



Rock history

Documentary explores Fargo's own rock n' roll story

By Cassie Tweten
Contributing Writer

Every city changes as it grows. Buildings are built, buildings are torn down and buildings are built again. People move in. Sometimes they settle down and have children. Sometimes they move away, or their children move away. As the city develops it acquires more buildings and more citizens.

The music scene within a community functions much like the city or cities around it. Venues open, close and get torn down. But, with public support for music, new venues are eventually opened. Bands come to play the venues, and musicians who live in the city see local venues as a place to get started and a place to come home to.

Writer and executive producer, David Meiers, tells the story of the Fargo-Moorhead area's changing music scene, the talent that has risen from it and the history of the venues where it all started in the documentary "Fargo Rocks," produced by DDM Films in association with Mike Bullock Productions.

Meiers said the idea for the film came to him while having a conversation with a friend about the venues, many of which are now closed, where he once attended concerts. Meiers started the project as a television documentary about area venues, but expanded the story during the research process.

"After a while I realized that the stories about the people were more interesting than the stories about the venues," he said. "I decided to go all the way and make a movie out of this."

According to Meiers, the film looks at a variety of topics involving music in the community. Important historical events in F-M music are noted, for example the acts that gained popularity after replacing Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valenz and the Big Bopper on the day the music died. Reasons for spikes in the area's music culture are also examined, including the impact of the Vietnam War on local

WHAT: "Fargo Rocks," a documentary on local music history

WHEN: 7 p.m., March 30 - April 2

WHERE: Fargo Theatre

COST: \$16/advance, \$20/door
(VIP seating available in advance)

music. Both groups that made it and groups that simply had a brush with fame are featured.

He said the nostalgia of the film and its reflection on the local music scene of 1960s and '70s is important.

"[The film] is about an area many of us grew up in," he said. "Maybe it's about an easier time. Back then, people worked nine to five then went to find something fun to do on the weekend. People had less stress back then. Music was happening everywhere across the county at the time, but this is our own story."

In addition, live music will be featured after each showing. Thursday, March 30, singer-songwriter Brenda Weiler will perform. Rhythm and blues band Mike and the Monsters will play on Friday, March 31, and four original members of the new wave-punk band the Phones reunite to perform on Saturday night. The premier wraps up on Sunday, with the '60s rock group the Pawnbrokers.

Perhaps "Fargo-Rocks" will encourage the music culture in the F-M area to be reborn despite somewhat-recent venue closings. "Music is each generations mark," said Meier. "[The lack of venues in Fargo-Moorhead] is kind of sad right now. I hope we get more [venues], because musicians need to perform live to polish their craft. I remember when Kirby's and Ralph's were just 'one more place' to go see music. Then they were some of the only places. Now, they are gone. It would be great to see some new venues come up out of the woodwork."