

High Sierra Music Festival 2014 Artist Bios

Afrolicious

San Francisco dance-fusion collective Afrolicious has established itself as one of the top live/electronic bands on the scene. Starting as a weekly SF dance party featuring DJs and brothers Pleasuremaker and Señor Oz, who brought percussionists, MCs and horn players into the mix, Afrolicious evolved into a full band with as many as 12 players — and a well-earned reputation for incredible live shows.

Ashleigh Flynn & The Back Porch Majority

Ashleigh Flynn grew up in Kentucky and cut her teeth on local bluegrass music. Now based in Portland, OR, the prolific songwriter is also an electrifying performer. Her latest release *A Million Stars* (produced by longtime friend and collaborator Chris Funk of The Decemberists) has received positive reviews in several Americana journals, and features guest appearances by Todd Snider and more.

Avi Buffalo

Hailing from Long Beach, CA and built around the songs of guitarist Avi Zahner-Isenberg, Avi Buffalo hit the ground running with their eponymous debut, a collection of off-kilter pop that earned raves from numerous critics. They've kept the momentum going with tours in North America and Europe, as well as their follow-up releases (including the new album due in September) on esteemed label Sub Pop.

Beats Antique

Electronic/world fusion "live-tronica" group Beats Antique has become wildly popular amongst the tribal dance, music and performance art communities, and beyond. With their global approach to sound and style, the trio masterfully merges modern technology, live instrumentation and seductive performance to create a gorgeous and trance-y collage of beats, loops, grooves, vocal riffs and rhythms.

Bill Frisell - GUITAR IN THE SPACE AGE! featuring Greg Leisz, Tony Scherr & Kenny Wollesen

With a career spanning more than 25 years, Bill Frisell has established himself as a visionary presence in American music. A jazz guitarist beyond classification, he creates picturesque soundscapes that mix rock and country with jazz and blues. His newest project features a cast of stellar musicians (and frequent Frisell collaborators): Greg Liesz on pedal and lap steel guitars, Tony Scherr on bass and Kenny Wollesen on drums.

Bombino

From Niger where he was raised as a member of the nomadic Tuareg, to being named one of *Rolling Stone's* 2013 "artists to watch," guitarist Bombino has had quite an amazing journey. His band's music fuses traditional Berber rhythms with the energy of rock, while his dazzling live performances and guitar virtuosity have led notable critics to compare him to Jimi Hendrix, Carlos Santana and Jerry Garcia.

BoomBox

BoomBox is the duo of versatile producers, DJs, songwriters and multi-instrumentalists Russ Randolph and Zion Rock Godchaux. Derived from the rich musical history of Muscle Shoals, AL and the West Coast underground electronic scenes, their unique style is an electronic blend of vintage rock and blues that also incorporates their signature backbeat, psychedelia and funky house sounds.

The Budos Band

An instrumental collective signed with renowned funk and soul label Daptone, The Budos Band wins over audiences around the globe with their "Afro-Soul" sound. Their music is shaped by the seemingly disparate influences of the band members — including horn players and percussionists — and blends jazz, deep funk, Afro-beat and soul into a combo of rhythm and melody that gets the dance floor movin'.

The Bug Family Band

The Bug Family Band plays rockin' original music for kids (and former kids). Hatched in the Bay Area as the Ladybug Picnic, they metamorphosized into their mature band with eight rockin' Bugs and are now gracing the High Sierra Family Stage with their debut CD. They are sure to rock us all into a pollination frenzy that you don't want to miss!

The California Honeydrops

The California Honeydrops don't just play music. They throw parties. The band defies genres, drawing heavily on Southern soul and Bay Area R&B with a twist of New Orleans second-line street music. Their style might not have a name, but one thing is certain: The California Honeydrops create music to make people dance, sing and enjoy themselves.

Carolina Chocolate Drops

Bursting onto the scene in 2010 with a Grammy-winning debut album, the Carolina Chocolate Drops have made a serious name for themselves in just a few short years. Starting with material culled from the Piedmont region of the Carolinas, they sought to freshly interpret this work, not merely recreate it, highlighting the central role African-Americans played in shaping our nation's popular music.

The Chris Robinson Brotherhood

We welcome back Chris Robinson with his psychedelic blues-rock brotherhood of incredible musicians: Neal Casal, Adam Macdougall, George Sluppick and Mark Dutton. What started as an experiment during The Black Crowes' hiatus evolved into a fully-realized band with a growing trove of original material — mainly via the writing partnership of Robinson and Casal — and a reputation for killer live shows.

