

# Indie Local Acts Hit Big Stage

By Francis Ma

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BOSTON - David Crespo is bringing local live music to two different groups of people: the habitual Youtube user and the hipster who hits the local clubs. Oh, and one more group may be interested — anyone who wants a primer on the music those groups love.

The local scene, which Crespo says has been sliding in the past couple of years, needs a boost. Long-time venues have closed and people seem to lack the desire to leave their computers and televisions for a show.

“When I was young, there were a lot more clubs in Cambridge,” says Crespo. “Places like the Abbey Lounge were way more hopping than they are now.”

In an effort to reinvigorate the local scene, Crespo embraced the technology so many shied away from and created [theOpsercian.com](http://theOpsercian.com) late last year and dubbed it “New England’s Online Rock Club.”

It takes advantage of the fact that people get their music directly from the Internet. He figured he could utilize Youtube to promote music. The site features simple videos of footage from local concerts featuring bands like The Click 5, Damone, and Someday Rome.

“Bands like it too because they get a free video out of it,” explains Crespo. “I do everything for free.”

But the scene can’t rely on Youtube videos alone. There also has to be a sense of community, and that means paying attention to more than just the national acts that blow through town. So Crespo is putting on [No Contracts Needed Festival](#), a mini-Lollapalooza for local bands, March 29 at Somerville Theatre.

The festival takes a subtle dig at the current music industry’s inability to nurture new bands. It’s also a chance to highlight some of the best local acts, and by harnessing their collective power, provide them with the biggest stage of their careers.

“I want people to realize that this music is not just for the club scene,” says Crespo. “Sometimes people get locked into going to clubs all the time. It’s a different experience going to a theater. It’s like the IMAX for music.”

The six bands featured in the festival are a group of Crespo’s personal favorites and include [3rd Left](#) (jam rock), [The Ride](#) (“spaced-out rock music”), [On the Drop](#) (reggae rock), [Ubiquitous](#) (alternative rock), [Someday Rome](#) (pop rock), and Crespo will perform with his band the [After Party](#).

“As someone in a band, it’s huge for a band to get in front of a bigger audience and a bigger stage that gives a show a bigger meaning,” says Crespo. “When you’re committed to something, you’re going to work harder at it. With a bigger stage like this, bands will work harder.”

Assisting Crespo in his effort to reinvigorate the local scene is Brett Sylvester, a New Bedford native and founder of [Slyrox Music](#), which is helping to promote No Contracts.

Like Crespo, Sylvester is dedicated to the local music scene and hopes the festival gives lesser-known bands a chance for more exposure.

“It’s tough for upcoming bands to play in the city without being at the Paradise or the Middle East,” says Sylvester. “The bigger nights are Thursday to Saturday, but those are usually reserved for national acts coming into town.”

But the festival is also for the fans and Sylvester hopes it opens the eyes of younger fans who may not be used to going out to see a show.

“There are some people getting out of high school who grew up with the Internet,” says Sylvester. “They use Myspace and Youtube instead of going out. No one just goes out to hang out while a band plays. I want people to realize that you can do that on a Friday or Saturday night.”

And maybe a younger crowd will discover a music scene they had no idea existed.

Mike Baez, guitarist for the reggae rock group On the Drop, says his band has been playing the Boston scene for about five years and cultivated a strong fan base already. But playing the festival affords them an opportunity to introduce themselves to crowds who wouldn’t normally be at their shows.

“There isn’t one single music scene out there,” explains Baez. “The festival will help us reach out to a different and probably younger crowd.”

And for the young, high-school aged Ubiquitous (who will open the show), the festival will be the biggest gig of their four-year career.

“This is a really great opportunity,” says drummer Ben Stamas. “This will be our first show with professionals. We haven’t really played with bands who are older than us.”

**Fast Fact:** Another No Contracts Needed festival is in the works for the summer at the [Arlington Regent](#) No Contracts Needed / Saturday, March 29, 6 p.m. / Somerville Theatre / Tickets: \$15 / 617-497-6299



*On the Drop joins other unsigned bands for the No Contracts Needed Festival, March 29 at Somerville Theatre*