



STAGE HAND

Local and Northwest bands flock to celebrate Block Party

BY SILAS VALENTINO AND LAUREN MESSMAN

BLACK BEAST REVIVAL

Like any good block party, the Whiteaker Block Party has much to satisfy the aural senses — perhaps too much for one person to make sense of, and thus here are some (stage) handy picks to check out on this wet, hot American summer day and night. But be a good community member and check out all the stages — Blair Alley, Slash and Burn, Hostel, Uncle Brad’s Secret Stage, Territorial — and get to know your neighbors.

G-SPOT STAGE

WBP will kick off the day with a nod to its roots. Singer-songwriter **Jesse Meade** has been a key component of the celebration on and off the stage since he moved in with fellow WBP performer Girin Guha six years ago. A master of iconic Mississippi blues guitarist John Hurt’s fingerpicking method, Meade blends earnest lyrics, traditional blues and hints of country into a style all his own. Catch him at 2 pm.

According to bassist Eli Copeland, the groovy territory of **Inner Limits** is a space where heady jazz connoisseurs and metal heads are known to set aside their differences and dance. “It’s not something that you can put in a box,”

he says of the funky foursome’s multidimensional sound. Inner Limits will embark on a quest to get your toes tapping to its improvisational jazz-fusion funk stylings at 5 pm.

Finishing off the night is another local band ready to unleash rock ‘n’ roll fury upon this town. **Cash Only** combines elements of rockabilly, surf rock and punk into a musical concoction that resembles The Cramps and Reverend Horton Heat. Their neighborhood ode, “Whiteaker Bumps,” rolls on like a hearse en route to hell; the chorus drone of “Why can’t you give me the Whiteaker bumps” will ring like a true swan song for the night. Cash Only plays at 9:30 pm.

NINKASI PATIO STAGE

Quirky jazz folk group **Hot Milk** came together at the UO because of mutual love for the way jazz fluidly moves without constraints. Lead singer Rebecca Conner’s enchanting voice surges through masterfully syncopated instrumentation, creating a warm, dreamlike experience. This must-see group kicks off at noon.

“I’m ready to party and rock out,” says Eric James, lead singer of the Bellingham, Wash., rockers **Black Beast**

Revival. BBR had a successful year since it played at WBP last year. With an EP released, a vinyl record out and a six-week tour of the West completed, BBR can’t wait to return to Eugene. “It’s seriously one of the best times I’ve ever had,” James says. Catch BBR at 6 pm.

Prepare for a truly electric performance from Portland-based sister act **Acoustic Minds**. Twins Amanda and Jenni Price lay soulful harmonies over producer and keyboardist Aaron Altemose’s expertly blended synth-pop tracks and Josh Lorenzen’s spacey bass beats. “We are trying to bring live what happens behind the turntables,” Jenni Price says. With an album on deck and new dance pop single “Love Somebody” generating buzz, Acoustic Minds will be blowing minds at 7:30 pm.

CORNERSTONE STAGE

Volifonix is the Willamette Valley’s answer to psychedelic funk. *EW*’s 2012 Next Big Thing winner plays with funky riffs, pounding drums and sexy sax; like a college freshman, these guys are more than excited to experiment. You can prep for the quintet by chilling out to the band’s 2012 sophomore album *Space*. Volifonix hits the stage at 4:30 pm. ■

ORAL TRADITIONS

The Spoken Word Stage rings in its sophomore year BY ANDY VALENTINE

Before books and magazines, newspapers and scrolls, e-readers, tablets, tabloids and texts, the spoken word reigned supreme. The oral tradition still exists in many forms, in almost all cultures, so it’s only fitting that our seven-year tradition, the Whiteaker Block Party, should collide with one so formidable.

The stage kicks off at 3 pm with local poetry — an art form best enjoyed when read aloud — and as the day draws on the boards are home to a feast of different orators ready to give it their all, among them comedians, singers, storytellers and special entertainers. Last year the stage was

quiet and secluded, a perfect oasis from the heavy-hitting temperatures of that day, and this year will be no different, but there is one draw to this year’s line up that makes the Spoken Word Stage particularly inviting: a chance to hold the mic in your hand.

Beginning after the poets, at 4:30 pm, the open mic and variety show is destined for greatness, with all of Eugene’s wacky, riveting (and perhaps drunken) mouths running off in all directions. David Priest, the stage facilitator, is a man who keeps his vision for the Spoken Word Stage apparent: Fun is priority number one. So don’t be shy, folks. If you’ve got a short story, anecdote, Gregorian chant, Christopher

Walken impression, talent for throat singing or a cache of jokes (I’m looking at you, Frog Miller), then get your ass to the Spoken Word Stage and give the public something to talk about.

When all is said and done, there’s rumors of karaoke, and what better way to show that you can scream into a microphone than that, right? If the karaoke happens, it’ll be at 7:30 pm, and you can wind down the evening and bring on the night.

The Spoken Word Stage is a growing entity unto itself, and may it become a tradition of traditions, a synecdochic high-five for the oratorical gods. And hey, the stage’s format may be loose-lipped — it may be down right nonsensical — but, Priest says, “I know the schedule isn’t very specific, but I like it that way.” ■

For more info on the Spoken Word Stage, visit wkly.ws/liq. There are still slots available if you have a prepared act that stretches beyond the bounds of open mic-dom.