

Dr. Zoo blends Celtic and African music

Written by Richard Amery

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If you want to dance and sing along, you will want to be at the Moose Hall, for the Lethbridge Folk Club's presentation of Dr. Zoo, Oct. 5. It will be like a Maritimes-style kitchen party in Africa.

Dr. Zoo features band members from Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge's Megan Brown and Felipe Rodriguez playing fiddle and bass respectively.



"The last time we played here was March 15 at the Lethbridge College Barn for a St. Patrick's Day party," said frontman Randal Arsenault, who spent four years working at Lethbridge College before accepting a professor position at the University of Alberta. "It's a good mix of sing along folk music and African grooves with Celtic fiddle," Arsenault described Dr. Zoo's sound.

He connected with the Lethbridge members through open mics.

"I met Megan because she was playing at the Lethbridge Folk Club open mics. And I met Felipe after playing around open mics at the Owl Acoustic Lounge. I asked about bass players and they recommended Felipe. They've been playing with us for a couple of years," he said. He noted having members living in three different cities can be challenging.

"That is the challenge. But we only play four or five big gigs a year. So we rehearse the day before and the day of the gig," he said adding the band members hold down day jobs, though a couple of them are professional musicians.

He is from Newfoundland, so has a natural affinity for Celtic music, his appreciation for African music comes from Paul Simon's 'Graceland' album.

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“I was definitely influenced by that. And I lived in Africa for 12 years as a biologist,” he said. Dr. Zoo will be joined on stage by Felipe Rodriguez’s dad, who will be adding extra hand drums..

“It’s nice to play with him because he’s a great guy,” he said.

{youtube}DquJWdi8Jsc{/youtube}

they are also working on recording a new record they plan to release next year. ‘We’re also going to apply to festivals during the summer when I’m not working. So hopefully we can play the South Country Fair,” he said.

Tickets for the Folk Club show at the Moose Hall, Oct. 5 are \$20 for members, \$25 for non members, which includes a membership to the Folk Club. The show starts at 8 p.m. on the nose.

— *By Richard Amery, L.A. Beat Editor*