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music BY BRETT CAMPBELL

Alasdair Fraser and
Natalie Haas,
May 15, Shedd.



Folkier Forays

Fraser, Haas light up Shedd.

After bringing us the most exciting month of jazz in Eugene's history, the Oregon Festival of American Music now inclines in a folkier direction. On Saturday, May 15, the great Scots fiddler **Alasdair Fraser** returns, this time with cellist **Natalie Haas**. Although we mostly think of the cello as a classical instrument (and Yo Yo Ma's appearance here the night before bolsters that claim), it once supplied the rhythm in Scottish dance bands, much like a string bass in other folk music.

Haas, a student of the great classical/new music cellist Fred Sherry, does much more than lay down a dance beat — she turns the warmer-toned instrument into a full partner for Fraser's buoyant fiddling.

One of folk's most charismatic and audience-friendly performers, Fraser enchants listeners way beyond the hardcore Celtic music fans (that's his haunting fiddle on the theme to KLCC's "Mist Covered Mountain" show), and this show is warmly recommended to anyone who likes a good tune or a good dance or both.

The Shedd hosts another prominent folk duo, **Jay Ungar** and **Molly Mason**, on Saturday, May 22. Ungar's "Ahshokan Farewell" was inescapable during PBS's presentation of Ken Burns' "The Civil War" a few years back, but the duo's coffeehouse credibility stretches way beyond that unexpected crossover hit; they play and teach most American traditional music styles, including Appalachian, country and swing. This concert will also feature them on mandolin, guitar, banjo and piano.

Fretboard fans will also want to be at Café Paradiso this Thursday, May 13, when the great guitarist **Adrian Legg** makes his latest visit to Eugene. The experts have voted Legg best acoustic guitarist so many times in so many polls that his finger-picking virtuosity is beyond question. But he's also a splendid composer, teacher and raconteur whose wit is as quick as his fingers. Traversing folk, jazz, classical and other idioms, Legg's music delights a whole range of listeners, not just guitar nerds.

A slew of fine music from beyond American borders infiltrates our town this month, too. On Friday, May 21, the WOW Hall brings the Afrobeat sound of **Albino** to town. Composed of members of the bands of Fela Kuti, Spearhead, Sonny Okusun, and

other world beat ensembles, the Berkeley-based big band channels the effervescent, revolutionary sounds of Fela Kuti. They're joined by another fine world music fusion group, **Tarka**, whose violin, mandolin and polypercussion should make this a colorful, danceable evening.

On May 14, Cozmic Pizza hosts the Balkan ensemble **Trio Slavej**, featuring the great Bulgarian multi-instrumentalist (keyboard, flutes, accordion, tambura) Kalin Kirilov along with UO professors Mark Levy (clarinet, bagpipes) and Carol Silverman (vocals), performing Roma (gypsy) and other tangy music from Eastern Europe.

The classical season — as well as the **Eugene Symphony's** Beethoven Symphony cycle — draws to a fabulous finale on Thursday, May 20 when the orchestra performs the master's alpha and omega — his first and final symphonic statements. Symphony #1 is, not surprisingly, reminiscent of Beethoven's teacher, Haydn, yet already shows signs of breaking classical boundaries. The glorious Ninth has, of course, become the embodiment of European unity (played at the fall of the Berlin Wall) and symphonic grandeur, which makes it easy to forget how revolutionary its innovations were.

If you've never heard it, by all means, go. But even if you've heard it too often, try this concert, because music director Giancarlo Guerrero's use of new editions of Beethoven's scores has brought a leaner, lithier, fleeter feel to these warhorses, revivifying them while bringing them closer to the composer's intentions. And the ESO has proved up to the challenge.

Meanwhile, for a taste of today's cutting edge, classically inspired sounds, try the UO's Beall Hall. On Monday, May 17, the **Oregon Percussion Ensemble** plays a couple of large-ensemble pieces — "Diabolic Variations" by Raymond Helble, and "Duo Chopinesque" by Michael Hennagin, along with works for solo marimba and quartet. You never know what kind of extra-musical hijinks these brash players will pull, but their concerts are always worth hearing for the music alone.

And on Tuesday, May 25, the UO's always-rewarding **100th Monkey Ensemble** plays contemporary West Coast avant garde music in a free concert. **EW**

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