

Daytona has good time at 'Bank'

By LaNae Riviere

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Although not as infamous as CB-GB's or as notorious as the House of Blues, Daytona's Bank and Blues still manages to throw a mean party. With the support of Good Time Productions and The Homegrown Roots, the Bank and Blues opened its doors Nov. 5 for Unknown Hinson's anticipated return to Daytona.

Unknown Hinson has been labeled a "favorite" opening act of popular rockabilly artists Reverend Horton Heat and Hank III alike. His appearance alone is noteworthy enough. Looking like a comical cross between Elvis Presley and Bela Lugosi, Hinson takes the stage and leers at the audience. For first-timers, his theatrical appearance seems enigmatic enough. But once he starts playing, the crowd can't get enough of him.

By 11 p.m., the Bank is nearly filled to capacity. People rush the dance floor for such songs as "Peace Love and Hair Grease" and a top-dollar rendition of "Manic Depression" that drives the crowd wild. Hinson couples raunchy showmanship with incredible musical ability, creating the kind of rock and roll atmosphere that is rarely seen in modern America these days. The urge for large venues and stadium seating has sucked the lifeblood out of rock's roots. It's relieving to know that acts like Hinson are prepared to show us what we've been missing.

Opening for Hinson was the popular local group, The Halifax Contraband, who brought in quite a following of their own. Guitar player Matt "Flanders" Meehan also plays solo every Thursday evening at Robbie O'Connell's Irish Pub on Seabreeze Blvd. Contraband has

opened for Hinson before as well as the Bank's previous rockabilly production, The Legendary Shackshakers. Featuring a vocalist reminiscent of Nick Cave and a mandolin player who blows the mind, Contraband is one local band to watch.

Music lovers often travel to Orlando and Jacksonville for shows. After two well-respected venues on Seabreeze closed their doors permanently this year, the music scene in Daytona seemed bleak at best. Most college-age patrons aren't even aware of the broadening musical opportunities at the Bank and Blues due to its assumed predilection for 'mature audiences' consisting mainly of bikers and blues enthusiasts. Jason O'Keefe of Good Time Productions hopes to alter the misconception by bringing in out-of-state acts that appeal to a broader range of music fans.

"What I'm trying to do is give this town a substantial venue of its own. This is not a money making venture either. I'm doing this to make quality music more accessible for myself, my friends and this town in general," he said before the show. "The people here need something better to listen to than cover bands. I plan to give it to them and if enough folks get into it, we could make it a regular occurrence."

With big shows booked at the Bank for Jan. 26 and Feb. 6, as well as a weekly event planned for Frank's Front Row on Seabreeze every Sunday, O'Keefe appears to be walking the walk. All Daytona has to do is follow suit.

A Good Time Productions calendar of events can be viewed online at www.myspace.com/productionsgoodtime, or look into local talent at www.myspace.com/homegrownrootsjamboree07.