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[home](#) > [the university of wisconsin](#) > [town profile](#) > [bands](#)

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[Bands](#)
[Venues](#)
[Stores](#)
[Eat & Drink](#)
[Around Town](#)

Bands



Pale Young Gentlemen

The Pale Young Gentlemen are one of the movers and shakers of Madison's local music scene. A smart-pop amalgamation of Madison's German heritage and Andrew Bird's revamped Americana, the group and its live sets show that Madison's fiery intellectualism hasn't died with its reputation for political proactivity.

Led by "the Brothers Reisenauer," the band is as literary as it is musical, using songs as vehicles to recall the zeitgeist of ages long past with an immediacy different to many other bands on the scene today. A trip to Madison isn't truly complete without sampling this local staple. - *Oren Rosenberg*

Houses in Motion

Houses in Motion is a Talking Heads cover band from Madison and Chicago. The group frequently plays around Wisconsin and have built up a following thanks to its impressive accuracy in performing a wide range of Talking Heads material. When not touring elsewhere, Houses in Motion regularly plays at various events around Madison and circulates to many of the city's music clubs. - *Ben Peterson*

Awesome Car Funmaker

Awesome Car Funmaker is an amalgamation of decades of rock, melding the likes of Ok Go-esque pop with Queen-like dramatization. For some, ACF's arena-pop sound is easy to pass off as a novelty act, but the band's live show vindicates them. Described by lead singer Ryan Corcoran as "tactically absurd," ACF plays each song with unbridled enthusiasm. The group's latest effort, the self-released "E for Everyone," was recorded in Chris Walla's Hall of Justice and is a critique of the human condition in Midwestern America. In 2004, ACF was named Top Rock Band at the Madison Area Music Awards, and the group continues to mesmerize audiences to this day. - *Kyle Sparks*

Bongzilla

Due to the distinctly wholesome vibe emitted by its name, the assumption is often made that Bongzilla is a patriot-rock band with themes of rule-following and moral fabric concerns. You can imagine how surprised most people are when they find out that nearly every song is about weed. Talk about pulling a fast one! Since signing to Relapse Records in 1998, Bongzilla has admirably represented the Midwest in the heavy-music underground. "Most definitely the most legit" metal band to originate in Wisconsin, the group's oppressive mixture of anvil-blues and groovy sludge is widely recognized and approved in the stoner-rock world. -- *Mario Puig*

The Box Social

On its 2007 debut album, "Get Going," the Box Social displays a pop sensibility steeped in the Ramones and Tom Petty bolstered by Sonic Youth-like guitar squalls. Top it off with a biting wit ala Elvis Costello and you can see why this youthful band has become favorites of the media in Madison and Milwaukee, where its hooky tunecraft has garnered a substantial following. 2007 saw the Box Social take its attention-grabbing live show on the road for a national tour, bringing the group one step closer to its goal of being able to leave the daily grind and devote itself to music full-time. - *Matt Hunziker*

Freighter

For a band that's been around less than two years, Madison's Freighter has already managed to surround itself with a great deal of public misunderstanding, frequently being characterized as disillusioned metal heads. Part of that is due to the angular precision of the group's blistering prog-metal and the no-nonsense, vaguely cubist album art for its self-titled debut. But browse Freighter's discography to see song titles like "Mutant League Football" and "Someone Set Your Voicemail from Stun to Kill," or notice that the band's bio mentions the influence of a "Robot Lord." Freighter is less doom and gloom and more in the virtuoso party-rock tradition of Van Halen with some serious metal chops. -- *Matt Hunziker*

Sleeping in the Aviary

With one full-length to its credit (2007's "Oh, This Old Thing?") and another on the way, Sleeping in the Aviary's ramshackle pop-punk has earned comparisons to the likes of the Thermals and the Violent Femmes. Back from touring nationally last year, the band has added a pair of extra players and a bevy of new instruments (accordion, musical saw, violin, etc.) to its lineup. Under this setup, Sleeping in the Aviary has wed bits of folk to its jittery pop hooks as well as stretched out songs to the three-minute mark. Put in a live setting, the group's show is part sugar rush, part arm-flailing mania. -- *Matt Hunziker*

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The Daily Cardinal

This town profile was produced entirely by student journalists from The Daily Cardinal and The Badger Herald, the leading news sources for the University of Wisconsin community. You can learn more about the individual student contributors by visiting their profiles on UWIRE.com:

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News

OK Go members offer songwriting tips, play acoustic set at Northwestern

Leaving their treadmills and dapper suits at home, three members of OK Go turned the McCormick Tribune Center Forum into their own unplugged concert and songwriting tutorial for a group of about 30 students, faculty and local residents Friday afternoon.

MTV reality show editor-in-chief to attend NYU in fall

With new U.S. label, Dizzee spins in the states

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Reviews

Music Spotlight: Death Cab for Cutie's 'Narrow Stairs'

Whereas 2005's "Plans" saw Death Cab for Cutie polishing up its pop sound, "Narrow Stairs," the group's second Atlantic effort, finds the Seattle boys scratching things up a bit. The tone is darker, the sound more raw, but nothing here is shape-shifting enough to offer much new to long-time fans.

Frigid at first, Augustana warms up the crowd at Dartmouth

Atmosphere - 'When Life Gives You Lemons'

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