

# Civic BASS Outlet Rankles Competitors

THE NEW BASS ticket outlet at the Civic Auditorium has raised the ire of local record store owners and music promoters, who claim the new arrangement is fattening the wallets of a big out-of-town corporation while threatening to keep music out of Santa Cruz.

City officials, meanwhile, say the arrangement is a moneymaker for the city and a service to the public, and the only people being pinched are a

couple of record store owners.

The city-owned Civic (which became a BASS outlet this spring to fill the void created by Record Factory's closing last Fall) has an exclusive contract with BASS that says only the Civic box office and Warehouse Records on 41st Avenue can sell tickets to events at the Civic. When Record Factory was the BASS outlet, other record stores (particularly Cymbaline and Blue Rhythm records) also sold tickets, which brought traffic into the stores while giving consumers a better choice.

Although record store owners might be able to get their hands on some tickets via some under-the-table wheeling and dealing, potential customers will have no way of knowing it because advertising the fact could set the merchants up for a lawsuit. Cymbaline owner Ron Prilliman — who said the only reason he hassled with carrying the tickets was to get traffic into his business — said there's no incentive to keep selling tickets and plenty of incentive not to.

"All the Civic is doing is *eliminating* outlets," said Prilliman. "Everyone admits there is no money to be made selling tickets, so why is the Civic going into something they can't

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GREG PIO

**Prilliman: "All the Civic is doing is eliminating (ticket) outlets."**

## Civic

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make any money at while alienating a lot of people? It essentially tells promoters that it's much more difficult to put shows on at the Civic."

Michael Horne, a promoter for Backbeat Productions and co-owner of Blue Rhythm records, is being hit from two sides. Not only is he, too, no longer able to use ticket sales as a lure to get people into his store, but "as a promoter, I'm not the least bit happy. We want to put tickets on sale at as many places as possible."

Horne said that the BASS arrangement meant "a lot of red tape" for promoters, and that the Civic's higher service charges made tickets that much more expensive for concertgoers (a charge flatly denied by city officials).

Carol Scurich, a recreation superintendent for the city of Santa Cruz, presented the issue as a simple case of sour grapes on the part of Prilliman

and Horne, who she admitted would probably lose some business under the new arrangement.

"One location in the center of Santa Cruz is adequate to serve the public," Scurich said. Responding to Prilliman's complaints about not being able to advertise the fact he had tickets, Scurich said, "Of course they have to (leave off Cymbaline's name) because the tickets aren't (technically) available there."

Scurich pointed out that the BASS service charge for Civic events was only 50 cents (of which BASS keeps 42 cents), the same that Cymbaline charges its customers. For other events, the Civic charges a \$2 service fee per ticket, of which BASS keeps \$1.50. Even with the seemingly low return, Scurich said the ticket sales were a moneymaker for the city.

"We're not making a great deal of money off BASS, but we're making enough to offset some of our costs." •

—Sam Mitchell