

Artpark: Fifty and fabulous

BY DAVE WEDEKINDT

Interim President of Artpark

As I write this, Artpark has just welcomed over 2,000 children and adults to experience our 14th annual Fairy House Festival on Saturday, and perhaps you or your favorite little ones were among those clad in wings, costumes, and other fairy fare. Then at the conclusion of the festival, the always stunning Jon Lehrer Dance Company thrilled with a performance of audience favorites, newer works, and then closed with a world premiere piece with our Artpark Bridges group. It's little wonder why this event has become a tradition for many in our area, as it encapsulates many of the things that make Artpark special. It brings together visual and performing arts, nature, creativity, imagination, inclusiveness and, of course, fun!

While the grounds were alive with fairy house fans, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and some of the world's finest opera stars were rehearsing inside the Mainstage Theater for last Sunday's concert of Puccini's music. Recalling that Christopher Keane conducted the BPO in concerts of opera music on the same stage in our opening season, this was certainly an appropriate and meaningful program for our anniversary.

Also at the same time, in a quiet portion of the trail off of the South Fourth Street entrance, visitors listened in wonder to the music of plants in our just installed "UltraSound: The Secret Symphony of Plants." Free listening sessions will continue on July 27 and Aug. 3, culminating with a ticketed concert on Aug. 25.

The events of the weekend perfectly encapsulate our goals for this 50th anniversary – to honor Artpark's past, while also looking to the future. And there's much to look forward to in July and August while we also continue to set the stage for our next 50 years.

On Wednesday, July 24 – almost 50 years to the day that Artpark opened – rock music icons Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo will perform on the Amphitheater stage. They've been a favorite of our concertgoers over the years, and are excited to return.

If you would like to join in on the fun and show your support for Artpark, we're also hosting the "Artpark Birthday Bash." Come celebrate Artpark's 50th anniversary with an exclusive birthday party in our Skybox. For \$150 per ticket, this party will include an open beer and wine bar from 6-9 p.m., food catered by Southern Junction, and a prime spot to see Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo perform.

Regular-price tickets for the concert are still available for \$59 (front of stage, standing-room-only) and \$20 (general admission, carry-in chairs and blankets permitted on grass areas). Ticket prices increase by \$5 starting on July 21. The evening will close with a fireworks display.

And while we've already hosted quite a number of fantastic concerts this summer, the music really plays on from now through early September. Tonight, hit-makers Train make their first appearance in our Amphitheater, and they're bringing with them



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recent Artpark performers Yacht Rock Revue, who were here with Richard Marx last summer.

Then on July 22, the Flaming Lips will make their highly anticipated return to Artpark, this time to perform their acclaimed "Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots" album and more. The band actually has a long history with Western New York, and in fact recorded this album and others at Tarbox Road Studios in Cassadaga, in Chautauqua County!

Wrapping up July, we'll also host Ireland's Two Door Cinema Club on the 29th, then close the month with rock guitar icon Slash and his S.E.R.P.E.N.T Festival on the 30th. Slash may be best known for his work in Guns 'N Roses, but he also has a deep affection for the blues. He'll perform a set of heavy rocking blues and more with his band. Also on the packed, four-band bill are Keb' Mo', ZZ Ward, and Robert Randolph. It will definitely be a show not to be missed.

August is also filled with music. We'll have plenty of guitar heroes – Kenny Wayne Shepherd and Eric Johnson (Backroads Blues Festival, Aug. 10), Brian Setzer (Stray Cats, Aug. 13), and Derek Trucks (Tedeschi Trucks Band, Aug. 20). If pop/rock from the 1990s to 2000s is your thing, don't miss Gin Blossoms + Toad the Wet Sprocket (Aug. 13); Blues Traveler + Big Head Todd and the Monsters (Aug. 16); Bush (Aug. 17); or O.A.R. (Aug. 27). Audiences have also been asking for more country, so we're pleased to offer Cole Swindell on Aug. 29. This show will likely sell out in advance, so don't delay!

The always-popular The Machine performs Pink Floyd returns on Aug. 3, this time in the Mainstage, joined by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. Reserved seats are going fast. We also added the hard rock band TESLA to our Mainstage schedule this season.

Love jazz? We have you covered there, too, with the Buffalo Jazz Composers Workshop on Aug. 18. This concert will be held on the Emerald Grove stage in the lower park. And just between us, I think this stage is one of Artpark's best-kept secrets!

July and August are obviously very big for music this season, but we'll still have some exciting art installations, family activities, and more. Visit our website at www.artpark.net for the current schedule.

Hope to see you soon!

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July & August Events

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| <p>Tonight!</p>  <p>Train with Yacht Rock Revue July 19 8PM Amphitheater</p> | <p>This Monday!</p>  <p>The Flaming Lips July 22 7:30PM Amphitheater</p> |
| <p>Next Wednesday!</p>  <p>Pat Benatar & Neil Giraldo Fireworks after the show! July 24 8PM Amphitheater Starting at \$20 advance</p> |  <p>Two Door Cinema Club July 29 6:30PM Amphitheater</p> |
|  <p>Slash - SERPENT Festival Featuring SLASH, Keb' Mo', ZZ Ward & Robert Randolph July 30 5:30PM Amphitheater Starting at \$29 advance</p> |  <p>The Machine performs Pink Floyd with the BPO Featuring a laser-light spectacular Aug 3 7:30PM Mainstage Theater</p> |
|  <p>Backroads Blues Festival Featuring Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Eric Johnson, Duane Betts & Palmetto Motel With Special Guest Bobby Rush Aug 10 6:30PM Amphitheater Starting at \$25 advance</p> |  <p>Gin Blossoms + Toad the Wet Sprocket With Special Guest Vertical Horizon Aug 11 6:00PM Amphitheater Starting at \$20 advance</p> |
|  <p>Stray Cats With Special Guests The Midnight Cowgirls Aug 13 6:00PM Amphitheater Starting at \$25 advance</p> |  <p>Blues Traveler + Big Head Todd & The Monsters Aug 16 7:00PM Amphitheater Starting at \$20 advance</p> |
|  <p>Bush With Special Guests Jerry Cantrell, Candlebox & Bones UK Aug 17 6:30PM Amphitheater</p> |  <p>Tedeschi Trucks Band: Deuces Wild 2024 Tour With Special Guest Margo Price Aug 20 7:00PM Mainstage Theater</p> |
|  <p>O.A.R. Summer Tour 24 With Special Guests Ripe and DJ Logic Aug 27 6:00PM Amphitheater</p> |  <p>Tesla: Keepin' it Real Tour With Special Guest Kurt Deimer Aug 28 7:00PM Mainstage Theater</p> |
|  <p>Cole Swindell With Special Guest Tigirlily Gold Aug 29 6:30PM Amphitheater</p> |  <p>3rd Annual Better off Read Festival Aug 31 10-4:00PM Mainstage Theater</p> |

Tickets: ticketmaster.com | 716-754-4375

Artpark Box Office

Tuesday-Friday 10AM-4PM & Saturdays 10AM-2PM

More info: artpark.net