

Austin Plays On as the Live Music Capital of the World®

Once known mostly for its country and blues music, today Austin's music scene is as diverse as its ever-growing population. The Texas capital is a cradle of musical talent for the likes of the late Stevie Ray Vaughan and Janis Joplin, as well as for such famed melody makers as Willie Nelson, The Dixie Chicks and Asleep at the Wheel's Ray Benson.

Many newer homegrown talents are climbing the music charts including Bob Schneider, Kelly Willis, Spoon and Seth Walker. Austin's musical strength lies with perennial songwriters and performers who pack the dazzling array of clubs, performance halls and amphitheaters that dot the city and the surrounding Texas Hill Country. What's more, the city caters to its music fans through restaurants, concerts, festivals and television programs. The 31-year-old landmark show *Austin City Limits* broadcasts on 833 PBS stations around the country and is known as a platform for both recognized and little-known performers.

The city's nearly 200 live music venues cater to numerous musical styles—country, blues, Latino, folk, punk, indie rock, alternative and jazz. The majority of the venues are located either in the Sixth Street entertainment district, which features some 50 clubs, or the Warehouse District just west of the central business district.

The dean of the country music scene, The Broken Spoke on South Lamar, survives as Austin's premier honky tonk original, where owner James White has booked country and western legends for decades, everybody from the late Bob Wills and Jerry Jeff Walker to Alvin Crow and Gary P. Nunn.

South Congress Avenue continues to be known as the hippest spot in Austin. One of the city's most celebrated venues is the Continental Club, where Tuesday "Hippie Hour" shows are an Austin tradition. Guests of Guero's Taco Bar, a favorite among celebrities, enjoy the restaurant's famed Tacos el Pastor while listening to local Latino acts.

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For a good dose of the blues, head to “Austin’s Home of the Blues.” Antone’s boasts an international reputation as “the” place in Texas to hear the finest blues performers in the world. For almost 35 years, such legends as “Muddy” Waters, the late Stevie Ray Vaughan and Buddy Guy have cooked up a tasty blues gumbo at this institution. The blues also find a welcome home at several clubs along Sixth Street.

Fans of the alternative music scene should look no further than Austin’s Red River District. Stubb’s provides a major venue for rock/alternative bands and also features blues and a Sunday gospel brunch. Elysium caters to the goth/industrial crowd, while Headhunters and Emo’s grind out nightly punk rock and hip-hop.

While fans enjoy live music daily in clubs and bars, not every venue encourages a night out. Even grocery stores Central Market and Whole Foods Market feature singer/songwriters and full bands seasonally. Austin-Bergstrom International Airport offers three stages for Austin musicians to showcase their talent to arriving and departing passengers.

Music has become a lucrative business for the city of Austin with thousands of music industry leaders, hundreds of bands and a legion of music lovers migrating to the city every March for the South by Southwest Music, Film & Interactive Conference and Festival (SXSW) to hear rising stars, as well as yet-to-be-discovered acts. The festival is only one of more than 92 annual music events including the 6-year-old, award-winning *Austin City Limits* Music Festival in September and the NAMM (International Music Products Association) Summer Show in July.

Some 1,650 music-related businesses flourish in Austin, including guitar makers, publishing companies, record labels and recording studios. The industry employs more than 9,400 Austinites.

New musicians flock to Austin to join more than 2,037 recording acts with an estimated total of 8,785 musicians living, working and creating great music in the area. Live music generates an economic impact of \$116 million annually, with \$38 million coming SXSW alone and another \$27 million from the three-day *ACL* Music Festival.

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