushed his career to new heights. He was a living legend amongst ravers for his high energy sets, and a DJ’s DJ for his top skills and record selection. From techno and house to breaks and 80s cuts, he was unpredictably exciting. Fast forward some years and he firmly took the helm of a style of House all his own. “Too peak for the house stage, not peak enough for the mainstage,” he once kidded.

He was vested in DJ culture at all levels, even curating a museum in his locale of San Francisco. Not just interested in working with some of the hottest acts, he took time to develop talent and recoding artists through his inStereo label.

As he came down the airport escalators, I saw the clock. Two re-routes had made it so we had to hightail straight to the gig. More good news for a road-weary DJ. I was ready for the worst. He was all smiles. Happy to meet me, the fanboy. We would save time as his luggage, and all but one small record box, were lost. Politely, he asked could he borrow my headphones. Never complained once. And he *destroyed* for two hours on *three* turntables with thirty-odd records. At one point, he was just flipping records looking for tracks he hadn’t played. At 5am, he was off to buy clothes and a toothbrush at WalMart.

Still, all smiles. Always. Every time, no matter what. That mindset and attitude greatly affected a cadre of followers. We will cherish what he left us the way he would have wished for us: All smiles.

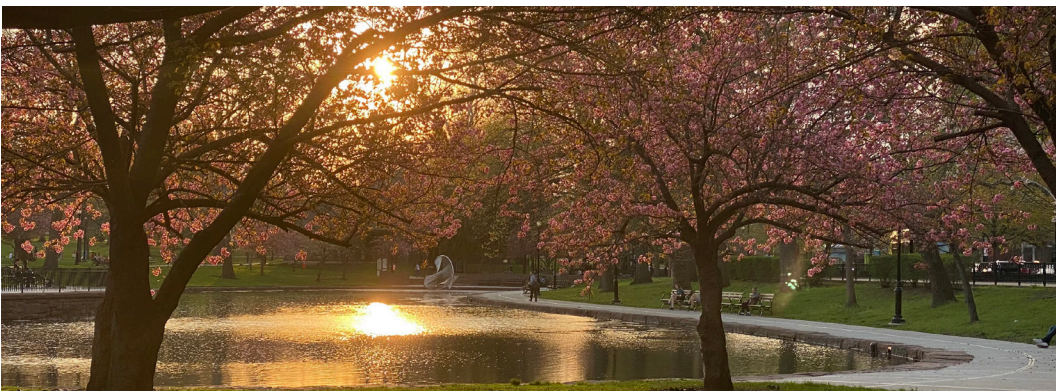
–Nicholas Lee Alexander Polit, editor
aka Nervous Nick, DJ Nick Bishop

We’re really excited to bring you this magazine. We have big plans for what we want to cover. From presenting a library of local photography to showcasing the photography of our local shutter smiths, we can’t wait.

In part, this is intended to be a magazine about things to do in Hartford, but also dedicated to helping people who live in and around Hartford find things to do in and outside of downtown. In the future, we look to include pieces on local martial artists, articles from local leaders in spiritual & mental health, and more.

This magazine is about the things we’re most passionate about: Music, particularly anything that MAKES you dance, Visual Art, and martial arts, as a pathway to balance and good mental health. We’re also passionate about Hartford, as this little gem so many unique ways to spend your hard earned time.

The first issue is dedicated to the late DJ Dan whose joy fueled the dance scene for decades. I figuratively fought to meet DJ Dan in my early days as a talent runner in Austin, Texas. It was at the airport, and at the time he was touring four to



Opposite: Hartford Public Library with the Capital In Background
Inset: Bushnell Park at Sunset (photos: Nick)

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Hartford Arts and Events Spotlight: The Wadsworth Atheneum



Hartford's own Gothic Revival museum is the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art on Main St. Wandering the halls feels like getting lost in a castle. Hosting the 43rd Annual Fine Art and Flowers Exhibit on April 24-26 this year, the fundraising event featured flower displays paired with works of art from the Wadsworth collection from local garden clubs, florists and interior designers.

The resonance between each work of art with its nearby floral echo provided a fresh perspective on the collection just in time for spring. It is an annual delight.

The Wadsworth is the oldest continuously-operating public art museum in the United States. Since 1844, the museum has delighted visitors with its collection of nearly 50,000 works of art, spanning 5,000 years.

