

Ballroom Thieves bring free-spirited creativity to festival

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Correspondent

When a member of a trio admits he is “infatuated with the cello and bagpipes,” another confesses to minor pilfering “but I’m over that now,” and a third rebelled at the “snooty auditions for a famous conservatory,” you know the group has to be eclectic and free-spirited. That’s exactly what the Ballroom Thieves brought to Sisters: a blend of incredible lyrics, a myriad of acoustic styles and their own ideas about convention.

Martin Early and Devin Mauch were friends and fellow musicians in college. They played together for a few years with limited success before finding an incredible cellist, Calin Peters, at an open mike. In 2013, they formed Ballroom Thieves and began a journey to create music that mirrors their travels and relationships.

Guitarist Martin Early

writes most of their music. Early’s songs will make you want to grab your iPad and begin searching for the lyrics. Like a polished poem, his words evoke layers of emotions and images and form a resonance between fantasy and reality.

I will not lose, and I will not fail

I whisper to no one as another ship sails

I was more than convinced I’d convinced you to change

So I stood, and I waited

And I dug my own grave

“Bullet” by Martin Early

“Our own personal growth and explorations in songwriting and musicianship caused us to end up in this unique spot where we can generally feel free to be who we are at all times,” says Early.

With his long brown hair and beard, Devin Mauch, the trio’s percussionist, looks like a portrait of Jesus with tattoos. Mauch created his unique style of drumming in college more from necessity

(a severe lack of space and money) than from an artist pursuit. He’s crafted together a sound that works with their distinctive style using a snare drum, a tom drum and a djembe, a rope-tuned skin-covered goblet drum that he plays with his feet. The creative energy Mauch brings to the process and the purity of Early’s lyrics takes their music to an even deeper complexity.

Calin Peters adds a deeper dimension to their sound. She began playing the cello at age ten and was pushed toward classical orchestra by her teachers and mentors who recognized her extraordinary talent for this instrument.

“I loved the cello from day one, but I could never see myself following tradition and striving for that first chair position,” Peters said. “I wanted to play by ear, to feel what the cello could do, to experience a higher range of cello sounds. This was unheard-of by most of the



PHOTO BY LYNN WOODWARD

Ballroom Thieves brought their eclectic musical tastes and free spirit to several stages at Sisters Folk Festival.

prestigious conservatories. I hated the entire audition process that was required and found myself feeling sick and anxious before an audition.”

Peters found a home in the music department at UC Berkley where she was able to “incorporate my love and passion into my playing without the judgment.”

The Ballroom Thieves’

journey has only just begun, but their minimalist foundation and solid knowledge of music and who they are makes this journey one of growth and exploring the limitless boundaries of music. Their latest album, *A Wolf in the Doorway*, documents this growth and will make the listener crave for more.

Fest helps families discover nature

The Children’s Forest of Central Oregon invites families to explore new ways to connect with the outdoors at the inaugural Discover Nature Festival.

With more than 30 fun, nature-based activities, the festival offers children and families the opportunity to enjoy time outside together, while engaging in hands-on activities, games, and more. The free event is September 26, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Riverfront Park in Bend.

There will be something fun and engaging for everyone – whether they are active and athletic, curious about the natural world, or want to get their hands dirty making art. Activities range from fly fishing and archery, to fort building and the firefighter challenge, to live birds of prey and storytime in the teepee.

The festival is also a way to learn more about Children’s Forest of Central Oregon, which inspires youth to lead healthy lives and be stewards of public lands through connections with nature.

For more information on the Discover Nature Festival, visit <http://childrensforestco.org>.

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