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Wakeling's English Beat Headlines Concert at PaliHi Stadium July 4

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Two weeks before the Fourth of July concert in Pacific Palisades, Dave Wakeling was in Austin, Texas, on tour with his band, The English Beat.

"It's 95 degrees, humid and there's talk that it will be hotter tomorrow," said Wakeling, a Palisades resident who had already changed shirts three times on June 14 and was looking forward to the weather here on the Fourth.

The irony of having an Englishman as the headliner for the pre-fireworks concert at Palisades High is not lost on Wakeling.

"We won the silver medal in the War of Independence," he quipped. "Actually, I've been asked a couple of times to play the concert but have never been able to fit it in the schedule. This year I told my agent we had to make it happen."

Initially, Wakeling's six-member band planned to work locations closer to the Palisades and drive here in their air-conditioned bus for the evening before going back on the road. However, concert dates were changed and they must now fly to L.A. from Arkansas July 2, and three days later fly to Virginia to resume the tour.

"It's costing me a small fortune," Wakeling said. "I had tried to plan better."

Wakeling has done benefit concerts for Marquez School, where his two children attended, Canyon School and the Palisades Recreation Center.

He offered to do a fundraiser for the Maggie Gilbert Aquatic Center at Palisades High, but the concert never materialized. Wakeling was particularly keen to promote the swimming pool, because as a youth he swam for the Camphill School for Boys Swim Club. As a 12-year-old, he won a bronze medal in the English youth championships, but switched to water polo and played on a U16 boys team that won a gold medal.

"Some of my teammates went on to swim at the Olympics, I went on to water polo and then music," Wakeling said, and then joked, "Chlorine is terrible for your hair."

The rock star is serious about giving back to the town that has been his home since 1993.

"Compassion and community will be two of the most serious



terms in the next decade," Wakeling said. "This is an opportunity to help out and cheer up the community that I've been living in."

"There are so many talented people who live here that just 'rest up,' and I would recommend that they get involved in some way to support the community, because afterwards it's a nice happy feeling that goes all around."

Wakeling is the original lead singer and songwriter for the popular UK rock band The English Beat. Although the original band broke up in 1983, he now has been playing with his current musicians longer than his original band.

The band was famous in the '80s for such hits as "I Just Can't Stop It" and "Special Beat Service." Wakeling is amazed that another of their hits, "Save It For Later," has been used as background music for everything from a barnraising in a Woody Harrelson movie to an HBO special about the Gulf War during a scene when bombs are exploding.

The English Beat music is a hybrid of pop, punk and reggae, which allows the band to tailor each concert to the demographic in attendance.

"We did a Harvard alumni reunion and played medium tempo songs," Wakeling said. "The next night we played at a punk rock bowling event, and it was mostly fast songs; and the next night we played reggae and ska."

On July 4 they won't have a set list. "We'll look at the demographics and decide that evening," Wakeling said. "It makes it more exciting."



Palisadian Dave Wakeling and his band The English Beat will headline the Fourth of July concert in the Palisades High stadium.

The singer is looking forward to playing an open-air concert, because the sound is better: "Not a lot of echoes flying around."

Often Wakeling is out of town on the Fourth, but he does remember one particular parade when he was the "water boy" for a group of Marquez cheerleaders. His job was to walk behind the girls and carry water for them.

"Moms were worried that the girls wouldn't have enough water, but they drank so much they were overhydrated," he remembers. "Nearing the end of the parade, they had to go to the bathroom. There was a lot of jumping up and down and it had nothing to do with cheerleading."

Wakeling also remembers coming to the Palisades fireworks show in

the late 1980s with a friend, C.D. Taylor, a video maker, shortly after moving to Hollywood from England.

"I used to take a drive on the weekends on Sunset all the way to the beach," Wakeling said. "When I drove through the Palisades it reminded me of a book that I read when I was little called 'Look and Learn.'"

"In the book, the streets were really clean and the people were smiling and happy and the firefighters were waving. Every time I drove through town I said, 'It's the 'Look and Learn' village.'"

Gates open at 6 p.m., the Palisades High School Concert Band kicks off the show at 6:30 p.m., Donovan and Randy take the stage at 7:15 p.m., and The English Beat performs at 8 p.m.