

Square to become a big stage for Equinox fest

By Sunny Schubert
Of The State Journal

It seems too early now to think of fall, unless one does so ala Scarlett O'Hara: "Tomorrow . . ." But the movers and shakers behind Madison's third annual Equinox Festival, billed as the state's largest outdoor free festival of the performing arts, have been thinking of fall for months now, planning the three-day extravaganza of food, fun and music that will celebrate the turning of the seasons.

Once again, the Capitol Concourse will be the place for music and dance, theater and crafts, and a world tour of ethnic foods to delight any appetite. The festival will be Sept. 12 through 14 (actually, a week ahead of the true autumnal equinox) with live performances from 7 p.m. to midnight Friday, 10 a.m. to midnight Saturday, and noon to 7 p.m. Sunday.

A special event in conjunction with the festival will be a Sunday night performance by Sweet Honey in the Rock, a nationally known quartet of black female singers from Washington D.C.

The women of Sweet Honey in the Rock perform a cappella, in the tradition of unaccompanied black chorales, with much hand-clapping, foot-stomping and thigh-patting. Their music ranges from gospel to soul. The concert, sponsored by Fallen Woman Productions and the Equinox Festival, will be at 7:30 p.m. Sunday in the Madison Area

Technical College Auditorium. Tickets, at \$12, \$8, and \$6.98, are available from the Willy St. Grocery Co-op, Lysistrata Restaurant, Room of One's Own bookstore, and at the door.

The actual Equinox Festival will take place at five main stage areas on the Capitol Square: the Pinckney Street Dance and Theater Stage, the West Washington Kids Area, the South Carroll Street Workshop, the Monona Avenue Music Stage, and the Wisconsin Avenue Folk Stage.

Among the dozens of performances scheduled this year are the Zulus African dance troupe, with University of Wisconsin guest artists Clyde Morgan and Claudia Melrose; jazz from the American Jazz Express; dramatic vignettes from Apple Corps Theater; Norwegian fiddling from the Blue Ridge Ramblers; medieval music from the Encore Early Music Ensemble; the Children's Theater Mime Troupe; blues from famed Chicago guitarist Jimmy Rogers; native American rock from the Little Big Band; Appalachian music, stories and songs from the Twelve Moons Storytellers; funk from Madison's own Paul Black-Jerry Alexander Band; Latin rock from Pipestone — and a host of others.

A program guide, to be distributed at the festival, will list times and places for individual performances, and will give brief biographies of the artists. Also, some of

the theater performances will be signed for the hearing impaired, and copies of the program will be available in Braille.

The Craft Area will feature a juried show this year, with more than 50 of the Midwest's finest artists and craftspeople. Many will offer hourly demonstrations. A special Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission grant will finance a mini-stage on South Carroll St. for the presentation of traditional crafts and instrument-making.

The festival will be featured on the Minneapolis-based National Public Radio's "Prairie Home Companion Show," broadcast live throughout the nation from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday from the MATC auditorium. In addition, Madison radio station WORT-FM will broadcast all three days of the festival, featuring on-the-spot interviews with both performers and festivalgoers.

The Equinox Festival is partially funded by grants from the City of Madison, National Endowment for the Arts, Dane County, United Madison Community Foundation, the Wisconsin Humanities Committee, Wisconsin Public Radio, the Pabst Brewing Company and the Pepsi Bottling Company. Local businesses that would like to contribute, as well as persons interested in volunteering during the festival, should contact Chad Hagen, program coordinator, at 306 N. Brooks St.



The Sweet Honey in the Rock quartet will perform here Sunday, Sept. 14.