

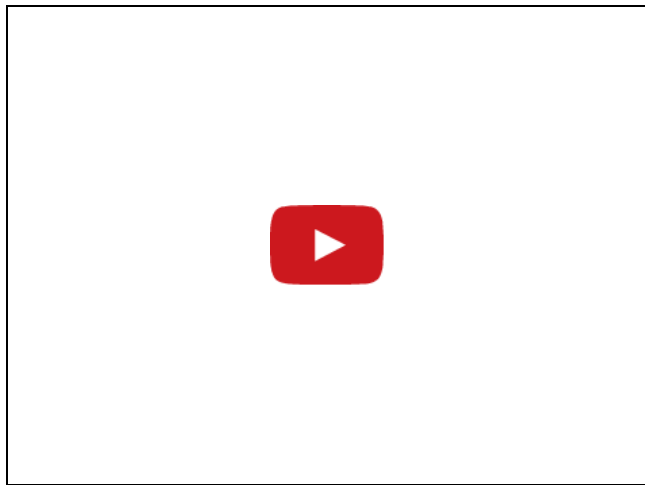
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## Preview: Firecracker 500 Festival 2012 – June 28-30 at Gabe’s

June 27, 2012 Melissa Zimdars Arts & Entertainment No comments

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This weekend at Gabe’s, the [Firecracker 500 Festival](#) is back! Twenty-five bands from Iowa City, Chicago, Tennessee, Alabama and other primarily midwestern spots will be creating enough noise to make your ears bleed for weeks. Beginning in 1997, the original Firecracker 500 featured The Exotics, The Delstars and Iowa City’s own The Bent Scepters (who will be playing again this year on Saturday). Despite its success, Firecracker 500 took an extended break a couple years after its launch, but local bookers and festival co-founders Joe Derderian and Doug Roberson brought it back in the summer of 2011. The best part of the festival is the stylistic diversity that the participating bands represent, from garage and psychedelic rock to proto-punk and guitar-pop. While I’m excited to see every band that will be playing, here are some highlights: (FULL DISCLOSURE, *LITTLE VILLAGE* IS A PROUD SPONSOR OF THE FIRECRACKER 500 FESTIVAL)



### Thursday – Apache Dropout

Apache Dropout is a “lysergic boogie,” garage trio from Bloomington, Indiana. The trio is reminiscent of an earlier era, channeling 60s fuzz, garage rock and proto-punk revival to create a style that somehow feels at once dated and uniquely new. Apache Dropout combines driving, rhythmic grooves overlain with screeching guitar solos and distorted vocals, often garnering comparison to [13th Floor Elevators](#) in terms of both musical style and psychedelic reference. Think also back to the early aughts’ Reigning Sound or a messier (in a good way) [Black Lips](#). It’s definitely worth checking out their self-titled LP (Family Vineyard Records, 2011) before seeing them.

