

Acoustic blues guitarist Mary Flower kicks off blues month at Peninsula Arts Center

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Nobody picks it like Mary Flower.

An internationally known and award-winning picker, singer-songwriter and teacher, Portland acoustic blues artist Mary Flower will perform live at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 6 at the Peninsula Arts Center.

Flower's immense finger-picking guitar and lap-slide prowess is soulful and meter-perfect, a deft blend of the inventive, the dexterous and the mesmerizing. Her supple honey-and-whiskey voice provides the perfect melodic accompaniment to each song's story.

Evolving out her native Indiana, Flower first relocated to the rich Denver music scene, working with Katy Moffatt, Randy Handley and Pat Donohue and was a founding member of the famed Mother Folkers. After building her career and reputation as a picker's-picker, including top-three finishes (and the only woman finalist) at the National Finger-picking Guitar Championship in 2000 and 2002, Flower escaped the Denver orbit to land in culturally rich Portland. She continues to please crowds and critics at folk festivals and on concert stages domestically and abroad, ones that include Merlefest, Kerrville, King Biscuit, Prairie Home Companion and the Calgary Folk Festival, among many.

Flower embodies a luscious and lusty mix of rootsy, acoustic-blues guitar and vocal styles that span a number of idioms — from Piedmont to the Mississippi Delta, with stops in ragtime, swing, folk and hot jazz.

Flower's 10 recordings, including four for Memphis' famed Yellow Dog Records — "Bywater Dance," "Instrumental Breakdown," "Bridges" and "Misery Loves Company" — show a deep command of and love for folk and blues string music.

Flower recently released her 10th album, "When My Bluebird Sings," this time on her



Submitted photo

Acoustic blues artist Mary Flower will perform at the Peninsula Arts Center on Feb. 6.

Mary Flower

7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 6

Peninsula Arts Center

504 Pacific Ave. N., Long Beach, Wash.

360-901-0962

\$12

own label, Bluesette Records.

"This CD is a departure stylistically from my previous recordings," Flower says. "The CD is a mix of lap slide instrumentals and guitar pieces with vocals, all original. Some of these tunes have been rumbling around in my head for quite a while and seemed well-suited for a solo project. Many of you have asked for more solo and more slide — so here it is, the raw and unadorned. Enjoy."

Accolades come easily and deservedly for Flower — the aforementioned National Finger-picking Guitar Champion-

ship finishes, as a nominee in 2008 and 2012 for Blues Foundation Blues Music Awards, a 2009 nod with the coveted Vox Populi award at the 2009 Independent Music Award's Acoustic Song category, and a 2011 Portland Muddy Award win. The list goes on. But for Flower, it's not about prizes. It's about making the music come alive onstage, in her recordings, and with her teaching. She continues to compose, record and tour relentlessly, honing and evolving her style rooted in rich tradition but always moving America's indigenous music forward.

The Peninsula Arts Center is located at 504 Pacific Ave. N. Admission is \$12 at the door, by calling 360-901-0962, or online through Brown Paper Tickets. Wine, beer and other refreshments will be available for purchase. Concerts benefit the Long Beach Peninsula Acoustic Music Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization.

Lowest Pair bring Americana to the Fort

ASTORIA — Fort George Brewery welcomes The Lowest Pair to perform Americana and bluegrass at 8 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 7. All ages are welcome, and there is no cover charge.

Born in Arkansas and now homesteading in Olympia, Washington, Kendl Winter sprouts alfalfa beans in mason jars in the back of the tour van and spreads her songs across the country, Johnny Appleseed-style. Winter brings her weaving poetry of song, old and new, and a voice somewhere between Gillian Welch and Iris DeMent with a little Olympia twist.

Palmer T. Lee, who hails from Minneapolis, was 19 when he inherited a couple of banjos and discovered he could reassemble them into his dream instrument. Lee's songs are distilled into the warm sweet sounds of his percussive wordplay and the melodic interludes of his own style played on a pieced-together banjo.

After a year of traveling the country playing clubs, hotels, house shows, backyards and street corners, the duo found their way back up to Minnesota, this time to Duluth, where they sat down to record the follow-up to "36¢." Linking up with Tom Fabjance at an old church (the same one Low recorded "C'Mon" in) seemed like the perfect way to expand on their sound without diluting their original magical formula.

Their latest album, "The Sacred Heart Sessions," is a collection that allows the listener to enter the space that surrounds its creation. One can virtually feel the walls and vaulted ceiling of the old wooden church rising up, creating a natural reverb and warming the air.

Be it Winter's punk roots, her admiration for the traditional American songbook or



Submitted photo

The Lowest Pair will perform at the Fort George Brewery at 8 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 7.

the gravitational pull she sensed drawing her to Olympia, it's her combining these talents and creative impulses with Lee's Midwestern charm, the long winters spent listening to a steady diet of

Townes Van Zandt and John Hartford and the strange moment of fate that left him with two inherited banjos as a young man; this combination has resulted in a original sound that is The Lowest Pair.

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The Lowest Pair

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