

OLD SETTLERS MUSIC FESTIVAL 2016 REVIEW



BY KARYN LYN

This was my 4th time attending the Old Settlers Music Festival in Driftwood Texas, and there's a reason the Texas Heart Beat crew keeps going back! Even though we were not familiar with all the performers, they never cease to amaze me with the array of talent they choose! I enjoy being cultured and up-to-date with the musical world; Life is a bore without music, and life is a bore without varietal tunes and tones. My teenager, Dakota, also helps me with this; he also loves music and its effect.

I have learned that you've got to be prepared for rain during this time of year, but the rain held off for the most part--allowing the crowds to gather, grinning ear-to-ear, immersing in music. Being that this great festival grants the Texas Heart Beat backstage access, I have the opportunity to mingle, meet and greet the finely chosen artists.



The first we had the honor of interviewing was the great and Houston-bred, Carolyn Wonderland. I don't know whether to compare her to Janis Joplin or Jimmy Hendrix! Wowza, what a fiercely gifted woman! She sure sets the bar, and I mean literally with her guitar extravaganza!

I had seen her perform at Schreiner University's Coffeehouse series while I was attending, but it was a pleasure sitting down with her on a personal level and listening to her stories (you can listen to our live interviews on TEXASHEARTBEAT.COM). Wonderland's main musical influence is her mother, who bought her a piano from a flea market when she was little. And praise the Lord she did! Kathleen Hudson can concur that she is a staple of a woman in the Texas Music Industry. Not only does she recognize this wild red-headed rock star in her book, "Women in Texas Music: Stories and Songs," but she is the featured image on the cover!



The Dustbowl Revival had a Mavericks flare, in which played at the Festival last year and rocked the field! This super talented group rocked out too, giving the audience an upbeat Bluegrass, Swing, Jazzy, Pre-war blues, Southern soul, and New Orleans funk blend!

And then there was Kevin Russell, of Shinyribs...talk about interesting, funky, and fun! This cool cat's influences ranged from James Brown, Elvis Presley, AL Green, Marvin Gray, Conway Twitty to an artistic twist of Tom Waits and Minute Men...a true performer who was all about high energy and keeping the crowd interacted. Everyone around me was having way too much fun with his personality and that, my friends, is what it's all about.



Other artists like the remarkable and adorable singer/songwriter Sierra Hull, had a darling voice, similar to Alison Krauss, who come to find out, called her to the Grand Ole Opry stage when she was 11-years-old and of course was a childhood hero and mentor. Sierra not only x-rayed her originality and skill, but by-golly could this 24 year old play a mean mandolin!

The timeless closing act was chosen

well by the Festival: The essence of Bluegrass-The Del McCoury Band. These fine gentlemen echoed off the treetops, as their banjos, fiddles, and upright thump played perfectly with the soft misty rain and moonlight. Del always has an infectious smile on his face, as he is obviously proud of his son's, Ronnie and Rob's, perfectly-pitched harmonies that drifted through the silent crowd.



Besides my focal point on music at this fine MusicFest—I have to include that they hold a Youth Talent Competition that is very inspirational, unique Texas vendors and artisans: alligator and shark on a stick, "Wicked Whatnot" penny art jewelry, not to mention it is home of the famous Driftwood Salt Lick BBQ! A True Texas Music event that I can't wait to attend again!

Old Settler's Music Festival is a nonprofit organization. Every year, they donate to a list of music-related charities. This year, they'll be giving to the Health Alliance for Austin Musicians, the Center for Texas Music History, and Kids in a New Groove. New this year, they we will be offering 4 Scholarships to students pursuing music related degrees at Texas State and Austin Community College.