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Welcome to the rockudrama

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It's not theatre under a roof, it's not theatre under the stars -- theatre in the environment.

New York producer Josh Frank brings Austin a rock musical about the beginning of the "punk" movement in the form of a rockudrama.



By day it's the courtyard outside Penn Field, an office complex on South Congress. But at night, it's the backdrop for the rock musical *The Man Who Was Too Loud*.

"The concept behind theatre, less theatre, is to do plays in obscure venues that sort of promote the feel of the piece...gets an audience to look at theatre differently, creates more of a cinematic feel," Frank said.

This fictionalized rock show catalogues the years 1969 to 1973. It's the story of Johnny Richman and the Modern Lovers, the inspiration for punk bands like the Violent Femmes and the Sex Pistols.

But instead of building a set, this company just picks a location based on the story.

"There's lots of references to radio towers and lots of power and the roadways ... and I thought to have it ... there's all this great metal and steel and there's a radio tower back there and huge water tower, which is actually behind the entire show, it's a \$25,000 piece of scenery that I didn't have to pay for," Frank said.

But this show is not in the tradition of Austin's live music culture. It's part rock, part documentary, part drama.

"It's theatre for people who don't like theatre and it's live rock music for people who don't like clubs. It's the best of both worlds," said David Wyatt, musical director and guitarist.

It's a place where the worlds of nature and theatre mingle creating a harmony you can only find in Austin.

The show plays at Penn Field, at 3601 South Congress, through Oct. 4. Clear Channel is renting out the space to promote it as a future venue. For show times and ticket information, call (512) 474-TIXS or visit teenageroftheyear.com