

1. Pennsylvania Railroad, New York

by Ucaoimhu

My journey to Nashville began with a train trip to New York, home of a certain music venue very similar to one in Nashville. In tribute:

(1) Each Down answer for a non-shaded space must be altered before entry in one of four musical ways (five will be altered in each way):

Rhythm. Delete the first letter pair, then keep the second, then delete the third, and so on in a steady pattern.

Arrangement. Rearrange the letters, always in exactly the same way.

Chords. For some musical note A–G in the answer, add the note two steps above it at the start, and the note two steps above *that* at the end.

Voicing. Change one or two letters representing unvoiced sounds to their voiced equivalents.

(To help you with the modified entries — which include two phrases containing capitals, seven capitalized words, and an abbreviation — a straight clue for the modified entry can be found in each such clue.)

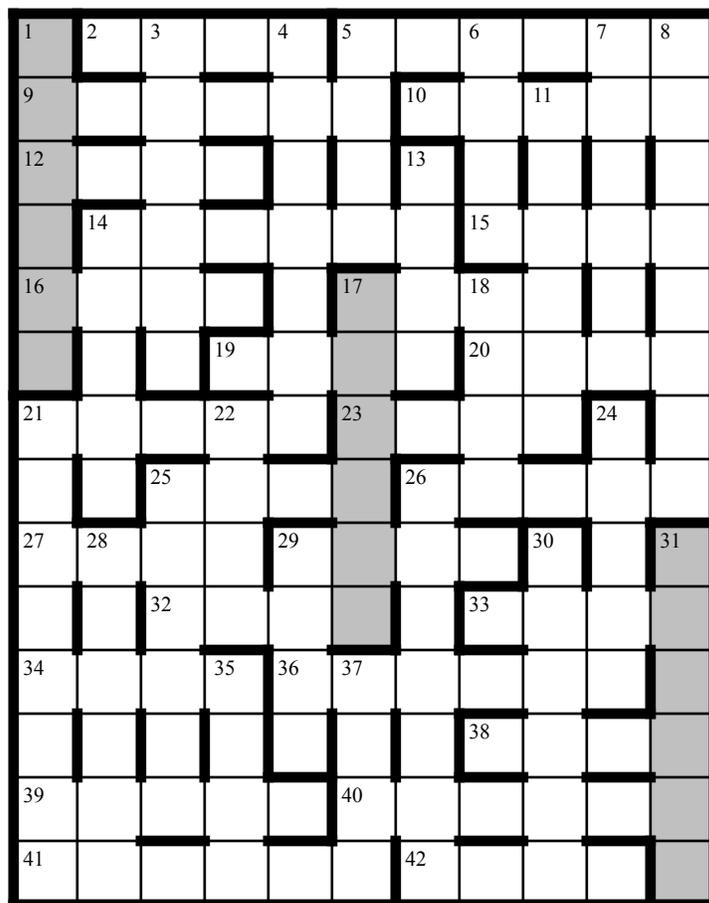
(2) Five Across clues each contain an extraneous word; in clue order, these form a cryptic clue (with enumeration) for a key part of the name of the New York venue. If you apply each of the changes from (1) in order to this key part, you will get a key part of the name of the Nashville venue. (The remainders of both names are equivalent.)

(3) The clues for 1 Down and 31 Down each have wordplay yielding a six-letter string containing an X (at a position that is unchecked in the corresponding grid space). Eighteen Across clues each have wordplay yielding a string with one or two extra letters at the start. In clue order, the nine extra single letters form two strings that can replace the Xs to get two geographical features that straddle the New York venue; the same is true for the nine extra letter pairs and the Nashville venue.

(4) Finally, the remaining three Across clues are ambiguous, each yielding two possible answers. Always taking the alphabetically first answer will result in the unclued entry at 17 Down being someone often heard at the New York venue; always taking the last will do the same for the Nashville venue. Where a clue in (3) gave an extra one or two letters, note the first or second letter (respectively) of the clue; all those first letters, and separately all those second letters, will spell out entities to which the New York and Nashville person (respectively) compare the same abstract concept. In each Across clue from (2), where the extra word is the *n*th word from the end of the clue, note the *n*th letter from the end of the clue; in clue order, these will state what each entity is, and what I became on the next leg of my journey.

ACROSS

2. Roc's foot obstructs semi-immature elephant (4)
5. Mideastern lingo reflected some chic, airy urban stuff (6)
9. About to circle behind curer's plant again (6) [NI2]
10. A UK prefix indicating "blood" or "BHA" in memo (5)
12. Egyptian wader quit undressing British ones (4)
14. Stifling id, deletes theatrical comments (6)
15. Ground essentially metal-free maple wheels (4)
16. Boss or groovy shirts for young amphibians (4)
17. Alphabet's third strange, sad, sketchy group? (4)
19. Ensnare thong (4)
20. A Teletubby making one error twice is on the sheltered side (4)
21. Film starring Emma Stone as fork spearing each tortoni (4 1)
23. Medico, in eschewing clothing, is displaying bad manners (4)
25. Female nickname contains right word to follow "chicken" (4)
26. Lets one see the core of Phobos and Mars (5)
27. Brief term for "appraisal of ill-clad actress Gabor" (4, *abbr.*)
29. \$1000 unit of grain for thing with ever-active teeth (4)
32. After rotation, sodium and English lye are at an angle (4)



33. All you see of Pat Benatar when ignoring En at ski lift (1-3)
34. Youngster gets very commercial rocks on the air (2 2, *abbr.*)
36. Bit of veering in west Swiss capital or Croatian capital (6)
38. Lyrical Lang wears left 50% of Warriors tie (4)
39. Iridescent material on 160 square rods (5)
40. Ripen alongside star brightening up city in Italia (6)
41. Twelve men go wild, O wee lover, in a 2011 romantic film (6)
42. Ding JFK's predecessor, along with vacuous nitwit (4)

DOWN

1. Fourteen boxes right above 'er waterway
3. Initially see anyone that's of rank in enlightened state
4. Communist radical, at middle of '70s, overturned regime
5. Yer rat's eye hurt way back when
6. Some railings run atop walls of African capital, fifthly
7. Retroactively fine me, carelessly in part, for inflorescence
8. Since yon empath ribs Glen's messy, unclouted, contradictory character [NI2]
11. Outwardly separate little Nepali prefix signifying element 34
13. Uttered first bit of "Posthaste, wine cheered strange, nondistinguishable entities" (4 *wds.*)
14. Ala. neighbor is fine with an underwriter adding a note (*abbr.*)
17. [See instructions.]
18. Later body art associated with Arp's leadership (*hyph.*)
21. Admitted having to start choosing plant protein
22. Having club test (for college credit, perhaps) maple fruit
24. Stay barely below "excellent" in grading fraternity guy, say
25. A pic with early elements of Anatolian language at the top
26. German wearing an essentially braceletlike item from Euclid
28. IVs inscribed with a name for the "Terrible" tsar (2 *wds.*)
29. Look at example
30. Massless moon contains each cluster of genes
31. By getting prescription near Washington Street
35. CHI₃ damaged room of Di
37. Say Noah's legendary ship must pay a gas company