

Clayton Hayes

Gig Posters



by Michael Erlewine

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Interview

by

Michael Erlewine

INTRODUCTION

This is not intended to be a finely produced book, but rather a readable document for those who are interested in in this series on concert poster artists and graphic design. Some of these articles still need work.

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Clayton Hayes (Gig Posters)

Interview by Michael Erlewine
February 2003, sound recording.

Clayton Hayes.
Birth date is September 29, 1975
Calgary, Alberta

Michael: [recording starts]...well, good, how was your move?

Clayton Hayes: Oh, not bad, it is always a pain to always pack everything up and move it and re-unpack it and go through everything, but once it's all done it's... I'm actually in a way nicer place, so I'm pretty happy here.

Michael: Cool. Well, let me ask you some questions. What I want to do is write a little interview with you. Tell people about gig posters and all the stuff your doing, how it got started and stuff.

Clayton Hayes: Well, I've always been...well, not always been, since early high school, I've been playing in rock bands and always kind of been in that scene.

Michael: What kind of music?

Clayton Hayes: Mostly punk rock music. Yeah, so I was always part of the scene and I was always interested in local art, you know, gig posters from here, which are nothing special, but it was always something. I'd go to a show and I'd take a poster down and I'd come home and put it on my wall, that kind of thing. They're just photocopied posters, pretty much, not even the silk-screens that we see today. Calgary's not a huge city for that sort of thing.

It's big enough, but it just doesn't seem to have that much interest...it has some nightlife, but not near as much as other big cities and states and stuff. So, it's mainly photocopied posters and stuff here. Even that attracted me, so that's how it started with my interests in posters.

Michael: And that was about when?

Clayton Hayes: Oh...early 1990s.

Michael: So you started collecting then?

Clayton Hayes: Yeah, I just started collecting posters, regardless of their artistic quality for reasons of historic... like I went to the show and I wanted to remember it. You know these were great bands, things like that.

Michael: Did you make any attempt to catalogue them, or organize them in any way?

Clayton Hayes: No, it wasn't probably as big of a deal as what you would think, more or less just a hobby, to get whatever I could and have fun with it.

Michael: Cool.

Clayton Hayes: Then I decided to, like I wanted to computer program, and I went to school for that.

Michael: What languages do you know?

Clayton Hayes: I work in Java, and I do PHP. Right now I'm concentrating on website design and PHP and MySQL Databases.

Michael: Oh, that's a very good thing to do.

Clayton Hayes: Yeah, and that's why I got interested in building a dynamic website for a reason and gig posters

just seemed to fit, and I decided to go ahead and build a site that I could display them, and display some other images of how people use their posters from around the world.

Michael: And when did gigposters start?

Clayton Hayes: It was January 2001.

Michael: And how did it come about? Well, you had the programming skills, so you could build it yourself.

Clayton Hayes: Yeah, I had the programming skills, and my girlfriend at the time, Kendra Jones, was an artist. We discussed it together. We worked together in the idea of the design and the whole nine-yards, what it was going to be. I had the programming skills and then she had more of the artistic know-how, you know, artists and galleries and how things worked with that community. I didn't really understand that. And it all just came together. I came up with some ideas, you know. I'd ask her and she'd cut them down, and then now I'm so glad that I didn't do certain things that I had in my mind.

Clayton Hayes: Like linking. I had one idea, which was to link to CDNOW, so people could buy CD's from each of the bands. And now I look back and I'm just like, geesh, because we would've ruined it.

Yeah, I'm looking back now. I'm thinking I'm glad I didn't do that, because in the beginning, it certainly wouldn't have concentrated on the art instead of the bands.

Because at that time I was thinking of it more as a band thing. I'd like to see my favorite bands and where they have played and things like that. But, now it's grown into this artistic, pretty much on-line art gallery.

Michael: It's very cool.

Clayton Hayes: It has its own whole side to it now. I'm really happy with how it turned out.

