

McKenzie Arts Festival

September 3 & 4 - 10am-5pm
Tokatee Golf Club
Milepost 47 McKenzie Hwy (126) East

www.mckenzieartsfestival.com

Wine tasting - Live music - Demonstrations
Hands-on art activities
Breathtaking views of the Three Sisters mountains

music BY BRETT CAMPBELL

Mamou Playboys



Music Alfresco

Afro Latin Jazz, Cajun & Honky Tonk at the Cuthbert.

The Cuthbert Amphitheater in Alton Baker Park may be an underused community asset, but this month, at least, it offers a trifecta of varied opportunities for music under blue skies and then stars. Thanks to our western Oregon climate, we won't get that many other opportunities this year for open-air music, so you might want to grab at least one of these while you can.

This Thursday, Sept. 1, the energetic Nashville-based honky-tonk trio **Trick Pony** rides into the Cuthbert. The band has picked up a number of country music awards — and a reputation as wild stage and bar-room performers — since forming in 1996. The sassy vocals and stage antics of lead singer Heidi Newfield snatch the most attention, and the band's raucous sound is firmly rooted in retro-honky tonk and '70s outlaw country styles, complete with clever and often funny lyrics about the usual suspects: whiskey, cheating, cowboys, etc. They're no purists, though, spicing up their basic sound with various other flavors, collaborating with Hootie & the Blowfish and opening for Kid Rock as well as Hank Williams Jr.

That show is sponsored by the Shedd Institute (formerly the Oregon Festival of American Music), which has presented most of the best concerts at the Cuthbert over the last few years. On Friday, Sept. 9, the Shedd brings **Steve Riley and the Mamou Playboys** to the Cuthbert. Early in his career, Riley, who played accordion in Cajun legend Dewey Balfa's band (it doesn't get more authentic than that) was considered the great young hope of Cajun music, sticking respectfully close to the traditional Louisiana sound (fiddles, guitar, plaintive vocals, gumbo, crawfish, French lyrics, dance tunes) and proving he could keep the tradition vital. Then he started writing his own material, bringing in diverse influences from swamp rock to zydeco and ranging even farther afield. Now, 16 years on, the Mamou Playboys are the hottest thing in Cajun music, with a sound that draws a lot more younger listeners than their elders, such as BeauSoleil. And live, they're said to burn like the cayenne peppers in Louisiana hot sauce. Should be a great outdoor concert, and one of the best of the summer. If you can only make one Cuthbert show, this is it.

The third Cuthbert event happens that same weekend, on Sunday, Sept. 11, when Lincoln Center's **Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra** brings its danceable rhythms to the bend in the river. You could say that all jazz is Afro-Latin, as its origins trace back to the confluence of African and Caribbean influences bubbling through New Orleans early in the 20th century. Over the years, successive waves of immigrants recharged jazz with Latin influences, from Cuba's Mario Bauza with the orchestras of Fletcher Henderson and Cab Calloway in the '30s to Chano Pozo in Dizzy Gillespie's famed 1940s group and up to modern masters like Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Paquito D'Rivera and Chico O'Farrill, sire of the ALJO's music director and pianist, Arturo. The all-stars in the ALJO channel that irresistible driving beat into a gleaming, pulsating big band sound that should have the Cuthbert crowds dancing along.

There is plenty of attractive indoor music this month, and several of the best shows happen at Cozmic Pizza. On Thursday, Sept. 8, yet another superb pair of musicians from Zimbabwe, **Fradreck and Fungai Mujuru**, will play music of the Shona people on their homemade mbiras, the metal harp-like instruments in gourd resonators that play interlocking, shimmering streams of music, accompanied by gourd rattle and vocals. Eugene is spoiled for Zimbabwean music, thanks to the local Kutsinhira Center and the local and African musicians it brings to local stages, but the Mujuru family's musical accomplishments go back for generations, and though they've toured the U.S. often, this will be their first local appearance. On Friday, Sept. 9, Eugene favorites **Taarka** return — sort of. This multi-genre instrumental band appears in a different incarnation almost every time it plays here; this time, it features compositions by David and Enion Tiller, played on guitar, fiddle, keyboards, percussion and bass. The ensemble's stew of jazz and funk, Afro-Cuban, Gypsy, Celtic, Middle Eastern and classical influences is hard to describe; they call it "Seismic Gypsy Hypno-Jazz," but whatever they play, they're always worth hearing. The next night, Saturday, Sept. 10, features Brazilian music with **Calango** and **Sun Bossa**. **EW**



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