

# WHERE Y'AT

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## LOST HORIZONS NEW MUSIC CLUBS POST-KATRINA

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When Katrina made landfall, the damage caused by the collapse of the levees resulted in not only destruction already reported upon ad nauseum, but also the disappearance of one of the city's cultural and economic assets: music.

As many musicians found themselves scattered to the four winds in the immediate months following Katrina, one would be hard-pressed to find more than a handful of clubs offering live music with virtually no touring acts on the bill. As far as this writer remembers, the only out-of-town act brave enough to play in New Orleans in those days was Austin's Honky at One Eyed Jacks.

With at least ten new venues now offering music post-Katrina due in large part to the courage of independent club owners, the live music scene in the Crescent City is poised to explode as New Orleans regains its status as a world-class music city.

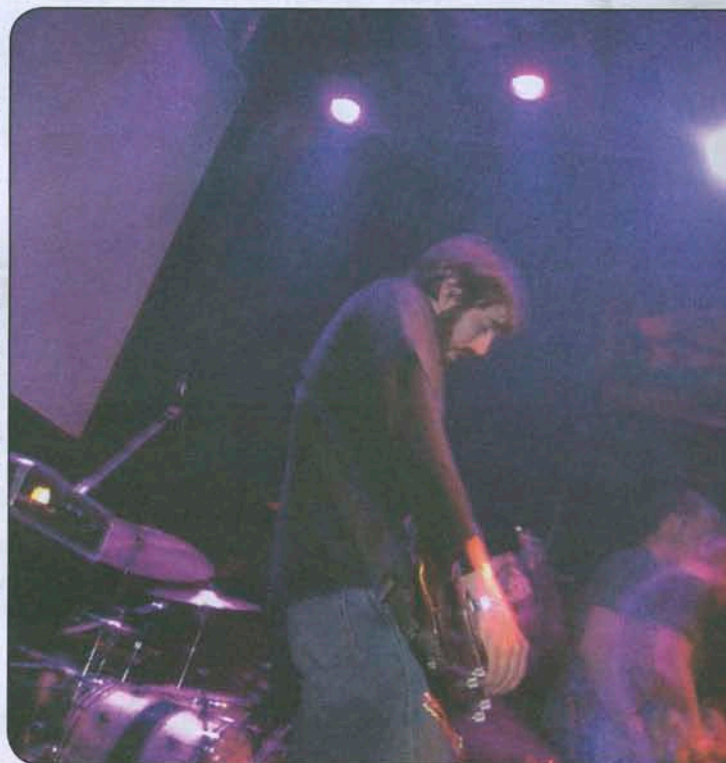
### WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

Located at the same 1100 Constance Street address that once housed the Mermaid Lounge, the Rusty Nail features "roots" music by mostly New Orleans bands. According to club owner Todd McNulty, "We opened the Rusty Nail in the post-Katrina environment because we started the process before the storm. As soon as we could get back to work, we began fleshing out ideas on how to help the city and its rebuilding efforts. As you can imagine, we decided that a great place to see and feel New Orleans and get a dose of great music was our mission."

Located just down the street at 828 South Peters at the former site of the Howlin' Wolf, in its post-Katrina history the Republic has become one of the premiere venues for touring acts, rivaling both the House of Blues and Tipitina's.

When asked about why the club was opened, Republic's owner Robert LeBlanc responds, "Everyone said it was insane for us to open a new music club three months after Katrina, but we all felt like it was something we needed to do. We had this sense that, even if Republic New Orleans was not feasible from a purely business standpoint, it was what was needed in New Orleans at the time. We set it up to be a staging ground for young people intent on rebuilding the city properly. We are hoping that Republic New Orleans will be viewed as, historically speaking, a place that was really important socially and culturally in New Orleans' rebuilding effort. We were completely prepared to lose money, if that was what it took."

"I think that the most difficult thing was that we really had no idea what we were doing when we opened Republic. I know that many people in our position purport to have everything figured out. Maybe they do, but in our case that would be bollocks. We have had to figure how to do things at the same time that we were trying to do them, and on a shoestring budget most of the time. I am still not sure we know what we are doing, but we're closer than we were a year ago."



"We feature some of the edgy indie rock and hip hop bands that are bubbling up from the underground that people are listening to in Brooklyn, London, and West Hollywood. Many of our bands are transitioning between underground cult followings and becoming widely recognized throughout the country and sometimes world, like Death Cab for Cutie. We think that the bands that we book at Republic are very important in what they are contributing to music and culture today."

Further down the street and also in the Warehouse District, 528 Fulton features well-known New Orleans artists such as Ingrid Lucia and John Boutte. Owned by Harrah's Casino, the club features artists who perform varied types of music, primarily jazz and R&B.

According to Bill Johnston, Entertainment Manager for Harrah's New Orleans, "Plans for the 528 Music Club were in the works well before Katrina, as part of our goal of showcasing the city's heritage and vibrant music tradition. Music is one of the primary reasons why people love New Orleans, so we viewed 528 as another great reason for visitors to come to New Orleans."

"Our main challenge is getting tourists to come to town and experience 528, and all that our property and city have to offer. Regarding our vision for the future, it is to continue to support local musicians, and become one of the top venues where locals and visitors alike can come and to listen to great New Orleans music!"

