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Jim Beal Jr.: Several flavors of rock on menu this weekend

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It's the grand-finale weekend for the Stock Show & Rodeo. And there's plenty more going on in the live-music whirl, so keep those boots moving.

Rocking writers

There are songwriters who spend their time toiling in little rooms, working overtime to pen songs they hope others will record. Then there are the other kind, who toil with the goal of singing their own songs.

Joe Ely is one of the other kind. The Lubbock-tempered, Austin-based singer, songwriter, guitarist and performer can make rave-up, roadhouse rock/etc.; team with Butch Hancock and Jimmie Dale Gilmore in the Flatlanders to deliver turbo-folk; or work solo.

Friday night at Gruene Hall, Ely and accordion ace **Joel Guzman** will play folk/rock-meets-conjunto. **Colin Gilmore**, Jimmie Dale's son, will open at 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$17.50. The hall will be set up concert style with chairs on the dance floor.

In March, Ely released the "Live Cactus" CD on his Rack 'Em Records label. The disc featured Ely and Guzman doing songs such as "Up On the Ridge," "Letter to Laredo" and "All Just to Get to You." And they sounded great. It's a safe bet the Ely/Guzman tandem can get the Gruene Hall crowd fired up.

Ely's latest release is a new 22-year-old album, "Live Chicago 1987" (Rack 'Em). A new Flatlanders CD, "Hills and Valleys," is set for release by New West on March 31.

At Gruene Hall on Saturday night, it's **Bob Schneider**, with **Meagan Tubb** opening.

Jon Dee Graham, raised in Quemado, along the Rio Grande, is a hard-core troubadour and a hot-handed guitarist. Graham survived a serious car accident a few months ago and has emerged battered, but working. When he and his band hit downbeat on songs such as "October," "Tie a Knot" and "Laredo (Small Dark Something)," Graham gets to the meat, to the bones, to the soul of the songwriting issue. He'll do that Friday night at 9 at Casbeers at the Church. **Los Mescaleros** work the Café at Casbeers at the Church Friday night at 6.

Rocking releases

21 Black has been making original rock 'n' roll since May 2004. But the members of the trio, Rob Banda (bass, keyboards), Robert Gloria (guitar, vocals) and Leo Zepeda (drums, trumpet), have decades of experience playing rock, blues/rock, Tejano, metal and more.

Friday night at Salud, 8123 Broadway, 21 Black will celebrate the release of its debut CD, "Now Is the Time." Showtime is 7 p.m. Support comes from **Rock!Bam!Blues!** and **Stolen Motive**.

21 Black plays San Antonio-style rock informed by classic rock and blues/rock. Influenced by the likes of Deep Purple, Steve Vai, Ritchie Blackmore, as well as by jazz players, the trio makes common-sense, grown-up rock powered by Gloria's hot guitar licks and the solid rhythm of Zepeda and Banda. Songs such as "Valley of the Shadows," "Listen to the Light" and "It's Only Money" will satisfy fans of the real S.A. rock deal.

Nothing More was scheduled to release its "The Few Not Fleeting" CD in early January. Things don't always come together when CD releases are in play. Nothing More fans can breathe easy, though, because the CD-release party is set for Saturday at Scout Bar with **The Last Place You Look**, **Meriwether** and **The Vinyl Affair**. Nothing More plays a brand of jam/rock/tribal rock built on groove and a high-energy show. Bet there'll be some fun.

Diego Bernal is a civil rights attorney and a beatmaker. Tuesday at Luna, Bernal will celebrate the release of his CD, "For Corners" (Exponential Records). Actually, "For Corners" is a digital release. The digital revolution might be making physical CDs obsolete, but it hasn't killed release celebrations.

Send e-mail to jbeal@express-news.net. Check his blog at mySA.com.

Keyword: Entertainment.



Joel Guzman (left) and Joe Ely are set to fire things up at Gruene Hall tonight.

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