In addition to its initial focus on traditional genres and art forms, in the 1930's it branched into more modern art. The institution was the first American museum to purchase a work by the surrealist Salvador Dalí, and first in the US to acquire works by Joan Miró and Piet Mondrian.

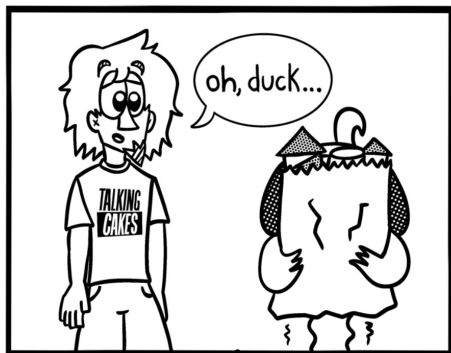
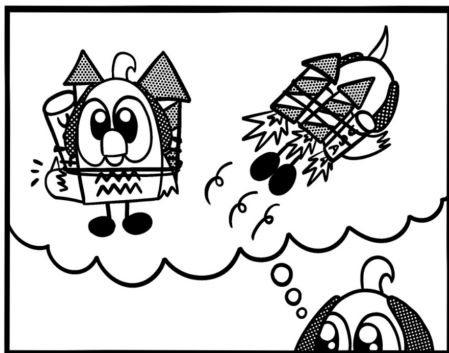
The Wadsworth offers free visits to Hartford residents, while special events such as the Fine Art and Flowers exhibit may cost an additional fee for admission. They're now open Wednesday to Friday noon to 5 pm and Saturday, Sunday 10am to 5 pm.

There is also a recurring first Thursday evening event at the Wadsworth with themes that change each month, which runs from 5 to 8pm. A film screening usually follows at 8pm.

-Gayle Klein, story & photos

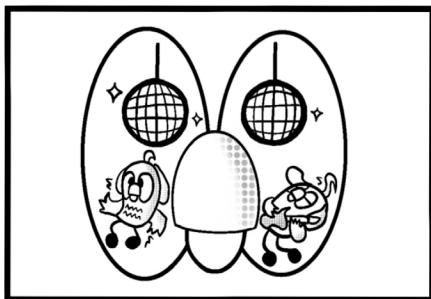
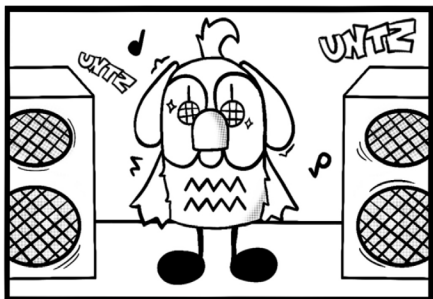
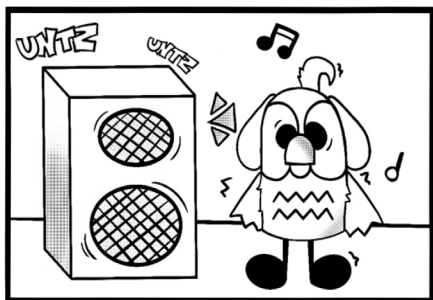


Above: Centuries-old paintings in the grand gallery; Far-Left: Built like a castle, it's architecture is part of the art; Left: The Flowers Exhibit gives color to classic marble sculptures.



ducky dog cake!

by LANA POLIT





Above: Were-Wolverine cosplayer artist

Below: Cosplayers make new friends

Bottom left: Beetlejuice... Beetlejuice

Bottom mid: **Jason Paige**, (singer, Pokemon TV theme song vocalist)



COMIC CON SEAS



Fandoms Unite!

Connecticon, CT's longest running convention, was first formed in 2003 by Matthew Daigle and Briana Benn-Mirandi. Originally held at the University of Hartford, it moved to the Connecticut Convention Center in downtown Hartford. It's one of the premier pop-culture cons in the area, bringing artists and fans together for nearly twenty five years.

Connecticon has a particularly strong social aspect. It feels more like a community rather than a traditional con. With Hartford's unique mix of urban and greenery, the convention center steps have become the place to be for fandom meetups and cosplay photoshoots. At night, the concourse



Each July, Comic Convention fever begins with a Hartford classic.



Cosplayers on Convention Center Steps



turns into a big dance party courtesy of the DJ Charizard.

