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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The 15th Oly Old Time Festival will feature Appalachian and Cajun music and dance.

OLYMPIA, Wash. – The Arbutus Folk School presents the 15th [Oly Old Time Festival!](http://olyoldtime.com/) Featuring the music and dance traditions of the southeastern U.S. including Appalachian stringbands, square dances and Cajun music for three days of concerts, jamming, dances and workshops Feb. 14 - Feb. 16.

The Friday night concert features Boston-based clogger and multi-instrumentalist Sophie Wellington, stringband music from Virginia-based Fiddlin Earl White, and the Cajun musical traditions of Louisiana's Balfa family with Balfa Toujours. The Shadies of Bellingham will serve up some driving dance tunes for Friday's square dance called by TClaw Crawford from North Carolina. All experience levels are welcome, no partners are necessary, and TClaw will ensure that everyone can join in on the fun.

Late afternoon "Lounge Acts" on Friday and Saturday offer a chance to enjoy some of the musical guests in a more intimate setting. TClaw and his partner Bridget Rue will share their favorite old time songs and tunes on Friday, followed by Canadian multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Ella Korth. Saturday's lounge is a special "crankie show" with Sue Truman and the Crankie Factory. Crankies are a 19th century storytelling art form with a long, illustrated scroll that is hand cranked through a viewing box to live music!

Saturday's highlights include a free, mid-day, all-ages square dance with Portland caller Steph Noll. Music will be provided by TClaw and Friends, and Steph will make sure that dances of all ages and experience levels can participate. Dancing continues into the night on Saturday with a square dance by the Earl White Stringband followed by a Cajun dance with Balfa Toujours.

Food and beverages are available from Ilk Lodge, Matchless, Three Magnets, Whitewood Cider, Sophie's Scoops and a local taco truck. A robust program of free workshops takes place on Friday and Saturday from noon to 4:30 offering instruction in old time and Cajun music, singing, and dance.

Tickets are \$30 per night and include access to the dances. Tickets available at <http://olyoldtime.com/>. As always, kids under 12 and festival volunteers attend for free. The evening events are at the South Bay Grange, 3918 Sleater Kinney NE. Workshops take place at the Grange and at the Arbutus Folk School, 705 4th Ave. E. Full schedule at <http://olyoldtime.com/>.

Sophie Wellington

Sophie Wellington is a Boston-based musician who draws inspiration from old time fiddle music, percussive dance, and jazz improvisation. Growing up in Staunton, VA, Sophie was brought up around contra dances, choirs, music festivals and camps. These communities offered her the chance to make music in performance settings as well as at sessions and collaborative gatherings. Sophie is a graduate of the Berklee College of Music. Summers find her traveling widely, attending festivals and camps. She is passionate about teaching, and has been faculty at the Blue



Ridge Old Time Music Week at Mars Hill University, Earful of Fiddle in Rodney MI, Augusta Heritage Center's Old Time Music Week and Fall Old Time Retreat in historic Cass, WV. In 2023 she was the recipient of a grant from Club Passim's Iguana Music Fund for her work integrating music and dance as a singular expression. She is also a champion fiddler, dancer, and singer placing first in multiple categories at the Hoppin John Old Time and Bluegrass Festival: Old Time Fiddle, Old Time Band, Flatfooting, and Folk Song. In addition to playing solo, she is in several bands including old time powerhouse Dumpster Debbie and classic country outfit The Talking Hearts. Most

recently she joined acclaimed musician and storyteller Willi Carlisle for his album release tour *Welcome To Critterland*. <https://www.sophiewellington.com/>



T-Claw Crawford and T-Claw and Bridget Rue

T-Claw is a professional dance caller and musician with 20 years of organizing experience. He's a passionate community-driven instigator for traditional music and dance, frequently employing unorthodox methods for maximum



engagement. Growing up in Nashville, TN, he played mostly punk and jazz, all the while fighting for human rights, social justice, and better biscuits. In college, he crowd-surfed his way into an old-time barn storm and dove into strengthening networks of American social music and dance. Touring all of the lower 48 states and abroad he can boast a near perfect record for getting people to hold hands with strangers, laugh, and let go. With T-Claw, everyone is always invited. He



dances in the kitchen with his wife and two girls every day and works to gather community for a healthier, happier world. Currently the music and dance coordinator for the John C. Campbell Folk School, T-Claw is also a co-founder of the Oly Old Time Festival and original member of Olympia's own Grizzle Grazzle Tune Snugglers, a band whose motto was: "We are the Grizzle Grazzle Tune Snugglers and so are you!" We are delighted to have T-Claw back for this, the 15th year of the festival.

Balfa Toujours

From Lafayette, Louisiana Balfa Toujours has been together for over 30 years. Christine Balfa formed the band after the death of her father, the legendary fiddler Dewey Balfa. Dewey Balfa was a National Heritage Fellow and is widely recognized a Cajun cultural ambassador central to the renaissance of Cajun and Creole culture. After his passing, Christine, a native Louisiana French speaker, wanted to carry on the traditional Cajun



music and message of the Balfa family. Balfa Toujours, meaning "still and always," plays Cajun songs from their Louisiana culture and continue to write expressive and incredibly danceable original songs. The band consists of musicians with rich musical families as well: joining Christine Balfa (guitar) is Jean-Jacques Aucoin (accordion), Blake Miller (fiddle), Shane Guidry (bass), and Jimmy Breau (drums). Christine also created the non-profit Louisiana Folk Roots and the Grammy nominated band, Bonsoir, Catin.
<http://www.christinebalfa.com/balfa-toujours>

The Earl White Stringband



Fiddlin Earl White has been a prominent figure in the old time music and dance community for more than 50+ years. He is one of few Black Americans playing and perpetuating the music that was once an important part of black culture and black communities across the US. He is an original and founding member of the famed Greengrass Cloggers and received his first fiddle in 1975. Earl's energetic, rhythmic, driving style is attributed to many years of dancing with the Cloggers to the delightful music of Tommy Jarrell, the Highwoods Stringband, the Plank Road Stringband, and the Horseflies, to name a few. His fiddling is as heartfelt as his dancing of earlier years. Currently, Earl leads the "The Earl White Stringband"

with the superb accompaniment of Danny Knicely (guitar), Mark Schatz (bass), and Mark Olitsky (banjo). Earl lives in Floyd County, Virginia where he owns and operates the Big Indian Farm Artisan Bakery with his wife and fellow musician Adrienne Davis.

