

Overcast saunters back to art show

Cowboy troubadour and recording artist Ken Overcast makes his eighth appearance in as many years at the Western Heritage Artist's Association show this weekend. Overcast performs in the Holiday Inn Lobby Saturday at 7 p.m., and Sunday at noon. The shows are free.

"It's a perfect fit between sellin' western art and havin' a singin' cowboy," Overcast related in a recent phone interview from his ranch east of Chinook.

Overcast's shows include a mix of traditional western standards, original material, yodeling tunes and humor.

His original material, both lyrically and stylistically draws from the cowboy lifestyle. It's not really country (music)," explained Overcast who accompanies himself on acoustic guitar.

"It's based on my experiences doin' what I do out here on the ranch. It's kinda like stuff that Gene Autry and Eddy Arnold did back in the early '40s and '50s."

Overcast has recorded seven albums over the last 12 years. His latest is "Montana Campfire," a combination of songs and narrative stories. A new

album, "Montana in My Soul," is slated for release sometime this year. Overcast said the new album will contain roughly an equal mix of songs by other artists and his own material, all in the cowboy vein.

Overcast has written a book, "Yesterday's Yarns" (Bear Valley Press), which is a collection of cowboy tall tales, a second book entitled "Shootin' the Breeze" will be released Sept. 1. The work contains a series of short stories adapted from Overcast's syndicated column "Meadow Muffins."

In yet another endeavor, Overcast produces and hosts a syndicated radio show entitled "The Cowboy Show with Ken Overcast." The weekly broadcast, carried on 45 stations coast to coast, features music from an assortment of cowboy singers and songwriters.

Overcast has earned a Will Rogers Award from the Academy of Western Artists and a "Cowboy Yodeler of the Year" award from the Western Music Association. Catch Overcast tonight in Shelby at the KSEN/KZIN Agriculture Appreciation Banquet. His show kicks off at 7p.m. at the Elks Club.

Pete Swanson - Feature Columnist