There are panels, vendors, artists, signings & photo ops, tabletop gaming, free-to-play pinball machines and retro arcade games. Celebrity guests include, such as voice actors from K-Pop Demon Hunters, Cowboy Bebop, and Jojo's Bizarre Adventure. It even features cosplay wrestling showcases in one of the ballrooms.

Panels often turn into discussions with guest panelists. The meetups are great to talk about fandoms or artforms. Connection also uses the attached Marriott hotel for extra events, such as tabletop events and vintage tabletop exhibits. Conventions are a perfect place to make friends or meet the artist/actor of your favorite fandom.

Unlike many other conventions, this one has offerings until late. Everyday except Sunday, the Marriott is open until 2am for TTRPGS and certain panels. The Convention Center is open Friday 11am-11pm, Saturday is 9am-11pm, Sunday is 9am-3pm. For early risers, the Marriott events start up at 8am.

-Logan Polit

Clockwise from Top middle: Anime Cosplay on the convention steps

Top right: Video game cosplayers, DJ Charizard's Afterparty, a packed panel, Skullkid, Legend of Zelda fandom meetup, Agita from Hyrule Warriors (photos: Nick)





Terrificon: A Con for Comics Fans

Founded in 2012 by Mitch Hallock, the focus was to present comic culture in a family friendly environment.

By 2015, the convention moved to Mohegan Sun where it has been a yearly event since (minus Covid). In its new home at the Earth Expo Center at Mohegan Sun, it's been nearly ten years of hand-picked exhibitors.

At cons, there's autographs and selfies to be had. But it's a different vibe than massive cons where line can get hundreds-deep to see the hottest stars of the biggest IPs.

That's not to say you won't see star power at Terrificon. It's hosted Keanu Reeves, Priscilla Presley, Michael Rooker, Michael Jai White & more. Guests like Billy Zane are spotted shopping comics. Most guests are involved in comics to some degree like writer/comedian Brian Posehn, while others just love comics.

The celeb power is matched by the variety of artists and exhibitors: Print makers, 3D printers, sculptors, acrylic painters, and original comics/characters you literally won't

find anywhere but these rare types of cons.

Once a sea of tables with tides of comic boxes for treasure hunters, it has become the yearly meetup for artists of all types. There's indie comics for kids, as well as the more spicy flavors for adults. Meet the artists on their way to Marvel/DC, or shake hands with the future stars of Image or Boom comics.

Terrificon is also different in that it truly caters to comics, which gives it its unique "Back In The Day" feel. The level of comic artist and writer that appears at Terrificon is a who's who of comics.

Who knows, you might find yourself in a chat with the artist of a comic you've long cherished. A handshake, a compliment given to the artist, it deepens the connection to the art, which is what Terrificon is all about.

—Nicholas Polit



Counter-clockwise from above: DC/Marvel Artist **Chris Campana**; "Monsterwood" booth; panel with **Brian Posehn**, **Joe Kelly**, **Jimmy Palmiotti**; Gilmore Girls/MCU actor **Sean Gunn**; Family Guy's **Rachael MacFarlane**; **Ernie Reyes, Jr.**; Terrificon's artist alley. (photos: Nick)



Conventions Abound!

For avid convention-goers, Hartford is a prime central location. Boston, Providence, and New York City host destination conventions, while conventions closer to home offer a different experience. Connecticut Convention Center is the hub for several pop/comic conventions.

Retroworld Expo is a vintage gamer's paradise. Everything from modern 8-bit programmers to pinball machines is present. The programming has game-themed bands and dance troupes, as well as auctions and game shows. Intersperse your Nintendo merch shopping with game-themed wrestling.

Where there's underground/nich cons, there's powerhouses like 90s Con, which has exploded in magnitude. This year features a slate of actors, including a pair of Backstreet Boys, Heather Locklear, and Freddy Prinze, Jr.

The New Britain Museum of Art (NBMAA) last year hosted Fandom Fest in September, which was a great lead-in to the fall con season, and they have a packed event calendar, with all types of events.

New England FanCon will take place at the Trumbull Marriott Shelton on Aug 15 to Aug 16. It will feature appearances by prolific voice actors, and the creator of Monster High toys, Garrett Sander.

Some links to get you started:

nbmaa.org retoworldexpo.com
nefancon.com/talent ctconventions.com

—Nicholas Polit

Clockwise from top: The **Kalligraphy Dance Crew**, the NBMAA library was converted into a TTRPG crypt for Fandom Fest, game-themed rock band **Lamegenie** at Retroworld Expo. (photos: Nick)





ALL-STAR RAVE “SUNKEN SUITE”

A symposium of EDM/DJ culture, art,
and good vibes in closeby Sturbridge.



