

The sound of music

FestiFall brings entertainment, art and bands to downtown Bryan this weekend

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From Native American tribal dancers to Tejano musicians to Irish folk bands, FestiFall '97 offers a world of discovery.

FestiFall is a two-day festival held in downtown Bryan to increase the awareness of arts in and around the Brazos Valley.

The eighth annual festival titled "World of Discovery" begins on Saturday, October 11 and runs through Sunday, October 12. Admission for all performances is free of charge.

FestiFall is a celebration of the visual and performing arts. Besides being able to experience the music of 15 bands, festival attendees can view the work of artists specializing in mediums including watercolor, pottery and wood-carving.

Karen Rogers, performance chair, said the festival organizers wanted to have a diverse group of performers with an international influence.

"What we really wanted was quality music," she said. "We've improved as far as diversity and quality. We've been able to bring in more out-of-town people."

Rogers said there were about 50 applicants just for musical talent.

The bands playing at FestiFall come from as far away as San Francisco.

Thomas Escalante, lead singer of The Suspects, a ska band from Houston, said the band members like playing at festivals where different genres of music are offered.

"I think the public, as a whole, needs a dose of different types of

music," he said. "It broadens people's horizons. There's a lot of good music we aren't exposed to."

Escalante said festivals like FestiFall are positive and give people a chance to experience seeing bands they would not normally see.

The Suspects play Saturday at 5:30 p.m. on the Bryan St. Stage. After the band's afternoon performance, The Suspects will play at the Dixie Theater at 11:30 p.m.

Lisa Tingle, a rock and blues musician from Austin, said outdoor festivals are her favorite places to play.

She said the outdoor acoustics are great, more people can see the shows and the fresh air puts people in better moods.

FestiFall is Tingle's first big show since a car accident she had several months ago, and she said she cannot wait to come back to Bryan-College Station.

"I'm ready to tear it up," she said. "It's been months since I've played."

Tingle said the multicultural music featured at FestiFall will give the musicians a chance to learn about other styles of music.

"It's really good for musicians to hear all kinds of music at all times," she said. "It keeps writing capabilities growing."

Tingle will play on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. on the Bryan St. Stage and later that night at 3rd Floor Cantina.

Bands playing at FestiFall include Miss Molly and the Whips, Lewis, The Dynatoners, The Blue Valentines and many others. There will also be street performers who will go around playing music for tips.

Amy Klinkovsky, youth stage manager and a volunteer in the performance division, said the main focus of FestiFall is to allow local artists to showcase their talents.

"It is a tremendous opportunity for the artists and the audience," she said. "It's educational in that a lot of people don't comprehend the amount of talent there is in our community."

Klinkovsky said she tried to get the youth more involved in this year's festival.

"One of the goals I was going for was finding acts that would interact with the children instead of just perform for them," she said. "They're not only being entertained, but they get to interact with the performers."

Acts directed toward the youth will include the Native American Student Association teaching tribal dancing, a professional juggler from Louisiana, a puppet show by MSC Hospitality and some performances by the 'Magicians from Magination Station.

Klinkovsky said FestiFall also gives people a chance to see some of the improvements in Downtown Bryan.

"It's a time for the communities of Bryan-College Station to go to Downtown Bryan and see some of its renovations and that it is becoming a tourist attraction," she said.

FestiFall '97 spans the globe, offering multicultural awareness of art, food and music.

From the first bite of a turkey leg to the final performance of the Karaoke Cafe, FestiFall will give audiences a taste of the world.



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