

CONCERT: Show is first in series presented by Sisters Folk Festival*Continued from page 3*

“Paradise” follows the band’s acclaimed 2013 release, “The Muse,” which was recorded almost entirely live around a tree of microphones in Zac Brown’s Southern Ground studio. Hailed previously by the *New York Times* for their “gripping” vocals, and by the *LA Times* for their “taught musicianship,” the live setting proved to be a remarkable showcase for the brothers’ live chemistry and charismatic magnetism.

Taking a different approach to their sixth studio album, *Paradise* was recorded at Dan Auerbach’s Easy Eye studio in Nashville. The decision to record in Nashville was no coincidence, as *Paradise* marks the first album written with the entire band living in Music City.

Advance prices for individual tickets are \$25; if available, individual show tickets are \$5 more at the door. Tickets can be purchased online at www.sistersfolkfestival.org/tickets or by calling 541-549-4979. Series passes are \$60 for adults and \$40 for youth 18 and under.

That series continues on Saturday, February 27, with Bumper Jacksons, from Washington, DC. Folding sounds of jazz, early blues, old-time music, and country swing into an exhilarating repertoire of modern American roots music, the DC-based band has brought a hard-driving party energy to countless dance floors.

Concluding the series is Massachusetts-based quartet Darlingside on Thursday, March 10. After two successful years as the fan favorite at the sold-out Sisters Folk Festival, SFF decided to bring them back for the third show of the series.

For more information on the 2016 Sisters Folk Festival Winter Concert Series visit sistersfolkfestival.org/winter-concert-series.

Armed takeover puts feds in tough spot

By Gene Johnson
Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — The armed takeover of a remote Oregon nature preserve has put federal officials in a tough spot: Should they confront the occupiers or lay off, given that the public faces no imminent harm?

The former risks bloodshed. The latter risks emboldening anti-government groups and possibly giving the impression that authorities treat the white armed anti-government activists with more deference than, say, young black men in the city.

A look at some of the key issues surrounding the federal response to the takeover at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge south of Burns, Oregon:

Race and religion

About 20 people are occupying the refuge in the frigid high desert to protest the prison sentences of two ranchers who set fire to federal land. They want the property turned over to local authorities so people can use it free of U.S. oversight.

President Barack Obama said Monday that federal authorities were monitoring the situation, but agents made no apparent moves to surround the property or confront the group — an approach that reflected lessons learned from bloody standoffs at Ruby Ridge, Idaho, and Waco, Texas, in the early 1990s.

But it also prompted complaints from many observers who suggested the government’s response would have been swifter and more severe had the occupants been Muslim or other minorities.

“Every time something like this occurs, we use the phrase, ‘If a Muslim had done it,’ and we imagine the completely different response that would follow,” said Ibrahim

Hooper, spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations. “You don’t have to stretch your imagination to come up with a different scenario if these weren’t white Christians.”

“There seems to be somewhat of a reluctance to think white people are as dangerous as people of color,” said Heidi Beirich, director of the Intelligence Project at the Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate groups.

But other observers suggested that from a tactical standpoint, the government’s cautious response would make sense no matter who was holed up in the government building in the reserve.

“These guys are out in the middle of nowhere, and they haven’t threatened anybody that I know of,” said Jim Glennon, a longtime police commander who now owns the Illinois-based law enforcement training organization Calibre Press. “There’s no hurry. If there’s not an immediate threat to anyone’s life, why create a situation where there would be?”

Instead, he and others expected the FBI to use a negotiator to try to persuade the group to leave peacefully.

Anti-government momentum

Among those leading the occupiers was Ammon Bundy, the son of Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy. The elder Bundy made headlines in 2014, when hundreds of armed anti-government activists rallied to his defense after federal authorities started seizing his cattle over more than \$1 million in unpaid grazing fees.

In Cliven Bundy’s case, federal authorities and Las Vegas police retreated and let him have his cattle back rather than escalate the confrontation. While officials have said that federal

authorities are investigating, no one has been charged with a crime, even though authorities said some of those involved had trained their weapons on police. The FBI declined to comment Monday.

The Southern Poverty Law Center was quick to say that the failure to hold anyone accountable was a major victory that emboldened anti-government groups around the country and led directly to the situation in Oregon.

“They got away with something pretty serious,” Beirich said. “You have a bunch of emboldened people who think weapons can be used to settle their disputes with the federal government.”

Michael Barkun, an emeritus professor at Syracuse University who has studied extremist groups, agreed that not confronting the Oregon group could embolden others. On the other hand, however, some extremists crave such a fight.

“You can say, well, a negotiated settlement emboldens them,” he said. “But by the same token it deprives them of a confrontation that some of them want.”

Terrorism or trespassing?

Some people took their criticisms a step further, arguing that if a radical Muslim group had seized the property, many would call it terrorism. But John McKay, the former top federal prosecutor in

western Washington and now a professor of national security law at Seattle University, did not see it that way. The federal definition of terrorism requires an act “dangerous to human life” that appears intended to intimidate civilians or influence government policy.

“I’m not sure what the terrorism is. I don’t see a violent act,” he said. “They’re trespassing and trying to change policy.”

Wayne State University law professor Peter J. Henning said their actions more closely meet the definition of sedition, which includes conspiring to overthrow the U.S. government, oppose it by force or seize its property. Sedition charges are typically reserved for the most severe cases, he noted, including that of Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, the “blind Muslim cleric” who was linked to the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. The sedition charge was for a plot to attack the United Nations and other landmarks.

In 2010, the Justice Department brought sedition charges against members of the Hutaree militia in Michigan, alleging that they planned to kill a police officer and then attack those who attended the funeral. A judge dismissed those charges, saying the evidence did not prove a concrete plan to oppose the authority of the federal government by force.

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