

THE DELTA Z





Portraits of rural America: The Deltaz on their new album and how being brothers shapes their songs

For The Deltaz, this year has been one of many firsts. For one thing, the Los Angeles-based Americana outfit has taken their first leap across the pond where they played 16 shows in Europe, even performing at Castle Kannawurf in Germany which was built sometime in the 1500s.

The band has also released their third studio album and first vinyl release, *Barrelhouse Boys*, which they recorded at Mulholland Recording in Malibu, California, with producer Tommy Hilton.

“One reason [we released the album on vinyl] is that we had a lot of requests for it out on the road,” says Ted Siegel, guitarist, singer and songwriter for The Deltaz. “Also, we grew up listening to vinyl. We love the sound—I love the sound of it. My brother kind of disputes it with me sometimes (laughs). I personally love the sound of it. It’s just the ritual of experience of putting on a vinyl record. It’s more of an experience.”

He, along with his brother John, who drums, sings and plays harmonica, fronts the band. Naturally, the two have a relationship that’s competitive, confrontational and deeply caring for one another. Having played music together since children, Ted says he trusts the working relationship they share, especially when it comes to songwriting.

“There’s a little bit of tension and competition that makes it so that we write well. I’ll write a whole host of songs and I’ll run them by my brother, and he’s a very honest, very strict critic,” he says. “I always know that if things are not going to make it past him, they’re not going to make it on the record, and that’s a pretty important tool to have. The songs are really shaped by the both of us.”

The Deltaz’ most recent host of songs has stood the band’s ritual of self-evaluation and critique and has culminated in an album that is their most straightforward blues effort yet. From “Fireline,” which talks about a female firefighter, to “Barrelhouse Boy,” which pays tribute to the rural American hero, *Barrelhouse Boys*, Ted says, acts almost as a tribute to an America that is perhaps only seen through months of endless travel.

“It’s kind of like portraits of rural America, of growing up in un-urban places in the states,” says Ted. “Barrelhouse Boys are people we’ve meet in our travels that are really interesting, compelling people in rural areas, you know. Barbeque pit masters, bluesmen, just hardworking, interesting people. Rural America heroes.”



Cover art for *Barrelhouse Boys*.

It would seem simple enough to talk about these heroes with a one-dimensional perspective, but The Deltaz capture snapshots of loneliness, abandonment and longing. In that regard, these characters become anti-heroes. Not ultimately unlikeable, but flawed, dismayed and disenchanted with life in a bustling America, “*lost in the crowd, one of the faces*” as Ted sings in “Main Street” with John providing harmonies over a steel stringed guitar crooning in the background.

Another first for the band is John’s appearance as lead singer in a few songs. He says he’s always been providing backups and harmonies during live performances, but with *Barrelhouse Boys*, John is putting his chops on record.

“I’m still getting the hang of that,” he says. “It was kind of a risk for me, but it was a risk worth taking.”

The Siegel brothers have been playing music together since high school when The Deltaz essentially began, though they didn’t pursue it as actively as they do now. The name, Ted says, stems from an obvious admiration of the style of blues which originated in the Mississippi Delta, but there’s also another meaning.

“We’ve always had a sort of romantic relationship with the music down there, and we just took our name from that influence from that music from the Delta,” says Ted. “Also, Delta in science means change, you know, and I think at the time we thought maybe we were going to bring our own spin and our own change to this music that we love, blues and country music, and kind of make it our own.”

Despite going through a handful of changes over the last 10 years, Ted and John have always been the core of the band, and their relationship shapes their music and each other.

“We were always playing original music and we’d always be covering stuff, and then it just started to happen,” says Ted. “Suddenly we just went from cold water to boil hot.”

That brother dynamic has become more than just a neat fact about The Deltaz. Instead, it has created a carefully constructed sound where elements of that relationship blend into the songwriting, in its lyricism and in the way the two play and argue with each other. What you’re left with is a sound that’s reminiscent of all of their inspirations—blues, Americana, rock ‘n’ roll and country—yet wholly unique to the relationship they share.

“If you’re playing music with your brother, you accept that you’re not going to have that kind of connection with anyone else,” says Ted. “Because you guys are really comfortable with each other you can also go to really deep spots when you’re fighting, when things aren’t going well. So there’s always a challenge of maintaining your relationship but also understanding the connection you have is irreplaceable.”



