

DULCIMER DUO

Along with many rock bands, orchestra and string musicians are equally prominent in making Eastern Oregon a music hub.

Heidi Muller and Bob Webb bring versatility and a lifetime of experience to dulcimers and folk music.

Muller has recorded five solo CDs, and her song "Good Road" has opened the NPR program "Inland Folk" each week for the past 25 years.

Webb has played in the backup band for Odetta, Arlo Guthrie, Tom Paxton, Mike and Peggy Seeger and other folk legends.

Muller and Webb are an irrepressible, nationally-known musical team who make their home in Wallowa County.

Muller's time and talents are divided between songwriting and dulcimer. She teaches with Webb at the annual Dulcimer Camp that they run at Wallowa Lake. She also provides group and private lessons and teaches at folk and dulcimer festivals around the country.

Webb, a West Virginia native, played cello while he was in high school. In 1974,

he was playing in what he calls a "hippie farm band" at a county fair gig for a maker of "West Virginian Stomper Dolls," an Appalachian children's toy.

A local dulcimer maker in the next booth noticed Webb's interest in the flat, four-stringed instruments and gave him a dulcimer to play.

Since then, Webb has shared his passion for dulcimer, as well as mandolin, through lessons and his partnership with Muller, which began in 2003.

After a decade of visiting Northeast Oregon to play concerts and events, the couple moved to Wallowa County in 2012.

"People would ask us, 'Why don't you move here?'" Webb said. "We told them it was a big decision. Then they'd say, 'Jump.' So we did."

Today, Muller and Webb are busy recording their fourth, an as yet un-named CD.

The album — chock-full of

songs written by Muller — will include more than just dulcimers. Accordion, fiddle, guitar, mandolin, ukulele and even a hurdy-gurdy, all played by local musicians, add diversity to the sound.

One humorous song, "Little Black Tick," includes a bassoon and the throaty punctuation of a contrabassoon played by Mark Eubanks.

Next up for the duo are concerts in the Tri-Cities, Washington, and elsewhere in the fall.

Muller and Webb said they may start a science-musical day camp for kids similar to a project they ran in West Virginia.

"There's never an end to things," Muller said. "The music just keeps going."



Ellen Morris Bishop

Heidi Muller and Bob Webb share the experience of dulcimer music with Eastern Oregon communities and beyond.