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info@MidSummerBluegrass.com

Popular Midsummer Bluegrass Music Festival returns

MANITOWISH WATERS – Bluegrass Music Awakening in Manitowish Waters

Summer is a good time of year for awakening to the sweet sounds of Bluegrass Music. The 33rd Annual Midsummer Bluegrass Festival on the Cozy Cove Tavern grounds, set amongst the towering pine trees and lake-dotted landscape of Manitowish Waters, Wisconsin, kicks off on Thursday, July 28, and goes through Sunday, the 31st. Bluegrass by definition is “Folk Music In Overdrive,” so waking up the Bluegrass audience will be the task of four top, youthful Upper Midwest Progressive Bluegrass Bands: The Driftless Revelers, Feed The Dog, Miles Over Mountains, and Dig Deep.

Placing a real-deal Bluegrass stamp on Bluegrass Shows for well over three decades in Manitowish Waters, however, has often required meeting the challenge of hiring an alumni of the legendary band, Bill Monroe, Father of Bluegrass, & The Bluegrass Boys (performed at the 2nd Annual MidSummer Bluegrass Festival in 1991), to keep things up to hoyle. This year, Mark Hembree, five year Bluegrass Boy veteran, will bring his Bluegrass Band to entertain. Sadly, we recently lost 2 Bluegrass Boys who played the fest: Sonny Osborne performed at the 5th Annual in 1994, and Byron Berline at the 28th Annual in 2017. Scheduled traditional bands Truman’s Ridge, Unclaimed Freight and Genesee Ridge will also give homage to this “Original American Art Form,” Bluegrass Music.

Bluegrass is sometimes described as the “Musical Genre of the High Lonesome Sound” and it is hard to find a vocalist who encompasses that parameter more than this year’s headliner, David Peterson. The iconic importance of Bluegrass Music’s breakout year, 1946, the year Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs joined Bill Monroe’s Bluegrass Boys, is embellished by David Peterson & 1946, a band who’s attire often represents the retro fashion of that yesteryear, 1946. David’s trance-inducing rendition of the tune “In The Mountaintops To Roam” reveals his vocals are of an upper echelon quality, worth the price of admission to hear live. His recent album, “A Cup of Lonesome,” exhibits his capacity as a standard bearer of Bluegrass Music’s future.

Bluegrass is unique in that it offers accessibility and a feeling of intimacy between its performers and audience. Check out the schedule for the Bluegrass Institute of the Northwoods sessions which include a dynamic question and answer meeting with Mark Hembree reflecting on his experiences as a Bluegrass Boy and Co-founder of the Nashville Bluegrass Band, a chat with David Peterson & 1946, special jam sessions led by Genesee Ridge, and a sit-down with the bands Dig Deep and Miles Over Mountains.

Folklorist Phil Nesbaum in 2003 presented this interesting premise at the Institute: “Bluegrass as a Theater of Africa Meeting Europe.” Acts portraying bluegrass’ expansiveness on this year’s docket include a band from a cousin genre, Texas Swing, performed by The Best Westerns, a rare treat in the Northwoods. The oneness of all genres of music will be made manifest by the imminently danceable Reggae group, Unity the Band, who’s band leader, Pita, hails from the Fiji Islands. In short, your attendance at this year’s Bluegrass Show very likely will rank as a peak experience on your musical resume of life.

Daily and weekend passes (includes walk-in tent 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.