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## Homegrown Music Fest: They're unsigned, unsealed, but they deliver

Acts excited to play in Germain show

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### [Metromix.com: Learn more about the bands and hear their songs](#)

Until now, Phoenix Falling has mostly rocked clubs and house parties.

That changes Saturday, when the Naples band finds itself center stage at Germain Arena - playing to an expected audience of 2,000-3,000 people.

Drummer Colby Peters can't wait.

"This will be our biggest show to date," says Peters, 23, of Naples. "We're just very, very excited."

Peters isn't alone.

Seventeen more Southwest Florida bands play Saturday's Homegrown Music Fest - a first-of-its-kind showcase of unsigned rock, metal, punk, reggae and rap acts.

And for most of them, this is their highest-profile show ever.

"A lot of bands have never played a stage this size," says Naples musician Roy Terry, who organized the show with Germain Arena's vice president of event programming, Sammy Wallace. "It'll be fun."

There aren't many venues for local bands, Terry says. Especially if they don't play cover songs.

"We're a vacation place," he says and laughs. "And if you don't do Jimmy Buffett, you're in trouble."

That's where Homegrown comes in. Organizers hope to make it an annual celebration of local, unsigned bands.

The festival follows a battle-of-the-bands format: Each band plays 25 minutes, and then judges pick the winners.

First place gets \$2,500 and 10 hours at a recording studio. Second and third place get \$1,000 and \$500, respectively.

To qualify for the event, each band had to sell 1,000 tickets - thus guaranteeing an audience of at least 1,800 fans. So far, about 2,140 tickets have been sold, but organizers hope for about 3,000 by showtime.

The performers range from Christian rapper Christaholik to metal bands Mantra, Snicklefritz and River

Bottom Nightmare.

"I really love creative, independent music," Terry says. "Fort Myers has some of the best bands in the country, I think. And we want to celebrate that."

Many of the bands have played at Naples Cornerstone United Methodist Church, where Terry works as the pastor. The band-friendly church lets local acts — Christian and secular — perform there and make albums in the church recording studio.

For two years, the church has also held its own music festival, the Locally Grown Indie Festival. About 40 bands played the festival this March.

Through the church and his own rock band — The Holy Moly Band — Terry has stayed deeply plugged into the local music scene. Those connections helped turn the Germain Arena festival into a reality.

"I've made a lot of friends," Terry says.

Arena officials had considered a local music festival for years.

"We do plenty of national acts here," Wallace says. "But there's a good local music scene, and there are a lot of different kinds of music."

Peters of Phoenix Falling can't quite believe he'll be playing Germain.

His band has been together for only about one year. And until this weekend, his biggest audience was about 200 people at a house party.

Still, the band plans to treat Saturday like any other show.

"We'll just give it our heart and soul and do what we do," Peters says.

It helps that he already knows most of the other bands.

"It's going to be cool to get together with them all," Peters says. "It's going to be a lot of fun."

## Additional Facts

If You Go

- What: Homegrown Music Fest
  - When: Starts at 2 p.m. Saturday and continues to about 12:30 a.m.
  - Where: Germain Arena, 11000 Everblades Parkway, Estero
  - Admission: \$10 (parking is free)
  - Info: Call 948-7825 or go to [germainarena.com](http://germainarena.com)
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