

Fest remains all about music

Aug. 19, 2011

By: Pat Stryker, Bohemian Foundation

Bohemian Nights isn't just about the music ... it's all about the music.

For the more than 80 Colorado bands performing at this year's Bohemian Nights at NewWestFest, it was an opportunity to showcase their art and connect to music fans. And Fort Collins proved, once again, that we are a proud city with a passion for music, especially music originating from our region.

Bohemian Nights has firmly established itself as a summer tradition in Fort Collins and is earning a reputation nationally as a high-quality music event.

The first year of Bohemian Nights, a small group of people put together the whole show, managing about 45 bands on three stages. This past weekend, our seventh year, an "extended family" of hundreds of staff, crew and volunteers made Bohemian Nights happen on six music stages with nearly double the original number of bands.

Bohemian Nights at NewWestFest is the result of many months of planning and collaboration between Bohemian Nights LLC, who has produced all-things-music for the festival since 2005, and the Downtown Business Association, who has produced NewWestFest since 1989.

There are other numerous contributors who make Bohemian Nights at NewWestFest a unique cultural experience. For example, Beet Street brought in local artist Tim Upham to install his amazing "Water to the Garden" sculpture constructed from reclaimed pine tree limbs for Creative Garden's towering centerpiece.

The music kicked off Friday night with a familiar feel: three great bands performing on a single stage. But this year we added something new, moving the concert to the Mountain Avenue Stage and simulcasting it on a big screen for the new Linden Street Lawn Chair Lounge.

Dozens of Colorado bands then rotated in and out of the spotlight throughout the festival for the rest of the weekend. Regardless of the genre - from folk to funk - Bohemian Nights had something for everyone. It was a chance for us to explore bands we may not have heard before, and catch live performances by our recognized favorites.

One of our main goals for Bohemian Nights always has been to create a positive and powerful collaborative venue for Colorado musicians. Bohemian Nights allows local artists to gather together in one place for one weekend, sharing their Colorado connection and love for what they do.

At the same time, local bands see their names featured in the lineup with national headliners like The Tedeschi Trucks Band.

Every August in Historic Old Town Fort Collins, Bohemian Nights shines the light on new, emerging and established Colorado musicians. By setting the stage for these artists - The Lionel Young Band, The Widow's Bane, The Epilogues, you name it - we are reminded of the hidden treasures of Colorado's music scene. Bohemian Nights gathers the community together to support these local artists and share in their gift of music.

So, you deserve a big "thank you," Fort Collins. You came downtown, cheered the bands on, bought their merchandise and volunteered your time to help make Northern Colorado's largest free music festival a big success, once again.

Thanks to you, Bohemian Nights remains all about the music.