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Tonight, May 20 • hard rock

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\$5 at the door • Doors 9:00 p.m. • Showtime 9:30 p.m.

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folk fest '94

Walker Ryan returns to festival

Self-proclaimed country blues musician Walker Ryan is returning for his sixth year at the Willamette Valley Folk Festival. He will play on Saturday at 5 p.m. on the EMU East Lawn.

Ryan has opened for groups from Steppenwolf to John Sebastian. His music has its roots in the deep southern gospels of the Mississippi River delta. The southern gospel music is, according to Ryan, "the spiritual core of the music I make," though stylistically his music is a mixture of several different types, including country, folk, blues and gospel.

During his performances, Ryan makes it a point to tell his audience about the history of the music he plays, giving credit to the southern musicians of the 1920s and 1930s who pioneered the music. "I really make a point of honoring where this music came from, because it is important to know," said Ryan. "I make a point of honoring my teachers."

Ryan's performances, along with personal tales and stories about the background of the music, include spontaneity and improvisation. "I never play the same way twice," said Ryan.

According to Ryan, he began playing 30 years ago to "survive adolescence." Growing up during the "folk scare of the sixties," Ryan was deeply touched by the blues and folk music he heard. He used his music as both an escape and a survival tool during his teen-age years.

A "generic west coast" native,



COURTESY PHOTO

Walker Ryan, who began playing music 30 years ago to "survive adolescence," will play his sixth Willamette Valley Folk Festival.

Ryan has played at folk and blues festivals all over the west. He's returned to the Willamette Valley Folk Festival six years in a row because that's how long he's been living in Eugene. He has called Eugene home for longer than anywhere else in his life,

and he "enjoys playing for neighbors."

Although he says playing in Eugene is part of enjoying community life, he mainly just enjoys playing. "The bottom line is I have a great time," he said.

— Natasha Shepard

Storytellers to share examples of historic tales

Mark Twain did it. So did Beowulf, Chaucer, and Henry James. Shakespeare did it more than once but Walt Disney, if not the most famous for it, is the most brazen.

Folk tales are one of the oldest artifacts of a shared history that humans possess. Passed down from generation to generation, the stories recur in literature and movies. Yet, while the collected versions may be the most memorable examples, the tales were intended to be told orally.

As part of the three-day Willamette Valley Folk Festival, local storytellers Bob Rubinstein and Jeff Defty will tell ethnic folk tales from around the world in their traditional form.

"Folk tales have survived because they reveal lessons and a philosophy of life," explained Ruben-

stein. Scheduled to perform on Saturday, May 21 at noon on the EMU East Lawn, Rubinstein is planning to tell a Jewish and Indian tale for the festival. "People throughout the world have the same fears and the same values but they take different forms," he said. "The stories provide guidance on how to make life's choices."

Indeed, the resemblance between stories throughout the world is startling. While the most famous example of collected folk tales is the Brothers' Grimm's *Household Stories* which was first published in 1812, some of the same narrative elements have recurred in cultures without any contact with Western Europe. Defty will recite one of these common themes at

Turn to STORIES, Page 12B

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