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Ghostplay joins the lineup at Sacramento Popfest, which will bathe Old Ironsides in dreamy soundscapes.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GHOSTPLAY

BY STEPH RODRIGUEZ / stephr@newsreview.com

## Sweet and dreamy

The Sacramento Popfest amplifies local and regional power pop sounds

**Gentle strums of guitar looped and reverberated** from a small stage inside a Midtown venue, followed by moody synth, a slow and steady drum cadence and accents of dreamy guitar riffs. Deep melodic vocals washed over the cascade of sounds that built and then crested over the audience.

It was one of Ghostplay's last shows at the now defunct Starlite Lounge, but the shoegaze mood will live on when the Sacramento band recreates its sonic bliss again as one of eight bands at the first-ever Sacramento Popfest on Friday, Sept. 6 at Old Ironsides.

Jim Rivas, the festival organizer and a longtime Sacramento musician, has built a bill that showcases some of the best indie pop, shoegaze and psych rock bands from the Bay Area, Los Angeles and Idaho. Despite its far-flung musical visitors, though, Rivas says the show is squarely Sacramento.

"I was really hungry to promote the city as being a hub and one of the birthplaces for really great indie pop music," said Rivas, who has drummed for

'90s-era indie bands, including the Rosebuds (a regular at the Cattle Club) and Rocketship (which performed at popfests in San Francisco and New York).

Local music on the lineup includes Clevers and Sad Numbers, plus sets from DJ Roger Carpio and Scott Miller. Three San Francisco bands—the Heartlights, Slowness and Starry Eyed Cadet—will join Los Angeles-based Rat Fancy and Idaho's The Very Most to cast a spell of sugary power pop music.

Rob Uyttingco, drummer and vocalist for Starry Eyed Cadet, said he's noticed a new generation of musicians and audiences who appreciate the original aesthetic.

"It's the music that influenced us to start playing music. The first time I saw the band Ride, that made me want to pick up the drumsticks," he said. "Even though we love other genres of music and are influenced by '60s, '80s, new wave or post punk, we always look to that fleet for inspiration."

Throughout his years behind the drum kit, Rivas said he's met a lot of musicians and forged a lot of connections, all based around indie music and its DIY backbone.

He's an avid live music enthusiast and says he often checks out new local sounds. That's how he discovered Ghostplay's hypnotic stage presence in 2014.

"They've just continued to top themselves every year that they've been around, and I think the best is yet to come in future recordings for them," Rivas said.

For Leticia Hess, the band's guitarist and vocalist, the small popfest is just another opportunity for audiences to enjoy local music. With venues such as Old I and Blue Lamp up for sale, these opportunities may soon be more limited.

"We never know how long our venues are going to be here. Jim's put on a really great showcase of what kind of music is around and put in a lot of effort to put these bands together," she said. "It's really important to get out and enjoy this kind of entertainment before it goes away."

**"I was really hungry to promote the city as being a hub and one of the birthplaces for really great indie pop music."**

**Jim Rivas**  
 promoter, Sacramento Popfest

Check out the Sac Popfest with Ghostplay, Starry Eyed Cadet and more, 5 p.m., Friday, Sept. 6 at Old Ironsides, 1901 10th St. \$8. facebook.com/events/2306986172853412.