The Malibu Times

NEWSPAPER • MAGAZINE • ONLINE

The Deltaz: Americana Music Born in Malibu

Catch the brothers at Ollie's Duck and Dive this Friday before they leave on a European tour.

A pair of homegrown Malibu boys is about to launch their third studio album and embark on their first European tour. Brothers John and Ted Siegal—known as The Deltaz—have been playing music together for nearly two decades, despite their young ages: John, 26; Ted, 29. The brothers have entertained as the house band at the rustic and quirky restaurant The Old Place in the Malibu/Agoura Hills area for nearly nine years.

Growing up in the canyons of Malibu, John, who plays drums, harmonica and vocals, said his interest in music all started when he went to an assembly while attending Juan Cabrillo Elementary School. Local musician and Malibu High School drumline leader Eddie Marz soon became his drum teacher.

"It blew my brother away when he was eight. My mother took us to a music store to get my brother some drums, and when we walked in the door, I saw guitars on the wall, picked one up and was immediately wowed and amazed," Ted recalled. "My parents always played us music from the '50s, '60s and '70s, so that's what we grew up on. Right then we started playing music together. We became The Deltaz when I was 17 and John was 14. It's crazy to think it's been that long."

Calling their style of music "Americana," Ted explained, "At its core it means blues and country music."

Then John chimed in.

"We started as more of a blues band," John said. "That's why we're called The Deltaz, but over the years, we've branched out. We've gotten more into playing folk music, but we're also focused on country," he added, mentioning Hank Williams as a favorite. "If you go back far in American music, the lines between country and blues get blurred a little bit."

After two well-received albums, "This Old Place," a tribute to The Old Place and partially recorded live at the venue, and 2016's "Like Your Brother," the Siegal brothers are about to finish recording The Deltaz' latest effort, titled "Barrelhouse Boys." After getting many requests, they'll be offering it on vinyl. The Deltaz currently have a Kickstarter fundraiser with an upcoming deadline of May 4 to get the vinyl pressed. Without a label backing them, the brothers are hoping their fans will help with their creative effort.

Speaking about "Barrelhouse Boys," Ted explained, "We're really excited about it. It's kind of like our last album, with a lot of country, but this album is a return to the more bluesy, rock roots of our playing. It features 11 new original Deltaz tunes."

You'll be hearing lots of slide guitar from Ted and harmonica by John.

"It was really important to us to have our album pressed on vinyl," according to Ted. "The extent of pressing vinyl, the mastering of our album, pressing it on CD, releasing it on iTunes and Spotify, and all that stuff, especially on the heels of us leaving on our first tour to Europe—it's put us in a position where we need to ask for people's help. That's why we've reached out to people on Kickstarter."

Before The Deltaz leave to play Germany, Belgium, Holland and Norway, they'll be making an appearance locally Friday night, April 20, at Ollie's Duck and Dive. The band will also have an album release show at Harvelle's in Santa Monica on May 11.



That's the date the record will be released on CD, music streaming services and over the internet. The vinyl will not be available until the end of June. The brothers said they'll probably have another mini celebration then, too, for the vinyl release when they get back from Europe. If you donate \$25 on Kickstarter, you can preorder the record. "When we get back from Europe, you'll be the first ones to get the vinyl copy," Ted said.

Since The Deltaz only tour about four months each year, you can usually catch them Saturday nights and Sunday mornings at The Old Place, singing harmonies, taking requests and playing for tips.

Ted explained: "It's a really unique way we get to perform that's different than any other. I don't think a lot of performers get this experience of playing songs three feet from someone and immediately getting to see their reaction to your music. That can be really exciting. The Old Place has been this catalyst for us—learning about ourselves as musicians. We've made so many connections with so many interesting people. It's rare these days for blue-collar musicians like [me] and my brother to have this opportunity to have a steady Saturday night Sunday morning gig for years at a time. It's valuable to us."



'Brother'-ly love: Blues-folk duo The Deltaz celebrate sibling bonds on new album

On the title track to their latest album, Ted and John Siegel — known collectively as **The Deltaz** — try something new: singing in harmony for the entire song.

But working harmoniously together is nothing new to the California duo, who'll return to Amarillo for a 10 p.m. Saturday show at Leftwoods, 2511 S.W. Sixth Ave.; cover charge is \$6.

