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SAM Concert Promotes Albums

By Jonathan Van Dyke
Staff Writer

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Although music pundits have been mourning the decline of album sales nationwide, four Long Beach bands will celebrate their most recent full-length milestones this Saturday.

Summer And Music's (SAM) "Release Me" concert will provide a showcase of four bands that have been fairly successful both in Long Beach and outside of it, co-founder Justin Hectus said.

"The idea really kind of came to us when we looked around at how many bands were releasing albums in the summer — all at about the same time," Hectus said. We always feel fortunate that Long Beach has such a good music scene and having four bands of such quality releasing at the same time kind of hammers the point home."

The concert, which starts at 5 p.m. at the Rainbow Harbor Amphitheatre, will include one-hour sets from The Brook Lee Catastrophe, Tijuana Panthers, The Fling and Delta Spirit.

"For people who don't know the music of these bands, you're going to be impressed with the craftsmanship and how serious these artists are in making music that is professional and meaningful," Hectus said.

For the Delta Spirit, the SAM concert will mark a return home. The band has been touring nationally all summer, and it will embark on a European tour starting in September. It's second album, "History From Below" was released on June 8.

Rolling Stone Magazine says that Delta Spirit "Frontman Matthew Vasquez wraps his harried croak around folk rock that recalls darkest Bright Eyes, raining doom like a black-hatted backwoods preacher..." and [Billboard.com](#) comments that the group "...is a California band with a Southern-fried sound."

The Fling have been preparing all year to finally release "When the Madhouses Appear" on Aug. 31, bassist and vocalist Graham Lovelis said. The band opted to self-release the record.

"It's been a long process of finding money to record and meeting different people and building relationships with a whole team, rather than a label just giving them to you," he said. "Pretty much starting our own thing from the ground up took almost a year, but I think it pays off a lot more. We're all really happy with every single aspect of it."

Lovelis cited Long Beach's tightly knit music scene as an inspiration for the band to go it alone.

"I think it's awesome having Long Beach become this real scene that's completely separate from Los Angeles," he said. "I feel like we know almost all the bands here and we've played with them."

Lovelis said the band's members hope the release of the album might usher in a new phase for The Fling and build upon its early success.

Media outlets have used bands like the Beach Boys, Beatles and Brian Jonestown Massacre to describe the group.

"I have a really hard time describing our stuff," Lovelis said. "The only thing I can say that makes sense is that we grew up listening to our parents' records and we grew up in the '90s, so we can't avoid those influences — we don't strive to do things that have been done before."

Surf punk three-piece Tijuana Panthers will release its new album "Max Baker" sometime before the concert.

Alt-rock band The Brook Lee Catastrophe released the first of a two-album project on July 13, entitled "American Hotel." The second album will be called "Motel Americana" and is slated for a winter 2010 release. The two albums are meant to be "the soundtrack to the night of your life ... and the cold morning after," according to the band's Web site.

Hectus said he's managed bands locally, and understands the difficulties both creatively and financially of getting a bands music out via hard copy.

"It's an overwhelming amount of work and I think what Long Beach really offers fertile soil and a great community of musicians that are shared from band to band," he said. "I think that's something we should celebrate."

For more information and links to each band, visit [www.summerandmusic.com](#) and click on "events calendar" and scroll down for hyperlinks to each bands blog or Web site in order to find music samples.

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
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