

'80s club Twilight Zone

**Landmark venue
was after-hours**

**Brothers tapped
N.Y. new music**

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In Toronto's hyper-competitive club community, it's hard enough to make an impact, let alone be lauded for being an influence. But more than a decade has passed since the Twilight Zone closed and the club's effect is still being felt throughout the scene.

Many clubbers still get a wistful look when they speak about the Zone. And because of that, the former owners are holding a

reunion party called "Back 2 the Zone" tonight at 99 Sudbury St., off King St. W. It will feature a fashion show, a short preview of the dance music documentary *Maestro* and a deejay list that includes Dino and Terry, Carl Allen, Jason Palma and Dave Campbell.

The Twilight Zone opened in 1980 and lasted for nine years. It was owned and operated by the four Assoon brothers — Michael, Albert, Tony and David. Albert and Tony were the resident deejays, and will be performing tonight.

"We just started throwing parties and hanging out in clubs, and I got inspired by this club in New York called The Garage And The Loft," says Michael. "There was nothing like it up

here."

The brothers found space in a three-storey warehouse on Richmond St. W. in what has become known as the entertainment district. The address is now a parking lot, beside where the club Money sits. The club's name was taken from the 1960s TV show.

"We wanted to create a place with wild sights and sound," says Michael Assoon, and the Zone pioneered a number of now standard concepts in Toronto's club scene. It was basically an empty warehouse with no décor to speak of. It was also all-ages, never served alcohol and only opened on Fridays and Saturdays. It became one of Toronto's first after-hours clubs, with parties going until

rises up, one night only

dawn, something that seems very normal in the post-rave world, but wasn't when Toronto's club scene shut down at 1 a.m.

"It was the very first club in the entertainment district. At the time that was still a manufacturing area," says Nick Di Donato, head of the Liberty Entertainment Group that runs several clubs and restaurants including the Phoenix and Courthouse.

"What really strikes me is how today at 3 or 4 in the morning you find a traffic jam going down Spadina to the Gardiner. Back then, you'd be the only one on the street."

For all of its firsts, the Twilight Zone will be best remembered for the music. The club had an incredible sound system and be-

yond that, it was introducing a new kind of music.

"It was all about the music. The space was a s---hole, a condemned building. You walked up those stairs, man, and you had to hold on. Once you got inside and heard the sound system, you were in a whole different world," says Carl Allen, who has known the Assoons for 25 years and helped out at the club. He's the host of *Loungin': The After Party* on the Ryerson station 88.1 CKLN.

"At that time (other) club owners weren't really interested in having black music in their venues, because it was a new thing. So that's why the alternative was Twilight Zone. You didn't go to that many places and see the mix of people you see today."

The Assoons were in all the important underground record pools at the time, and brother Albert says they were the only foreign deejays to access New York new music. For the reunion, organizers have asked some younger deejays to play as well, like Jason Palma. He's the owner of Play de Record and has a residency at the Alto Basso bar on College St. Palma never went to Twilight Zone but says he can still feel its influence.

"I definitely play in that spirit," he says. "Which was basically open-minded and the underground alternative to the boring sounds of the mainstream. A lot of the stuff played at the Twilight Zone is now looked upon as classic. A lot of those songs are still being played."

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2002 ★ TORONTO STAR ★ J7

Club scene

TWILIGHT ZONE THE REUNION

Sat Dec 7th 2002

10PM to Dawn

99 Sudbury Street

What is known as the club district today looks back on the originator of it all The Twilight Zone. The dance club of the 80's is brought back to you via Back2theZone Productions featuring the original "Twilight Zone Reunion Party". This landmark event happens on Saturday, December 7, 2002 at Studio 99 (located at 99 Sudbury Street, Toronto).

DJ LIST

Jason Palma

Dave Campbell

Dino & Terry

Gene King

Phat Albert

Tony Assoon

The Twilight Zone was the first establishment in the entertainment district and is the venue that set the standard for today's club environment in the city of Toronto. The Twilight Zone brought the city out of the disco era with the introduction of house, alternative, and new wave music in a large dance club concept featuring a dynamic sound system and cutting edge DJ's.

Fashion Show at
10:30pm

Featuring:

Boxxe

The night will encompass several local DJ's such as Dino & Terry, Dave Campbell, Carl Allen, Jason Palma, Gene King, Phat Albert and Tony Assoon, bringing back the sounds of the 80's and the Twilight Zone era.

This event is in honour of the late Ronald Holmes and Dave Del Valle, DJ's who were synonymous with The Twilight Zone. Their spirit will be kept alive with the music that was so much a part of their lives.

A portion of the proceeds of this event will