Michael: Also, you have some useful messages boards, right?

Clayton Hayes: Yes.

Michael: Tell me a little about that, because I think that's one of the most popular things. At least when I've been interviewing some of the other artists, like Kozik, and Jermaine, and people like that. They all talk about hanging out there. It's pretty cool what you're doing. Maybe describe it a little bit so I can share with other people.

Clayton Hayes: Okay, well it just started to grow from the beginning. I didn't know about every artist out there, of course, so I would just search the net and I'd find certain people. Like Max Fisher from Maximum Fluoride, and people like him. I would just email him and say, "Hey I started a new website. Are you interested in, you know, sending me any posters and stopping by?" So I slowly did that and I started emailing a bunch of people like Jermaine. As they started coming, you know, they never really had a place before where they could talk about things and discuss the poster world with people outside of their local community, unless they were already very successful. For most people it was a great place for them to talk to other artists.

Michael: And you get a lot of the poster artists there, right?

Clayton Hayes: Yeah, most of the designers are the active ones. There's tons of visitors, but the people who stop by who are just looking don't usually spend time to stop and chat.

Michael: Who are some of the artists that hang out there that I might be familiar with?

Clayton Hayes: There mostly the newer artists, that I'd have to say, like Frank Kozik, Jermaine, Justin Hampton, Emek... trying to think of the bigger name ones that are bigger today. There is some other ones, like Mark Arminski.

Michael: Mark's a friend of mine. He is a great guy. Have you met him?

Clayton Hayes: No, I've never met a single designer in person.

Michael: Maybe you should consider going to Flatstock in Austin.

Clayton Hayes: I am. I am going to go down to Flatstock.

Michael: Oh, that will be a great trip!

Clayton Hayes: They actually paid for it.

Michael: Oh, wow.

Michael: How does gigposters make money?

Clayton Hayes: It doesn't really make that much money at all [laughs]. That's the thing it was never intended as a moneymaking thing

Michael: Yeah, that's what I did with All-Music Guide (allmusic.com), same thing.

Clayton Hayes: So I make a little bit of money off of banner advertising, which really it just covers the server costs.

Clayton Hayes: Yeah, pretty much every designer that is listed in the designer section participates in the forums.

Michael: What are your plans with it? How do you see gigposters growing?

Clayton Hayes: I think it will pretty much just continue to grow and become a massive archive, Historically, gigposters has helped artists grow and has so many features and qualities, that I think it will just self-sustain itself and just keep going. And it pretty much pays for itself no problems. My work and my involvement will, you know, pay off a little bit some day as far as... so that I'm not just wasting my time updating the site every day [laughs].

Michael: No, I think your doing something good. I will do my best to try to promote it, to tell people about it on our site.

Clayton Hayes: Oh yeah.

Michael: We'll list your URL. I'm an archivist. My interest is in archiving posters in terms of every last one, just like I did with the All-Music Guide. Someday, if you have time, check out allmusic.com, or allmovie.com. You'll see there are hundred of thousands of albums/films there. Like Yourself, I didn't take advertising. And it was started before the World-wide Web existed, just on the Internet on what used to be called "Gopher Sites."

Clayton Hayes: Yeah.

Michael: And I also didn't sell any CD's. I think they do now. Like yourself, I'm a systems programmer.

Clayton Hayes: Yeah.

Michael: My theory is, which I'd think you'd appreciate from being in Calgary, is that this is the tip of the iceberg.

There are thousands and thousands of small cities that many of these acts got to.

Clayton Hayes: Right.

Michael: And there must be posters for those gigs.

Clayton Hayes: Yeah.

Michael: And no one has ever dug them out. So I think there must be an enormous number.

Clayton Hayes: Oh yeah, for sure [laughs].

Michael: And we haven't even begun to do it.

Clayton Hayes: Honestly, I'm still blown away by how successful my site is. It's just every day I look at it, I can't believe I did this. I can't believe how many good posters are out there. Like I just didn't know there were so many people involved and I don't even think everyone that was involved knew, that there were so many other people involved either. It's just crazy.