Electronic music seems to be a sea of its own. The artists of legend are still sailing stronger than ever. And what better place to witness this than a semi-annual gathering of self-described “ne’er do wells” producing a pirate themed event.

It’s fair to compare it to raves of the 90s/2000s. The DJ lineups alone are a bit of a time machine, at first glance. And the dress does have a bit of the “candy raver” element (always welcome sights). But the similarities start to fall apart quickly. Right away, in either of the main rooms, you’ll notice modernities missing from dusty warehouse. Massive LED arrays blaze and darken the room, with lasers adding to the show. Every room has decor and is visually stunning. Under the hood upgrades like the state of the art sound systems thump without sacrificing quality.

Even the veteran sea dogs are still at the top of their game and have advanced the art into new ground. They experiment right before our eyes, such as jungle/dnb legend Dieselboy delving into House bpm range with his usual aggressive triple-deck “threaded” approach. U.K. acts like Krafty Kuts are

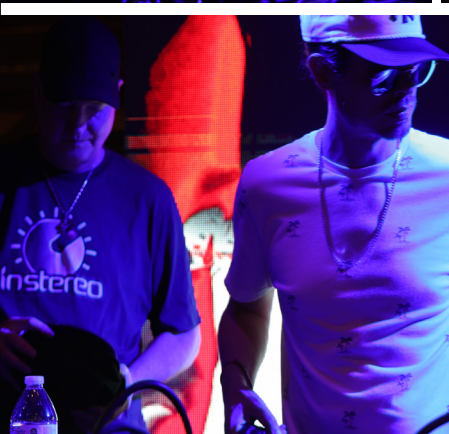
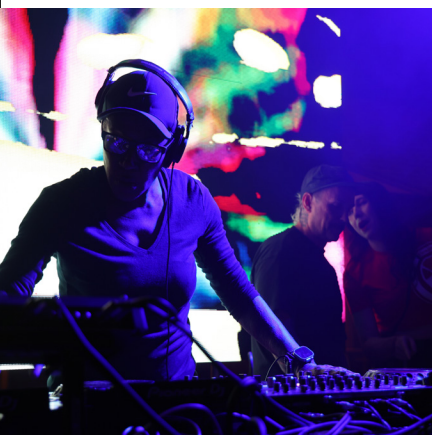
a rarity in the USA, and they’re still producing at levels that sees them topping their genre charts on Beatport. Appearances by top talents are a treat, as many of these acts were only accessible at major festivals.

Sunken Suite and Tropical Dreams, sister events in summer and winter respectively, are the antithesis to the massives. The party people are always enjoying themselves, if not in a subdued way. The beach decor, pirate patches everywhere, and indoor pool (bring a suit), it feels laid back the minute you walk in.

The whole philosophy of Mutiny Events and its founder Shane Burke can be felt in its approach. He surrounds himself with a dedicated staff that operates almost with a hive mind to keep the vibe right. The professionalism and respect flows throughout, which makes the event feel like a co-op party. Going on its fifth year, the event has expanded to five stages to showcase all the talent that New England has to offer.

—Nicholas Polit

Clockwise from bottom right: **Mike Incillo** w **Codes**, DJ Dan, **DJ Dan** in the wings as Codes prepares to turn over the decks; **DJ Heather** from Chicago; the Oasis Stage. Opposite page, **Gene Farris** ready to drop white labels as jungle/dnb legend **Dieselboy** plays his second set of the night as **Halen**. (photos: Nick)





Rob Swift and Mista Sinista: Legends of Hip Hop in Hartford

The 2026 edition of the annual Trinity Hip Hop Festival delivered a sleeper highlight. Literally taking us to school, Rob Swift talked origins of turntablism and traced its roots back fifty years.

Later that evening, Lite Box Studio hosted an hours-long showcase of the past, present, and future of hip hop. Rob Swift and Mista Sinista, both formerly of the X-Men/X-Ecutiioners scratch supergroups, performed together as Da Odd Couple. Their performance was a masterclass of scratching and body tricks that blew the minds of even the most seasoned heads.

“In ancient cultures, **dance** and **music** were the **same word**; they have a symbiotic relationship.”

