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Pat Benatar looking forward to Artpark concert:

'It's always such a fun show; it's a great, great audience'

√ Rock & Roll Hall of Fame duo of Benatar and Neil Giraldo to perform July 24 as part of special 50th anniversary celebration

PART I OF II
BY JOSHUA MALONI
 GM/Managing Editor

When it comes to having a good time on stage, Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo have two very different definitions.

"You know, my husband especially loves" performing outdoors, Benatar said, "because he doesn't care if he's sweating. He doesn't care if there's bugs on him – that kind of thing. I mean, he just wants to be outside like a dog! (laughs) I'm looking for a little air conditioning myself."

"Well, you know what it is? It's being in the elements. I love that," Giraldo said. "I love wind. I love sweat. And I love every bit of it. I just always have. I mean, I don't care if it rains and I'm out there. I just like the elements."

He added, "I know that Patricia don't like the outdoors, because she don't like sweating and her makeup running and all that, but me, I don't have any of that, you see! So, I like it."

In all seriousness, Benatar said, "It is magical, the night, especially if the moon is out or as the sky is clear and you can see stars. I mean, for us, it's the same as for you all when you're out there. You're looking up and you're seeing everything and it's amazing. And then, sometimes, you get to be in a beautiful rainstorm and you're performing in the rain, and it's just all the elements are making it even more special."

Giraldo said performing outdoors oftentimes creates a bonding experience with fans.

"Yeah, no question," he said. "I mean, would they prefer it not rain? Of course. But, if it rains, the ponchos come out, they all are enjoying it."

Such a shared moment, Giraldo added, is key to playing live: "The connectivity with the audience – that's what you're doing it for. Or else, sit at home and listen to music at home."

Benatar and Giraldo will perform at Artpark on Wednesday, July 24, as part of the 50th anniversary season celebration.



Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo will perform Wednesday at Artpark in Lewiston. (Photo by Travis Shinn // High Rise PR)

Gates open at 5:30 p.m. for the 7 p.m. show. Special guest The Vindys will provide support. For tickets or more information, visit www.artpark.net.

Artpark & Company Interim President Dave Wedekindt said, "Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo are one of rock's true power couples. They still perform at a high level and make every show unforgettable. They've also greatly enjoyed performing at Artpark over the years and are excited to return for our birthday celebration."

"We can't wait to see y'all," Benatar said.

Benatar and Giraldo, of course, have a slew of hit songs: "Love is a Battlefield," "Hit Me With Your Best Shot," "We Belong," "Invincible," "Treat Me Right," "Fire and Ice," "Shadows of the Night," "Heartbreaker."

That said, Giraldo explained the live show is "a combination of a little bit from every record, so to

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Artpark to celebrate 50th anniversary with birthday party, outdoor concert

Artpark & Company will celebrate its 50th anniversary season with an exclusive birthday party in the outdoor skybox beginning at 6 p.m. at the Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo concert on Wednesday, July 24.

The birthday celebration tickets are \$150 per person and will include an open beer and wine bar from 6-9 p.m., with food catered by Southern Junction. Attendees will also have a prime spot to see Benatar and Giraldo perform in the Artpark Amphitheater – and they can enjoy birthday festivities and more (all with Artpark's unique and creative spin!)

The birthday bash is standing-room-only – no seats will be provided, though guests can move throughout the skybox area, the party deck, and the Artpark Amphitheater throughout the evening.

July 24 will be Artpark's largest fundraising day of the year. All funds raised will support Artpark's arts and cultural programs.

Organizers said, "We hope you can be a part of the fun and support Artpark's 50th anniversary."

For more information, visit www.artpark.net.

Also that night, a sold-out gala celebration dinner will honor Artpark's 50th birthday with a dinner on the Mainstage. Gala chairs are Jack and Dena Armstrong, Greg and Joanne Bauer, Michael and Janice Vitch, and families.

See more inside today's Tribune/Sentinel:

- Artpark: Fifty and fabulous
- Local leaders congratulate Artpark

The story behind ... Better Off Read fest at Artpark



A scene from a past Better Off Read Summer Book Festival. (Submitted photo)

BY IAN KINNEY

Special to Niagara Frontier Publications

Dear Readers,

My name is Ian Kinney. I'm a writer from Lewiston, and I run a small, nonprofit publishing company out of rented office space at my former elementary school, Stella Niagara. This Aug. 31, at Artpark State Park, I'm presenting the third annual Better Off Read Summer Book Festival.

This free-to-attend, all-ages literary festival is meant to encourage reading, promote writing, and celebrate storytelling. The event will feature a large, discounted book sale; over 70 local vendors, food trucks and other concessions; complimentary attractions, fun surprises, and much more.

Additionally, the festival is tremendously proud to present a special \$1 per ticket celebrity-sponsored basket raffle. This year's special donors include Tom Hanks, Scarlett Johansson, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Matthew McConaughey, Kerry Washington, Chris Pine, Anna Kendrick, Mark Wahlberg, Jimmy Kimmel, Sarah Silverman, Stephen Colbert, "South Park," "Bob's Burgers," Colleen Hoover, Neil Gaiman, David Byrne, Wilco, Pearl Jam, Blink 182, songwriter icon Bob Dylan, filmmaking legend George Lucas, global superstar Billie Eilish, and many more.

This event means the absolute world to me. I could never put into words how proud of it I am. Plus, it's nothing short of a genuine dream come true for

SEE BETTER, continued on Page 7

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