



Cool Music Scene: Louisville, Kentucky

Jonah Bayer | 02.21.2008

Forget about Seattle or Brooklyn. Over the past few decades Louisville, Kentucky, has quietly constructed one of the strongest music scenes in the country. Check out a few of the city's most popular acts as well as a couple of newcomers.



My Morning Jacket

[My Morning Jacket](#) are perhaps the biggest band from Louisville, Kentucky, in the past decade—and the only band we know of that can unite jam band fanatics, indie rock purists, and classic rock enthusiasts alike. While all of the band's albums are stellar, we recommend checking out their breakthrough 2003 album *It Still Moves*, which features “One Big Holiday,” a song that can be considered the “Free Bird” for the iTunes generation. Oh, and if *that* doesn't impress you, Netflix a copy of their live DVD *Okonokos*, which beautifully showcases the cinematic grandeur of the band's live performances.



VHS Or Beta

Like all great scenes, the Louisville music community is extremely incestuous. In fact, My Morning Jacket's guitarists Jim James and Carl Broemel both guest star on [VHS Or Beta](#)'s latest album *Bring On the Comments*. That's not to say that the bands sound the same—VHS Or Beta's dance-influenced rock jams are more at home in a trance club setting than [the Burning Man festival](#)—but both acts have successfully elbowed aside any genre restrictions and helped to unite seemingly disparate scenes with their music. Plus, VHS Or Beta have opened for [Duran Duran](#), and that's just plain cool.



Wax Fang

We hate to harp on the My Morning Jacket connection, but [Wax Fang](#) have opened for MMJ numerous times and definitely share the band's indie-jam philosophy on their expansive album *Black & Endless Night*. That said, Wax Fang's music is slightly more experimental and the band is as apt to name-check authors like Hermann Hesse and Albert Camus as influences as they are musicians like Brian Eno and [Frank Zappa](#). Oh, and if you haven't seen the band live yet, we recommend standing toward the back of the room and bringing a

camera, because they're known to dress up in strange outfits and face paint in order to fully realize their avant-grade sound.



Slint

Okay, time to move onto a different sub community. [Slint](#) may not be a household name, but they probably should be. Although the band's original incarnation was only around for six years and released two records, the influence this Louisville-bred act have had on the math rock scene is incalculable. By taking hardcore's aggression and mixing it with angular guitar lines and emotive vocals, the band basically invented the genre of post-rock and albums like 1991's *Spiderland* still sound as groundbreaking now as they did when they were originally released. Oh, and take it from someone who saw the band during the reunion tour last year: they sound even better live.



Dead Child

Wondering what the reunited Slint guys are up to these days? Well you can find David Pajo, Todd Cook, and

Michael McMahan banging their heads in [Dead Child](#), a Judas Priest-influenced metal band whose aptly titled debut LP *Attack* drops this April on [Quarterstick Records](#). Despite their indie rock pedigrees, there's nothing ironic about Dead Child's music—and if you've been looking for the successor to *Kill 'Em All*-era Metallica, these guys are the closest you'll get. "Dead Child has created a five-headed Frankenstein that now walks among the living," the band claim on their web site. We couldn't agree more.