

FOLKS CUT A RUG AT THE DANCE PAVILION



YOU SHOULD BE DANCING

New pavilion invites Fair-goers to take off their shoes and shake it up



As you're cruising around the loops at the Oregon Country Fair, be sure to stop by the new Dance Pavilion, featuring movement performances and workshops for all.

"The dance space is for the exploration of dance and the movement arts," says volunteer

site coordinator Shawn Kahl.

The Dance Pavilion stage and an adjacent outdoor studio, the "WorkIt Shop," have concurrent but separate programming throughout the weekend. Both areas welcome and encourage participation.

"We've adopted a unique format for many of our performance times," Kahl says, noting that the spaces "fuse together an instruction-and-participation model,

which allows for learning as well as fun socialized dancing opportunities."

A committee, which reviewed the myriad applications, has selected the performers and teachers for the Dance Pavilion.

"We've intentionally featured many dance styles from around the world in an effort to include international communities," Kahl says, "and things are structured in a way that is inclusive to all participants."

This year's offerings include a variety of dance styles and forms, including yoga, belly dance, contact improvisation, African dance and Bhangra. There's something for everyone.

"We're also co-programming the Dance Pavilion and WorkIt Shop stages to have more cross-pollination," Kahl says.

The Connexus Dance Collective, for example — a

group that holds social partner dance lessons at the Dance Pavilion — also offers workshops at the WorkIt stage on "consent on and off the dance floor."

"We have this type of relationship with several of our performers, with the intent being to offer a smaller, workshop-based opportunity to learn more about a particular style related to a larger performance on the Dance Pavilion," Kahl says.

The Dance Pavilion (and the entire new area, formerly known as Crafts Lot and now permanently named Xavanadu) was developed over a period of years "and has essentially been a vision of the Fair leadership for decades," Kahl asserts.

The Dance Pavilion construction came together last year and is quite impressive, with a large metal frame covered with tent, a bandstand for live music and a 2,600 square-foot hardwood dance floor surrounded by audience seating. The WorkIt shop stage also has a tent covering and serves as a smaller, more intimate venue for workshops and classes.

"As the Dance Pavilion grows, I have a vision of making the program a destination for dancers, not just a stop-off for people who happen to wander by the Dance Pavilion during their time at the Fair," Kahl explains.

Wanna check it out? Instructors just ask that participants show up on time and participate for the duration of the themed session.

"We've broken up the program into short (50 minute) sessions to allow for folks to have a full OCF experience without being tied up at the Dance Pavilion, and also to allow for a greater diversity of programming throughout the weekend," Kahl says.

"We are looking to get people on the dance floor," he adds, "connecting with each other as much as possible." — Rachael Carnes