

# THE ARTS

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## Sedona Fire Band **BURNS** with creative energy

By DAN HAAG

The annals of rock 'n' roll history are crammed with legendary artists who experimented with different musical styles. Led Zeppelin layered their hard rock with the blues; The Police dabbled in reggae; Paul Simon took on zydeco; Blondie recorded a rap song.

No matter the outcome, the idea was to stretch and grow as artists.

"I don't know where I'm going from here," the late David Bowie declared. "But I promise it won't be boring."

That might as well be the mantra of Sedona Fire Band, a diversely talented ensemble hailing from the Nehalem Valley area.

Playing an eclectic blend of genre-crossing music they've dubbed world folk fusion, this seven-piece outfit isn't afraid to challenge themselves — as evidenced by the levels of instrumentation band members bring to each gig: Sedona Torres on vocals and flute, Michael Dinan on guitar and vocals, Bob La Torre on cornet, Renee DeLight on cello, Barbara McLaughlin on bass and percussion, Chuck McLaughlin on percussion, and Enya Torres-Ling on percussion.

According to Torres, world folk fusion is an eclectic combination of world, folk, rock and blues.

"We're very eclectic," she says. "We've done a lot of diverse stuff because all of us have had different experiences with different music."

Growing up in the Midwest, Torres quickly became a fan of

folk acts like Peter, Paul and Mary. She also found inspiration in her mother's huge record collection. "Local DJs used to call her if they needed music," she says.

Torres and Dinan originally formed the group as a duo in 2009 and recorded their first album, "The Spark," in 2011.

The band gradually grew from there, releasing "Pages of the Mind" as the larger unit in 2014. The group is currently laying down tracks for a third album, "Into The River."

With more band members, Se-

dona Fire was able to delve into deeper, richer sounds, especially with percussion.

The McLaughlins, who had been involved in the local outfit The Tsunami Drummers, lent Sedona Fire a different beat when they came aboard in 2013.

"I've always liked the sound of hand drums," Torres says. "They capture that world essence."

Torres recalls a gig where the hand drums gave a familiar folk song a new feel. "We were covering 'Leaving on a Jet Plane' and the percussion gave it kind of an island beat," she says. "We all really liked it and said, 'Let's keep it that way.'"

Torres enjoys the tighter harmonies of folk music and the

genre's ability to convey a narrative with rich tones, rather than just having a danceable beat.

"It's about expanding the experience of the music where you can really fill in and not just have a bunch of instruments make noise," she says, adding that the band rehearses at least once a week.

Sedona Fire has gigged all over Oregon, including shows in Bend and at the Lan Su Chinese Garden in Portland.

This summer will keep them busy as well, with several shows lined up, including performances at the Manzanita Farmers Market in July and the Astoria Sunday Market in September.

The show closest on the horizon is a special performance from

2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, June 5 at the newly renovated NCRD Performing Arts Center in Nehalem, where the band will debut new material.

The gig will include guest musicians Carl McLaughlin, son of percussionist Chuck McLaughlin, and John Ling and his 12-year-old Enya Torres-Ling, the newest and youngest member of Sedona Fire. These family members will be playing together for the first time on stage.

While the show promises to be a big undertaking for the close-knit group, Torres isn't nervous about expanding the band's already large roster for one night.

"It's worth it because we've grown as a band and a family," she says. "The show honors what Sedona Fire is about: being inclusive and making a connection with the audience without any separation."

To learn more about Sedona Fire and hear some of their music, visit [www.sedonafiremusic.com](http://www.sedonafiremusic.com)

### HEAR SEDONA FIRE IN CONCERT

2 to 4 p.m. Saturday, June 5

NCRD Performing Arts Center

36155 Ninth St., Nehalem

\$10 for adults, free for children 12 and under



The seven-piece, Nehalem-based Sedona Fire Band plays world folk fusion music.

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