

Mellow mood for Redmond Music & Arts Festival



LeeAnn Sturrock, a printmaker, was part of the visual arts component of the Redmond Music & Arts Festival.

Photos by Bill Bartlett

BY BILL BARTLETT

For The Redmond Spokesman

The second annual Redmond Music & Arts Festival took place over the weekend and crowd pleased with the three day happening at the High Desert Music Hall.

It was a family affair with younger families chief among the attendees.

"It's a place where we can come, have a beer or two, check out the music and not worry that our kids will be bored," said Redmond resident Tanya Estrada. Her husband Miguel, added: "The whole thing is kind of laid back, lots of music options."

Music was the main attraction with 16 different performers, mostly solo acts. That it was all free was a strong selling point.

"We got our money's worth," Willy Hudson beamed. "I've seen five or six of the acts and the vibe was good."

Attendees seemed to like the fact that it was all in one spot. "I thought we'd be walking all over Redmond in the heat. This made it really comfortable," mentioned Charleen Filton.

Both she and her friend, Betz, were aided by walkers.

Half of the hall was set aside for music, half for visual art.

There were only a few art choices, enough to justify the word "Arts" in the festival brand but several visitors expressed hope that the visual arts portion of the event would grow.

On Sunday, the music moved outdoors to the food and drink area. Four food trucks offered a range of popular options all weekend including Mexican and Greek cuisine. By Sunday afternoon the temperature was a pleasant 82 degrees, down from a forecast five days earlier of temps in the 90s.

The good weather was a main topic of conversation including gratitude for the few wildfires burning in Oregon. Tables filled quickly particularly those under the canopy or umbrellas.

There was food and drink inside of course at the permanent Backline Restaurant, Bar & Lounge. A good portion of its space was converted to the art exhibit space.

According to its owners, the Music Hall aims to curate and provide a diverse set of music genres, along with a palette of healthy foods, sips, brews and libations, as well as a handful of professional and creative spaces for community engagement.

The Festival had to compete with the Rhythm & Brews Festival in Sisters, the Sunriver Art Fair and summer concerts at the Hayden Amphitheater in Bend.

The party atmosphere of the festival spread to close-by Centennial Park. A good number of families picnicked there before of after exploring the Festival. The splash pad was very active. Linda Spence, a mosaic glass artist, drew a steady stream of festivalgoers. Her glass-infused guitar was a sensation and a good match for the music spilling from across the hall.

LeeAnn Sturrock, a printmaker, had the primo spot in the art section. Her pop-up store was situated at the entrance impossible to bypass. Her



Mary Eliza (top) took the stage at the Redmond Music & Arts Festival, while children took on some art projects (above).

aprons and journals were the most asked about. Children invariably found their way to the art project table where a variety of opportunities were available for budding artists like Ezra Dickinson, 6, and Vaeda Dickinson, 8, from Bend. The family is hoping to relocate to Redmond soon, after finding its lifestyle more compatible and less hectic than Bend.

Patsy Erskine, Sybil Hardesty and Leah Porter came over from Prineville for the event. They commandeered an outside table under a tree and in the shadow of the Music Hall where they sat for several hours able to hear the music seep through the doors onto the uncrowded street.

Looking up from lunch, a plateful of quesadillas, Leah spoke for the group.

"We could sit out here all afternoon and just watch and listen," she said. "It's all so mellow."



A fused glass guitar made by artist Linda Spence drew a steady stream of festivalgoers.



Nick Rosenberger/Redmond Spokesman

David Maldonado cooks caramel corn at the Deschutes County Fair in Redmond on August 3.

County fair attracted record crowd in 2022

BY LEO BAUDHUIN

Redmond Spokesman

For Deschutes County Fair & Expo manager Geoff Hinds, the 102nd annual fair was a resounding success.

The 2022 Deschutes County Fair broke an attendance record set just last year as it welcomed 165,000 visitors through the five-day event, and set a single-day record with almost 50,000 fairgoers on Saturday alone.

"We were just honored to be able to celebrate with so many members of our community, and that the different activities and events we put together were well-received," said Hinds.

From Hinds' perspective, this year's biggest success was the rodeo. Organizers moved this year's rodeo indoors

and focused on high-energy, well-produced events, he said.

On multiple nights, it was standing room only inside the 4,000-seat First Interstate Bank Center.

This year's fair also built off 2021 adjustments, like moving concerts outdoors and making them free with fair entry. While Hinds said the move was initially motivated by COVID-19 safety, fair organizers decided to continue the new tradition this time around.

Part of that was motivated by the awareness that the pandemic isn't fully over and risks increase when tens of thousands of people gather indoors, Hinds said. But he said it also plays into Central Oregon's summer outdoor concert culture, and that they expect the tradition to continue in up-

coming years.

Even areas where the fair has struggled have seen some level of improvement. Hinds said last year was a major milestone in traffic management. Through a multi-jurisdictional management effort, organizers were able to get exit times down from two hours at peak capacity to about 45 minutes. Although he doesn't yet have specifics for this year, Hinds said he's heard anecdotally that this year's traffic has met or exceeded that 45-minute benchmark.

Still, Hinds said, most of this fair's takeaways will be up to the community — both of organizers and their networks — that helped it come together.

"We have to take some time to recap this one and recognize our successes and where we can improve," he said.

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Geoff Hinds

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