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Warm up with Winter Music Festival

Plan now to warm up your winter with some hot bluegrass, heartwarming new and traditional folk, and foot-stompin' Americana.

Nine high-caliber groups will heat up the Florence Events Center on Jan. 24, 25, and 26, 2020, during the 18th annual Florence Winter Music Festival. Each day features exhibits and demonstrations by regional artisans, jam sessions, food, and drink. A complete festival overview, with artist profiles and ticket prices, is available at WinterMusicFestival.org. Sea Lion Caves is this year's Presenting Sponsor.

The 2020 festival headliner is Livingston Taylor, who deftly blends a range of musical genres — folk, pop, gospel, jazz — fusing it with upbeat storytelling and hit songs he's written for his brother James.

New this year will be workshops by select musicians on songwriting, guitar skills and jamming. There will be separate admission for non-concertgoers. Free, dedicated, on-site jamming space is available beginning at noon on Friday and 1 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday.

"We're expecting big things for this year's festival as we have continued to improve on the quality of our lineup," said Kirk Mlinek of the Friends of the Florence Events Center, producers of the event. "We have a Grammy winner, IBMA winner, Portland's performer-songwriter of the year, and a headliner some call James Taylor's more talented brother."

The weekend starts on Bluegrass Friday with Canadian mandolin master John Reischman and the Jaybirds at 7 p.m. and Kathy Kallick Band at 8:30 p.m. Kallick, a Grammy and IBMA award winner, was described as "jaw-dropping awesome" by the Delaware Valley Bluegrass Festival. Friday's



The 2020 Winter Music Festival's headliner will be Livingston Taylor.

shows are sponsored by The Old Town Inn in Florence.

Saturday is Americana Day, beginning with the Pete Wernick Jam Method workshop at 9 a.m. led by Annie Savage of The Greg Blake Band. Jim Hurst's guitar workshop begins at 10:30 a.m.

Saturday afternoon's performances start with the soulful passion of blues and rock melded with the honesty of folk as presented by Mr & Mrs Something at 1 p.m., the deft finger work and smooth vocals of Nashville's sought-after guitarist Jim Hurst at 2:15, and the multi-award-winning country/folk/bluegrass music of the Greg Blake Band at 3:45. Saturday afternoon's shows are sponsored by The Waterfront Depot restaurant in Florence.

Saturday evening's session starts at 7 p.m. with Circus No. 9, a hot band that represents everything that's good about the new generation of acoustic music, blurring the lines between bluegrass, jazz, and rock. Headliner Livingston Taylor takes the stage at 8:30. Saturday night's shows are sponsored by The River House Inn in Florence.

Circus No. 9 will also perform a free community concert at Oregon Pacific Bank, 1355 Highway 101, on Friday, Jan. 24, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Sunday features True North Duo's songwriting workshop at 10:30 a.m. At 1 p.m. the wildly creative Tyler Stenson, twice-named Portland's performer-songwriter of the year, brings

his "elegant folk" music, as heard on SiriusXM's Coffee House Radio, to the stage. At 2:30 p.m., festival favorite True North's Kristen Grainger and Dan Wetzel, performing as a duo, deliver their trademark powerhouse of intelligent, memorable songs and lush instrumentals and vocals, to wrap up the weekend.

In harmony with the music is the free Florence Regional Arts Alliance Winter Arts Festival. The group has assembled renowned local and regional artists and craftspeople to fill more than 20 booths with two- and three-dimensional art in a wide variety of media, personal care items, edibles and adult potables. In addition to selling their works, select artists will demonstrate how their art or craft is created.

"Last year saw attendees from more than 80 different zip codes and five different states. The 2020 edition will highlight Ninkasi Brewing Company," Mlinek said. "Food trucks will be back and the annual pie sale, sponsored by the Ladies of Elks, returns as another folksy festival favorite. Dedicated on-site jamming space is available, too."

Tickets are available by phone or in person at the Florence Events Center Box Office — 541-997-1994 or 715 Quince St. — or online at WinterMusicFestival.org.

Admission for a three-day pass is \$112, a two-day pass is \$92. Tickets for Friday Night Bluegrass are \$35, Saturday afternoon general admission Americana, \$27, Saturday night headliners \$49, and Sunday \$27. All prices include customary ticketing surcharges. The events center's doors open one hour before show time, and theater doors 30 minutes later.

The Winter Music Festival is produced by the 501(c)(3) non-profit Friends of the FEC.

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