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### Local Events Calendar

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12



Iowa Men's Basketball

Carver-Hawkeye Arena at UI

6:00 PM



Southern Valentine with New Pi's Matt

New Pioneer Food Co-op Coralville

6:00 PM



PYO Knit & Wine

Home Ec. Workshop

6:00 PM



Country Dancing

Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon

6:30 PM

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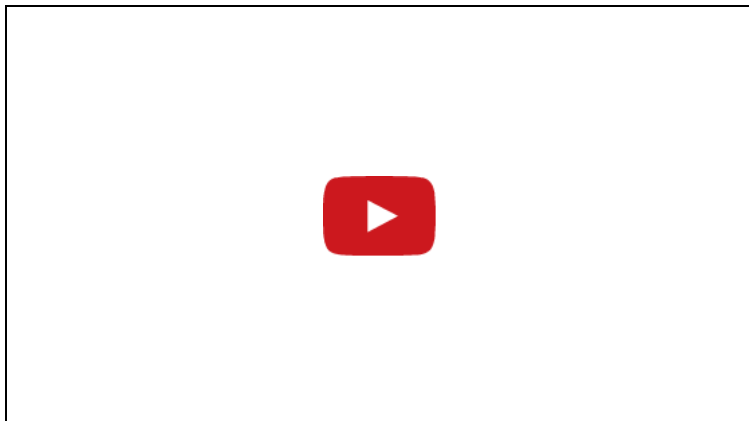
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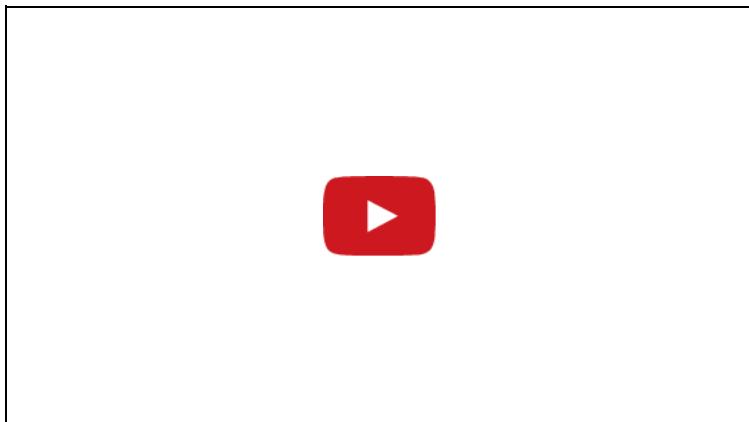
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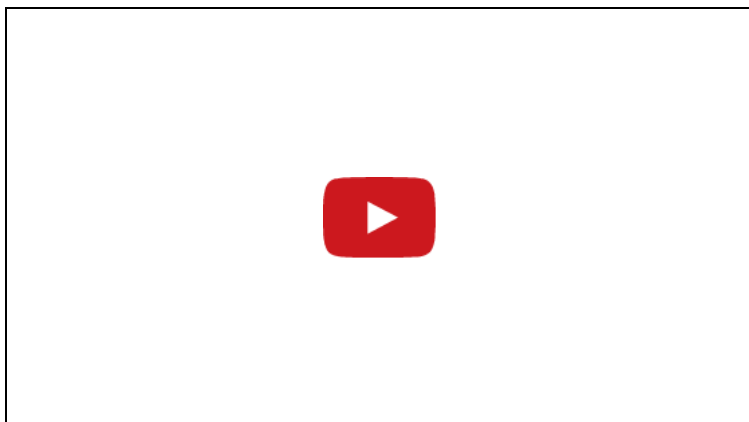
**Friday – TV Ghost**

Friday’s headliner, TV Ghost, is a synth-punk, psychedelic group from Lafayette, Indiana, who released their sophomore LP, *Mass Dream*, with In The Red records in 2011. The record might be more accurately called *Mass Nightmare*, with its sometimes jarring noise combinations, meandering guitars and the overall persistently dark, unhinged quality of their music. They are like an update to the early 80s band, The Birthday Party, and at times, a spookier version of Lost Sounds. TV Ghost is one of the most unique bands playing this weekend, though maybe not the only one with the potential to haunt you in your sleep afterward.




**Saturday – The Hussy**

From Madison, Wisconsin, The Hussy is a garage, punk, trash duo who released their second LP, *Weed Seizure* (seriously awesome album title), last March with Tic Tac Totally. They’ve been touring the U.S. heavily the past few months, lighting guitars on fire and winning the affection of everyone who has the opportunity to hear them. Bobby Hussy’s sometimes manic playing style—which can be potentially dangerous to those too close by—is perfectly matched with Heather Hussy’s fierce drumming and their alternating vocals. You can definitely expect to hear some of the catchiest two-minutes-or-less rock and roll currently being created.

