

Hot afternoon at South country Fair

Written by Richard Amery
Sunday, 20 July 2014 09:55 -

I only caught part of a windy Saturday afternoon, July 19 at South Country Fair, but caught all of the acts I wanted to.

I arrived just in time to catch the last song from Declan O'Donovan, one of several pianists performing for this year's fair. And while I missed Stephanie Niles' Friday night set, I got to hear a couple of her piano powered folk songs during an excellent workshop with Tin and the Toad on Saturday afternoon.

Several of the bands I really wanted to see were on the East Stage. Blackberry Wood put on a colourful, energetic set of jazz fuelled folk fun, which had much of the audience dancing in front of their stage to upbeat, toe tapping, originals about pirates and circus folk plus crowd favourites like their cover of Tom Wait's "I Don't Want to Grow Up" and their quirky cover of the Star Wars "Cantina Theme."

Old time stringband the Whiskey Shiekhs provided another great show on the East stage. They were reminiscent of one of the best stringbands of all time the Mississippi Shiekhs. So there was plenty of fiddle, banjo, stand up bass, stellar vocal harmonies and a whole lot of sweaty energy on stage. One of the members even played the spoons on his thigh for extra percussion. Their multi-part vocal harmonies were absolutely impressive.

Back on the South Stage, Geoff Berner and Kris Demeanor were playing politically charged and often politically incorrect folk songs. Berner's Jewish protest songs "Daloy Polizei" was an instant highlight as he had most of the seated crowd shouting along with him "f..k the police" while kids obviously danced to the upbeat accordion.

Catchy punk folk shared the stage with wry, sarcastic "poetically incorrect" and sometimes self deprecating humour and politically charged rants about abusive police officers, unions and greedy oil companies and corporations not to mention celebrities coming to Alberta to protest them.

The duo work well together. Berner can make a person laugh their head off while simultaneously opening their minds.

They introduced an old Pete Seeger song "What Side Are You On" with Kris Demeanor teasing the B.C based Berner about coming to Alberta like Neil Young and protesting oil

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companies. They had the audience singing along with them for it.

Unfortunately I missed a hot night time line up, but thanks to the beauty of workshops, I'll catch the Good Co and Bend Sinister on the last workshop of the day on the south stage at 4:20. They will be joined by northern B.C based ukulele powered folk duo Twin Peaks, who also have a solo set on the East stage at 2:15 p.m. I'll also be able to catch Declan O Donovan with Kris Demeanor and Clinton St. John who open the day with a 12:30 workshop on the South Stage.

There is an excellent closing day at South Country Fair with performances by folk singer David Newberry, alt country trio Steve Brockley and Australian musician Kim Churchill among the highlights.

▣ South Stage

▣ *Noon*: workshop: Maria Dunn, Declan O'Donovan, Kris Demeanor, Clinton St. John

1:40 p.m.: Steve Brockley (Alt country) <http://stevebrockley.com/>

▣ *2:50 p.m.*: Poet Dia Davina

3:15 p.m.: Kim Churchill (folk/ blues) <http://kimchurchill.com/>

▣ *4:20 p.m.*: Workshop Bend Sinister, Good Co. Twin Peaks

East Stage

Noon: Little Gill's Big Grass jam

1:05 p.m. David Newberry (folk/ singer songwriter) <http://www.davidnewberry.ca/about.html>

▣ *2:10 p.m.*, Twin Peaks (folk) <http://www.twinpeaksmusic.ca/band-bio>

3:15 p.m.▣ The Crooked Brothers (Alt Country) <http://crookedbrothers.com/bio.php>

— *By Richard Amery, L.A.. Beat Editor*