—Rob Swift

DJ Rob Swift’s visit to Hartford began with a lecture at the Trinity University campus here in Hartford. During the nearly two hour lecture, he discussed the history and evolution of DJing, not so much hip hop culture in general. He described how it was common trait DJs to build their own sound systems and mixers. They to be creative with what they could make and afford. The theme of the lecture was about the evolution of turntablism, and of how it sounded back then, and how it has changed over the years.



According to Swift, three DJs in particular were monumental in influencing the rapidly changing genre of hip-hop: Kool Herc in 1973 with the back to school jams in the western Bronx. There, he pioneered juggling and looping breaks. According to Swift, “[people] didn’t start breaking until 1975 at Kool Herc parties”. Swift detailed how Herc was extending breaks before cueing hardware existed, dubbing his method the “merry-go-round technique”. Kool Herc was also known for having a very loud custom sound system, with speaker stacks known as “The Herculoids”.

Swift spoke about the legendary DJ Grandmaster Flash, who developed the “clock theory”, where he would use markings to juggle records, visualizing the record as a clockface. Grand Wizard Theodore was the one who discovered scratching with the help of his angry mother: When he was practicing on the decks, his mom wanted to speak to him, and he caught the record, causing it to move back and forth. This made the “vshh” noise, which he immediately expanded upon, inspiring many others to progress the art.

Left: **Rob Swift** and **Mista Sinista**; Top right: **Rob Swift** signs his book for the next generation; Above: **Rob Swift** demonstrates as well as lectures; Rob talks details and shows hip hop artifacts like Grandmaster Flash tapes (photos: Nick)

Later that night, Da Odd Couple performed at the Lite Box Live venue on Park St. After opening performances by B-Boy Tim Andria and Ovalord Radio, Rob Swift took the decks. It took no time before the crowd was in a frenzy. The crowd breakdanced in a circle as Da Odd Couple mashed up funk, modern rap, old skool hip-hop, soul, and more into a danceable dish, B-Boys and B-Girls entertained onlookers. Both professor sthrough and through, their record selection was a history of hip-hop and its roots as well.

Trinity University’s Hip Hop Festival continued throughout the weekend with performances at Parkville and more.

Rob Swift’s book “The City of Hip-Hop: New York City, The Bronx, and a Peace Meeting” which is a 300 page treatment on these subjects is available on Routledge or Amazon.

–Nicholas Polit & Logan Polit

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eyeopenercomics.com

Boom Tube Comics

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boomtubecomics.com

Retro Junk

(860) 305-6385
757 Main St, Manchester
retro-junk.locable.com

Heroes and Hitters

28 Main St, East Hartford
(860) 529-8824
facebook.com/HeroesComics

Alternate Universe

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alternateuniversect.com

Wonderland Comics

(860) 963-1027
160 Main St, Putnam
wonderlandcomics.com
@wonderlandcomicsct

PARTY LIFE

Arch St Tavern

FRIDAYS/SATURDAYS

This long-running venue is sometime more known for rock/jazz and its weekly Booyah! night. It often hosts EDM acts, dubstep nights, and the occasional Goth/Industrial night.

Aug 1 DNB/Bass Night ft. Lenore, Glowworm, Pnutt, Detroit Mike, Cycle

[archstreettavern.com](#) @archstreettavern

Smoke Public House

140 Park Rd, West Hartford 860-772-0077

FRIDAYS

With its beginning at the old Tisane, FIRST FRIDAY has become a staple of the local scene, with residents Mike Incillo presenting the best CT has to offer, plus special regional guests like Osheen, at its new home.

Every Friday until 2am, this cozy BBQ staple on the borderlands of WeHa transforms into a mini nightclub. The sound system is always thumping, so bring earplugs as you're not going to want to leave the floor.

Sometimes there's a cover, but that means there's a marquee DJ that night. DJ Legacy hosts a hip hop night called Final Fridays and makes special appearance other nights, with third Fridays dubbed "House Head City" and present the best in the soulful, deep, and classic House flavors, with guests like DJ Leon McIntosh spinning a history of House. Don't forget they serve mean BBQ when not doing events.

[facebook.com/firstfridayhousemusic](#)
@smoke_public_house

Shish Kebab House

TUE/THU/FRI/SAT

36 Lasalle Rd, West Hartford

(860)231-8400

DJ on Tuesdays, Fridays, & Saturdays

Powered by the multi-talented DJ Gabe Gandres, this venue has a DJ weekend nights, plus a special service industry night on Tuesday. Not just another bar in WeHa, Shish offers a proper hookah environment in a posh upstairs environment. The bar area is a proper party with a thumping system and its own mini dance floor. Sip, eat, dance while overlooking the party people on the sidewalks below.

