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APRIL 18, 2007

Tonic Goes To City Hall

Yesterday a press conference on the steps of City Hall was held in response to the eviction and closing of Tonic, the downtown venue that shut its doors after nine years. A committee of musicians, cultural activists, and supporters made a call for public and political intervention to protect new music/indie/avant/jazz in New York City and to ask the city to provide a minimum 200 capacity, centrally located venue for experimental music. From [the press release](#), the coalition is asking:

1. that the city council adopt a general principle similar to European cultural policy: that NYC's new music and experimental jazz/indie musical culture is a unique asset, an essential part of the city's history, economy, and identity, and not to be left entirely at the mercy of market forces.
2. that the city recognize the damage done to its cultural heritage and status as a 'cultural capitol' by the displacement of venues central to experimental musics, and act now to protect those venues still left from displacement either by providing funding sufficient to allow them to withstand the explosion of commercial rents, or by legislation forcing landlords to restrict rents of culturally valuable venues, or both.
3. that New York City intervene to preserve 107 Norfolk Street as an experimental music venue, or make available a comparably sized and centrally located space for that purpose.

About 40 musicians in all showed up yesterday, including Marc Ribot (pictured), Ned Rothenberg, Rebecca Moore (pictured), Patricia Parker, and Cooper-Moore, all who spoke on behalf of the cause. Councilman Alan Gerson was also on hand, [stating](#), "This is not just about music. This is about whether New York will remain the cultural capital of the world. It's time to sound a note of crisis."

Tonic was located at 107 Norfolk Street until April 14th, closing after being unable to afford a series of rent increases imposed by landlord William Gottlieb Inc. Marc Ribot and Rebecca Moore [were arrested there that night](#). Other recent venue casualties have included The Fez, CBGB, Sin-e, The Continental and in 2009 [the Knitting Factory](#) may be gone, too. It's sad that New York City cannot be depended upon to provide a unique and diverse venue for its residents as well as tourists. Who wants to come here to see [giant blue condos](#)? There is a petition to sign [here](#).