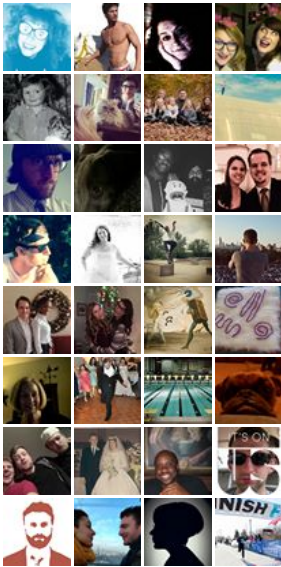


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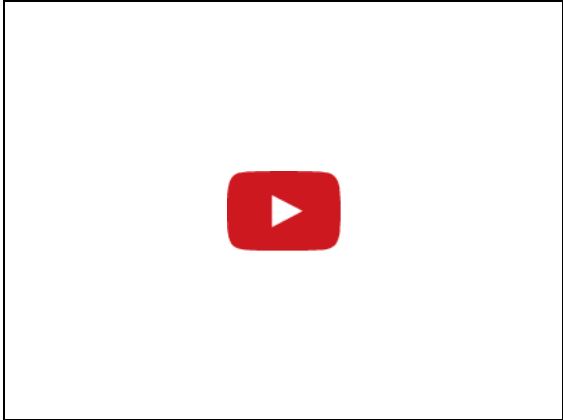
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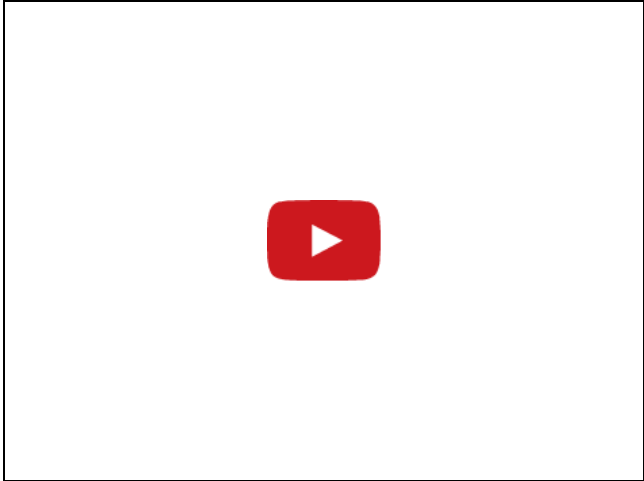
**Saturday – The Midwest Beat**

Hailing from both Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin, The Midwest Beat is a unique mix of guitar-pop, rock and a little bit of country. Often compared to the The Byrds or The Kinks because of their jangly guitar riffs and throwback vocal harmony style, The Midwest Beat is not short on energy or fun. Despite all the members having numerous side projects (including the bands Static Eyes, Tim Schweiger and the Middle Men, and The Honey Slides), they've been playing "angry bubblegum" music for years, and released their *Gone Not Lost* LP on Dusty Medical Records in 2011.



**Saturday – Jack Oblivian**

Saying that Jack Oblivian is the leader of Memphis' garage/rock scene is an understatement, as he is a founding member of both The Compulsive Gamblers and The Oblivians, and has contributed to or played in numerous bands, including Jack Oblivian and the Tennessee Tearjerkers, Knaughty Knights, and The Cool Jerks. Adding to his already massive catalog of music, Oblivian's 2011 release, *Rat City*, features a combination of proto-punk noise and stripped down tunes that will please lingering Oblivians fans and non-fans alike. Bottom line, getting to see Jack Oblivian play in Iowa City is cause for celebration.



Some other bands I am especially pumped to see: Hotchacha (noise gaze/post-punk from Cleveland) and Outer Minds (garage/psych/pop from Chicago).

For the full line-up: Official Firecracker500 Festival site/  
Where: Gabe's, 330 East Washington St. Iowa City, IA, 52240  
When: Doors at 5, shows at 6, June 28, 29 and 30  
Three-night pass for \$25, or \$10 a night

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### About Melissa Zimdars

*Melissa Zimdars is a doctoral student in Communication Studies at the University of Iowa, specializing in all things television.*

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