



KANSAS AND OKLAHOMA

When it comes to music, the Heartland States are endlessly surprising. **Matt Bates** introduces six of the best Kansas and Oklahoma music features

1 BIG NAMES ABOUND

Kansas and Oklahoma folks have music in their veins! Throughout their history the two states have produced sons and daughters who've taken the world by storm. Singer/songwriters such as Woodie Guthrie, Leon Russell and JJ Cale; bands like Hanson, Kansas and the massive Kings of Leon are music royalty.

WHO'S WHO: Kansas gave us American R&R's Joe Walsh (Wichita, KS) and country's Melissa Etheridge (Leavenworth, KS); out of Oklahoma came C&W legends Garth Brooks (Yukon, OK) and Reba McEntire (McAlester, OK).

ONE MORE NOTE: Watch out for Clearwater, KS's rising songwriter/guitarist Logan Mize, who just debuted in the UK with LeAnn Rimes. travelksok.co.uk

2 FABULOUS FESTIVALS

Throughout the year in the Sunflower and Sooner States, you'll hear live music in pretty much any county or town on a weekend – everything from local C&W gatherings to world-class R&R festivals to amateur musical groups to national symphony orchestras – Kansas and Oklahoma will feed your soul.

WHAT'S WHAT: In Kansas, nothing is bigger than the annual Country Stampede, Manhattan, KS (June 26-29, 2014) whilst Oklahoma rocks the state and nation with Rocklahoma in Pryor, OK (May 23-25, 2014). countrystampede.com; travelok.com

ONE MORE NOTE: Seek out Walnut Valley Flatpickin' Guitar Festival, Winfield, KS (September 17-21, 2014). wvfest.com

3 MUSIC DISTRICTS DELUXE

The Heartland States' cities have come a long way in recent years, and for

entertainment, art and culture they now rival anywhere in the US. In Kansas, take a look at Lawrence, Manhattan and Topeka, and in Oklahoma chill out in Oklahoma City, or grab 24 hours in Tulsa! travelks.com and travelok.com

WHEREABOUTS: In Oklahoma City, it has to be the cool and classy Bricktown district for live music – blues, jazz, R&R and country. Wichita's ever-growing Downtown offers up live music in all its forms – jazz, folk, symphony, big stage shows...even opera for aficionados! bricktownok.com; downtownwichita.org

4 MELODIC MUSEUMS

There's hardly a cowboy museum or a Native American tribal centre anywhere in the Heartland States where you won't find music and dance interwoven with history and narrative alike. Music has always helped tell the nation's story – no more so than in Kansas and Oklahoma – from before the Civil War through to today.

LISTEN AND LEARN: A national treasure in downtown Oklahoma City, OK, the American Banjo Museum is world class, celebrating America's national instrument. In Tulsa, OK's Brady arts district, the Woodie Guthrie Center celebrates America's most famous folk singer and political activist. americanbanjomuseum.com; woodieguthriecenter.org

5 STANDING ROOM ONLY

Live entertainment is food and drink to Kansas and Oklahoma people. Native American powwows take place throughout the year; campfire singalongs round off busy trail-ride days, and many concerts that started from small beginnings have now become regular not-to-be-missed and greatly sought after statewide events.

GIGS A-GO-GO: In Kansas, the annual Symphony In The Flint Hills (June 14, 2014) offers a unique approach to classical performance. In Tulsa, OK, Tulsa Roots Rocks The Green (September-October, 2014) brings free, outdoor concerts to Sunday afternoons. symphonyintheflinthills.org; tulsarootsmusic.org



6 ECLECTIC + ELECTRIC

Any road trip through Kansas and Oklahoma will bring at least a few memories of the quirkiness and creativity of the Heartland States' citizenry – the cafe in Cottonwood Falls, KS where a 'jam festival' can equally mean sweet treats to eat and Friday night live music sessions; or Medicine Park, OK (pop. 500+) where the mayor produces three music festivals every year, are just two examples.

THE QUIRKIEST: The Emma Chase Cafe, Cottonwood Falls, KS with Emma still serving most days; and Medicine Park, OK with blues, flute and r&r festivals every year. emmachasecafe.com; medicinepark.com

