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## DAS Fest USA, a new German festival, brings Alex Meixner to Elkhorn, WI

DAS Fest USA has officially announced the entertainment lineup for August 13-15, 2021. The fest will bring in German entertainment from across the United States to the Walworth County Fairgrounds in Elkhorn, Wisconsin.

Straight out of Florida and headlining the event, *The Alex Meixner Band* will perform all three days on the Oktoberfest Tent stage.

Alex Meixner is a nationally acclaimed musician, performer, bandleader, educator, and a leading advocate of polka music. Formally trained in classical, jazz, and ethnic music, Alex has cross-pollinated his versatile playing styles through pop music, funk, jazz and polka. He is an active ambassador for polka music, revitalizing interest coast to coast resulting in sold out shows, renewed cultural interest, and growing mainstream acceptance. For Alex, it's more than playing energetic shows; it is a mission to provide a much-needed positive experience that pulls communities together to celebrate history, culture and genuinely good times.

Coming in from Ohio and hitting the stage Friday night, DAS Fest welcomes *Chardon Polka Band*.

The band's range of style is as equally eccentric as its members. *Chardon Polka Band* plays traditional polkas reminiscent of The Lawrence Welk Show, a style that has endeared them to traditional polka fans, but sometimes morphs into punk-rock renditions of the same songs, modified to bring in a younger audience. They throw in comedic renditions of oddball favorites, bizarre audience participation songs, and even polka-rock covers of anything from Twisted Sister's "We're Not Gonna Take It" to Queen's "Fat Bottomed Girls" to Lady Ga Ga's "Bad Romance"! The Chardon Polka Band also has an ever-growing library of original tunes, many of which are featured on their popular studio albums.

Joining the lineup from Nebraska are *Bolzen Beer Band*, and *The Happy Players*.

What started out busking at football tailgates on a fall Saturday has turned into playing shows all over the country and Europe, with *Bolzen Beer Band* becoming the first American band to play Gillamoos, a 700-year-old Volksfest and the 3rd largest in Germany.

For *The Happy Players*, it began with a 2013 Christmas gift of an accordion and the "Beer Barrel Polka" on a cell phone. This group of young energetic musicians quickly rose to become one of the hottest young polka bands in the Midwest.



Minnesota's *Alpensterne* will also perform all three days at DAS Fest USA.

*Alpensterne* is one of the most unique and musically diversified groups performing today. "Name That Tune" performed on the 15-foot Swiss Alphorn and master yodeling are among the band's crowd pleasers. *Alpensterne* performs some of Germany's most loved folk songs. They are equally at home doing the standards, Latin, and all your favorite musical genres. The group performs at numerous German festivals and Oktoberfests.

DAS Fest attendees can go on a music journey with Wisconsin's own *Copper Box* on Saturday afternoon in the Oktoberfest Tent.

The band's co-founder Danny Jerabek was awarded Wisconsin's "Specialty Instrumentalist of the Year" 2 years in a row by WAMI. He is currently endorsed by Hohner Accordions. His wife and *Copper Box* co-founder Michelle was awarded WAMI's "Reed Player of the Year in 2017" and nominated again in 2020. She is WI Polka Hall of Fame's first woman to be named, "Side Person of the Year." *Copper Box* has shared main stage festivals nationwide with artists such as: The Doobie Brothers, The Mavericks, The Little River Band, Buckwheat Zydeco, Little Feat, Little Big Town, Peter Dinklage, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Lou Gramm, Marcia Ball, C.J. Chenier, Spin Doctors, Brave Combo, Terrance Simien, W.C. Clark, Los Lonely Boys, Robbie Krueger from The Doors and Huey Lewis. They have been featured at the International Accordion Festival in San Antonio, TX, the Cotati Accordion Festival in Cotati, CA, as well as seen on national TV, and WI Public Television.

Local favorites, *Alpine Blast*, showcasing yodeling master Bruce Schuetz, and *Die Freistadt Alte Kameraden Band* are also in the lineup. The *Alte Kameraden* will open each day in the Oktoberfest Tent. This 25-member authentic German-style band has played in the U.S., Germany, and Austria. Fans may recognize the band from a recent Travel Wisconsin commercial.

"With three stages on the DAS Fest grounds, we knew we could welcome a variety of German performers," announced DAS Fest Director, Tammy Dunn. "It will be an exciting weekend to celebrate local talent and to introduce Southeastern Wisconsin to new faces traveling from all over the United States."

Providing additional entertainment are German dance performers including D'Oberlander Milwaukee, a club Dunn is familiar with having grown up dancing with the group, and the Original Live Glockenspiel. And if all this wasn't enough there will be two days of Dachshund races. Registration for the inaugural races and costume contest opened May 1st.

With free admission, cold German beer, authentic German food, and a talented entertainment line-up, this is DAS (the) fest to mark on your summer calendar.

DAS Fest USA is co-hosted by the Elkhorn Area Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Walworth County, and is held on the 99-acre Walworth County Fairgrounds August 13-15, 2021. The three-day festival celebrates German culture with proceeds supporting over forty nonprofit agencies. More information is available at [www.dasfestusa.com](http://www.dasfestusa.com), or by calling the Chamber office at 262-723-5788. #DiscoverYourDeutsch at DAS Fest USA.

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