

East Coast Music Conference makes its debut in Norfolk

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The East Coast Music Conference, which starts today and ends Sunday, will fill downtown Norfolk with an array of live music, mostly from indie acts of different genres from across the country and around the world.

But beyond the intimate performances, the conference also offers opportunities for aspiring artists to network with industry insiders, when they're not attending seminars focused on making them better performers and business people.

Inspired by older lucrative music conferences, namely SXSW, Mondo and DIY, the East Coast Music Conference cherry-picked elements of all three to make it more concise and artist-friendly. For instance, ECMC is driven by performances. More than 90 national and international acts, including Virginia Beach singer Brandon Showell, who appeared in 2017 on NBC's "The Voice"; Bryce Hitchcock; Billy Mercury; and others, are scheduled to perform in venues throughout downtown Norfolk.

ECMC will be at two locations within walking distance of each other – the Slover Library and Waterside Marriott. A pass to shows costs \$24-\$59, and conference passes go for \$99 each. Walk-up registration for the entire four days is \$129. Passes can be picked up at will call at the Slover Library, which will have five stages for performances. Other Norfolk venues with ECMC shows include the Barrel Room, Bearded Bird Brewing, the Brick Anchor and others.

Seminars and workshops, most featuring high-profile publicists and other industry insiders, promise to focus on topics especially pertinent to indie acts. They will explore, among other things, how to tour more efficiently, making money on merchandise while on the road, how to navigate the complicated but profitable worlds of licensing and publishing, and how to use different video-streaming services.

All events at the Slover are free to the public. The Marriott will host the conference sessions. For more information and tickets, visit www.eastcoastmusicconference.com.