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Sign says Fillmore, but will Detroit?

June 13, 2007

BY BRIAN McCOLLUM

FREE PRESS POP MUSIC WRITER

The question has dogged philosophers for eons: If you give a rock theater a new name and nobody uses it, does it really exist?

Only time will tell if there's staying power behind "Fillmore Detroit," the name that takes over today at the venue long known as the State Theatre. Part of a national branding campaign by Live Nation, the venue will be rechristened tonight in a party with Fergie.

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Live Nation is putting its formidable muscle behind the enterprise, promising a beefed-up presence on the local concert scene. But the question lingers: Area fans may embrace the Fillmore ... but will they let go of "the State"? Some Detroit institutions that have had trouble shaking old names:

- **Pine Knob:** Ten million dollars can put your corporate logo on a marquee, but it won't necessarily buy the general public's habits. Since this venerable venue became DTE Energy Music Theatre in 2001, countless area concertgoers -- and touring musicians -- have continued to use the original name.
- **Hudson's:** First Marshall Fields. Now Macy's. Six years after a rebranding by new owners, that big store in the mall still prompts many brains to reach for the familiar, century-old name.
- **DEMF:** The Detroit Electronic Music Festival has been renamed several times since changing

hands in 2003. That hasn't kept the world's techno fans from sticking with this catchy initialism from the event's early days.

- **East Detroit:** Fueled by image concerns, residents voted in 1992 to change their city's name to Eastpointe, a controversial move that still finds stubborn resisters today.
- **University of Detroit:** Seventeen years after a merger produced the University of Detroit Mercy, many alumni, sportscasters and others still slip into old tendencies.

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lrs319

I'm sure Bill Graham is rolling in his grave knowing Fergie is kicking off the first Fillmore Detroit show.

I love that a large corporation can just buy out such a historically significant name from the rock world, slap it on their venue, put up some "vintage" photos and posters and call it their own in their attempts to be "hip."

It's just sad. The State Theater was Detroit's own - the Fillmore name is just a product of big business.

Posted: Wed Jun 13, 2007 8:55 am

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(ERIC SEALS/DFP)

Last week the Fillmore sign replaced the State name on the marquee.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fillmore Detroit Opening Party

With Fergie and Rooney

8 tonight

Fillmore Detroit, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit

313-961-5450.

Ticket info: www.livenation.com

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