

‘BETTY’ to headline Women’s Redrock Music

By Seth Braken

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The Women’s Redrock Music Festival in the rural town of Torrey, Utah is more than just a gathering of hundreds of women and some of the top female folk and indie bands in the nation. For Stephanie Novak, it was the first time she felt really proud of Utah’s music scene.

“It’s an event that could only happen here in Utah and it is, without a doubt, one of the most special moments I could have ever hoped for,” Novak said, who attended the festival for the first time last summer.

Novak is a self-described military brat who has experienced concerts and music scenes in North Carolina that are powerful, collaborative and active.

“I missed the music so much. I am very interested in female groups and singers, and when I first came to Utah, I thought I left all that behind,” she said. “It wasn’t until I went to the festival that I really felt proud of being involved in Utah.”

The festival is celebrating its fifth anniversary and will be held Aug. 12-13 in Torrey, Utah. The festival is attracting some big names this year such as Betty, the band who sings the theme song from *The L Word*. Other well-known acts include Garrison Starr and the Sister Wives.

Each year the festival attracts around 500 attendees and the crowd is extremely diverse. While the festival-goers and performers are not all lesbians, there is a large queer presence and everyone is very open-minded.

The fest, which is a non-profit organization, attracts many from Salt Lake, but there is also a growing market from Las Vegas, California, Seattle and even some from Australia, said Jeri Tafoya, the program director for the festival. The group uses proceeds to sponsor musical scholarships and donate to local charities.

The city of Torrey, which has a population of 171, opens its doors to queer travelers through its hotels, restaurants and camp sites. Due to close proximity to Capitol Reef National Park, there are plenty of restaurant and lodging options. The festival also has pottery, jewelry and other art vendors.

The eateries and lodging options fill nearly completely during the festival, Tafoya said.

“We were a little nervous at first to see how everyone would react to the festival, which is largely a lesbian gathering,” Tafoya said. “But aside from the great music and the economic impact, the community is starting to see that it’s pretty calm.”

The festival is the state’s only large women’s music festival and it strives to build a sense of community for all the festival attendees. However, everyone, including men, is invited to attend the festivities.

“I think everyone that goes can expect a friendly environment where everyone is there for some fantastic music and fantastic friends,” Novak said. “I loved meeting new people at last year’s fest. Everyone was just so awesome and easy to get along with.”

The festival has been growing steadily, but there are no plans to grow much more, Tafoya said.

“We want to keep that intimate gathering feeling in everything,” she said. “It really is so much more than just a music festival.”

The festival is about all the different experiences, friends and communities that are built in just a short period of time.

“I’ll never forget the last night of the festival. The band was going full throttle on stage,” Novak said. “The night was a beautiful clear night and a woman that had just met and I were dancing under the stars. It was a magnificent moment. When you have an experience like that, you hold on to it.”

For more information, including tickets, go to RedrockWomensFest.com.

Festival Lineup

Local Musicians

Jules Morrow
Mary Tebbs Band
Bronwen Beecher
Talia Keys
Chandra Whitaker (of Salt Lake City band, The Vision)
Secily Saunders (also of The Vision)
The Sister Wives

Visiting Musicians

Adrienne Gonzales (Los Angeles)
Ellis (Minneapolis)
Garrison Starr (Los Angeles)
Julie Wheeler (Memphis)
Liza Garsa (Poet/activist out of Texas)
Mia Dyson (Los Angeles)
Natalia Zuckerman (New York City)
Mona Tavakoli (San Jose)

Headliners

BETTY