

The Lowdown with Matt Munoz

Band gets creative about money

Soulajar tries new online fundraiser

Local band Soulajar is in need of some funky funding. Currently seeking donations to help finish their latest recording project, the band has chosen a more creative route to get the support they need through a campaign known as “crowdfunding.” Hosted by Internet music site Kickstarter.com, it's the latest in the quartet's strategy to get its career back in tune.

Drummer Brian Boozer, who was responsible for getting the band involved in a 2007 online competition — Starbucks' “Does Your Barista Rock?” contest, which they won — decided the band needed a new start. Doing some research for new ideas, he stumbled upon the Kickstart craze.

“I just started noticing other bands in bigger cities, heading toward the crowdfunding phenomenon. Kickstarter.com looked the most trusting place to try it out, so we decided to go with it.”

The funding process works like this ...

Each artist must first pitch a project to the website to be screened by a Kickstarter panel. If approved, the band can then set up an artist “pledge page” where fans and supporters can interact and donate money.

“We waited around for about a week to get the approval, then we started working on a promo video

with local videographer John Sledge. That took about 30 days to film and edit. We had a



Matt Munoz is editor of **Bakotopia.com**, a sister website of *The Californian* that devotes itself to promoting Bakersfield's art scene. Matt's column appears every Thursday in Eye Street.

Bakotopia Radio

9 to 10 p.m. Sundays on 106.1 FM. KRAB Radio

Hosts: Matt Munoz and Miranda Whitworth

This Sunday:

Interview with Rage Against The Machine guitarist Tom Morello.

Interview with Texas indie rockers Girl In A Coma.

Dicky Barrett of The Mighty Mighty Bosstones and Jimmy Kimmel Live.

band meeting and uploaded it early last week, making sure it streams well.”

Checking out the video at the artist page, the band gives a sincere plea on why they need your help and of course, money. Similar to a silent auction, each requested pledge amount is associated with various prize packages ranging from “Guest Producer listing,” “Limited Edition Vinyl,” to “Private Soulajar Performance.” The band can choose a window of one to 90 days to meet their pledge goal. If within that time frame the band successfully reaches their goal, the band will hopefully see their plans come to fruition. If not, all pledges are dropped without penalty to band or supporter.

In the case of Soulajar, they've set a goal of \$10,000 in 45 days to help with the release of their new CD, “Pipe Dream.”

“It's a risk-free deal,” explained Boozer. “If you don't reach your goal, then we don't owe them anything, and nobody loses anything. Kickstart takes only 5 percent of the total amount made for their services. If we make it, everyone gets to take some credit and a gift for its success.”

Boozer went on to explain that while the amount seems high, the

help it will provide goes beyond just the music.

“We're going to use money to work with publicists. We're trying to get our own set of people behind us, and making our own record deal with the money that we get from our fans.”

At press time, the band had already amassed \$2,500 to their account with less than 40 more days left until the campaign expires. Boozer is optimistic that longtime fans and believers of “crowdfunding” will jump aboard.

“We're really respectful to Bakersfield for coming through for us during the Starbucks competition. We hope we can get that kind of help again.”

Boozer also added that once the project is finished, the public will be invited to join them for a huge CD release party concert already in the works. Until then, “Soulajar-heads” will have to make due with a few sporadic live shows, including a set at this year's Villagefest on Sept. 11.

“We're going to keep it low key until it's all over.”

To check out Soulajar's Kickstarter artist page and donate to the “crowdfund,” visit: www.kickstarter.com.

A rockin' Roadshow

Last Sunday's Rolling Roadshow at the Kern County Museum was one of the city's better midsummer events. With a few hundred in attendance, the giant inflatable screen was set up near the museum's oil tower and derricks similar to those seen in Paul Thomas Anderson's “There Will Be Blood,” shown that evening. Before the screening, Tim League of The Alamo Drafthouse, which co-sponsored the event, greeted attendees and reminisced about his time running the old Tejon Theater in east Bakersfield in the '90s. Kicking off the screening



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLY CARLYLE

Soulajar — from left: Ryan Fergon, Greg Bettis, Jim Ranger and Brian Boozer — is trying to kick-start its career with a creative fundraising campaign known as “crowdfunding.”

with some vintage movie trailers and the aptly titled “I drink your milkshake” contest, the night rolled on without a hitch.

Some local scenesters spotted in attendance were former Chaos Coffeehouse owner Rebekka Haas, photographer Kris Delano, musician Moe Adame, Inner Body Works' Tara Aiello, filmmaker Matt Kieley, and many others.

My only suggestion is that next time the event be held on the large grassy area in the center of the museum. Sure, the derricks and tower were cool for effect, but one small section of grass located at the rear was not enough to set yourself up to get a good view should you choose not to be on the hard asphalt. Not to mention the number of high-backed chairs obstructing blanket-seated viewers. That aside, there should be more events like this! It was a blast!

Matt's picks

The Future Has-Beens at Fishlips, 1517 18th St., 8 p.m. today. \$5. 324-2557.

It's about time we started to see more shows like this. Usually held at 11 p.m. on weekends after local plays, downtown dwellers can get

some much needed laughs before Friday. Combining music and sketch comedy, the Future Has-Beens make their debut with a cast of seasoned sillymen at the 'Lips. One of the show's highlights is sure to be member Morgan S. Roy who can drop a tune about hemorrhoids and Reno in less than 16 bars.

Beat Surrender DJ Night at Sandrini's Bar, 1918 Eye St., 10 p.m. Friday. Free. 322-8900.

Sporting Bakersfield's best afro, local vinyl junkie Alex Rodriguez, aka “DJ Moustache,” provides the best in '60s and '70s funk and soul. A serious music man, you can also hit him up about his latest selection of rarities, including your missing Village Callers Live album.

The Ataris and more at B Ryder's, 7401 White Lane, 7 p.m., Saturday. \$10. 397-7304.

With a record 15 ex-members, Indiana's The Ataris have figured out that if your own song can't get you on the radio — head to cover land. 2003's “So Long, Astoria” featured their rendition of Don Henley's classic “Boys of Summer,” still heard on local rock radio. You've probably heard it, don't lie.



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