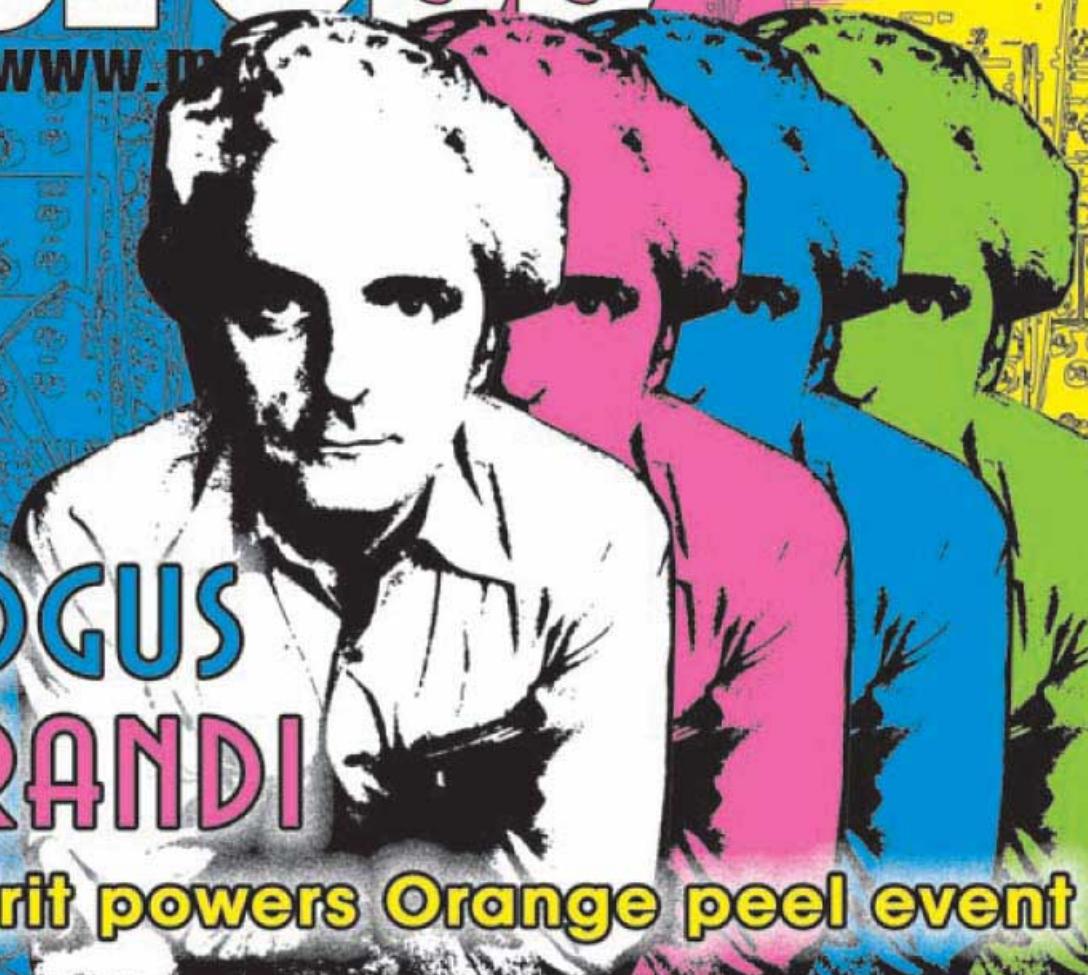


# MOUNTAIN Xpress

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## MOOGUS OPERANDI

Moog spirit powers Orange peel event



BANDING AGAINST BASHING p.14



DRUG COURT SAVES LIVES p.16



ACS SAYS GOODBYE TO ITS LONGTIME DIRECTOR p.60



PRESENTS A NEW FUNDRAISER CONCERT EVENT:

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## Feeling the Moog spirit

Benefit brings together local musicians, a California-based keys wizard and one mammoth synthesizer

by Jake Frankel

Michelle Moog-Koussa knows her dad would've dug the spirit behind Moogus Operandi.

For one thing, it features an analog modular synthesizer so massive, it's known as the "Wall of Doom." And virtuoso keyboardist Erik Norlander won't be playing the monster alone. An orchestra of diverse local musicians (including Woody Wood, Ellie LaBar, Adama Dembele, Shen Hunt, Greg Howell, Derrick Johnson, Oso Rey, Debrissa McKinney and Amos Gaynes) will be adding strings, percussion, horns and vocals to the mix.

Bob Moog would've loved the idea of creating such musical fusion, says Moog-Koussa, who timed the event to celebrate what would've been Moog's 76th birthday. "His beacon was really music as a transcendental means of communication that brought people together in community," she says. "And that's what this event is doing — it's bringing different musicians together, different kinds of music together."

