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Popular Midsummer Bluegrass Music Festival returns

MANITOWISH WATERS – Set among the towering pine trees and lake-dotted landscape in Manitowish Waters comes some of the sweetest bluegrass music you will ever hear. The 31st annual Midsummer Bluegrass Music Festival on Thursday-Sunday, July 23- 26 will feature music by artists and bands from all over the nation. Hosted by the Cozy Cove Tavern & Restaurant, this year's outdoor event (Wisconsin's longest running annual bluegrass festival) features five traditional artists/bands: Junior Sisk, Amanda Cook Band, Tony and Heather (Berry) Mabe, Daughters of Bluegrass, and Hand-Picked. As an added attraction, the progressive or jambase parameters of Bluegrass Music will be explored with performances by Feed The Dog and Ginstrings.

Headliner Junior Sisk is highly decorated as one of today's top bluegrass vocalists, and a constant reminder that traditional bluegrass is still alive and well. If Bluegrass was Major League Baseball or the NFL, crooner Junior Sisk would be a sure bet to be a first ballot Hall of Famer after his retirement. Fortunately for the MidSummer Fest, Mr. Sisk is a long way from retirement.

Junior's album Heart of a Song earned the prestigious IBMA (International Bluegrass Music Association) Album of the Year Award in 2012. Its single "A Far Cry from Lester and Earl," which Sisk co-wrote, became a rallying cry for a resurgence of traditional sounds in bluegrass and additionally, received the Song of the Year Award from the IBMA.

Mr. Sisk was further honored when he was named 2013 IBMA Male Vocalist of the Year, and in 2014 his band earned the SPBGMA (Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music of America) Bluegrass Band of the Year award. In 2016, "Longneck Blues," a collaboration with noted singer-songwriter Ronnie Bowman, was named Recorded Event of the Year by the IBMA. Most recently, Sisk received the 2017 Male Vocalist of the Year award from SPBGMA. Junior is not resting on his laurels as he is again nominated for Male Vocalist of the Year honors.

Another one of the highlights of the 31st Annual Midsummer Bluegrass Festival is scheduled for 2 PM Saturday with the performance of the Daughters of Bluegrass show. Each year at the Daughters of Bluegrass festival in Guyton, Georgia, a new daughter is inducted into the ranks. The festival celebrates female-led bluegrass acts, including many who had performed on the various Daughters of Bluegrass award winning albums over the years, some of which Heather Berry-Mabe had performed on. Within the past few years, both Amanda Cook and Carolyne VanLierop-Boone were also inducted. The Manitowish Waters audience will see first hand why

Amanda, Carlyne and Heather's talents were so highly credentialed by a jury of their peers. This year's festival is taking a close look as to how female Bluegrass artists bring a strong and beautiful balance to the Bluegrass genre by featuring five female centric acts.

Sunday's Gospel line-up allows for farewell performances by Ragtime John & His Open Mic Ensemble and Ginstrings starting at 10 AM.

Daily and weekend passes (includes walk-in camping on-site) are among your ticket options. RV or trailer camping is also available; all campsites are rustic, but a call ahead to reserve is encouraged because of a limited number of on-site spaces. Cozy Cove is located on 5786 U.S. Highway 51. Bring a blanket or lawn chair for the musical performances. Make it a full week of fun by staying at one of the local lodging facilities. A serene natural Northwoods beauty frames the township of Manitowish Waters. Just across the street is a paved hike/bike path leading to the downtown and elsewhere. So, bring your bike and walking shoes for an excursion in between sets. For more information, contact bluegrass festival at 715-543-2166 or email at info@MidSummerBluegrass.com. Visit www.MidSummerBluegrass.com to see the full schedule and detailed ticket information.