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Local rock documentary premieres on PBS 45 & 49 in September, spawns reunion concert

*PBS 45 & 49 and Akron-Summit County Public Library will host premiere of the
documentary and rare live performance by Unit 5 and Chi Pig on Sept. 21*

(Kent, OH) — University of Akron documentary maker Phil Hoffman is rocking Akron again. In September, his new production for PBS 45 & 49 **If You're Not Dead, Play!!** will premiere at the Akron Public Library and will air on the station. The documentary is a sequel to **It's Everything and Then It's Gone**, Hoffman's documentary that chronicled the rise of Akron rock legends like Devo and The Waitresses.

PBS 45 & 49, the Akron-Summit County Public Library and The University of Akron School of Communication will host a premiere of the new documentary on Wednesday, Sept. 21 at 7 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium, 60 S. High St. in downtown Akron. Unit 5 and Chi Pig, two of the bands featured prominently in the documentary, will present rare live performances.

If You're Not Dead, Play!! will air on PBS 45 & 49 on Wednesday, Sept. 28 at 8 p.m., with a repeat airing on Thursday, Sept. 29 at 11 p.m. Hoffman's **It's Everything and Then It's Gone** also will air on Tuesday, Sept. 27 at 8 p.m. Both shows are part of a national PBS week-long celebration of the 1960s called **Talking 'bout My Generation**.

If You're Not Dead, Play!! documents the second wave of Akron "garage bands" that continued in the tradition of "the Akron sound" that began with bands like Devo,

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Tin Huey and The Waitresses. In the wake of this first wave of rock bands, whose story Hoffman told in *It's Everything and Then It's Gone*, a second group of bands formed and took over an old dilapidated bank in downtown Akron, which they dubbed The Bank. Soon, bands such as Unit 5, Chi Pig and Hammer Damage were drawing larger crowds than the first bands ever did, and it looked like the road to rock stardom would run right down Akron's Main Street.

The story is told through interviews with musicians involved in the movement, including former band members from Unit 5, Chi Pig and The Diffi-Cult.. Also featured is insight from Chuck Klosterman, a senior writer for *Spin Magazine* and former *Akron Beacon Journal* rock critic. Klosterman is also the author of the recently released *Killing Yourself to Live: 85% of a True Story*, chronicling his road trip to the death sites of some famous rock stars. *Beacon Journal* columnist David Giffels, author of *Are We Not Men?*, also provides background on the era.

Hoffman uses a variety of media to tell his story, including archival video footage from The Bank, JB's in Kent and club showcases in New York City; never-released audio recordings by the bands that have not been heard in over 20 years; and photographs, newspaper articles and other memorabilia.

“What most surprised me as I created the documentary is that I've become an advocate for ‘rock-as-art,’” mused Hoffman. “The average person who considers rock ‘n’ roll only looks at the musical part. These bands were dedicated to it as performance art — as theater — and I have come to appreciate the full artistry of their work.”

A resident of Wadsworth, Hoffman is the manager of media facilities and general manager of Z-TV in the UA School of Communication. For more information, contact him at (330) 972-6217 or phoffman@uakron.edu.

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