

Alka Mahdi combines electronics with live music

**The duo plays July 15
for the Side A-iley
concert series**

By John Vollinger

Go! Magazine

LA GRANDE — Switching things up for Side A's Side A-iley concerts is local duo Alka Mahdi, who play at 7:30 p.m. Friday, July 15, at Side A Brewing, 1219 Washington Ave.

Alka Mahdi — composed of Maddie Ford and KC Kunkle — is a relatively new collaboration, although both musicians have been involved in music for a number of years.

Alka Mahdi is similar to the acts that have already graced the back patio stage at Side A, in that they have a broad array of songs that are engaging, fun and well-crafted.

Where they differ, however, is in their sound.

Kunkle had been refining his music for years when he discovered the "Akai Force" — an electronic production machine that allows one to use samples of music, as well as synthesized sounds, to create wholly original tracks. This gives him the opportunity to prearrange some of the more melodic and percussive elements of particular songs in a fresh way. He then accompanies these sounds, live, by playing the guitar and keyboards, describing his sounds as a "hybrid of DJ



Contributed photo

Alka Mahdi, the duo of Maddie Ford and KC Kunkle, play Friday, July 15, at Side A Brewing, 1219 Washington Ave. in La Grande.

and live music."

What rounds out this puzzle is the vocal accompaniment of Ford, with some additional harmonies added by Kunkle.

Ford has a voice that can sound powerful at volumes high and low, and seems to easily relay songs of a range of sounds and genres.

This brings us to the all-important question: What can we expect to hear from the group?

Alka Mahdi performs covers of popular songs, of various time periods, in a wholly original fashion. The audience

can expect to hear covers of anything from Fleetwood Mac's "Rhiannon" to Cher's "Believe" and "Rolling in the Deep" by Adele.

At first glance, this might seem like a wide variety of styles to form a cohesive performance, but Alka Mahdi manages to pull it off with their distinctive style.

With Kunkle's unique style of production, he is able to reimagine elements

of the songs that give them a newfound style and groove to make for an atmosphere that is energetic and fun to dance to, regardless of the genre of the original composition.

For an example of this, look up the band on Facebook for a full rendition of "Rolling in the Deep," as well as snippets of many other covers, from "Auld Lang Syne" to the Backstreet Boys.

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