Darkwave (John Medeski, Skerik & Adam Deitch)

You might wonder how these three prolific players — keyboardist John Medeski of MMW and more, drummer Adam Deitch of Lettuce (also a Grammy-nominated producer) and saxophonist Skerik (of countless bands) — found time to form a project together. They've played as a trio over the years, and this year they're bringing their jazz and funk (and slightly twisted) live show to High Sierra.

Dead Winter Carpenters

Somewhat new on the scene, Dead Winter Carpenters is quickly emerging as a favorite among roots music fans, poised with an arsenal of original songs and an unyielding tour schedule. Defying musical boundaries, the band blends elements of rock, folk, roots, country, bluegrass, ragtime, blues and reggae with choice influences from throughout rock history, as well as traditional fiddle tunes.

The Del McCoury Band

For more than 50 years, Del McCoury's music has defined authenticity for hardcore bluegrass fans as well as those only vaguely familiar with the genre. Del is something special, a living link to the days when bluegrass was made only in hillbilly honky tonks, schoolhouse shows and on the Grand Ole Opry stage, yet also a commandingly vital presence today, from primetime and late night TV to music festivals from coast-to-coast.

Dopapod

Dopapod is not so much a jam band as they are a band that improvises. They're an electronic band without computers, a metal band with groove and soul, and a funk band that's not afraid to get intricate. Dopapod's progressive songwriting, boundless improvisational exploration and infectious and sensory live performances are why a growing number of music lovers are eagerly returning for more.

The Duhks

The Duhks are back on the heels of their long-awaited new studio release *Beyond the Blue*. The album shows the band in the best form of its 13-year career. Energized by the return of vocalist Jessee Havey and addition of new members Rosie Newton (fiddle), Kevin Garcia (drums/percussion) and Colin Savoie-Levac (guitar/bouzouki), founder Leonard Podolak found an amazing palette of inspiration for the new project.

Ernest Ranglin & Avila

Jamaican-born guitarist Ernest Ranglin is often credited with being the originator of ska music — the precursor to reggae that combined elements of Caribbean folk and calypso with American jazz. His playful virtuosity and jazz sensibility have made him a revered and honored player, and at age 82 he is still a joy to behold onstage. We're very excited to have Ernest Ranglin return to High Sierra.

Fareed Haque and Friends

From his appearances with Garaj Mahal to his playshops and countless sit-ins, guitar virtuoso Fareed Haque has certainly participated in his share of memorable High Sierra moments. Fareed's playing moves easily between jazz, rock, blues, ragas, classical and open-ended improvisational jamming, underscoring that his versatility is one of his greatest assets.

The Floozies

The Floozies are producer/guitarist Matt Hill and drummer Mark Hill, two brothers who are bringing their fresh approach to electronic music and live performance to venues and festivals all over the country. The duo's combination of cutting edge electronic production and party rocking funk energizes crowds and turns venues into epic dance parties.

Greensky Bluegrass

A five-piece band hailing from Kalamazoo, MI, Greensky Bluegrass plays traditional bluegrass instruments and uses them to create original songs and soundscapes that are unique and new, yet somehow feel comfortable and familiar. They draw their influences from a wide range of musical styles, and their sets flow from traditional bluegrass numbers to soaring originals and inspired covers.

Hard Working Americans

This new all-star group is led by Todd Snider's intrepid vocals and backed by a band of ace players: Dave Schools (Widespread Panic), Neal Casal (Chris Robinson, Phil Lesh), Chad Staehly (Great American Taxi) and Duane Trucks (Col. Bruce Hampton). Their self-titled debut album dropped in January, and their rockin' live shows leave fans cheering for more. HWA will be doing overtime at a special Late Night show.

Heather Maloney + Darlingside

Talented, riveting singer/songwriter Heather Maloney collaborated with indie quartet Darlingside, whose lush sound blends folk, retro-pop, barbershop and chamber music. This fine pairing resulted in *Woodstock*, an EP that garnered attention from *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe*. Now these Massachusetts natives are performing the new songs on tour dates across the U.S.

Hey Marseilles

Seattle-based orchestral-pop ensemble Hey Marseilles emerged in 2010 with a debut release that NPR called "sublime and heartfelt." Lyrical wayfaring abutted an instrumental palette that embraced folk tradition — accordion, strings, and horns; gypsy, Gallic and classical. Their more recent material is less old-world yet still evokes the band's signature sound: poignant, panoramic, unreservedly gorgeous.

