

## Young Music Makers



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- Music critic
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The Baton Rouge area has many talented young singers and musicians. Appearances by Jacob Dupre, for instance, a 16-year-old jazz musician and composer, and Clay Newsom, a 13-year-old blues and rhythm-and-blues singer-keyboardist, are listed in the Fun section's Shows To Watch music calendar nearly every week.

Fifteen-year-old singer-guitarist Mark Klein performs about twice a month with one of Louisiana's longest-running bands, the Boogie Kings. Sixteen-year-old singer-songwriter C.J. Solar and his 14-year-old brothers, Cody and Mack, have been performing in public together as the Solar Heat for six years. Twenty-year-old singer-guitarist Jonathon Long, a professional musician since childhood, recently represented the Baton Rouge Blues Society at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis.

We've highlighted these young performers who appear frequently in this area and beyond. They may be getting an early start on stardom.

Collectively known as The Solar Heat, musical brothers C.J., Cody and Mack Solar play their Southern rock regularly in Baton Rouge. In addition to appearing at venues such as La Carreta, a Mexican restaurant on Government Street, the Solar Heat's opening act slot for singing star Vanessa Hudgens at the Blue Bayou/Dixie Landin' last summer put the trio in front of thousands.

Sixteen-year-old C.J. sings and plays guitar. His 14-year-old twin brothers, Cody and Mack, play bass and drums respectively.

The trio's music-making began after C.J., then 7, discovered his dad's long unused guitar in a closet. C.J. began taking lessons about a year later from Stan Campbell and Cody and Mack soon began studying drums with Herman Jackson.

The Solar Heat began performing about six years ago at Avoyelles Café on Jefferson Highway. C.J. was 10, Mack and Cody were 8. Influenced by their parents' musical tastes, they play songs by Creedence Clearwater Revival, Lynyrd Skynyrd, the Eagles and other classic and Southern rock acts.

The band released its CD debut, *On The Right Track*, last summer. Seven of the 10 tracks are original compositions. The group is already making a second CD. "We have a lot of new songs and we want to get them down," C.J. explained.

The new material is less country than the earlier songs but still in a Southern-rock vein, he added. C.J. also expects the new CD to show the group's continuing musical progress. "We sound a lot more mature," he said. "And the songs are better because we've had more experience at writing."

In addition to performing with the Solar Heat, C.J. plays solo, in a duo with Stan Campbell and with a new band, Guaranteed Fresh. Nonetheless, the chemistry he has with brothers Cody and Mack is undeniable.

"We can learn a couple of songs a night," he said. "That's why we have such a large repertoire. And Cody and my voices go along together nice. It just flows well."

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