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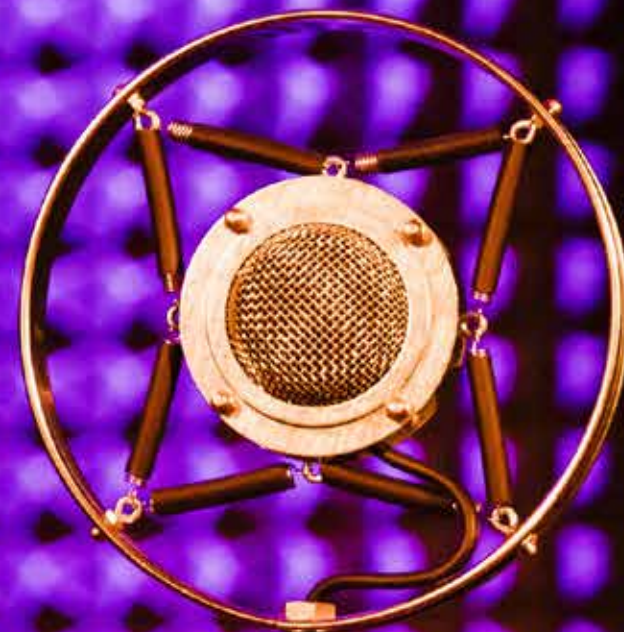
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ATMOSPHERE



LISTENING *at the Stoltz*

This month, Shore Monthly introduces Atmosphere, focusing on hot spots across our region.

Story by Sarah Ensor
Photos by Caroline J. Phillips

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THE SPOT:

The Stoltz Listening Room at The Avalon Theatre on Dover Street in Easton.

THE DIGS:

A 60-seat music venue with two walls of windows offering views of Easton.

THE VIBE:

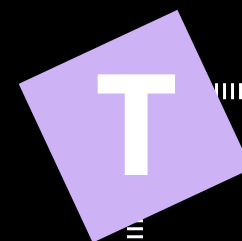
1970s-jazz-club cool, friendly, comfortable

WHEN TO GO:

Almost any weekend

WHO TO TAKE:

*A hot date or a group of music-loving friends
Be in the know: Sign up for emails at avalonfoundation.org*



The Stoltz Listening Room, celebrating its 10th anniversary, is cool, intimate space on the second floor of The Avalon Theatre. The room, originally built as a ballroom, was renovated specifically as a small music venue with great acoustics.

As The Avalon Foundation staff members began to consider developing a small music venue, they were approached by Keith Stoltz, who wanted to honor his parents' 50th anniversary by supporting The Avalon. Jack and Susan Stoltz are huge supporters of the theater, and he wanted to honor their commitment to the arts and the community.





The staff responded by pitching Keith Stoltz an idea for the room. Their proposed renovations would have cost roughly \$50,000. Stoltz said it should be better. His vision for the project brought it to about \$200,000, and he funded the whole project.

The Avalon hosts roughly 100 performances a year, and while shows demanding smaller crowds did well financially, it was a bit lonely to have a small crowd in the 400-seat theater. The Stoltz Listening Room, sold out at 60 people, feels electric and exciting, and it has developed a reputation among musicians for being a great venue.

“When a band is hot in there, the camaraderie gets blended together with the music,” said Tim Wiegand, marketing director for The Avalon Theatre. “It’s a place you’re just going to check out again.”

The same is true for musicians who return again and again to perform in the space. And it’s no wonder. The entire room was renovated for listening, from the shape and position of the stage to the fabric in the curtains and the chairs. A banquette under the windows lends to the lounge feel, and original photos by American photographer Pete Turner, known for his

ultra-saturated images. Turner was the eye behind many great album covers. If you think of the style of some of your favorite jazz albums, you are probably thinking about Turner’s work.

The room, although designed for acoustics, has a moody, cohesive aesthetic.

“A lot of different elements went into creating that feeling,” said Al Bond, president and CEO of the Avalon Foundation.

A few tips: Arrive at the venue early to get your favorite seats. Grab drinks at the bar, and mingle with others before the show starts. The second floor is accessible by stairs and elevator. ●