Hollow Wood

With their debut LP *Spirits* scheduled to release this year, Hollow Wood offers listeners both the catchy familiar and the unexpected. Most would classify this Boise, ID group as a "folk" band, but they continue to evolve into a well-tuned collective of heart, soul and musical fluidity, with emotionally-charged songs and live instrumentation that breathes new life into the status quo of the genre.

Incidental Animals

The band name might be unfamiliar, but you know the players! Incidental Animals is Kyle Hollingsworth from The String Cheese Incident, Dan Lebowitz, Steve Adams and Dave Brogan from ALO, and Jen Hartswick from Trey Anastasio Band. The group did a series of shows during a rare time when their respective bands weren't touring or recording, and they had so much fun that they decided to bring the party to High Sierra.

John Craigie

For the past decade, John Craigie has "lived the life romantic" of a continuously touring folk singer. A dynamic yet humble troubadour who performs across the U.S. and the world, he stays true to the essence of folk music and the traditions of the seminal writers of our past century. His songs, with timeless melodies and insightful lyrics, take many poetic turns before bringing his listeners back home.

Jonathan Wilson

A prodigiously talented singer, songwriter, record producer and guitar hero, Jonathan Wilson is admired for his authentic exploration and modern updating of the "Laurel Canyon sound." His albums have earned positive reviews in the U.S. and Europe, he's opened for the likes of Tom Petty, RatDog and Wilco, and he's produced acclaimed work by artists such as Chris Robinson, Father John Misty, Dawes and many more.

Ms. Lauryn Hill

Ms. Lauryn Hill became a star with multi-platinum hip-hop trio the Fugees and then her widely acclaimed, Grammy-winning album *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*. Though she famously "dropped out" for a time, Hill remained an enduring figure in the public eye. She's returned to the stage in recent years, performing solo and Fugees material as well as Bob Marley covers and more for fans excited to experience this legendary neo-soul vocalist live.

Lettuce

Celebrating 20 years as modern day rulers of old school funk, all-star collective Lettuce formed through a mutual love of pure funk. With such highly skilled players and unrivaled chemistry, it's no wonder the band wows audiences with their fresh take on a revered musical style. Their latest release *Fly* is a raging slab of relentless groove, hyper-charged syncopation and psychedelized soul anthems.

Living Folklore

Since 2000, Living Folklore has brought zany characters, clowns, stiltwalkers, giant puppets and workshops to High Sierra, and this year the tradition continues! They are Gaia, a spritely wood elf who knows the secrets of plants, Dennis The Red Eustace who will be back with more puppet mayhem, Heather Normandale the sing-sangy songstress, and of course Gumbo Wobbly.

Lord Huron

LA-based savant Ben Schneider wrote, recorded and blew people's minds with his debut album, which the LA Times called "full of lush acoustic guitars and... harmonies" with "Caribbean-influenced percussion that fans Lord Huron's folk sound into flame." For live shows Ben recruited band members, who now perform as Lord Huron, skillfully recreating his songs on stage and winning over new fans.

Moon Hooch

Moon Hooch makes "cave music," similar to house but with one drum kit and two saxophones — no DJs or manufactured beats. While busking in NYC the band was spotted by Mike Doughty of Soul Coughing, which led to opening his national tour and then supporting Galactic, Lotus and more. Moon Hooch's looping, frenetic sax melodies and furious drumming are fierce and trance-like, manic and thrilling.

The Mother Hips

The Mother Hips have been mining the roots of the guitar-oriented American musical landscape for more than two decades. Led by co-founders Tim Bluhm and Greg Loicano, the band is going strong on stage and in the studio. Their most recent release is *Chronicle Man*, a collection of songs culled from their mid-'90s archives of unreleased material, much to the excitement of their loyal fanbase.

Nahko and Medicine For The People

Oregon-native Nahko, born a mix of Apache, Puerto Rican and Filipino cultures and adopted into an American family, suffered an identity crisis from an early age but soon discovered the unifying power of music. With the dynamic group of troubadours known as "Medicine for the People," Nahko delivers a soulful dose of curative vibrations — sometimes exuberant, sometimes savage, but always transformational.

