

Festival from 1A

The band, led by Nathan Johnstone, his wife Tempest

and performer Dogwood, played several acoustic sets throughout the weekend.

Johnstone said, "The festivals I like best are the ones that

incorporate themselves into the community in which they are happening. ... It's nice to see people come in off the streets saying, 'Wow, what is this?'"

He used the word "maggie" to describe the band's sound: "Anything new and shiny becomes a part of what we do."

Incorporating talented and diverse musicians, visual artists and theater artists, The Nathaniel Johnstone Band creates a show full of movement, power and creativity. Songs speak of forbidden love, legendary figures, comedic moments and quiet longing. Sometimes only two performers take the stage. The full band creates a roaring "rock band sound," often accompanied by Tempest's belly dancing.

"We write songs and play them for our friends — and people who aren't our friends yet but soon will be. Just the psychic energy that creates amongst all of us is so wonderful," Johnstone said.

He used to be a blues magician before falling into the festival scene, a group of people "I am already inclined to know and like" once he met them.

"The thing I like most about the whole steampunk environment is it is thick with collaboration and cross-pollination in support of the arts. The more you share, the more it comes back," Johnstone said.

Dogwood describes it as "creative tension," both on stage and in recordings. For her, she has to unite her background in vocals and theater with a more laid-back, discover-as-you-go performance.

"We all come together in community," she said. "How amazing is it that so many people are willing to say, 'Yes — and.' Coming from an actor history, that is the main rule. When someone offers you a chance, you agree and see immediately what you can add."

For the band, that means playing with other bands and musicians. It also means using Tempest's art for their cd covers and band designs, sometimes in collaboration with other artists.

Johnstone said, "We do this because it's important to us. We like it, and we like the people.



CHANTELE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS
Nathan Johnstone and Dogwood of the Nathaniel Johnstone Band

They are very connected with what they do."

Dogwood said, "It's been great to be around all these creative folks who share my version of the world. I like it and I have confidence in that. I feel like it's really hard to have confidence in yourself and your version of things these days. We've created an atmosphere of let's play, let's just play together."

In the end, that is what the Second Star Festival aims to achieve — an atmosphere of play, collaboration and creativity. It brings together a group of people who travel to conventions, Renaissance fairs, festivals and concerts to see each other and work together.

"Everybody is more real," Johnstone said. "The people that I'm rubbing elbows with are people who live a real life. They're not locked into trying to fulfill someone else's dream."

Dogwood added, "When I'm around them, I remember how to stand up straight. I can be the myself I'm learning how to bring into the world outside of these magical spaces."

The Hawks continue to work to bring the magic to the Florence area all year long. Matt designed "Green-Eyed Sue," one of the Florence Events Center's Dancing with Sea Lions.

"We're already planning next year," Kesha said. "We want to make sure the people of the local community knows they are invited to share their creative spirits with the festival and us."

For more information on the Second Star Festival and its featured artists, go to www.2ndStarFestival.com.

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