Offering a night of musical, artistic and multimedia exploration, the Moogus Operandi event aims to bring the legacy of Moog, the synthesizer engineering pioneer, to life.

A worldwide electronic-music icon known for his innovative analog synths and theremins, the inventor lived in Asheville for 27 years before his death in 2005. Now, the Bob Moog Foundation, a nonprofit started by Moog-Koussa, seeks to carry Moog's torch by educating and inspiring people through electronic music.

"This foundation is driven by making an impact on future generations," Moog-Koussa tells *Xpress*. "That's a very powerful thing to be able to do. I think it would be a waste of his legacy if someone didn't fulfill that."

The latest in a series of creative events held to help fulfill that mission, Operandi will be headlined by keyboard maestro Norlander, who Moog-Koussa says she recruited because he's "a really multifaceted symbol of how the Moog legacy has carried on, through the music he chooses to perform and the variety of Moog instruments he uses."

One of the instruments Norlander will bring to Asheville from his home in Northern California is a massive, 400-pound analog modular synthesizer his roadies coined the "Wall of Doom." Powering the six-by-seven-foot musical monolith is a 1967 vintage Moog modular, complete with 22 oscillators(!) and six filters.

"When I got my first Minimoog, it was an epiphany for me. It was 'Wow, this is the greatest sounding synthesizer I've ever heard,' and it just kind of went on from there," Norlander says of his ever-expanding rig. "It's only a 'wall of doom' for the poor guys who have to lift the thing and put it into trucks and all that."

On his new album, *The Galactic Collective*, Norlander harnesses the musical beast to craft epic instrumental compositions that call to mind everyone from Pink Floyd and Rush to Metallica. A prolific artist, he culled the songs from his previous 32 albums of material,

**who:**

Erik Norlander, Blind Boy Chocolate and the Milk Sheikhs and other local collaborators

**what:**

Moogus Operandi, a benefit for the Bob Moog Foundation

**where:**

The Orange Peel

**when:**

Thursday, May 27 (7 p.m. / 6 p.m. doors. \$10/\$12. [theorangepeel.net](http://theorangepeel.net) and [moogfoundation.org](http://moogfoundation.org))



Bob Moog, the legend.

PHOTOS COURTESY THE BOB MOOG FOUNDATION

re-recording the tracks with a new band and reinterpreting them into a cohesive sonic whole that navigates intensely technical prog-rock. "You take the idea of a best-of album but then you go in and you reinterpret all those songs in one singular context," Norlander says of the concept.

At the Orange Peel, Norlander plans to recruit top local musicians to help bring songs like his 20-minute opus, "The Dark Water," to life. The collaborations promise to produce a unique mix of electronic and organic improvisation that Norlander sees as a fitting way to honor Moog's work.

"A big part of the modular Moog system is truly the spirit of limitless possibilities and the idea of improvisation; not only musically, but sonically," he says. "There will be certain anchors and themes, but how long it takes us to get to each of the themes, and how we get there, is really up to all the musicians."

Empowering the audience to join in the creative spirit, Operandi will also provide opportunities for those in the crowd to collaborate and improvise, as organizers plan to set up a public "MoogLab" with theremins and synthesizers. The evening will also include the launch of Moog Filtered Ale (See sidebar), a multimedia presentation created by local digital-design guru Gene Felice, and an art auction of Moog-inspired work from local artists such as Gabriel Shaffer, Chad Adair and Phil Cheney.

All of the proceeds from the event will go to the foundation, which Moog-Koussa says has been hit hard by the sluggish economy.



Keyboard virtuoso Erik Norlander is bringing his 400-pound analog modular synthesizer, the "Wall of Doom," to the show.

"We're struggling just like other nonprofits right now," she says. "So, we're getting creative. The beer is one of the ways we're getting creative."

Moog-Koussa thinks that her dad would've approved of the new brew. "He loved beer," she says. "We never drank any kind of soda at our house. He would always say, 'Beer's better for you than Coke is, beer's better for you than pop.'"

The foundation continues to make slow but steady progress towards its goal of creating a Moogseum to house Moog's archives, interactive exhibits and a performance venue, says Moog-Koussa. In the meantime, expanding the foundation's school program is a major focus.

"Instead of just going into schools every once in a while, we're going to develop something for grades K through eight that we can start here and then grow throughout the region and then the nation in the next five to ten years," she says.

More than anything else, Moog-Koussa says it's the potential to impact young lives that motivates her to plow ahead.

"Sometimes I surprise myself at how hard I'm driven at it," she says, relaying a story of how she got up at 3 a.m. on a recent morning to start working. "My husband said to me 'Do you have the holy spirit in you?' and I said, 'No, I have the spirit of Bob Moog in me.'"



