

DAAC Offers Community Space for Local Talent

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The DAAC may mean different things to different people, but it actually stands for the Division Avenue Arts Cooperative of Grand Rapids.

Located in the Heartside District in downtown Grand Rapids, The DAAC is a venue for everything from local bands to lectures.

Sam Snedeker books and plays shows at The DAAC and also volunteers. He thinks of The DAAC as a do-it-yourself space for music, film, art shows, lectures and pretty much anything else that people in the community want to put on there.

Snedeker said The DAAC's board, a group of local citizens who run The DAAC, are a pretty close-knit group who are involved in Grand Rapids's art community.

"They are there making sure that The DAAC is open to anyone who wants to do something," Snedeker said.

Just the fact that there is an available DIY space in Grand Rapids that supports local arts and local music is important, Snedeker said.

"It's great that a space like this is surviving and thriving and that we have a space where anyone that wants to put together a show. If they want to have their first art show, they can go there and do that," Snedeker said.

Alex Karpicke, a GVSU student and member of the band The Meadowlarks who play at The DAAC thinks of The DAAC as a much-needed venue for all-ages music in the Grand Rapids area. There aren't many other venues besides coffee shops, which Karpicke doesn't consider true venues.

"The DAAC represents a place where art is welcomed; it's a place where independent musicians and other types of artists can share their art with the community," Karpicke added.

Scott Rider, a member of the local band Valentiger, who have an upcoming concert at The DAAC, agrees with the lack of all-age venues and non-coffee shop venues in Grand Rapids.

"Grand Rapids needs more all ages venues where artists can connect with people who enjoy art. When I think about The DAAC I think venue. I don't think bar or coffee shop that has music," Rider said.

The DAAC is one of Karpicke's favorite places to play.

"I feel like people that come to the shows there want to actually hear your music. That isn't that case with a lot of places you play at," Karpicke said.

Playing at The DAAC has made him and his band feel that they are part of a community there, which is part of what makes The DAAC such a unique venue.

Karpicke attributes the community-feel of the DAAC as perhaps stemming from its democratically-run board with people from the community.

Rider also enjoys the community aspect of The DAAC.

"It is a space that people share. They have music that might not have an outlet at a loud bar: It's unique," Rider said.

The community aspect, for Rider, can be viewed as an advantage and disadvantage of the venue. For newcomers to The DAAC's atmosphere, the closeness of everyone involved can seem intimidating.

"If you don't understand what is going on at The DAAC you could feel out of place. It's a

community, and if you are coming to check it out, you might feel like an outsider,” Rider said. “Give it a show or two, and you could know everyone’s name. It's pretty cool.”