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Wyatt Deck is alive with the sound of music

Musicians gather at Arboretum's Folk Music Jam Sessions

By MEE YANG
Aggie News Writer

A total of 28 participants and listeners gathered on a beautiful and sunny Friday in the Arboretum to play music ranging from John Anderson's "Seminal Wind" to Johnny Nash's "I Can See Clearly Now".

The gathering was part of the Folk Music Jam Sessions, which brings together musicians and music lovers every alternate Friday from noon to 1 p.m. at Wyatt Deck at the Arboretum.

Elaine Fingerett, academic coordinator of the Arboretum, has served as host and facilitator for the community music sessions since they started six years ago.

"Folk Music Jam Sessions are a chance for student, staff, faculty and community musicians to come together to play a variety of folk music genres," Fingerett said.

"I think the spirit and practice of folks coming together to play music really has

not changed much over the decades," Fingerett said. "So much folk music expresses a message about our culture and society."

A mixture of students, staff members and community members were present at last Friday's session. At one point, a small boy of about six joined in drumming. Even the cleaning lady for the restroom watched and drummed with a toilet paper roll as she waited for the restroom to clear out.

"The Arboretum is the most beautiful part of campus, a welcoming place to play music outdoors," Fingerett said. "Many years ago, before I worked at the Arboretum, I occasionally played music with friends at the Wyatt Deck. I remembered how much I loved playing there and I thought, 'Why not create a biweekly opportunity for folks to play music together?'"

Listening nearby was an alumni couple from Toronto, Peter and Kay Mehren. The Mehrens found out about the biweekly jam

sessions through the Davis Dirt events calendar, and since Kay used to play folk music when she was in the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, they decided to spend Friday seeing the campus and the Arboretum.

They sat quietly and reminisced about their days at UC Davis during the late '50s and early '60s.

"When we were here," Kay said, "there would have been 50 people joining in and singing with their guitars."

"People would just show up and play music. Other people would hear it and come and go back to their dorms and get their guitar," Kay said.

The jam sessions are a part of the GATEways Project at the Arboretum, which stands for Gardens, Arts and the Environment. The project works to use the Arboretum as a space to showcase creative work at UC Davis, according to its website.

More information can be found at arbo-



Aaron Juarez / Aggie

Folk jamming sessions occur every other Friday on Wyatt Deck in the Arboretum.

retum.ucdavis.edu. The next jam session will be held on March 2 at the Wyatt Deck.

"Come bring your instrument, your voice or your interest in listening," Fingerett said.

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