

Bands boosted by B.R. bash; group sponsors Open Air Jam

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In an effort to support amateur Baton Rouge musicians and the local garage band sound, a new organization will sponsor a benefit "Open Air Jam" Saturday.

The newly formed Music Coalition was established as a non-profit organization set up to provide support, in the form of exposure and communication, to local musicians and bands.

"There is a great deal of talent and diversity of music in Baton Rouge, but very few venues in which to perform," said Music Coalition Director Ron Dinnocenzo.

"One of our ultimate goals is to become an organization strong enough, financially backed enough, where we can take over venues for the sole purpose of promoting local music," he continued.

To get this task underway, bands

such as Meantree, Girl Scout Heroin, Tandy Martin, Mr. Smallpants, Anachronauts and Street Level will begin playing for free at the Greek Amphitheater at 11 a.m. on Nov. 20.

Admission to the benefit, which will end at 5 p.m., is free and Dinnocenzo said he hopes its timing with the LSU-Tulane game will draw between 300 and 500 people.

KLSU Station Manager Katty Biscone said they are helping promote this event by advertising it on the air.

"We've been wanting to get involved with the local music scene and this is one way we can help them by cosponsoring the event. There are so many local bands now and this is one more step we can take to help the local music scene," Biscone said.

The "Open Air Jam" is being paid for by Dinnocenzo himself because he believes the benefits for local bands will be worthwhile.

"As long as I think something can come out of it that will be beneficial to the local bands themselves and give a positive attitude toward Baton Rouge as far as what's happening with music, it's worth it," Dinnocenzo said.

Dinnocenzo, a lab assistant in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, decided to combine his personal interest in local music with his business administration background to help local bands get the support they need.

"A couple of years ago, when I became personally involved in the local music scene, I recognized immediately that there was no communication and no organization as far as what was happening locally with the music," Dinnocenzo said.

To compensate for this problem, Dinnocenzo received the backing of Baton Rouge Festival Coordinator Annette Villavaso and the

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University to establish the Music Coalition, which is a member of the Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce Association.

"There's nothing in Baton Rouge or on campus that creates the atmosphere or attitude about the local music scene that caters to the 30 and under college crowd," Dinnocenzo said.

Dinnocenzo said the organization, which is seeking membership, hopes to provide a "forum" in which local bands will be able to perform and market their unique sounds. Mainly, it will act as a referral

service.

"We're trying to create a network that would create these kinds of opportunities. We want to give bands the opportunity to perform, to record, to do some recording here in Baton Rouge, to do some promotion, so they won't feel like they're stuck," Dinnocenzo said.

But in order to do this the organization needs members. To become a member, applicants must fill out an application and submit a \$5 membership fee.

Dinnocenzo also said the coalition plans on sponsoring a spring festival in April, which will be similar to the Blues Fest.