



Going to the Country

44TH ANNUAL OREGON COUNTRY FAIR OFFERS ECLECTIC MUSIC MIX BY WILLIAM KENNEDY

Oregon Country Fair time in Eugene: When the most urbane townies listen to Pavement at home, drink our drinks downtown, check our well-coiffed reflections and reconsider moving to Brooklyn. But for better or worse, OCF is a central part to loving life in the Eug. And amid all the fervor and hoopla surrounding Fair, it's easy to forget the event is a venerable and respected (hippie-centric) music fest; this year the entertainment lineup for the 44th Annual OCF is full of some pleasant surprises, old friends and just enough '60s revivalism to please the old-time Fair faithful.

Appearing on 17 stages (with names ranging from WC Fields Stage to Morningwood Odditorium to Monkey Palace) is an eclectic bunch of acts ranging from the avant-bluegrass sounds of Portland's Black Prairie (featuring members of The Decemberists) to the Northwest's most-beloved hollerin' accordionist Jason Webley — in all his scruffy glory.

On Friday, July 12, the Fair's Main Stage features Vida Girls, Portland's sister-powered Shook Twins and legendary jam-rockers Jambay. On Saturday: singer-songwriter Tracy Grammer, jamgrass icons Poor Man's Whiskey (known for their bluegrass interpretation of

Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon*), female blues-rock powerhouse Carolyn Wonderland and L.A.-based funkmeisters, Orgone. Sunday promises '60s icon Peter Yarrow (Peter, Paul and Mary), Black Prairie, The Motet and Rootz Underground.

Elsewhere, amongst the jugglers, acrobats and variety acts, you'll find notable tunes on the Monkey Palace Stage. Friday offers Eugene-based Marimba ensemble Kudana, Webley and local brassy funk-hoppers Beat Crunchers. Look out Sunday for Portland's much loved high-school-pep-band-meets-hipster-freak-show MarchFourth Marching Band.

Friday on the Kesey Stage: "Pedal powered Appalachian jug grass" from The Conjugal Visitors, Joanne Rand on Saturday and local up-and-coming jam band Blue Lotus on Sunday. Reggae/hip-hop outfit Alcyon Massive headlines the Front Porch on both Friday and Sunday; Gypsy-jazzbos Taarka appear Friday on the Shady Grove Stage; master steel guitar-slinger Scott Law performs on Shady Grove Saturday along with local acoustic troubadours Brian Cutean and John Shipe.

If you'd prefer to wander the fairgrounds instead of committing to one stage or another, OCF still has plenty of sounds to offer. While browsing the crafts and food booths, keep an ear out for: My Father's Ghost, a Eugene-based '70s influenced pop group; local fiddle-player Chip Cohen; New Zealand's Mudwood and the "sizzling political piano" of Jonny Hahn.

To sample any of these sounds or to get complete entertainment listings, head to oregoncountryfair.org. The 44th Annual Oregon Country Fair is July 12 through 14 in Veneta; tickets available at all TicketsWest outlets. ■



Rock Medicine

WHITE BIRD'S MEDICAL EXPERTISE MAKES THE FAIR SAFE BY RICK LEVIN

Even in Utopia, shit happens. Take, for instance, the Oregon Country Fair, that vaunted Northwest gathering of boho spirits and fandango ogles, where the freak flag is flown as a testament to some netherworld normalcy. Even here, at peace-loving OCF, where the '60s spirit of freedom, expression and communal OK-ness reigns in benevolent wooded anarchy, it might happen that you step on a bumblebee, sprain an ankle or suffer some kind of respiratory distress. It's all fun and games until you forget your insulin.

Enter Rock Medicine, the festival wing of White Bird Clinic that brings its medical and social services to the carnival atmosphere of the Fair. A nonprofit human services agency based in Eugene, White Bird has been a presence at

Oregon Country Fair for the past 43 years. Essentially, White Bird and OCF have grown up together as "stepchildren of the '60s," Clinic Coordinator Chuck Gerard says.

"It had to do with the '60s and what was going on contextually at the time, the spirit of the community and in our case, trying to address some social issues," Gerard says, noting that what started back in the day as first aid response has grown to a fully staffed and efficient hospital and ER facility. "We're pretty wired in," he adds.

White Bird has established close ties with such agencies as Lane Rural and Fire District One, Eugene EMS and Central Lane Communications, which runs 911 response. Bringing in a volunteer staff of 160 or so workers before, during and after the fair, White Bird's Rock Medicine wing runs the central hospital by the Main Stage as well as an

outpost by the Fair's front booth. There are also as many as five roving response teams out working the crowds at any one time, people capable of handling what Gerard calls "either side of the issue," be it medical or mental.

"Often if there's an incident, other people are affected," Gerard points out, noting that crews are trained to handle everything from freak-outs to foot problems. "Anything from minor care to full emergency response to transport to the hospital," is how Gerard puts it.

The Fair is one of White Bird's biggest fundraisers of the year, and here's how it works: The organization charges OCF for its services, but because everyone on staff volunteers their time, that money goes to fund White Bird's work throughout the community for the rest of the year. "The staff loves the work, loves the Fair and loves the idea that we're contributing to White Bird operations for the year," Gerard says.

"White Bird and Country Fair are all about intentional community," he goes on. "It means a lot to us. We think the fair is how we should be living, out on the land with just handmade things, where health care is a right, not a privilege." ■