One Big Guitar featuring Scott Law, Lebo & Bo Carper

Scott Law, Bo Carper (New Monsoon) and Dan "Lebo" Lebowitz (ALO) play a captivating mix of rootsy country blues anthems and homespun originals in their newest musical collaboration. Longtime friends and accomplished guitarists, they showcase their individual musical gifts in a trio that exudes authenticity, synergy and personality.

The Polish Ambassador w/ a special appearance by Wildlight

DJ and producer TPA is a favorite of beat aficionados worldwide. Warm, analogue dreamwave, mind-altering glitch, world-infused groove, bass-fueled breaks, sexified down-tempo, electric lullabies and psy-fi funk are just a few of the genres that have poured from TPA's soul into earbuds and ghetto-blasters across the galaxy. Wildlight, his most recent project, is the duo of TPA and folk songwriter/vocalist Ayla Nereo.

Punch Brothers

These five young players have grown and matured together since mandolin virtuoso Chris Thile first formed the band in 2006. *The New York Times* calls them "American country-classical chamber music," though the band claims their latest release, *Who's Feeling Young Now?*, sounds more like hard-charging string-band punk rock. We simply call it great music and a terrific live show you don't want to miss.

RonKat Spearman's Katdelic

A vocalist and guitarist with George Clinton and P-funk (and a Grammy-nominated, BMI Award-winning songwriter), RonKat is a polished entertainer and leader of the funky dance experience known as Katdelic. Their music is a hybrid of rock, funk, soul and pop, and the band is a hot ensemble cast delivering an infectious, sophisticated mix that moves minds and bodies into a long-lasting groove.

SambaDá

SambaDá bring their Afro-Brazilian samba funk back to High Sierra. Founded by Brazilian natives Papiba Godinho and Dandha da Hora, the band draws from percussion-based styles of South and Central America, and blends it with that good old funk and reggae backbeat familiar to North American crowds. It's always a dance party when SambaDá takes the stage. Join them in the daily parades, too!

Scott Pemberton

Until you've seen Scott Pemberton play guitar, it's hard to describe. He is regularly compared to other great musicians such as Jimi Hendrix, Dick Dale and James Brown, but after a brief listen it's clear that Scott is creating something all his own. He plays with the uninhibited joy and intensity of someone who recognizes that every time he makes music, it is an honor and a gift.

Sensations featuring Greg Loiacono, Reed Mathis & Dave Brogan

Guitarist/songwriter Greg Loiacono formed Sensations while The Mother Hips were on hiatus; the band currently performs as a trio with bassist Reed Mathis (Tea Leaf Green) and drummer Dave Brogan (ALO). Their sound evokes the music of Roy Orbison and Buddy Holly, infused with '70s power-trio muscle and a dose of '60s British Invasion. Greg calls it "macho/sensitive music that explores modern day psychedelia."

Shakey Graves

Shakey Graves is the post-folk alter-ego of Austin, TX artist Alejandro Rose-Garcia. His southern, old-world sound is completed by frenzied finger-picking and a homemade portable suitcase drum kit. Between sensible balladic moments, gnarly, unconstrained guitar tones wail from his ragged guitar. Shakey Graves is a master of storytelling and a unique, memorable one-man-show.

Sierra Hull

Sierra Hull has already earned considerable respect in the bluegrass world, including five IBMA nominations, and there's a good chance she'll be the first woman to win the mandolin category. As a player, singer and songwriter Sierra has remarkable range and appeal, and has won over fans at performances around the U.S., including such prestigious venues as Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center.

Skerik

You know the guy you see on sax jumping in with a band for a song or two, then 20 minutes later you wonder how that guy got off stage with the one band, got to another stage and is now sitting in with another band before you even got there, when all you did was stop to get a drink on the way over? That's Skerik. He's appeared at High Sierra for many years with many bands — the quintessential artist-at-large.

Stanley Jordan Trio

Jazz guitarist Stanley Jordan first electrified listeners with his innovative "touch technique" nearly 30 years ago. Over the course of numerous recordings and musical collaborations, countless performances, and occasional forays in classical, pop and rock, he's proven himself a chameleonic player of dazzling versatility. His trio features the top-notch rhythm section of bassist Charnett Moffett and drummer Kenwood Dennard.

Steep Ravine

Steep Ravine is an acoustic quartet hailing from the San Francisco Bay Area. Their unique sound, equal parts poetic lyricism and string-playing ingenuity, bends folk and bluegrass in compelling new directions. Steep Ravine's riveting live performances catch audiences by surprise with the sheer acoustic power of their collaborative sound, a mix of soulful tunes and fiery instrumentals.

