

MC5 busted for noise

Fifth Estate Collective

1968

After finally freeing John Sinclair and Fred Smith from the iron grip of the Oakland County pigs July 25, the MC5 was awakened the next morning by representatives of the Ann Arbor Police Dept. and charged with “disturbing the peace” and being “disorderly persons” as a result of their free West Park concert the Sunday before.

The 5 were individually charged at the station, booked, fingerprinted, photographed, and allowed to post \$25 bond apiece pending a court appearance.

The trouble started a few weeks ago when the band applied for a permit to play free in the park on a Sunday afternoon and was given the total cold shoulder. After conferring with local attorneys and other Ann Arbor heads the band decided to just go ahead and play in the park for the (people

The first concert was held in the picnic shelter the 14th (Bastille Day). In attendance were Lt. Staudemire of the Ann Arbor Police and Ann Arbor mayor Wendell Helcher, both of whom spoke with MC5 manager John Sinclair about “working out some’ kind of program” for the weekly concerts, which they admitted were necessary and commendable.

The next week saw the Ann Arbor street fair, with live music on the streets sometimes twice a day—including the Prime Movers, Billy C. and the Sunshine, the Charging Rhinoceros of Soul, the House of Joseph, and the Mike Koda Cop. Only Koda, who was performing for a fraternity at the corner of South University and Washtenaw, outside, was hassled by the police, following complaints from up-tight residents of the area.

On Sunday afternoon the MC5 and family made it to West Park and set up in the bandshell, the traditional site of the festive music scenes. Last summer, for example, there were free rock and roll concerts in West Park every Sunday, as many Fifth Estate readers will remember. Sinclair rented a generator and both the 5 and the UP set up their equipment and started kickin’ out the jams.

The UP played a beautiful first set, which was briefly interrupted by two Ann Arbor pigs who sauntered on-stage intending to stop the show, but Lt. Staudemire, who has emerged as a sort of liaison officer between the local officialdom and the Trans-Love communes, walked up out of the crowd from where he had been digging the music and cooled them out.

Staudemire explained that there had been a lot of complaints from neighbors in the area about the noise and that if the bands could_ turn down a little, everything would be alright. The 5 relayed this message to the crowd and urged everyone to move a little closer, but apparently this wasn’t enough and the complaints keep coming in. Staudemire let the show go on through the end, but 5 days later appeared with the warrants, which had been signed by a Johannah Lemble.

Meanwhile, concerned city officials are meeting with Sinclair and other hip citizens this week to try to work out a compromise so the people can get their free jams like they’re supposed to. Many bands have volunteered to play, including the House of Joseph, the Prime Movers (who were instrumental in last year’s concerts), Dharma, the Third Power, the Stooges, and others, and we’ll let you know when and where the music will go down. It can’t be stopped, you know.

After posting bond Friday afternoon (bringing their bond bill for the week to some \$700) the MC5 grabbed a bite to eat and made it over to the Michigan Union Ballroom to play a benefit for the Resistance on this, the 15th anniversary of the Cuban liberation movement (26 de Julio 1953).

The Music was strong and beautiful, and the show ended just after Sinclair destroyed and burned a blown-up facsimile of his draft card “just for the occasion,” he grinned’ through his bruises.

After the events of last week the Trans-Love Defense Fund is about \$700 in the hole. Please send any contributions to Defense Fund, 1510 Hill St., Ann Arbor, 48104.

Note

Will any kids who were at the Loft in Leonard, Michigan, last Tuesday and witnessed the police terrorism there please contact John Sinclair at Trans — Love 1510 Hill St., Ann Arbor 48104, (313) 769-2017, immediately? We need your help. If you’re closer to Detroit please call attorney William Segesta at 963-2500 and tell him what you saw. If you can help us get in touch with any other kids who were there, please let us know. THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT: Thank you.

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