

The NINES to bring best of music and arts to Devens

By Ed Hannan, Sun Correspondent *What Do U Wanna Do*

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Whether it's Coachella, Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza or even last month's Boston Calling, music festivals are all the rage.

They are nothing new (New Orleans and Montreal have held jazz festivals for years and, of course, Woodstock pioneered the concept in the late 1960s), but now, there's a music festival here in our own backyard: The NINES, a music and arts festival that comes to Willard Field in Devens on Saturday, Aug. 10.

The lineup features San Diego-based indie rockers Delta Spirit, Austin, Texas, rockers Explosions in the Sky, Canadian experimental rockers Walk off the Earth, singer-songwriter Shuggie Otis, and Canadian DJ Kid Koala.

Delta Spirit has been around since 2005 and has appeared on Late Night with Conan O'Brien, Last Call with Carson Daly, Jimmy Kimmel Live and Later with Jules Holland. They have opened for My Morning Jacket, performed at Lollapalooza and Coachella. They are critical darlings whose music has appeared in the final scene of the television series Friday Night Lights, as well as Sons of Anarchy and The Walking Dead.

Explosions in the Sky have opened for Fugazi, but more notably, wrote the soundtrack for the film version of Friday Night Lights. The band's music has been featured in everything from CSI: Crime Scene Investigation to One Tree Hill to the sports documentary series 24/7 Mayweather vs. De La Hoya to the movies Ghosts of Girlfriends Past and This Means War. The band's two most recent albums, 2007's All of a Sudden I Miss Everyone and 2011's Take Care, Take Care, Take Care both landed on the Billboard album chart.

Shuggie Otis has been around seemingly forever. He wrote "Strawberry Letter 23" for The Brothers Johnson, which reached No. 5 on the Billboard pop singles chart in 1977. He's the son of Johnny Otis, known as the original "kind of rock and roll" and the "godfather of rhythm and blues." Shuggie has worked with everyone from Al Kooper to Frank Zappa to Etta James and Bobby "Blue" Bland. He actually turned down the chance to tour with The Rolling Stones in 1974 as well as declined an offer from Quincy Jones to produce one of his albums in the mid 1970s, but he has made guest appearances on recent albums from Mya, Monica and Tevin Campbell.

The all-ages event will also feature comedy, art installations, exhibits, interactive art projects, crafts, food and beverages, and more. The music lineup will take place on two stages with no overlapping sets while comedians will perform in a comedy tent. A beer garden for those 21 and over will offer beer and wine.

"Our mission is to bring attention to the breadth of artistic talent in our region, bring top-tier bands to our area and build on this year after year," said Monica Hinojos, executive director of Ayer-based 3Rivers Arts, which is co-producing the NINES. "We want to introduce audiences to Central Massachusetts as a hub of artistic talent, and hopefully, a regular summer tour stop for their favorite bands. Our vision is that a happy side-effect of The NINES will be a cultural and economic boost for the area, too."

Early-bird tickets priced at \$49 are available now. They can be purchased through Ticketmaster at www.ticketmaster.com or by phone at 800-653-8000. Children under 10 are admitted free with parent or guardian.

"Patron of the Arts" VIP packages are available for \$109. They include premier parking, fast entry, access to the private Cloud 9 lounge, arts garden and viewing area, complimentary beverages and hospitality, air conditioned restrooms, an official poster and more.

For information, visit www.theninesfestival.com.