Steve Poltz

Steve Poltz is a talented and prolific songwriter — as well as a smart-mouth, highly entertaining storyteller. His songs (including collaborations with Jewel) have charted on the Billboard Top 100 and appeared in movies and on TV. Steve's work is an impressive collection of ballads, rockers and melodic acoustic numbers that reflect his incomparable style of alternate tunings and savage finger picking techniques.

STS9

STS9 debuted at High Sierra in 2000 as a little-known instrumental progressive rock act and have since risen to the forefront of the international music scene. Their sound is a tour-de-force of rhythms and textures, beats and melodies, darkness and light all served up in an array of tempos and grooves from energizing, pulsing and ecstatic to ambient, ethereal and hypno-trance-entendental.

Sturgill Simpson

Raised in bluegrass country, Sturgill Simpson has an independent spirit and adventurous songwriting sense. His critically-acclaimed debut album drew comparisons to Waylon Jennings and Merle Haggard. In his latest release, Sturgill explores "progression and sonic oscillation" in country music, creating multi-textured soundscapes with elements of country, bluegrass, rock and even electronica.

T Sisters

For siblings Erika, Rachel and Chloe Tietjen of the T Sisters, their roots as songwriters are buried in a narrative of family and sisterhood. Their timeless harmonies intertwine with Americana and folk influences, forming a testament to family, musical traditions and sisterly creativity nurtured since childhood, but with a swift undercurrent of brazenly sassy fun and playful theatricality.

Thao & The Get Down Stay Down

Thao Nguyen began performing in her teens and spent most of her 20s touring in support of critically acclaimed releases. She fronts her own band and has also worked with such revered artists as Andrew Bird, Joanna Newsom and Laura Viers. Beloved for her delicate yet powerful voice, Thao increasingly steers her songwriting toward social concerns, including her recent work with incarcerated women in California.

Trampled By Turtles

An acoustic quintet from Duluth, MN, Trampled by Turtles exists beyond the box of categorization. Call it alt-bluegrass, non-traditional string, indie-folk, rock-grass, punk-grass or anything else, just show up with an open mind. The band members came from various rock groups and still play with that plugged-in intensity, only with acoustic instruments and beautiful, high-lonesome vocal harmonies.

The Travelin' McCourys

The Travelin' McCourys are 21st century musical pilgrims and adventurers. As the sons of bluegrass legend Del McCoury, Ronnie on mandolin and Rob on banjo continue their father's work — a lifelong dedication to the power of bluegrass music to bring joy into people's lives. And with IBMA Fiddle Player of the Year Jason Carter and bassist Alan Bartram, the ensemble is loved and respected by the bluegrass faithful.

Turkuaz

Turkuaz is a funk army of multi-instrumentalists and singers that aims to conquer the world... or at least shake the walls and the booties in every room they play. Influenced by Sly & The Family Stone, Rick James, Parliament and Bohannon, Turkuaz adds healthy doses of jittery, world-pop-power groove and a passion for Motown and R&B, resulting in a refreshing twist on the funk idiom.

Typhoon

This 11-member group from Oregon creates indie rock music with complicated arrangements and careful orchestration — featuring vocals, strings, horns, percussion and more — yet upbeat, catchy songs. After causing a stir in their home turf, Typhoon earned a "best song" nod from *Paste Magazine*, performed on the *Late Show with David Letterman* and opened for such acts as The Decemberists and The Shins.

Wheeland Brothers

The Wheeland Brothers are surfers making music for surfers, self-described "acoustic beach rock and ukulele hip hop reggae." It's Newport Beach shortboarder/Sublime attitude colliding with the San-O chill-out longboarder/Jack Johnson vibe. Their songs cover a full spread of punk reggae, acoustic hip hop and ukulele bonfire jams, and hit all sides of the Southern California beach culture flavor.

Widespread Panic

Twenty years ago Widespread Panic graced High Sierra's stage in Bear Valley for the first time. Today this musical powerhouse is one of the top American jambands on the scene, with a fervently dedicated fanbase who travel far and wide for their favorite band. WP's sound is southern rock meets funk and progressive jam rock, and their shows are a mix of time-honored originals and inspired cover songs. They'll close out the Grandstand Stage on Sunday night with two full sets — get ready to rock!