

[Home](#) > [Indianapolis Music](#) > [Story](#) > A Ripple of sonic uprising

A Ripple of sonic uprising

Festival floods entertainment district with music

David Lindquist

Metromix

October 17, 2010



0 comments | [Add Your Own](#)

Email Print View Share Add to Favorites Add to playlist



A sign signals the fourth annual Broad Ripple Music Fest on the grounds of the Indianapolis Art Center, where folk-influenced acts performed Saturday, Oct. 16. (Credit: Kelly Wilkinson / Metromix)

If Broad Ripple Music Fest were the type of event where recording labels discovered acts and signed them to deals -- and if signing a deal in 2010 helped artists more than it didn't -- Red Light Driver played a show Saturday night worthy of major-label attention.

The band filled the subterranean Casba with stylish rock, built upon Jonathan Harmon's shimmering guitar, bass player-vocalist Mike Contreras' Britpop mannerisms and guitarist-vocalist Derek Osgood's New Wave tendencies.

Closing with the songs "Manic Saturday" and "From the Start," Red Light Driver delivered a melodic jolt and brandished a well-rehearsed professionalism not always evident at the one-day festival that presented more than 70 acts at 14 venues.

In the old music-biz paradigm, a label would be smart to finance a Red Light Driver tour and leverage influence for radio airplay.

Today? The Indianapolis-based quartet avoids common corporate headaches of sharing all rivulets of revenue, surrendering creative control or having a release indefinitely shelved by making all of its music available for free download on website www.redlightdriver.com.

We Are Hex, the band that followed Red Light Driver at the Casba, is primed to thrive in the present music-biz paradigm.

Primitive and spooky, We Are Hex is championed on taste-making online outlets such as My Old Kentucky Blog -- which issued current We Are Hex album "Hail the Goer" on its Roaring Colonel label (an independent company not to be confused with Warner, EMI, Universal or Sony).

The unhinged fervor of vocalist Jill Weiss surges into a We Are Hex audience, making it possible for the band to build success one show at a time without relying on the mainstream.

"It's not for everyone" even has served as the band's motto, but it's hard to imagine Saturday's performance leaving anyone in the crowd unimpressed.

Drummer Brandon Beaver and bass player Trevor Wathen crafted a heavy, relentless foundation for Weiss and multi-instrumentalist Matt Hagan.

As Weiss wailed, Hagan employed guitar and keyboards (and a bass to match Wathen's on one song) to crest and dissolve.

Weiss spent much of the performance reaching toward the ceiling, eventually climbing onto the bar to push her body and slap a hand against the firmament.

She wanted her band's harrowing sound to break upward to whatever was happening at restaurant/nightclub Usual Suspects -- presumably the safe Broad Ripple stuff that transpires 364 days a year.

As Rooms drummer Ben Traub only slightly exaggerated during his band's afternoon performance at Luna Music Midtown, "there is no live music in Broad Ripple" -- the entertainment district where dance nights overseen by DJs have dominated for a decade or so.

Rooms specializes in a nervy and knotty post-punk sound, and Traub distinguished himself as a Buddy Rich of sorts within the genre.

Authoritative striking and creative rhythms are two necessary traits, and Traub hammered his cymbals to create a mighty rumble to rival guitarists Matt Askren and Kevin Toole.

Other highlights from a rewarding day of performances:

* Savvy Salon may have been the festival's most out-of-the-way venue (a hair boutique east of Broad Ripple



FIND THE BEST DEALS FROM YOUR FAVORITE DEAL SITES