Check their calendar for specifics and kitchen hours.

[afghancuisine.net](#) instagram @gabegandres

PD Club

SATURDAYS

(860) 205-5408

89 Grove St, New Britain

PD Club is the newest nightclub in the area, it dancefloor freshly opened in early April 2026.

Of note is their monthly showcase, already having brought such luminaries as Hatiras and Tommie Sunshine, with a major night featuring Joeski & Donald Glaude on the horizon for July 25. Check out their ALL AGES outdoors foam party on July 26 for some EDM vibes with DJ Talian and Polski DJ.

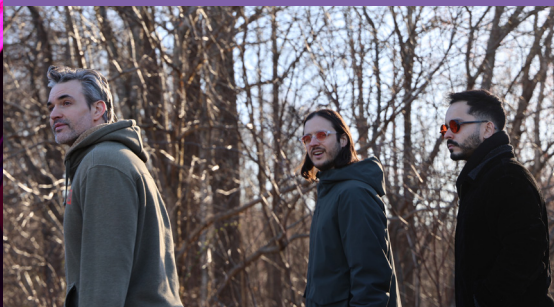
instagram @pdclubct



Artist Spotlight: Veytik

Progressive House/Trance Producer

CT musician **VEYTIK** tours Europe to Canada while keeping the gas on a heavy release schedule, all the while mastering music for a variety of labels and other artists.



Veytik with duo Pandhora



DANCE GAVIN DANCE

The Toyota Oakdale Dome
hosted another mid-week banger.

by Nicholas Polit & Lana Polit

Nicholas: *It's a party, you should just go.* That's what I'd say in an elevator if someone asked me. If they had more time, I'd relate how if Dance Gavin Dance is the headliner, intimate shows like this should be on your bucket list, at any age (skip the festivals if you're "old"). They're a certain brand of Post-Hardcore, so the music wasn't my taste; I'm mostly EDM/Hip Hop. But I like music, and this was musicianship at its finest. The Oakdale Dome is an unsung venue, especially with the perfect weather that night.

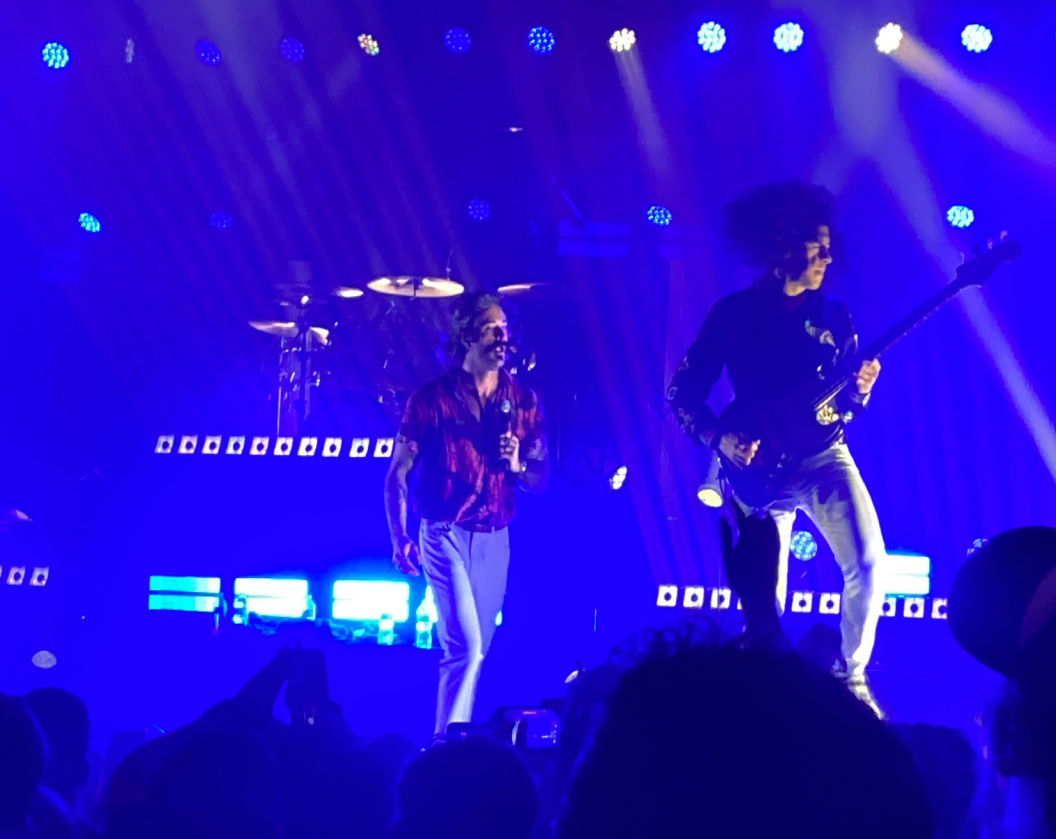
Band after band, they surprised me with how much fun everyone was having. Cheers to the Oakdales' friendly security for their professionalism, especially with moshers. It helped make it a memorable show.

