A promise to the community, how one poster redefined the way bands assemble in Columbia

Music Factory discusses the struggles of forming an identity in the scene and when to expect more shows

Deacon Lipsmeyer, MOVE Reporter



Lauren Replogle

Advertisements for student albums, flyers for lawn cutting services, and stickers for political causes litter everywhere from Shakespeare's to Rose Music Hall. One poster took a different approach. With its bold coloring and simple imagery, it delivered a promise to everyone who came across it.

The poster read, "Food. Free Music. $2 Beer." With those five words, Music Factory was born. The group is a collection of artists from across Colombia who work to book better venues and put on bigger shows for the city. At the helm of the ship is Ethan Artiga, a Chicago-born musician in his senior year at the University of Missouri. Initially, the idea came to be following what Artiga felt to be an underwhelming music palooza thrown by the university last May, but it quickly morphed into something else.

"We started talking about Mizzou-a-Palooza that happened last year, and you know, no hate to their event. I'm sure it was great — I didn't go, but it seemed more like a Jordan Ward concert rather than a palooza, a festival," Artiga said. "I'm a big festival-goer. I know what they feel like. I know what they're supposed to feel like, so let's do something like that."

Artiga realized that if he wanted to host an event of this size by May, he'd need to assemble a team. More importantly, he would need a brand image, something the people of Columbia could distinctly recognize as Music Factory.

Originally billed as a "kickback," the group's decision not to call their first show a concert was deliberate. This term helped distinguish their flyer from all the rest of the ads on Broadway, as they weren't inviting people to just listen to music, but also to hang out and have a good time.

"What's a kickback? I mean, you just invite some people over to your house," Artiga said. "You got some drinks, you got some food, you're there to hang out, you're there to spend time together, right? So that's what's at the core of our event, that's what it's all about. We're all here to just have some fun and spend some time together."

The show, which took place Oct. 9 at LSD Market, drew a crowd of nearly one hundred to see Find Fiona and Artiga perform. With full photo and video production, audience members felt like celebrities amongst a sea of paparazzi. The venue's intimate spacing packed guests in tight, only furthering the air of importance that surrounded the kickback.

The event also served as a way to introduce several photographers, DJs, bands, and venue owners to each other, creating deep ties between artists and their community. Find Fiona, lead guitarist Luke Sabath was one of the many performers struck by the professionalism.

"Some of the people that I met at the show were people that I just wouldn't have seen at Rose or at PDM or in most of the spaces that I'm in," Sabath said. "It kind of already helped us form some relationships with media people. Some of the photographers who were involved in Music Factory just weren't really on our side of the scene, and now we've bridged that gap."

The group's plans don't just stop at an occasional kickback. Music Factory still has its sights firmly set on its original idea of hosting a festival at the end of the school year. In the meantime, Columbia's newest art collective already has two more shows on the horizon for the next couple of months. They plan on splitting their focus into three distinct directions moving forward

The first is the kickback, an informal showcase of new talent in the community, trademarked by the laid-back nature of the show. Following that, there are the raves, DJ sets in bars with bright neon lights and a fast-paced thump. Lastly, there are band shows. These are the more traditional concerts, held at larger venues and featuring a deeper roster of live acts.

"Nothing is set in stone yet, but it's almost there," Artiga said. "It's coming in November, we're gonna throw a rave. We have bands we want to play with. Right now, our timetable for the next band show is going to be in early December. Right now, our focus is on the rave. I think it's gonna be a lot of fun. It's gonna be very engaging, something unique and dynamic that you don't typically see at a rave."

However, more than any performance, Artiga hopes the collective will continue to connect audience members with artists and provide them with an opportunity to work together and create special moments.

Edited by Mikalah Owens | mowens@themaneater.com
Copy edited by Maren Hettler and Avery Copeland | acopeland@themaneater.com
Edited by Chase Pray | cpray@themaneater.com