

Mueller's nonprofit Fly Me to the Moon, an Oregon Hall of Fame-affiliated project that delivers live music to residents of retirement, assisted living and memory care facilities.

In a way, Mueller said, the new music festival on the coast is "kind of a natural extension of what we do every day" — expanding public access to quality musical entertainment.

Cara Mico, program director at the arts association, said the festival also "focuses on a music as a healing art," adding, "It's really about bringing people together to celebrate music and community."

Small, intimate concerts

Throughout the 10 days, the event travels from Cannon Beach down to Manzanita and Nehalem, with performances held nearly every day.

Friday and Saturday are the most packed days for Cannon Beach. After a couple performances at the Cannon Beach Gallery on Friday afternoon, the Julie Amici Trio and 3 Leg Torso will give back-to-back performances at the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce.

Mueller plays bass in the Julie Amici Trio, which does a compilation of blues, rock and country. He and Amici spend time between Portland and the coast, both of which inspire their music.

"That's the life that you're living," Mueller said.

Saturday will feature several small concerts at the gallery and The Wine Shack. Blues, soul and R&B singer-songwriter Curtis Salgado and guitarist Alan Hager, both well-known artists in their hometown of Portland, will close the day with a performance at 8 p.m. at the chamber. Salgado, who also plays harmonica, and Hager have been playing together for numerous years and released an album, "Rough Cut," in 2018.

In bringing music groups to Cannon Beach, Mico said, the arts association is challenged by the lack of large venues that seat enough people to keep the ticket prices reasonable for concerts featuring nationally acclaimed performers. Through the music festival, she and Mueller are attempting to work with the venues that are available and present entertainment that is suitable for more "small and intimate" settings, she said, adding they want to develop a festival that has the potential "to grow."

'As good as it gets'

The festival will pick up again Oct. 9 and 10 at St. Catherine's Episcopal Church in Nehalem, where award-winning guitarists Brooks Robertson and Doug Smith will give daily workshops, with concerts held in



LaRhonda Steele and Julie Amici will perform a Nina Simone Tribute at 7 p.m. Oct. 12 in Nehalem during the Fire Mountain Musicfest.



Doug Smith and Brooks Robertson will lead guitar workshops and perform a concert together during the Fire Mountain Musicfest.

the evening. Smith, a Grammy Award-winning musician based in Vancouver, Washington, is highly accomplished in the finger-picking style, which he says can be used to play any number of genres, from classical and blues to jazz and pop.

"The idea is to try to play instrumental versions of a piece of music and include all the parts — base, melody and rhythm," he said.

In addition to gaining international recognition for his talent, Smith feels playing guitar is meaningful to him on a personal and intrinsic level.

"My craft is very tied to my identity," he said. "It's everything about me."

Smith doesn't get to the coast as often as he'd like, and he's looking forward to participating in the festival. That he is coming to lead workshops and perform, "for me, that's pretty much as good as it gets," he said.

Robertson, born in Eugene, is famous in his own right. After years of mentorship from Bruce B. Jones, along with dedicated self-tutelage, Smith won first place in a talent competition for 12- to 20-year-old participants on Robertson Garrison Keillor's National Public Radio classic "A Prairie Home Companion" in 2004 and he's continued progressing since then.

Another highlight of the festival is a Nina Simone Tribute, featuring singers Julie Amici and LaRhonda Steele, at the North County Recreation District performing arts center at 7 p.m. Oct. 12.

"As a performer and producer, it is exciting to help bring this festival to the North Coast," Mueller stated in a news release. "The collaboration between Fly Me To The Moon and CBAA has allowed us to bring some of Oregon's top-tier artists to the coast, and to provide support for these two great organizations."

If You Go

Fire Mountain Musicfest

Oct. 3-13

Venues from Cannon Beach to Manzanita

Admission to various events can be purchased individually or in a package. Some events have no admission cost. Purchase tickets at: cannonbeacharts.org/music-festival

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