"It's an equal partnership," said John Siegel, 24, who plays drums and harmonica. "There's definitely the dynamic of him being the older brother and having more of a, I guess, a leadership role, but when it comes down to it, we're equal, and if I disagree with him, I will tell him."

"Brothers are brothers," Ted Siegel, 27, agreed. "You're always going to have little arguments. I can't speak for John, but the more we've toured, the more we understand how the other lives and acts. It becomes easier the longer you go about it."

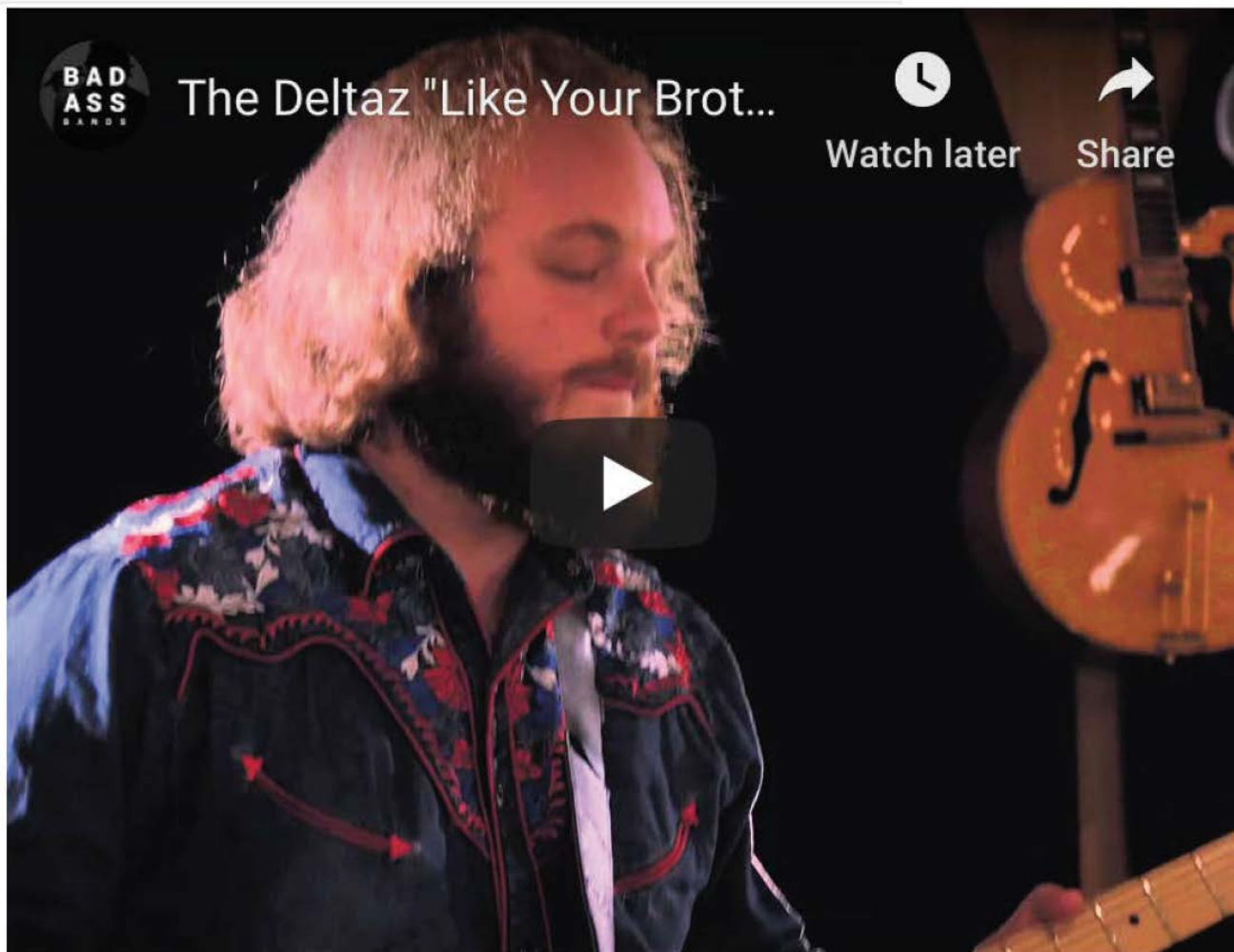
The Siegel brothers have been going about it for about 10 years, since they were still in high school, drawing inspiration from old blues masters as well as more contemporary alt-country acts.

