

# SCRATCHPAD

## 'STACKSTOCK ROCKED



By ERICK BENDEL  
COAST WEEKEND

'Stackstock — an indie music festival held Saturday at Haystack Gardens in midtown Cannon Beach — rocked. Plain and simple.

It wasn't a screaming, sweaty sensory overload like so many shows I've attended, but a tasteful class act, remarkably well-executed for a maiden event.

When I got word that Col-

in Meloy, The Decemberists' singer-songwriter, was dropping by the North Coast, my ticket appeared in my inbox before I'd finished writing up a blurb for the Daily Astorian. (Priorities are priorities.)

And, when the time came, I volunteered to cover it.

Yes, it meant I would need to be duty- rather than fun-focused (i.e., restrict my beer intake), but I would be part of 'Stackstock's written record.

It also meant I could — and eventually did — awk-

wardly sidle up to talented musicians and ask questions that sounded smarter in my head. (Meloy wasn't doing press for the event, a publicist informed me in advance, which, in a way, was as much a relief as a disappointment.)

I wore my press "pass" to the concert. I call it a "pass" because, as it turns out, having a laminated card that says "press pass" doesn't magically grant you access to anything you want — for example, the VIP section of a

concert. The 'Stackstock security crew basically regarded it, more or less accurately, as a costume piece and kindly directed me to the lobby, where I secured a legit VIP pass.

Later, I ran into one of our freelancers while waiting in line to buy another bratwurst. He informed me that my VIP status could probably get me free food in the VIP food-and-beverage area, which until then I didn't know existed behind the stage.

As expected, Meloy's

hauntingly resonant songs — combining a novelist's sense of detail, a poet's precision and a philosopher's clarity — had a deeper impact live, as part of a solo set, than do the studio recordings.

I developed a (still-growing) admiration for the performers preceding him, particularly Cardioid and Pure Bathing Culture. The bands managed to bypass my reflexively hypercritical faculties and pierce me right in the heart.

It's too early to know whether word of 'Stackstock will spread and create a sustained enthusiasm beyond the region — or whether Ryan Snyder, the president of Martin North who spearheaded it, will feel inspired to pull off a sequel.

But if he does, I will be among the first to sign up. **CW**

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