

APPETITE FOR DECEPTION



FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK

Revisit some of your favorite bands from the '80s at Harefest music festival in Canby

If the dream of the '90s is alive in Portland, the dream of the '80s lives happily in Canby — at least for two days in July during Harefest, a tribute-band music festival — and that's partially thanks to Jason Fellman.

Fellman says he's "sort of the Oregon tribute-band guy." He works as a promoter for multiple local tribute bands, and plays in one himself: He's the drummer for Stone In Love, a Portland-based Journey tribute act, and it was partly his love for tribute bands that brought forth the creation of Harefest.

Fellman and his band had been playing regularly at the

Wild Hare Saloon during Canby high school reunions, and their shows consistently drew more than 100 people. So, he says, he and Wild Hare Saloon owner Joan Monen hatched a plan. "We thought, 'What if we put this out in the parking lot and made a tent?'"

And thus, in 2010, Harefest was born. A play-on-words between Wild Hare Saloon's name and the "hair metal" genre a lot of its bands play, Harefest had 600 people attending its first year. Last year, it had about 6,000. This year, Fellman says, "if it doesn't sell out, it's going to be right up to the limit."

The 21-and-over, two-day festival has since moved out of Wild Hare Saloon's parking lot about 2.5 miles west into the 40-plus acre Pat's Acres Racing Complex, which includes space for those who want to camp in tents or RVs. That extra space also accommodates a variety of food vendors out at the festival.

Harefest hosts bands covering the likes of AC/DC, Guns N' Roses, Motley Crue, Poison, Beastie Boys and others. "It's a lineup you wouldn't have seen in reality," says Fellman. "The concept is simple — if you like these bands, you're going to have a great time."

This year's full roster consists of 18 acts, with most of the bands coming from Oregon and a few from Washington and Canada. "The heart of the event is very much local," Fellman says. "I sort of shepherd a large tribute scene up here, so it's the cornerstone event for all of these bands to play in one place at one time."

The overlapping tribute band fan bases tend to know each other, Fellman says, and because of that Harefest has a very familial vibe. The festival is like a "summer camp for adults," he says. "As promoters you want to talk about music and production but a big part of why people love it so much is that everyone is really nice."

But the bands are no joke, Fellman says. "Tribute bands have an interesting burden that people don't think about — the burden of authenticity," he says.

Original bands have the freedom to go off script and play songs any way they like, but no one wants to hear a tribute band improvise a 20-minute guitar solo. "The tribute band *has* to sound like the original," Fellman says. "They have to do things that the originals could only do in the studio. They have to hit those notes."

Besides the music, Fellman says Harefest is all about nostalgia. One of the biggest attractions of the festival is the "photo stage." It's an "exact replica of the mainstage with the lights and stage side banners and instruments," Fellman says. "The Paul Mitchell School is there doing up people's hair. You can rock out and have your picture taken while a band is performing on the main stage, and you can lip sync along."

Although it's based on mostly '80s nostalgia, it's not only for people who had lived through the era. "The age demographic is really surprising," Fellman says. "It's mostly people in their 40s... but also a ton of 20-somethings."

Fellman says this is due to the cyclical nature of music. "A lot of this is that these kids grew up listening to this music with their parents," he says.

Whether you were blastin' AC/DC's *Back in Black* when it came out in 1980, or you weren't even born until a decade-and-a-half later, Harefest is an opportunity to revisit memories and create new ones. Fellman says it's a chance to "remember what it was about music that got you so excited."

Gates open for Harefest at 4 pm Friday, July 14 (if you're camping, you're allowed in at 9 am that day). The festival goes through late into the night on Saturday, July 15, with the last band ending past midnight. The fest takes place at Pat's Acres Racing Complex (6255 S. Arndt Road, Canby).

Tickets range from \$40-\$50 for a one-day pass; they're \$75 for a two-day pass without camping and \$100 for a two-day pass with camping. RV parking/camping is sold out. ■

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