Clayton Hayes: I guess I should mention the American Poster Institute, I'm not sure if you know anything about that that Frank Kozik is starting?

Michael: I do know about it. Frank talked to me. I think that is a wonderful idea!

Clayton Hayes: Yeah, they made me a board member on that.

Michael: That's great.

Clayton Hayes: So, I will have some say in the new poster institute, whatever they are planning on doing. It's so new that they don't really have plans yet.

Michael: I interviewed Kozik about it and I think it's really important to be organized in that way, and be able to pass on techniques, teach people how to do things.

Clayton Hayes: Yep.

Michael: Does it take you a lot of time to do your site?

Clayton Hayes: No, that's the advantage of my site is that I don't do that.

Michael: Anyway we can cooperate, I'd be happy to help you. Certainly I'll send everyone I can to you site.

Clayton Hayes: I don't have much knowledge in the poster business, but I'm slowly growing, like your saying. I could barely even name the names [laughs]...just because I started out as the programmer. I'm the computer guy.

Michael: Right.

Clayton Hayes: It wasn't 100% out of pure interest for the poster world, at the time, but it has grown into that, for sure.

Michael: Well, you get into it, right? And you get to appreciate the work that goes into the posters, right?

Clayton Hayes: Exactly.

Michael: Are you the main guy who works on the site?

Clayton Hayes: Yeah.

Michael: How many people help you? Do you have a...

Clayton Hayes: The only person that helps me is Kendra Jones. She covers for me when I go on a holiday, or she helps out with a lot of things, especially the decision-making. I do all the programming and computer stuff of course.

But she does hold an integral part in helping me out, because it's really hard to do everything by yourself, so...

Michael: Yeah, that's for sure.

Clayton Hayes: Like she will be coming down with me to Flatstock.

Michael: Oh, that's cool.

Michael: I'd like to meet some of those Texas artists, because they have kind of a gotten short shrift. One of the things I'm trying to do is to bring attention to a lot of these smaller venues, like the Texas venues.

Clayton Hayes: Right.

Michael: Anyways, maybe I'll show up there, I don't know.

Clayton Hayes: It would be nice if you did.

Michael: Yeah. It would be fine to meet you.

Clayton Hayes: Looks really like it's going to be an amazing time.

Michael: Oh, I think it will be, I think it will be.

Clayton Hayes: Yeah, it is a lot of work. I've found there are so many features I want to add to gigposters, but [laughs] it's already enough work, you know

Michael: I know it.

Clayton Hayes: It's really hard, because there are things that I want to do too. Without help I can't do it. That's kind of a why I'm leaving things the way they are for now.

It seems my my site kind of grew it's own, on it's own. It became it's own thing and it seems to be more of a forum for growing and emerging artists kind of site.

I know what you mean, for like. I haven't seen any submissions from any of the older 1960's artists, you know. there's the odd one of there, but very few.

Michael: Right.

Clayton Hayes: If your site has a ton of those, I mean it would be great, you know?

Michael: Yeah, well, I'm going to document the new guys too, with whatever I can put together. I don't know how interesting it will be. It might be interesting to someone like you. Because you'd be able to go and see stuff in order and all this kind of stuff.

Clayton Hayes: Yeah, yeah.

Michael: And what year they did this or that, and you'll find examples of original art and... more academic I think. I'm trying to raise the awareness of posters beyond being seen simply as memorabilia. We are talking about collectible art.

Clayton Hayes: Right.

Michael: So, anyway, that's, that's the plan. But I just do it because I feel like it, probably the same way you did.

Clayton Hayes: Yeah, I just enjoy what I do, as long as I can put food on the table, I'm happy.

Michael: Yeah. Well, thanks for taking the time to speak with me.

Clayton Hayes: Thanks for interviewing, this is great, everything you said is wonderful, I can't wait to see what you do.