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POP BEAT

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"Plastic Army," the new EP from San Francisco dance rock band the May Fire, which celebrated the CD's release last month at Fat City, is sass-dripping stuff brimming with charisma, punky attitude and sirloin-thick hooks. The track "Late Song" is certain to inspire late-night bounce-about at the city's rock discos. The four band members recently returned from Hollywood, where they played flamenco-outpost-turned-hipster-hangout El Cid and wowed a roomful of famously hard-to-impress Angelenos. On Saturday, the band did its part to help bridge the gap between San Francisco's predominantly straight indie rock scene and its small but bustling queer rock scene, when it shared its revved-up flavor of dance-charged alternative music with the all-gay audience at the monthly queer rock 'n' roll disco Trans Am. Listen to "Late Song" at www.myspace.com/themayfire.

Speaking of El Cid, San Francisco's Lovelikefire has been invited to play a monthlong May residency at the club's popular Friday-night music showcase, the Fold. Go to www.myspace.com/lovelikefire to sample tracks from the forthcoming follow-up to the band's debut EP, "Bed of Gold." While you're there, you can download two unreleased tracks, including the song "Wish You Dead," a breakup song that gives me chills every time I hear it.

RubberSideDown is four dudes from San Francisco whose straight-ahead style harks back to the crowned kings of stadium rock. We're talking AC/DC, Van Halen and the like. As one of RSD's fans put it recently, "All that indie stuff sounds the same to me, another bunch of guys in tight sweaters playing mopey music. I wanna hear some rock 'n' roll!" Apparently, RubberSideDown's classic sound has struck a similar nerve with network producers in Hollywood. The band's music has been featured in several major television shows, including "CSI: NY." You can sample music from the band's latest release, "Powder Keg Logic," at www.myspace.com/rubbersidedown. You can also download a track from RubberSideDown's previous release, "ZeroFighter." RubberSideDown plays a free concert for ArtFest on May 19 in Civic Center Plaza. The next day, they'll be rocking runners-by at Bay to Breakers from a course-side perch in front of the Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park.

LISTEN UP: "We Are Free" by Sunshine Jones. As half of iconic deep-house duo Dubtribe Sound System, Sunshine Jones helped secure a place for San Francisco producers on the dance-music map.

After disbanding the group and taking some time off to be a husband and dad, the producer is back with "Seven Tracks in Seven Days," a solo debut CD that reflects Jones' fondness for the techy but soulful, roots-house sound championed by Chicago producers and DJs in the 1980s. Sample "We Are Free" and other tunes from "Seven Tracks in Seven Days" at www.kingstreetsounds.com/sunshinejones/.

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