



TAÍNA ASILI (CENTER) WITH
LA BANDA REBELDE

LOUD AND PROUD

OUT/LOUD Queer and Trans Women's Music Festival celebrates its 16th year

The battle for gender-inclusive spaces is in the white-hot spotlight recently, notably from backlash pertaining to the passage of transgender exclusionary bills such as North Carolina's restriction on public restroom use in accordance with the sex assigned on a person's birth certificate.

The need for gender-inclusivity in spaces like public restrooms and locker rooms is obvious to many, though the importance of inclusive creative and social spaces, like festivals and concert venues, is often overlooked.

This is an issue the ASUO Women's Center has continuously addressed over the years through its queer and trans women's music festival, OUT/LOUD, which celebrates its 16th year Friday, May 20, at the University of Oregon Memorial Quad.

Along with hosting a variety of musical artists on the LGBTQA spectrum, OUT/LOUD is an inclusive, safe space with no cover charges and no age restrictions. The festival is also working with university police to offer after-hours access to Prince Lucien Campbell Hall, a building on the quad that has gender-neutral, single-stall restrooms.

The festival's setup will include one outdoor stage at the Memorial Quad with a variety of seating, tables and options for covered areas.

"I think it's important to have these inclusive creative spaces because there's a lot of negative out there," says

Suzie Barrientos, ASUO Women's Center public relations coordinator. "It's a chance to come together and heal and have solidarity in a way that's uplifting, and in a way we often don't see in the media."

OUT/LOUD tries to ignite an inclusiveness that Barrientos says is seriously lacking in the music industry. "Queer and trans artists need more visibility," Barrientos says. "The music industry needs to make a more conscious effort to include them and pay them for their work."

OUT/LOUD is hosting a diverse set of artists in order to achieve this. Artists include locals like former UO student Mischief Mistress Jane, who will be performing an EDM set, and melodic Portland singer-storyteller Nikole Potulsky. There will be touring acts as well, like Boston-based trans and genderqueer "riot-folk" artist Evan Greer, and Taína Asili, a New York-based Puerto Rican singer-songwriter and bandleader of La Banda Rebelde.

This year will be Asili's fourth time performing at OUT/LOUD, a festival whose long-running consistency of diverse lineups has been meaningful to her.

"I have always been impressed with the lineup of LGBTQ-identified artists around the country that come together," Asili says. "They're all representing social change, liberation, queer identity and trans identity through the voice of music, which I think is very special and powerful."

For Asili, events like OUT/LOUD are a way for marginalized people to connect.

"I think that if there weren't spaces like OUT/LOUD, the work that I do about my identity or politics wouldn't have the same reach," Asili says. "I wouldn't be able to find my people and have my people find me."

She adds: "The more that we can create these openly inclusive spaces, the more profound art will be accessible to more people." ■

OUT/LOUD runs 7 pm to midnight Friday, May 20, at the UO Memorial Quad; free, all-ages. A 21-plus after party will follow at The Wayward Lamb.

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