

Sound on Sound Fest

Keeping the Beat

Medley of music fests
always on tap in Austin

BY AMY LYNCH



Known as much for its warm, weird hippie ethos as for its recent popularity among tech start-ups looking for a place to launch, Austin is a melting pot of sights, sounds and creative inspiration.

Nicknamed the “Live Music Capital of the World,” the city’s many bars, clubs and outdoor venues pulse to the beat of live bands nearly every day of the week. Just a stone’s throw from the laid-back campus of the University of Texas at Austin sits the bustling downtown music district along Red River Street, where

music-makers test their tunes in front of appreciative crowds. Zilker Park and Auditorium Shores, just a few blocks south of City Center, host large lakeside music festivals throughout the year, covering every genre on the sonic spectrum and keeping the heart of Texas humming along to every melody.

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SOUND ON SOUND FEST

An informal successor to the now-defunct Fun Fun Fun Fest, this event is seen as the slightly edgier sibling to the more mainstream Austin City Limits Music Festival. Held 35 miles east of Austin in the Sherwood Forest, this three-day experience draws weekend campers and night-by-night visitors to its cornucopia of acts that include rockers, rappers and stand-up comedians. This year, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Iggy Pop and The Shins lead the pack of performers.

► soundonsoundfest.com



AUSTIN'S NEW YEAR

While there's no shortage of New Year's Eve parties taking place in the heart of the Lone Star State, crowds bundle up and flock to Auditorium Shores for an afternoon and evening of live music on several stages. The evening culminates at 10 p.m. in an extravagant display of fireworks against the downtown skyline towering above Lady Bird Lake. To keep things family-friendly (and in compliance with local sound ordinances), the big show ends at 10:30 p.m., allowing celebrants to ring in the actual new year wherever they choose.

► austinsnewyear.com



FREE WEEK

The name "Free Week" is a misnomer because the local celebration of all things musical often spans a full two weeks. As each new year unfolds, raucous bands rock the mic at an array of live music venues around town, giving revelers free access to scores of bands. Spaces like Barracuda, Mohawk Austin, Cheer Up Charlies and Empire Control Room melt away the winter blues with the sounds of cult favorites and up-and-comers alike.

► freeweek.do512.com



CARNAVAL BRASILEIRO

Called the "best public bash" in the state by *Texas Monthly*, one of the largest Carnival celebrations outside Brazil takes place in Austin each winter. Bringing the spirit and samba of Brazil to the massive Palmer Events Center, Carnival Brasileiro keeps the beat going with Brazilian and Brazilian-inspired performers. Perennial favorite Austin Samba, a local ensemble with more than 100 drummers performing in the style of traditional escolas de samba, helps guests pack the dance floor late into the night. Tickets go on sale in December.

► sambaparty.com



SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST

What began as a simple music festival has since ballooned into an international event of epic proportions, celebrating music, film, interactive technology and more. South By Southwest (SXSW) takes over Austin each March, with its music portion attracting thousands of acts from all points of the globe looking to make their mark. Spilling out of the convention center and into a variety of venues throughout the city, all official SXSW events require a badge for entry. Registration for the March 9-18 festivals opened in August.

► sxsw.com

AUSTIN HAS
15+
 MUSIC FESTIVALS
 year-round. Find out more at austintexas.org/visit/music-scene