They've been working on *Like Your Brother*, their second full-length album after 2013's *This Old Place*, since 2014, mostly working off and on in a home studio, then buckling down with producer Tommy Hilton to get the album out this summer.

"That was probably our biggest motivator — having it available at shows," Ted Siegel said.

The title track alludes not only to the Siegels' relationship, but also to occasional tourmates and fellow California musicians the **Zmed Brothers**, who played in Amarillo with the Deltaz on their last tour in the spring, as well as more frequently back home.

"We got to observe another set of brothers going through what we go through — grappling with touring with each other, how you deal with and how you also appreciate being on the road with your sibling," Ted Siegel said.



"Like Your Brother" (live), The Deltaz

"(The song) is about ... how it's difficult but essential," he continued. "I think that's something we found in the Zmed Brothers' work — no matter how difficult the relationship with your brother is at times, it was something that our musical lives couldn't exist or couldn't exist to the extent that they do without."

Other songs on the album — including "BB Guns and Dirt Bikes," written by Jake Smith, a/k/a The White Buffalo — touch on the brotherly theme, but Ted Siegel said he likes to be vague on any other themes to let the listener decide.

"You take something really personal for you — sometimes it's abstract, sometimes it's concrete — and you try to express it," he said. "Then you put it out in the world, and sometimes people will like it, sometimes not so much, but sometimes people will have this incredibly different interpretation of it."

Like perhaps the, shall we say, carnal impact of the song "Wild Mustangs," which almost didn't make the album. Good thing it did, because there's a couple out there that just *loves* that song.

"They told me that they have sex to that song all the time," Ted Siegel said. "I thought that was so funny, that there's a ritual involved and that they told me about it."

"I guess a lot of people would be shocked, but I was flattered that they use our music as the soundtrack to their lives."

SouthSide On The Town

20 Jul 14 - The Deltaz



Los Angeles ...the city of angels ...celebrity dreams ...Whiskey A Go Go ...and country/rock?!



Yes, blogspot readers, you heard correctly. It was surprising for SouthSide as well Apparently, .Los Angeles knows how to rock the country music scene too especially after meeting the touring band - The Deltaz recently when this trio performed at Elbo Room as part of the lineup featuring Always Waiting, The Fishermen and Jared & The Mill. And what a set this band had for the Chicago audience. They thrilled this audience with rousing grit off the guitars and

percussion rhythms from a drummer who was also blowing on the harmonica at the same time (plus vocal duties)! Now that was definitely something this reviewer had never seen before.

Basically, blogspot readers, it was a rockin' country/bluegrass fun time with The Deltaz on this Sunday evening. Opening with the song "Two Side" (because there's always two sides to every story), this band soon amped up the music to a toe-tappin' country rhythm that electrified the stage which even had this reviewer bouncing to the lively beat. That was after as she mentioned earlier being unexpectedly shocked that the trio were country and not what she originally anticipated. Still, for her, it was hard-hitting as well as heartfelt especially with Ted (guitar/vocals) on lyrics with brother John supplying the percussion, harmonica, and vocals in the back along with newcomer Eric (a man of very few words) on bass.

Throughout The Deltaz's performance, the audience were treated not to a set featuring country rock but also immersed into deep emotions during the ballad "Face to Face" and a bit of wit during the tongue-n-cheek look at those music reality shows the promise to "Make You A Star", blogspot readers.





The music really hit home with this Chicago audience when performing as a duo during an electrifying but rowdy blues number where Ted broke out the steel guitar for this particular song. According to the band's front man, they were exposed to "...real good music growing up..." And that was definitely well demonstrated, blogspot readers, throughout the rest of the set which featured other songs like "Wild Mustangs" (about their horses back home) and

"Round and Round" (a traveling song about their travels on the road). How fitting since The Deltaz have been on the road for over a month visiting places like Michigan, Texas and other parts of the South and Midwest. They even spent nearly a week in Chicago "visiting" (i.e. performing) at some of the other venues like The Bird's Nest, The Red Line Tap and Moe's Tavern. The highlight of the set was their "Shady Rascal" song that featured some funky chicken clucking between Ted and John ...never knew you could make an electric guitar cluck like a chicken. The song itself was high octane intensity on the country rock sound leaving the audience thoroughly winded from the blast of guitar riffs and harmonic melody rockin out the stage.

