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## MUSIC SCENE ROCKS IN CHAPEL HILL & CARRBORO, NC

CHAPEL HILL, N.C., Aug. 18, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- From a comfortable, overstuffed chair just a few feet away, — the once-upon-a-time only Cool Kid on the Block — Chapel Hill has been watching Carrboro come into its own. Chapel Hill used to be the only Cool Kid on the block, but now there are two. Chapel Hill still rocks, of course: it's one of the best places in the world, with music venues including Local 506 and The Cave. But these days some of the best rock is coming from Carrboro.

Carrboro has become a mecca for many things, including film and food and a stylish sort of freedom, but music is what defines it, not unlike how basketball defines Chapel Hill. There are so many venues, and so much attention is paid to its existence, music has imbued the town like a tie-dyed t-shirt. On some nights you can stand in one place and be equidistant from half-a-dozen different bands, playing half-a-dozen different kinds of music. Magical.

Here are some of the venues. It's not a comprehensive list, because music can happen all over, in places there wasn't a note the night before, and where one may not be tomorrow.

Let's start with the most famous of them all, the granddaddy (or maybe the slightly eccentric uncle) of Carrboro's music scene, Cat's Cradle. The only club in the world whose name is derived from the title of a Kurt Vonnegut novel, Cat's Cradle is where the big boys play. Since 1969 — 46 years! — it has been hosting some of the biggest acts a small club can hold, and a must-stop for bands touring the east coast. Think Ben Folds Five, Richard Thompson, NRBQ, The Replacements, Indigo Girls, Bad Brains — the all-stars of the indie scene.

To round it out, owner Frank Heath has created what's called the Back Room, where local bands on the way up, but not quite there, can play. With this addition Cat's Cradle can lay claim to being one of the best music clubs in the country.

Presently in the same modest strip mall as Cat's Cradle, The ArtsCenter has quietly become a star in the constellation of the itinerant musician. They don't compete with Cat's Cradle as much so they complement it. Leon Redbone, Arlo Guthrie, Chapel Hill's own Red Clay Ramblers and Richie Havens have all played there. You get a somewhat older crowd than you would at the Cradle; some of the acts are quite . . . nostalgic. And it's a small auditorium with comfortable seats. Shows sell-out quickly, beer and wine are available, but it's a laid-back group of folks. Very nice.

Right across the street is Milltown, a restaurant, coffee shop and bar, which boasts a beautiful courtyard where smaller acts can play, usually fresh songs by local talent. These three clubs are so close you could stand in one spot, throw a rock and hit them all. But why would you throw a rock? It doesn't make sense.

The Station is right down the street, well within walking distance, where live music is a staple in this down-home pleasantly scruffy bar, with a dance floor to boot. A popular local hangout, for sure.

Buskers and troubadours roam the streets, serenading . . .

But the space that connects all these clubs in an almost spiritual way — because it connects all of Carrboro — is the lawn at Weaver Street Market. It's green and spacious; bring a blanket and listen to jazz, bluegrass, and singer-songwriters from the Triangle and all over. It's where Carrboro gathers, the heart of this beautiful walking town.

To top it all off is the amazing Carrboro Music Festival. Since its inception in 1998 (it was originally called Fête de la Musique), the festival has drawn musicians and music lovers from all over the Triangle and more distant climes. Each year over 180 bands play on 25 stages. Quite literally there is music everywhere. It's kind of surreal and definitely unique. All the performers donate their talent for a mere t-shirt. It's an Everyman's Festival.

This gargantuan event is a product of a coordinated effort by the Carrboro Recreation and Parks Department and the Carrboro Music Festival Planning Committee. This year it will be held on Saturday, September 26th and Sunday, September 27th.

So yes, Carrboro is officially cool; Chapel Hill is too. Why go anywhere else?

For more information, contact the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau, [www.visitchapelhill.org](http://www.visitchapelhill.org).

*The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau is Chapel Hill and Orange County NC's official Destination Marketing Organization and is accredited by the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) of the Destination Marketing Association International in Washington, DC. The Visitors Bureau is a department of Orange County Government. The Bureau's mission is to develop and coordinate visitor services in Orange County and to implement marketing programs that will enhance the economic activity and quality of life in the community. For information: [www.VisitChapelHill.org](http://www.VisitChapelHill.org).*

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