

the main event

Unfurl freak flag at the Fork

Solaris Music Festival a chance to let loose

By SARAH WILLARD

Interest in the local talent pool of DJs, production companies and performers is growing, evident in this summer's lineup for the Solaris Music Festival.

The love child of Grand Forks, B.C., event organizer Trevor Murdock, Solaris is celebrating its sophomore year, after a successful production in 2007.

Described as a "two-day outdoor camping experience that celebrates life and promotes peace through the common element of electrified sound and spoken word," Solaris is being held at the historic Doukabor village, three kilometres west of Grand Forks.

"The effort that they put into the stages, the atmosphere for the stages and camping area, is 110 per cent all-out," says Kelowna-based performer and Flydjs founder Jenn Goulet, otherwise known by her stage moniker, JGirl.

"They treat their patrons very well and create a very welcoming environment."

And she should know. Having performed at countless festivals and clubs from Victoria to Montreal, JGirl and her Flydjs crew can likely spot a shoddy event a mile away.

After participating last year solely as performers, the Kelowna-based all-girl DJ crew, Flydjs (www.flydjs.biz) has been invited to host and produce its own stage, Area49, a responsibility the group was excited to take on.

"The people in Grand Forks have been hosting a lot of events over the years," says JGirl.

"We slowly built a relationship to the point where we were invited to become a lot more involved in certain aspects of the show."

Friday and Saturday nights promise to be both a visual and auditory journey with performance, dance, DJs, vocalists and live art installations at the festival's two stages: Area49 & the Pyramid. Featured are performances by Seattle's Dig Dug, Vancouver's Woodnsou and a host of other B.C. favourites, a third of whom call Kelowna home. Festival-goers are invited to dance under the stars to the varied rhythms of break beats, drum & bass, mash-ups, reggae, funk, house, electro and more.

Additionally, Kelowna's own Kinshira Fire spinning crew will perform intermittently throughout the festival.

Saturday's hip hop showcase will feature performers from across B.C. and California. Free interactive workshops will be offered, featuring the talents of MCs, DJs, break dancers and live graffiti-style artists.

"It's a nice weekend escape from normal weekend activities," says JGirl.

Due to this, JGirl finds that people tend to go all-out, dancing with more energy and generally taking the time to really let loose and have a great time.

"People who go to these festivals are more energized, they don't have any other duties other than have a good time," explains JGirl.



CHRIS STANFORD/eVent photos
Kelowna DJs, from left, Jenn Goulet, Lora Salvatore, Brianne O'Connor, Jeff Abel and Tyler Hodgkinson will perform at the Solaris Music Festival Friday and Saturday near Grand Forks.

"They are ready to give it on the dance floor, 110 per cent. So we can also play a lot more energetic, engaging music."

Flydjs crew will include BreO, Lola, Lyssa, and Manousos (JGirls' DJ-husband, whom she is excited to share the stage with for the first time in many moons). Also from Kelowna are Stickybudz and DJ Excision, local instigator of the rapidly thriving dubstep scene and owner of Rottun Records.

Aside from performances in the great outdoors, Solaris is also known for its workshops. Starting Saturday at noon, the Area49 stage will feature many activities, including a simplified version of Flydjs DJ Basix, offering hands-on DJ lessons for the novice. This will be followed by an intermediate lesson by Timothy Wisdom and Stickybudz, which will focus on on turntablism & scratch tricks for the advanced DJ.

"Music, art, laughter, evolution, healing, inspiration . . . that's what Solaris is about," says Murdock.

"Solaris is created by loads of wicked people who believe in the music and enjoyed by a unique crowd who come to be part of the show. . . . It's one big multi-dimensional living work of art that we are all part of . . . every tune, sculpture, dance move, dreadlock and costume."

Murdock is proud of the fact that Solaris doesn't require corporate or commercial sponsorship to get its groove on. In doing so, the festival revolves around the participation and contribution of everyone involved: especially that of the festival-goers themselves.

"We believe in keeping it real, letting loose and inspiring others to laugh, get involved, get dirty, get jiggy, or just relax," explains Murdock.

"We have created a space for people to dance and share talents, connect and reflect, teach, learn, and be here now, without any of the manipulations of the corporate world. It's not always like that out in the big wide world, which is why we want as few reminders of it as possible."

All in all, Solaris is known for being open-minded, warm hearted, friendly and supportive. Or as Murdock says, "Here it's alright to smile at a stranger and let your freak flag unfurl."



DJ JGirl (Jenn Goulet) will spin at the Solaris Music Festival.

quick hit

What: Solaris Music Festival
Where: The Historic Doukabor Village in Grand Forks, B.C. (located on Hwy. #3, approximately 3 km west of Grand Forks)
When: Friday, June 27, to Sunday, June 29
Tickets: \$50 weekend pass or \$60 at the gate (must be 18+ with photo ID). Hip Hop Showcase (only Saturday, June 28, noon - 9 pm) \$20 advance or \$30 at the gate (anyone under 16 must be accompanied by an adult). Advance tickets available online at www.solarismusicfestival.com or in Kelowna at Hemp City, 526A Bernard Ave. (868-3088), and various outlets in Vancouver, Nelson and Grand Forks (see website)

