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## Bands For Sale

KKFI's auctioned acts are prepared to play anywhere.

BY ANDREW MILLER

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Mixing money, musicians and radio can be unseemly. In recent years, payola has plagued the corporate airwaves as unscrupulous independent promoters dole out cash to get their clients (usually upstart major-label bands) into regular rotation. Less sinister yet still shady are station-sponsored concerts that paste together incongruous acts; in exchange for prime spins, even self-respecting artists will bite the bullet and take a time slot between Whitesnake and LFO.

At community stations such as KKFI 90.1, the situation works a little differently. Local artists volunteer their services to express their gratitude for the only area outlet that plays their songs. During the **KKFI Band Auction**, which runs from July 29 to August 2, musicians visit the studio in half-hour increments, spin a couple of tracks from their CDs (or play acoustic tunes live) and tout their selling points to listeners. (For a full schedule, see [kkfi.org](http://kkfi.org).) In turn, intrigued callers bid on the band, with the winner getting a gig from the group. The proceeds go to finance equipment and other essentials for the perpetually money-challenged station.

KKFI also holds a silent auction at the Levee on July 26 from 3 to 7 p.m., selling everything from a full-season pass to the Grand Emporium to autographed Los Lobos CDs to dinners with DJs such as Connie "Crash" Humiston and John "Junebug" Stuerke.



**Traveling man: KKFI's auction allows Billy Ebeling to add to his exotic itinerary.**

### Details

#### KKFI Band Auction

**Details:** Tuesday, July 29, - Saturday, August 2; KKFI Silent Auction. Saturday, July 26, at the Levee from 3 to 7 p.m.

**Where:** On 90.1 FM

### *this week in Music*

From the Week of Thursday, July 24, 2003

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XTA-C finds that success has heavy repercussions.

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Critic's Choice

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However, the band auction presents a unique, more compelling format. The possibilities are limitless: Callers could hire their own traveling personal soundtrack ensemble; they could shell out bucks for a group they despise and host a heckling night with their most rapier-witted pals; they could arrange for a bedroom-window serenade. But for many of the artists, it would take quite a bizarre bid to outweird their goofiest gigs.

Lonesome Hank and the Heartaches, a saucy jump-blues band given to risqué double entendres, has played a birthday party for a one-year-old. On the other hand, Christian blues artist Jimmie Bratcher played to an audience of one at a maximum-security prison in Arizona.

"As I started to play, I noticed that he was watching my hands," Bratcher recalls. "I asked if he was a guitar player, and he answered yes. I will never forget the look on his face as I was leaving that day. I only hope his day was a little brighter."

When it comes to unorthodox settings, though, well-traveled bluesman Billy Ebeling has everyone beat. Ebeling's first and only trip to Paola, Kansas, was the result of a KKFI auction, but his music has taken him to even more remote locales.

"I've played a gig at an Australian Rules football game in Brisbane, Australia, and on a game show in Costa Rica called *Night of Millionaires*, where gallons of paint seemed to be the main prize," Ebeling recalls. "I've played in front of the immigration office in Fiji, which is a good way to get deported. I used to have a regular gig in New Zealand on a ferry boat. I've played on the back of a truck. I played to 500 elementary kids on the last hour of the last day of school in Kansas. I've played in a walled fortress in Yugoslavia. I've played on an island in Belize in exchange for hotel rooms and lobsters, in front of a gyros stand on an island in Greece, and on top of a fountain in Honduras. I was thrown in jail for playing without a work permit in Mexico."

#### **House**

Saturday, July 26, at the Bottleneck.

#### **Helios Creed**

Saturday, July 26, at the Brick.

#### **Band Battle**

Wednesday, July 30, at America's Pub.

#### **Sister Mary Rotten Crotch**

Tuesday, July 29, at the Bottleneck.

#### **KRS-One**

Thursday, July 24, at the Bottleneck.

#### **David Allan Coe**

Sunday, July 27, at the Madrid Theatre.

#### **Ray Charles**

Friday, July 25, at Ameristar Casino.

#### **Rockin' Jake**

Saturday, July 26, at B.B.'s Lawnside Bar-B-Que.

#### **John Mayer**

Monday, July 28, at Verizon Amphitheater.

#### **Paris, Texas**

Monday, July 28, at Davey's Uptown.

Hear & Now

#### **Rob Dougan**

*Furious Angels*  
(Reprise/Warner Bros.)

#### **Ugly Duckling**

*Taste the Secret*  
(Emperor Norton)

#### **Gang Starr**

*Ownerz* (Virgin)

#### **Thorns**

*Thorns* (Aware/Columbia)

#### **Beyoncé Knowles**

*Dangerously in Love*  
(Columbia)

#### **Jerry Dowell**

*Prelude to Apocalypse*  
(Thunder Horse)

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It would seem safe to describe many of these settings as unusual, but Bruce D. MacBain, manager of the Afro-Caribbean act Descarga KC, disagrees.


"When it comes to music, there is no unusual place," he says. "We have played restaurants, clubs, venues, private parties and festivals, and the only unusual thing is how all different types of people get into the groove and get along."

Perhaps MacBain would sing a different tune if his band ever played a genuine biker party, at which it truly would be shocking to see everyone in attendance getting along. Crosseyed Jack, a veteran rock outfit that's played everything from a "school's out" party for Baldwin School District teachers to an open-mic appearance at Joe's Standard Bar in Blue Springs, had a memorable run-in with some biker boyz.

"It was billed as a party for a Johnson County bicycle club, but it turned out to be a biker party," bassist Randy DeBord recalls. "There was a wet-T-shirt contest, a hog roasting over a fire, the whole bit. One of the guitarists went to get a bite to eat, and when starting time came, this burly guy started pounding his fist on the stage and screaming, 'It's 8! Start.' He growled at us and started making motions like he was going to come up onstage to kick our asses. The other guys and I quickly pulled a song out of our hat and started playing. Later on, one of the drunk chicks from the wet-T-shirt contest fell into the lighting tower, which proceeded to come down on top of us."

Even if it means another run-in with the not-so-easygoing riders, though, Crosseyed Jack is willing to take one for the KKFI team. Although the musicians' experiences vary wildly, their reason for participating is uniform. As singer-songwriter Amy Saia says, "Everyone knows musicians are too damn poor to actually *give* any money themselves, so this was the next best thing."

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