Lana: This was my first time seeing any of the bands live, and they were all amazing. From the moment that the first opener, Novelists, came on stage, through Wolf & Bear and then The Fall of Troy, the excitement in the crowd grew at a steady pace.

When Dance Gavin Dance performed, the crowd went wild with a moshpit and crowdsurfing. The atmosphere at the Oakdale Dome is really intimate, too. All of DGD's fans are really devoted to their music. So much that during points in their performance, you could barely hear the music over the crowd singing the lyrics. Overall, it was a super fun show, and it really felt like a community rather than an audience with the way everyone came together.

both opposite, below: **Dance Gavin Dance**, top and mid left:
The Novelists, bottom left **Wolf & Bear** (photos: Nick)





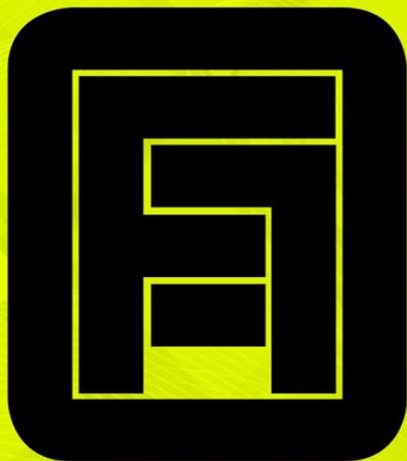


GABE GANDRES

GIG LINEUP - JULY // 2026

 [FACEBOOK.COM/GABEGANDRES](https://facebook.com/gabegandres)  [SOUNDCLOUD.COM/GABEGANDRES](https://soundcloud.com/gabegandres)

7/7	SHISH	WEST HARTFORD
7/10	SHISH	WEST HARTFORD
7/11	RIVA BEACH BAR	WEST HAVEN
7/12	MERCATO	SHELTON
7/14	SHISH	WEST HARTFORD
7/15	SALTWATER NEWPORT HARBOR MARINA HOTEL	NEWPORT, RI
7/18	MERCATO	SHELTON
7/21	SHISH	WEST HARTFORD
7/25	SALTWATER NEWPORT HARBOR MARINA HOTEL	NEWPORT, RI
7/28	SHISH	WEST HARTFORD
7/31	MERCATO	SHELTON



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U.S. DMC Champion - At Large - Las Vegas

IMMORTAL

U.S. DMC Champion - ClearAM - Miami

Δ trentino ▽

Red Bull 3Style Champion - Clear AM - Las Vegas

DJ
VENOM

Rare Non Electronic Turntablism Set
Volume / ClearAM - Providence

RD
Club

21+ TO ENTER

9-9:30 - \$5 SHOTS

\$20 9PM-11PM

\$25 11PM-CLOSE

SCAN FOR

\$15 PRESALE



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SUNKEN SUITE

FRI JULY 17TH TO SUN JULY 19TH 2026

@ STURBRIDGE HOST HOTEL STURBRIDGE MA

DNB STAGE HOSTED BY: BP²

**DARA DEEKLIN DEGS EVOL INTENT GEORGIE RIOT
JFB PHANTOM 45 RONI SIZE SPOR UNGLUED**

WITH EMCEES JOSIAH SCRIBES & ELIJAH DIVINE

OASIS STAGE:

**CARLO LIO CODES GETTOBLASTER J. PHILIP
KRAFTY KUTS MADAM X THE SPONGES UNIIQU3**

+ 3 MORE STAGES TO EXPLORE

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