SouthSide highly recommends checking out The Deltaz while the band is currently on the "Round & Round" tour traveling the highways and bi-ways before they head back home to Los Angeles, blogspot readers. It's definitely not surfer rock ...that's country/rock done California style! For more information, visit <http://www.thedeltaz.com>.





SPOTLIGHT

COUNTRY & BLUES BROTHERS: THE DELTAZ

BY KELLY WILKES

WHAT'S THAT MUSIC RIPPLING out of the canyon with its roots in American classic rock, and its own distinct take on country and blues? It's the sound of The Deltaz, made up of brothers Ted and John Siegel. The two grew up in Southern California and are the regular Saturday night entertainment at The Old Place in Agoura Hills. The brothers take inspiration from "home, love, travels, the trail, our environment and life experiences" as well as the music of Creedence Clearwater Revival, The Band, Amy Winehouse, and The Black Keys, to name just a few. By performing at the Old Place, they have been fortunate enough to get to know Rick Rosas, Neil Young's bass player, who has become a mentor for the two.

The brothers have been surrounded by musical influences their whole life, and knew it was only a matter of time before they started making music of their own. "Our dad owned a jazz club for a long

time. Our sister was a violinist, our aunt is a concert violinist; everyone in our family played some sort of instrument," shares Ted. "I started playing drums to get out of singing in the school choir when I was 9," says John, 21, who still plays drums, harmonica and now also sings. "And I started getting involved a couple months after that," adds Ted, 24, who writes lyrics, sings and plays guitar.

More recently, a couple of The Deltaz's songs were picked for the hit MTV series *Jersey Shore* and *Snooki & JWOWW*. "It's good for us to get those placements; we were really lucky to get that," says Ted. If you don't happen to catch either of those, you can see The Deltaz for yourself (and I recommend you do—their live show is engaging and a lot of fun) at local venues around the Conejo Valley and Los Angeles area, or on their tour up the coast of California this December and January. Check thedeltaz.com for dates, locations and new music. **TM**

Brothers come together in music, travel

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — With every new day, there is writing. That's the way Tedi Siegel likes it.

Siegel, along with his brother John, make up the folk/blues duo The Deltaz.

The duo have been making music for nearly five years and their writing process is more collaborative.

"John has taken a more active role in writing, which I think is great," Siegel says during a phone interview from Indianapolis. "I like my writing to be spontaneous and my goal is to write a part of one song every single day. It's a writing exercise that I've done for a couple years now and I find that it keeps my mind fresh and open to different possibilities."

The brothers are touring in support of their current album, "Meet Me There." It was released in February and The Deltaz have been touring nonstop in support of it.

Siegel says the band purposely picks towns that they've never played before.

"We've been around for some time and we've gotten followings in bigger cities," he says. "But what we're trying to do is expose our music to everyone on the country. This will actually be our first time in New Mexico and we're looking forward to seeing what inspiration comes from the shows."

The Deltaz will perform two shows in Albuquerque, one at Zinc Wine Bar & Bistro and another at Burt's Tiki Lounge.

"Dive bars are some of the best places to perform because you are able to connect with the audience," he says. "There usually aren't a lot of people and we can work the crowd over and get them involved and having fun. We are a laid back band and like our music to take the audience on a journey."

Though Siegel writes on a daily basis, he admits that it's difficult to wade through the material when it's from a personal point of view.

"There are times that I've said something so personal or profound to me that I'm almost embarrassed to sing it," he admits. "But I've learned that it's better to sing the stuff that you are shyest about because others have felt the way you have. It's true that time heals those trepidations and I only grow from learning for the experiences that I've had. It's impossible for me to write about something that I haven't experienced."

While the brothers get along for the most part, Siegel says there are times when they do fight.

"We're brothers and it's just in our nature," he says. "We come from a family of five and we're the closest in age, so we have developed together as musicians and people. It's really great to have him alongside on tour because we can help each other out."

Siegel anticipates that the band will release a new album every year.

"Since we're always writing, we have to keep up with recording," he says.

"Having an album a year will give audiences enough time to digest the music and then want more."