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## Funk Fest To Bring Best Of Genre To Downtown

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Posted: Wednesday, August 4, 2010 12:00 am | Updated: 10:55 am, Fri Aug 6, 2010.

By Jonathan Van Dyke  
 Staff Writer | 0 comments

You may not think you know Jimmy Castor and his fellow funk genre artists, but for those stopping downtown this Saturday, you might just hear a few notes of familiarity.

"I've been sampled a lot," Castor said, noting that popular artists like Christina Aguilera, Kanye West, Fat Joe and the Spice Girls have used his music in modern hits. "You'll say, 'Oh, that was him?'"

"It's cool because it brought in the younger generation for me."

Castor will be one of the headliners during Summer and Music's (SAM) Long Beach Funk Fest: Sustaining Our Future Through Funk. The one-day festival drew SAM's largest attendance last year, bringing in almost 15,000 different people throughout the day.

"I expect bigger and better," said Bobby Easton, a Funk Fest founder who also is a member of local funk band Delta Nove. "We have a different layout this year and we've been through it once, so now we're a little more organized."

Funk Fest will employ two different stages, one on Pine Avenue between Broadway and Third Street, the other on The Promenade between Broadway and Third Street.

"There will be two different areas and two different feels, with a killer lineup," said Steve Sheldon, marketing and special events manager for the Downtown Long Beach Business Association. "We have a lot of new acts as well (as some from last year) that will make it a really exciting day."

This year, super-group Ladies of P Funk is the headliner. The band will feature members of Brides of Funkenstein and Parlet—two groups that played with funk legend George Clinton's Parliament Funkadelic.

"It's a group of all female members that had fame with their own groups and also individually," Sheldon said. "It's been about 30 years since some of them have performed together so it's kind of a landmark performance for some of them to be playing together. They're seen as really being the first ladies of funk—the female powerhouses of the genre."

Funk music, in itself, is a tough genre to pin down and describe, Easton said.

"It feels good, is the best way I could put it quickly," he said. "The thing about funk is a lot of people don't know what it means. When people come to our shows they dance like maniacs—they get into it and just feel good."

Easton noted that funk could range from early James Brown hits, to "the nastiest" of the Rick James catalog to the funkier parts of George Clinton albums.

Besides the Ladies of P Funk, other headliners will include Castor, The Original Stone City Band (Rick James's band), The Big Ol' Nasty Getdown, Bloco Nove featuring Delta Nove, Yo Mama's Big Fat Booty Band, Weapon of Choice and Orgone.

This year, Easton's band will be putting a twist on the genre by inviting a whole separate Brazilian percussion line to play with them.

"To my knowledge, there hasn't been anything like that," he said.

The festival will start at 11 a.m. and run until 10 p.m. During the day, each stage will trade off with live music acts. When one stage doesn't have a live act going, it will have a DJ playing music instead. A "Kid's Zone of

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acts. When one stage doesn't have a live act going, it will have a DJ playing music instead. A 'Kids Zone of Funkativity' will be set up for children to play and create art and there will be a beer garden near the Promenade Stage.

A special art exhibition will be at the corner of Broadway and Promenade. It will feature artwork by George Clinton and various funk memorabilia.

Castor said it was going to be good to be back in front of an outdoors crowd — he's currently working Las Vegas as his day job.

"We have to bring (funk) to them," he said. "I think it's the most wonderful thing Bobby and his partners are doing in downtown Long Beach. I've been doing this all my life and a festival like this is very important."

Admission is free and a bike valet is available. Visit [www.summerandmusic.com](http://www.summerandmusic.com).



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