

## Local Beat

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**Elvis** -- **Costello**, that is -- sightings have become a regular occurrence this month since the English pop antihero began recording a new album at **Oxford's Sweet Tea Studio**. While in Oxford, Costello is residing at the home of town mayor **Richard Howorth**, but next week he's moving to more rustic digs -- **The Shack Up Inn** -- in nearby **Clarksdale**.

"He came over from Oxford last Thursday to preview the shacks and the studio [**Jimbo Mathus' Delta Recording**]," explains **Guy Malvezzi**, a partner in the "bed & beer" establishment. "I showed him around town. His reaction was great. 'I could stay here forever,' he said. My thought was, hell, leave your credit card, and you can stay for as long as you want!" Apparently, once Costello leaves Oxford -- and before his sold-out Memphis shows at the **Hi-Tone Caf ** Friday and Saturday night -- he'll settle into the scene at Delta Recording to cut a few more tracks for his upcoming album.

**The Memphis and Shelby County Music Commission** wants to put a call out to local musicians hoping to serve on its **Musicians' Advisory Council**. The council's inaugural meeting will be held April 20th from 6 to 8 p.m. at **Emerge Memphis** at 516 Tennessee Street.

"We're looking for musicians who can serve as community leaders," says **FreeWorld** bassist/vocalist **Richard Cushing**, who has been appointed chairman of the council.

"There are so many genres of Memphis music," Cushing says. "I want this organization to involve all of the different communities, from metal to rap to gospel to jazz, blues, rock, and country, and everything in between. From the symphony to Saliva!

"Back when **Jerry Schilling** was in charge, the Musicians' Advisory Council existed, but it was an informal group. [His successor] **Rey Flemings** has really impressed me with his vision," Cushing says of the current music commission president. "I really want to make this something that local players can be proud of. I don't think the city has ever had anything by the musicians, for the musicians, and of the musicians."

According to **Wayne Leeloy**, associate director of the music commission, Cushing was "an easy choice" for chairman. "Richard has been on the forefront of the local music scene for years," Leeloy says. "He has his hands in several organizations, and he knows the community well.

"Richard has a very strong handle on the broader spectrum of [the music commission's] relationship with local musicians," Leeloy continues. "He's very good at involving younger players in projects, and he's worked within many different genres of music."

Cushing says the council must be something the city has never seen before. "I want to let the committee choose its own members." He says he hopes that at least 50 local musicians will turn out for Tuesday's meeting, so he can cull 25 to serve on the council.

Leeloy, however, expects the advisory council to pare down naturally. "In the past, we may have excluded some folks," he says of the last council, whose members were handpicked by the music commission. "But this time around we want to keep things as open as possible. Anyone who wants to come to the table is welcome to do so. We want to make sure we have as much communication as possible with the local

music scene."

Cushing admits that he doesn't know how much power the council will yield. "Participating in the council is going to be hard work," he says. "This can't be a monthly bitch session. We need to spend our time coming up with solutions."

Meanwhile, the music commission has teamed with **Wendy Day** and the New York-based **Rap Coalition** for a series of "**Inside the Industry**" panel discussions for 2004. The first panel, "**Marketing and Promoting Your CD**," was held on April 1st. The next panel, scheduled for May 6th, is titled "**Choosing a Lawyer and Manager**." This summer, look for additional discussions on career-building strategies (publishing deals, touring, and endorsements), artist networking, and rap production. Panels will be held the first Thursday of every month, from 7 to 9 p.m., at the **New Daisy Theatre** on **Beale Street**. Admission is free and open to the public.

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