Jake Frankel can be reached at [jfrankel@mountainx.com](mailto:jfrankel@mountainx.com).

# Moog in a bottle

Asheville Brewing Company releases Moog Filtered Ale



by Anne Fitten Glenn

Asheville Brewing Company and the Asheville-based Bob Moog Foundation are launching a beer named for synthesizer pioneer Bob Moog.

The Moog Filtered Ale, an American pale with notes of caramel and pine, will be available starting Thursday, May 27. The first tastes will be served to the public at Moogus Operandi. All proceeds from the sale of the limited edition beer will be donated to the foundation.

The ale initially will be sold from May 27 through May 30 at Greenlife Grocery, The Orange Peel and Asheville Pizza and Brewing. Starting May 31, it'll be distributed nationally and internationally (where possible) through Asheville-based beer shop Bruisin' Ales. It will also be available on tap at various restaurants and pubs throughout Western North Carolina.

"It's a very accessible beer that reflects the Moog legacy," says Doug Riley, head brewer and part owner of Asheville Brewing. "I've been a fan of Bob Moog since college, and I'm excited to present a beer in honor of an American pioneer."

(Asheville Brewing previously produced a limited edition Christmas Jam White Ale, in honor of Warren Haynes' Christmas Jam concert. All profits from that beer's sales — more than \$9,800 — went to the W&S Charitable Foundation, which partners with Habitat for Humanity to provide housing for area residents.)

The beer's label was designed by Asheville artist Phil Cheney. It shows Moog leaning over a keyboard with musical notes, synthesizer knobs and patch cables floating around him. The number "76" graces the upper right-hand corner of the label, commemorating what would have been Moog's 76th birthday, on May 23 (Moog died in 2005).

Sean McDonald, board co-chair of the Bob Moog Foundation, says he's excited about the ale and what it means for Moog. "We can give people a rockstar way to donate to the Bob Moog Foundation, which means schools will get better programs to use music to teach science," he says. "I think the whole team here at the foundation is really proud to be working with Mike Rangel and Asheville Brewing, because this model is fun, innovative and generates revenue for a nonprofit that's making the world a better place. That's a win-win-win."

So how does McDonald like the beer? "I love it. Perfect ale — worthy of the Moog-y community of donors, sponsors, allies, volunteers and friends," he says. "In my experience, the Moog Filtered Ale is best served with a pizza from APBC and a side of synth rock, turned up loud ... but I'm going to try salad and theremin jazz next."

Anne Fitten Glenn writes about beer for [mountainx.com](http://mountainx.com) and her blog, [brevogasm.com](http://brevogasm.com).

# Opener Dwight Hawkins



PHOTO BY JERRY NELSON

by Scott Sessoms

You may have seen Dwight Hawkins on the streets of Asheville, making music with a large handsaw and a violin bow, to striking effect.

Sometimes he plays solo on a classical-sounding piece, other times he's joined by old-time musicians and uses the saw as a fiddle, or he'll scratch it to keep a percussive rhythm. His saw has a unique, high-pitched sound, similar to the theremin.

Hawkins lives an unconventional life. He's chosen to be a full-time street musician, despite his carpentry and building experience. He calls himself and his friends hobos.

How does one fall into this line of work? His childhood wasn't that uncommon: strict parents, good grades, a few state science-project awards. But craving for adventure led him to run away and live on the streets a few times.

Hawkins found music: punk rock, folk, Woody Guthrie. "It's all similar," Hawkins says. "It's all dissident music with strong messages and emotions."

Hawkins, 29, has played music and continuously learned new instruments all his life. By age 10, he played the trombone, tuba and piano. In his teens, he focused on the guitar.

Music and traveling are his passions. He often pops out of town on freight trains. "Free spirit"; you hear that term a lot, especially in towns like Asheville, with lots of artists and entrepreneurs. But Hawkins directly lives the full spirit.

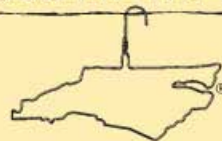
His band here, Blind Boy Chocolate and the Milk Sheiks, plays a lot of jug-band music, '20s and '30s style. The Sheiks open the Moogus Operandi event — don't miss them.

Blind Boy Chocolate and the Milk Sheiks are Dwight Hawkins on saw and vocals; Aaron Gunn on fiddle and vocals; Antone Costa, finger-style guitar, kazoo, harmonica and vocals; Nick Marshall, mandolin and vocals; Alex Brady, washtub bass; Mike Moravetz, vocals and accordion — plus frequent guest Jesse Kammerdiener, country-and-western folk guitar/harmonica/vocals.

Read the entire story, including videos of Hawkins playing on the streets and traveling by train, at [mountainx.com](http://mountainx.com).

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