

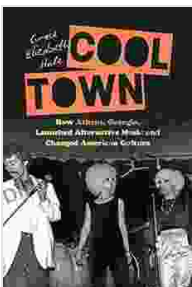
Athens, Georgia: The Athens Alternative Music Scene's Rise and Enduring Impact on American Culture

Nestled amidst the rolling green hills of northeast Georgia, the small college town of Athens has played an outsized role in the development of American popular music. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Athens became a hotbed of alternative music, spawning a wave of influential bands that would help to redefine the sound of rock music and shape the cultural landscape of the United States.

The Birth of R.E.M.

The story of Athens' alternative music scene begins with the formation of R.E.M. in 1980. Led by vocalist Michael Stipe, guitarist Peter Buck, bassist Mike Mills, and drummer Bill Berry, R.E.M. quickly became a local favorite, thanks to their infectious melodies, jangly guitars, and enigmatic lyrics.

In 1983, R.E.M. released their debut album, **Murmur**, which was a critical and commercial success. The album's lead single, "Radio Free Europe," became a college radio anthem and helped to establish R.E.M. as one of the most promising bands in the alternative music scene.



Cool Town: How Athens, Georgia, Launched Alternative Music and Changed American Culture (A Ferris and Ferris Book) by Grace Elizabeth Hale

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 15292 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 379 pages
Screen Reader : Supported



The Influence of Wuxtry Records

Another key factor in the development of Athens' alternative music scene was the presence of Wuxtry Records, a small independent record store that became a hub for the city's musicians and music fans. Founded in 1977 by record collector Clay Harper, Wuxtry Records quickly became a popular destination for music lovers from all over the region.

Wuxtry Records played a vital role in fostering the Athens alternative music scene by providing a space for bands to perform, sell their records, and connect with fans. The store also helped to promote the city's music scene through its in-store performances and its own record label, Wuxtry Records.

The Rise of the 40 Watt Club

In addition to Wuxtry Records, another important venue in the development of Athens' alternative music scene was the 40 Watt Club. Founded in 1974, the 40 Watt Club quickly became a popular spot for local bands to play and for music fans to see their favorite artists.

The 40 Watt Club hosted a wide range of acts, from local up-and-comers to national touring bands. The club's intimate setting and supportive

atmosphere helped to create a sense of community among Athens' musicians and music fans.

The Athens Alternative Music Scene's Impact on American Culture

The Athens alternative music scene had a profound impact on American culture. The scene's bands helped to popularize alternative rock music and paved the way for the grunge movement of the 1990s. The scene's music also helped to shape the sound of college radio and MTV, and its bands became icons of the 1980s alternative music scene.

In addition to its musical impact, the Athens alternative music scene also had a significant cultural impact. The scene's bands helped to create a sense of community and belonging for young people who felt alienated from mainstream culture. The scene's music also helped to challenge traditional gender roles and promote tolerance and acceptance.

The Legacy of Athens' Alternative Music Scene

The Athens alternative music scene of the late 1970s and early 1980s is widely regarded as one of the most important and influential periods in the history of American popular music. The scene's bands helped to redefine the sound of rock music, shape the cultural landscape of the United States, and create a legacy that continues to inspire musicians and music fans today.

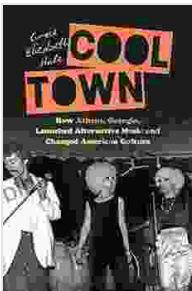
Further Reading

- [Athens, GA: Inside the Classic Music Scene That Revolutionized Rock 'n' Roll](#)
- [Athens, Georgia: The Birthplace of Alternative Rock](#)

- [The Athens Alternative Music Scene: A Retrospective](#)

Image Credits

- [R.E.M. performing at the 40 Watt Club in 1981](#)
- [Wuxtry Records in Athens, Georgia](#)
- [The 40 Watt Club in Athens, Georgia](#)



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