



Alton Main Street and Riverbender.com Announce Bands for 2013 BIG GIG

July 1 2013 9:08 AM

Alton Main Street and Riverbender.com are set to host the fifth annual BIG GIG Local Music Show at Alton's July Block Party; two stages will be located on 3rd Street in Downtown Alton. The event will take place on Saturday, July 20th from 4:00 to 10:00 p.m. The concert and additional festivities are free & open to the public.

The following St. Louis / Metro East bands have been selected to perform a 45-minute set of their original music at the concert:

Avenue (Alternative from Alton, IL)
Elemental Shakedown (St. Lou-grass from St. Louis, MO)
Jam Like Ham (Rock from Alton, IL)
Locrian Manor (Progressive Rock from Alton, IL)
Mars Needs Guitars (Hard Rock from Alton, IL)
The Thin Dimes (Blues / Americana / Folk from Kirkwood, MO)

"Our selection committee has built a tradition of showcasing a diverse, multi-genre lineup of talented local musicians," said Sara McGibany, Executive Director of Alton Main Street, "We encourage the community to come out and show their support for Alton's thriving music scene, chances are you'll discover your new favorite band." Two original songs by each band can be heard at www.RiverfrontAmphitheater.com/BIGGIG.

Music lovers will vote for their favorite act on-site, and the group that generates the most crowd support will have the opportunity to return on Friday, August 9th and perform at Riverfront Amphitheater. The first act at the amphitheater will be The Five and Dimers, an Alton/Godfrey-based Americana group who are the reigning Riverfront Times "Best Traditional Country Band in St. Louis". The Big Gig winner will then play an opening set for Leftover Salmon, a nationally touring jam band from Boulder, CO.

Tickets to the concert are \$20 in advance, and can be purchased online at www.RiverfrontAmphitheater.com or in person at the Alton Visitors Center (200 Piasa Street) or at the Big Muddy Pub located at (204 State St).

At the Block Party, Big Gig bands will take the stage starting at 5:30. From 4:00-5:00 p. m., the Kasimu Taylor Jazz Quartet will be performing a tribute to Miles Davis, the most famous musician to hail from Alton. Following their performance, the community will be introduced to artist Preston Jackson, who has been commissioned to create a bronze statue of Miles Davis that will be located on Third Street in Alton's downtown entertainment district.

For more information, please visit the Events page of www.DowntownAlton.com or contact Sara McGibany at: sara@altonmainstreet.org or 618-463-1016.

Band Bios:

Avenue (Alternative) –

Dave Massey and Kyle Minner began writing songs together back in January of 2011. One year and a notebook full of half-written songs later, Lenny Levi joined the duo and the three began the process of developing some potential “full band” material. Lenny's brother, Billy Levi, agreed to take up the role of drummer and Avenue was born. Lenny and Billy had worked together in countless other projects prior to Avenue, so their chemistry combined with the new band members created an atmosphere that was simple and fun to make music in.

The music always seemed to come together well, and with it, friendships grew. Avenue refuses to restrict their music to any one genre for fear that it will kill creativity and inspiration, so as time has passed the band has developed a sound with a variety of styles mixed in. Avenue is currently in the process of recording their debut album with OFFBrand Productions. The full eight song EP is due out Mid-Summer 2013, but two songs have already been released on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ave.tunes.

Band members:

David Massey - vocals, guitar, bass

Lenny Levi - vocals, bass, keyboard, guitar, drums

Kyle Minner - vocals, guitar, bass

Billy Levi - vocals, drums, guitar

Elemental Shakedown (St. Lou-grass) –

Elemental Shakedown has been entertaining fans since 2009 with infectious string-bending rhythms. They have developed tight commanding original pieces which serve as a strong foundation for their own interesting interpretations of the standards and creatively arranged cover songs. 2011-12 was a period of major growth and expansion, including beginning the production of their first full length album.

ELSD is becoming known for their full vocal harmonies, scorching fiddle solos, hot banjo rolls, and screaming dobro licks. They have begun booking regionally, consistently playing throughout central IL, MO and Southern IN. The band has enjoyed collaborating with Bluegrass and Jamgrass giants like Greensky Bluegrass, The Henhouse Prowlers, Mountain Sprout and Mountain Standard Time; they also hosted the New Years Eve after-party following the Yonder Mountain String Band performance at The Pageant in St. Louis.

