

Now that you're a university student, you'll undoubtedly become a creature of the night, partying until the sun comes up or studying until your head unexpectedly thuds on the open pile of books beneath you—and rivulets of drool begin to pool under your cheek.

However, your nocturnal escapades shouldn't just involve consuming massive amounts of beer or small typed print; the twilight hours are also a time to culture yourself in the ways of music, theatre, art and movies. So, in order to get a head start on your self-betterment and amass some cultural caché, here's a guide to some of the city's most popular (and easy-to-get-to) places to spend your evenings.

Written by Amanda Ash



## MUSIC VENUES

### **The Sidetrack Café (10238 - 104 Street)**

The Sidetrack Café has been rated as Edmonton's #1 music venue, as well as one of Canada's best places to catch blossoming artists. This past year, the 'Track moved locations, leaving behind over 25 years of history, but it brought the talent along. With big screen TVs, hardwood everywhere and intimate little tables to watch gigs from, it's almost like being in a western movie, except everyone is really hip. And the Sidetrack has a very intimate setting, so musicians aren't afraid to play over their time, chat it up with the audience and heckle everyone into dancing.

**Type of music:** Ranges anywhere from indie to alt-country, mainly showcases up-and-coming artists.

**Notable acts:** Pink Mountaintops, Sarah Harmer, The Weakerthans, The Silver Mt Zion Memorial Orchestra & Tra-La-La Band.

**What people wear:** A lot of university students, as well as older music lovers, frequent the Sidetrack, so it's usually bohemian-style clothing, or just a t-shirt and jeans.

### **Starlite Room (10030 - 102 Street)**

The Starlite Room is housed in an historic brick building, specifically the one constructed in 1925 by the Salvation Army to house its northern Alberta headquarters. There are two parts to the Starlite: the first is the Starlite Room itself, which houses larger names and most touring groups. The second is the Velvet Underground, the downstairs bar that features an intimate hole-in-the-wall stage, along with live DJs each night. The Starlite is known for its cool but uncomfortably slanted floor, a feature that allows all the short people out there to have a good view of the stage. The Starlite Room sees itself as a fairly exclusive club, so you'll have to purchase a membership in order to enter the realm of musical pretentiousness. The lineups are notoriously long, and with wide-open spaces to dance and little room for sitting, it's wise to wear comfortable shoes so you can last into the wee hours.

**Type of music:** Ranges from indie and rock to experimental and dance, usually more mainstream bands.

**Notable acts:** Metric, Wolf Parade, She Wants Revenge, MSTRKRFT, Chad VanGalen

**What people wear:** Studded belts, obscure band t-shirts and crazy hair.

### **Myer Horowitz Theatre (Main Floor of SUB)**

The Myer Horowitz is a very intimate theatre, considering its moderate size. It has a balcony, and seating is very similar to places like the Jubilee or the Winspear, but it's actual capacity is much less. Still, it has great sound and a lobby to chill in afterwards. The Horowitz is great because it's located on the second level of SUB, so you're never far from the entertainment. However, if you come out of a show, yelling because you can no longer hear anything, or laughing ridiculously because you're giddy with delight, beware: students are studying! You might feel guilty for disturbing their focus on mitochondria energy or quantum physics. Aside from concerts, though, you might grace the Horowitz's halls for the Revolutionary Speaker Series, to watch Students' Union election speeches, or for your little sister's dance competition. Or to convocate, if you ever actually complete that degree.

**Type of music:** Anything from cultural music to big-name musicians

**Notable acts:** City and Colour, Neko Case, Hawksley Workman, Hayden, International Week performances

**What people wear:** It's not a fashion show, so pretty much anything they feel like.

### **The Powerplant (113 Street and 90 Ave, behind the Dentistry-Pharmacy building)**

The Powerplant is cool because it actually used to be a power plant. Seriously. The open ceilings and brick walls provide the 'Plant with character and a unique atmosphere that transposes itself onto the artists' passionate performances. Or something like that. There are pool tables, an upstairs sitting area, as well as Dewey's Lounge, which is a separate room you can chill in or rent out for parties. The Powerplant is a bar, so bring your ID. Also, don't forget to say hi to the lovely people working the front door. Chances are, before the first month is done, you'll be on a first-name basis with them.

**Type of music:** Anything from local artists to more widely recognized musicians

**Notable acts:** Danny Michel, Shout Out Out Out Out, Stars, Final Fantasy

**What people wear:** Whatever they wore to their previous class.

## THEATRES

### **Studio Theatre (Timms Centre on campus)**

Studio Theatre is great because it's right on campus, plus they have student discounts for all of their plays. During intermission, the Timms Centre lobby is the best place to mingle with chic and sophisticated (not snobby, in the least) students, catch up with old friends, or grab a coffee. Studio Theatre is also the place where many of Edmonton's (and even Canada's) most respected artists first got their start, and where the seats are incredibly comfortable. No matter where you sit, you always have a good view of the proscenium-style stage.

**What to expect:** Great performances by drama students studying right here at the U of A.

**Notable productions:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Beaux' Stratagem*

### **Catalyst Theatre (8529 Gateway Boulevard)**

Catalyst Theatre was founded to promote theatre based in social and political advocacy, so much of their fare is issue-charged. They also aim to bring in foreign acts that Edmontonians may not be exposed to otherwise. Very inviting and inspiring, the theatre lobby is minimalistic, giving you a sense of creativity and openness. I know the best aspect of Catalyst Theatre should be something like its black-box stage or versatile set-up, but in fact, the coolest thing about it is the washrooms. They're super cool. Made out of crazy recycled materials and rad lighting, the bathrooms are a must-see, even if you really don't have to go during intermission. But, you know, you should always pee first, just in case.

**What to expect:** Seeing a lot of regular theatre-goers; low-profile, innovative foreign theatre.

**Notable productions:** *Famous Puppet Death Scenes*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Blue Orphan*

### **Varscona Theatre (10329 - 83 Avenue)**

Located right next door to the restaurant Packrat Louie's, the Varscona is the perfect place to go to if you want to have a sexy dinner-and-a-play date. Inside, the theatre looks like a big hug. Really. It's in a u-shape, and the red seats will bring back the nostalgic feeling of sitting in old-school movie theatre seats. The Varscona is the playing space for a number of Edmonton's oldest independent theatre companies.