

Wildcat O'Halloran incorporates humor in his music

Local musician will play at Riverside Blues, Brews & BBQ this weekend

"It's shaped like a woman but that's where the resemblance ends, because I never had no guitar running off with my best friend," sings Wildcat O'Halloran on the song "Shaped Like a Woman," off his new disc, "Hot Pull-down."

On this song, O'Halloran from Sunderland muses about how he finds his guitar a lot more trustworthy than

any woman he has ever known. This song is one of 11 tracks that make this disc such an enjoyable romp through the blues.

On "Hot Pull-down," Wildcat and his band serve up a tasty collection of blues from old-style numbers to bar band rockers to a few covers.

One of the reasons that "Hot Pull-down" is such a refreshing listen is because of the humor that is incorporated in some of these songs.

When it comes to songwriting, O'Halloran never takes himself too seriously, but when it comes to playing well, that's another story. On "Hot Pull-down," he demonstrates his absolute mastery of the blues guitar and is aided by a topnotch band that includes Joe Fitzpatrick on drums and Matt McManamon on bass.

If you want to hear some of these new tunes or pick up a copy of "Hot Pull-down," head to the Riverside Blues, Brews & BBQ Festival at the Franklin County Fairgrounds on Saturday from noon to 5 p.m.

The festival is hosted by the Greenfield Recreation Department and Lefty's Brewing Company and sponsored by local businesses. Now in its seventh year, the festival that was previously held at Beacon Field

moves to the fairgrounds this year.

In between all the BBQ cooking competitions and the beer tastings, you can enjoy plenty of music. And as we settle into fall, this is one of your last chances to experience music outside, and is also one of the area's only all blues music festivals.

You'll have to get there early to check out The Wildcat O'Halloran Band because

they are going to kick things off at noon.

Janet Ryan from Conway, who is known for her rich soulful voice, is also part of the lineup. She will play later in the day at 4.

Danielle Miraglia from Boston will perform at 1:15. Her voice is a raw, powerful instrument that's nicely supported by her skilled picking style of guitar playing.

Rounding out the lineup is Easy-Baby, a band from Connecticut that features yet another powerhouse female vocalist, Kelly Rago, as well as master harp player Rich Badowski. They will take the stage at 2:30. This popular band performs throughout New England and will head to Memphis, Tenn. in January to participate in the international blues challenge.

So it's pretty obvious, if you are a blues fan, that the Franklin County Fairgrounds is where you'll want to be on Saturday. Admission is \$20 or \$10 for designated drivers. This is an age 21 and older event. For more information, visit: www.riversidebluesandbbq.com

Another option

The 8th annual Old 78 Farm Fall Festival will be held in Warwick on Saturday, with music beginning at



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Wildcat O'Halloran will perform at Franklin County Fairgrounds this weekend.

noon and continuing until 11 p.m. This festival, which is held on a sprawling family farm, is very much a family event. It features all kinds of local food (much grown on the farm), vendors, crafts and fun events, but its main focus is the music.

Musically, I think of this as a scaled-down version of the Wormtown festival because many of the acts playing have routinely graced the stage at Wormtown. The artists performing are a mix of some of our top local acts and some nationally touring ones.

Rebel Alliance, a band from the Berkshires with a strong following in this area, will bring its reggae-influenced sounds to the festival, as will the Alchemystics, another group that draws heavily from reggae. This



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Flux Capacitor will perform at the Old 78 Farm Fall Festival in Warwick this weekend.

Northampton band, a festival favorite, blends Jamaican, Cuban and Trinidadian rhythms into its modern-day roots-rock sound.

Duppy Conquerors, a band that features some of Boston's finest reggae musicians, will be performing the music of Bob Marley.

You can soak up some genre-blurring rock music from two of our popular locals acts when The Diamondstones and Rice: An American Band take the stage. Rice is led by Phil Simon, who happens to be the host of this fine festival.

Another local band that will play is the folk-influenced acoustic group Lunar Carnival from South Hadley, and if you are a fan of the blues, you won't want to miss singer-guitarist Patty Tuite, who hails from Connecticut.

Rounding it out is Flux Capacitor. This group features three brothers from Pennsylvania who play a heavily improvised psychedelic rock music that makes for an exciting live show. Flux Capacitor is a fast-rising band in the jam scene, and has played large festivals like Bonnaroo.

The band is currently in the middle of an extensive U.S. tour, so do catch them in a small setting like this while you can.

After taking a good look at this lineup, I have to say that you should be sure to bring your dancing shoes. While the Old 78 Farm Fall Festival is a very laid-back festival, the music will be very high energy.

Admission is \$10 in advance and \$15 at the gate; children under 12 are free. Please note do not bring any pets, as this is a working farm.

Both the Blues, Brews & BBQ Festival and the Old 78 Farm Fall Festival are rain or shine events.

The Old 78 Farm Fall Festival is at 823 Orange Road in Warwick.

For more information, visit: www.old78farm.com

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