Band members:

Chris Helmick - Guitar

Matt Flory - Bass

Alyssa Avery - Fiddle

Bob Stuckey - Banjo

Bryan Ranney - Mandolin

Jam Like Ham (Rock) –

The members of Jam Like Ham are proud to have made friendships with one another at MarquetteCatholicHigh School. The members Luke Vest and Joel Reft will be seniors at the school next year, whereas Luke Reft and David Wilton have graduated and are attending college. David is in the medical scholars program at Saint LouisUniversity, and Luke is studying music business at LindenwoodUniversity. The Reft brothers, Jake, Luke, and Joel, are also the band members of Team Treachery, but they have joined forces with Jam Like Ham for the Big Gig. Jake is the eldest Reft at the age of 24 and is currently a teacher in St. Louis.

Each member of Jam Like Ham contributes a wide variety of ideas to the band, so no two songs sound the same. The band's music is influenced by artists such as Dave Matthews Band, Animals As Leaders, and Say Anything. Each member is multi-talented and is capable of playing many different instruments. The two vocalists are Luke Vest, who sings original Jam Like Ham songs, and Luke Reft, who sings original Team Treachery songs. The band is able to bring excitement to any venue with its repertoire of songs which ranges from energetic punk rock to slow acoustic style jams.

Band members:

Luke Reft - guitar, bass, vocals

Joel Reft - bass, guitar

Jake Reft - drums

Luke Vest - guitar, keyboard, vocals

David Wilton - bass, guitar, keyboard

Locrian Manor (Progressive Rock) –

Formed in 2011, Locrian Manor is a progressive/alternative rock band that hails from the Alton area. The project is made up of five long-time friends who formed the band under a simple, unifying goal ---- to write great music and play it for as many people as possible. Locrian Manor brings a style that sets itself apart while never being afraid to let its influences be known; the most prominent being Metallica, Opeth, Tool, Rush, and Pearl Jam. The music is defined by its use of time-signature/key changes, unyielding percussion, dominant guitar-work, symphonic overtones and strong, melodic vocals; with lyrics that center on the reoccurring theme of strength, determination and the ability to rise and overcome.

The band began recording their first full-length album in late 2012, which they hope to release by the end of this year. The band will continue to play music venues in the St. Louis area while also making preparations for a tour taking them to different locations throughout the US.

Band Members:

Donnie Myatt - Vocals / Synth

Jonathan Sterling - Guitar

Bruce Bonebrake - Guitar

Joe Rather - Bass

Butch Coplin - Drums

Mars Needs Guitars (Hard Rock) –

Mars Needs Guitars is a rock band made up of four local musicians that have been playing in the area for quite some time. MNG Band's song list includes originals written by Lyndon Sickmeier, as well as a wide array of Classic Rock and Blues covers from artists such as Jimi Hendrix, the Doors, the Beatles, and Led Zeppelin.

Lyndon is a well known guitar player in the area, having played in many local bands for

over 40 years. He has opened for and/or played with multiple national acts including Chuck Berry, George Thorogood, and Robin Trower. In addition to Lyndon, the current lineup includes his son, Nathan Sickmeier, a multi-instrumentalist who stays busy playing with many local cover bands including Come Closer, County Line Band, and Wherehouse Project, as well as playing fiddle for local original country act, Brandon Holland, and violin in the local Gateway String Quartet. The remaining members of the rhythm section grew up playing music with Lyndon and have reunited to bring you top notch rock.

Band members:

Lyndon Sickmeier - Lead Guitar & Vocals

Nathan Sickmeier - Keyboard, Electric Violin, Trumpet, Lead/ Rhythm Guitar & Vocals

John Scanlon - Bass & Vocals

Otis “Bob” Pilger - Drums & Vocals

The Thin Dimes (Blues / Americana / Folk) –

The Thin Dimes is the product of five like-minded artists who make quality, high-energy, foot-stomping music. The band’s influences include Robert Johnson, Mississippi John Hurt, and Elmore James. Americana runs through their blood and the sounds of the roots rings from their soul. Friendship and brotherhood tie this band together as much as it sets them free.

Brothers Nathan and Nick Pence had been playing together for years, then acquired the additional members in college and The Thin Dimes were born. Similar to the first leaf that falls in autumn, this group has a familiar but refreshing sound. Their energy is contagious and their respect for the music is reassuring that American roots music will live on for generations to come.

Band members:

Nick Pence - resonator guitar, slide, vocals

Hannah Satterwhite – vocals

Paul Rhodes – guitars, harmonica, vocals

Nathan Pence – upright & electric bass

Kevin Cheli – drums & washboard