

# HOMER TRIBUNE

## Tunes from the Turf

By Layton Ehmke Homer Tribune  
July 25, 2007

Lose your shoes and let your hair down. Kick back and groove a while in the Cosmic Hamlet to some funky tunes. KBBI's Concert on the Lawn returns and it's going to be a smooth one.

This year, KBBI administration let go the wheel of selecting the entertainment lineup for its annual fundraiser. For this one, the selection task went solely to locals with sensitive ears.

Kelly Jackman, Carolyn Norton and Beth Carroll, who each have a wicked love affair with music, convened early this summer to decide which talents would be wooing the lawn-seated crowds.

Without really knowing it, the three tunes connoisseurs fashioned nearly identical concert schedules once hearing the applicants.

Jackman said deciding the lineup was quite a difficult project.

"If we had a week-long festival, everyone who applied would be included," she said.

Cramming all those acts into 25- to 45- minuteslots over a two-day stretch means the show will have an identifiable dynamic, the committee hopes.

The days start out smooth and mellow, and grow wilder as the concert postures on.

"It will build up through the day and then we'll slam it up with rock at the end. We wanted to set a rhythm," Jackman said.

Representing younger Homer bands was key with the committee, supporting Jackman's plan for a swinging-good time.

"It's the feel-good, upbeat groups that can bring a whole family together. For example, Nervis Rex can guarantee to get all ages of the spectrum up and moving," she said. "My vision was to utilize a progression throughout the day, and with a positive slant on things. And because it is a community radio event, we want to represent the tastes of the community."

Jackman has been a volunteer DJ at KBBI since 1992. Jackman developed her musical tastes by seeking out soulful music "from the heart" with the caveat that music flavor is just a matter of opinion. A musician herself, she has been around it all her life.

"I've been listening to music since I was born, I guess. My mom was a huge Motown fan," Jackman said. When she moved to Homer nearly 20 years ago, she took a more active role in music and learned to play guitar and drums.

The process for selecting music is straightforward enough. The committee locks themselves in a room with the box of applications and CDs and dive in. They talk. They listen. They chuck a disc. They talk. They listen. They find a fit. And so it goes.

Jackman, in her fourth year on the selection committee, said she focuses on accentuating fresh talent — "something new and spicy." As she keeps in mind the format of a segueing DJ, she looks for a set that builds up to a pinnacle.

Beth Carroll lost her selection-committee innocence this year, bringing an appreciation of all types of music to the group. While she "particularly celebrates Reggae," being a DJ on KBBI has exposed her to more diversity. Her insight on what the show would offer includes growing pace in the rhythm.

"There is definitely a rhythmic pace for the day, and it was difficult to thin out all the incredible music to create that diversity throughout the concert," she said.

Giving everything its fair shot, the three individually conjured their ideal master schedule. Reconvening, they found their lists didn't differ much at all.

"There is so much music crammed in there, we tried to get as much of it as we could. That was the hardest part of the process — choosing the ones that would fit the groove of the day," Carroll said. "And we really wanted to allow a lot of the youth bands to shine. I think this thing is becoming large for young bands."

Carroll said she thought the trio of concert decision-makers would at least need to compromise on a few bands, but they just didn't need to.

"Our lists were nearly identical," she said. "Even down to the times the performers took stage."

The top slot, Saturday night's closer, went to Casualties To The Cause. Guitarist Ethan Martin said the band will toss out a few cover tunes, commingled with CTTC originals. But foremost, Martin wants to save a little room to jam.

This will mark the band's fourth year playing Concert on the Lawn. For this year's entry, Martin said they submitted their full length L.A. project, where they trained with studio pros. And having played heavily in their hometown gave them the degree of street credibility for top billing.

"We'll pretty much just play a couple of songs that we really like playing — maybe a little funk and a little reggae — and then I just want to jam and vibe off the people," Martin said. "There's a lot of other good bands there, and I think people will be ready to rock. It's going to be a tight night."

Folksy storyteller Peter Cooper, who played early this spring with Nashville performer Todd Snider, returns to open Sunday's show.

"I loved it up there," Cooper said from his place in Nashville. "I fell in love with it. I mean, I walked into KBBI and the DJ was practically playing my own record collection."

Cooper also plays Friday night at the Slough Theatre in Seldovia, then again Saturday night for the Homer Council on the Arts at Alice's Champagne Palace.

And thankfully, there's also room for a little obscurity at Concert on the Lawn.

Please welcome David Edwards-Smith.

Former bass player for the Suicide Machines, out of Detroit, Edwards-Smith now lives and works in Soldotna. He makes his Homer debut at this year's Concert on the Lawn.

Armed with hand and kick drums, a didjeridoo and two bass guitars, Edwards-Smith said his one-man show is entertainment enough just to watch.

"If I don't have people from ages 5 to 65 bobbing their heads, I'm not doing my job," he said. "There's



HOMER TRIBUNE FILE/Layton Ehmke

Brita West dances with friends at last year's Concert on the Lawn at Karen Hornaday Park. Tickets for this year's show are on sale now.



HOMER TRIBUNE FILE

Part of the appeal of Homer's Concert on the Lawn is the availability of space to get up and show off your best moves to the high energy of local bands.

going to be some good-time funk."

As the Suicide Machines were about to sign a record deal with Disney, Edwards-Smith contemplated his future as a musician. Instead of signing over his life to Disney, he created a new start with wife and kids in Soldotna in 1999. There, he decided he needed to find out what he could really do with music.

"This is pretty cool, and I've been excited to introduce this to Homer," he said. "Hopefully, it's something you'll want more of."