

Music for Olympians a smash success

Written by Richard Amery

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July 11, a good sized crowd supported a fantastic new annual event — the Olympic Athletes Musicfest outside the Geomatic Attic, July 11, which was hosted by the Lethbridge Sports Hall of Fame and the Lethbridge Kinsmen Club. The event had a double benefit — not only raising money to support skeleton rider Carla Pavan and hammer thrower Jim Steacy's quest for Olympic gold, but to support local musicians as well. Carla received a cheque for \$500, Steacy will receive another third of the proceeds, but was unable to attend. The other third of the proceeds is being put into a special fund for. Several fantastic performers took the stage beginning with Karen Romanchuk and the Constant Remnants (Darwin Romanchuk, James Oldenburg and David Popovitch) who played an entertaining set of original country music including "Tired And True" the song Karen submitted to the South Country Fair and Calgary folk festival songwriting competitions. The Shaela Miller Threesome were up next with a set of darker original country as well as Hank Williams' "Lonesome Blues" and Elvis Presley's "Blue Moon of Kentucky."

The crowd enjoyed a revitalized Fat Baby Jake — a power trio featuring Steve Keenan, David Popovitch and Darwin Romanchuk who played original blues as well as some Stevie Ray Vaughan.

Washboard Hank and the Grave Lickers were next with a gut busting hilarious set of comedic country and bluegrass. They were lewd, a bit crude and hilarious, singing about girls at the dump, Elvis being alive and well and living in Tweed, Ontario, and Chompy "the head biter-offer," among other crazy characters. Washboard Hank himself was in his element, alternately playing a guitar, banjo, washtub tuba and a home made "stradivarius" washboard complete with bells, whistles, duck calls and bike horns. Brilliant. Dave McCann and the Ten Toed Frogs closed off the evening with a tight set of alternative country rock music. Organizer Mike Spencer was pleased with the first Olympic Musicfest and expects to do it again next year.

"It's a good first festival. Based on this turnout, we'll look hard at doing it next year," Spencer said, adding they just missed being able to bring Jim Steacy to the event by a couple of days. "The bands were very pleased with the venue and the atmosphere we created so it will be easier to sell to other bands (next year)," Spencer continued, adding they had enough tickets sold before the event to make it a success and had excellent walk up traffic as well.