

'90s at Artpark

Musicians reflect on colorful decade

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you would get lost in the music. I mean, I don't know if the show in 1990 is different from the show in 2010, in a sense that, if you go out and you connect with a crowd, and people lose their minds – and they really do lose their minds – it's like such an elevated, exalted state. It's so loud, and so wild, and people are extremely primal, you know? So, I think that's what it is."

He added, "We've got better lighting now!"

There are many similarities between the '90s and today, and some extend beyond music and the arts.

Toad the Wet Sprocket frontman Glen Phillips said, "Things move cyclically. And, you know, as new generations come in, I don't think the kids are rejecting our generation's music in the way we might have rejected our parents' music."

He added, "It's good music, and nostalgia follows certain predictable time cycles. I think some of it is merely that."

"But I would also say there's something about the disillusionment of the '90s. It was a time when media had opened up in a way where we were seeing kind of the cracks in the system, things that weren't functioning. We were watching a particular kind of decay and dysfunction. And we were upset about the possibilities for the future. And I think it was maybe a first wave of that. And it was a reaction to that, that wasn't the flower child, you know, '70s reaction of, 'We're going to evolve our way past it all. This is the new age.' It was more like, 'Dammit, you guys messed up the world for us,' like, 'How do we fix this?'"

"And I know people are feeling that way again, in a really profound way. Wondering how we got here, how we allowed ourselves to get here, and wondering if there's



a way out. And if there's a parallel in the vibe between the '90s and today, I think it's that."

One big difference, especially for musicians is, "In some ways it's definitely harder today, because they don't have the avenues and the machinery that we did" to rage against the machine, Gin Blossoms guitarist/vocalist Jesse Valenzuela said. "Today, there's not record companies handing out record deals quite as easily as they did back in the '90s. I'd say that kids are really much more DIY and they make it on their own, and go out and tour on their own without tour support, without record labels."

"I think that the kids today, the ones that are out there doing it, have a lot of heart and a lot of guts, and I'm happy for them. I think they're brave. There's no radio setup like there was in the old days."

"We got lucky, getting signed to A&M Records, and received tour support to go out and get in a van and go across the country a bunch of times."

Though there are many things that make the '90s special, Blues Traveler drummer Brendan Hill said, "A couple that come to my mind are the people that are sort of my age, that grew up buying cassettes and records and popping them in their car, listening to a whole album, and having that kind of experience, when they're like graduating from high school or going to college or doing a road trip with their friends – that kind of thing is instilled in people's psyches. When they hear a band is coming through, they're like, 'Oh, man.' You know, it brings them right back. That music group brings them right back. Kind of like John (Popper's) lyric in 'The Hook': 'The



hook brings you back."

"So, I think there's a lot of that kind of nostalgia for those days when you had bootlegs, or you had cassettes or records that you would play over and over and over again of your favorite band."

"I think, also, people like myself that have kids that are now in their late teens who are interested in live music and, of course, we've got the Taylor Swifts, the Beyoncé's, all the big mega-tours, but, bringing your kid to a concert where it's like a live a band performing and doing kind of like a (Grateful) Dead set, like without a net kind of thing, that kind of jamming and rocking out and having fun is unique to a lot of bands that came out in the '90s. It was like sort of a little bit of an edge to it – a danger."

"And so, I think, people my age who have kids, want to expose their kids to that, saying, 'This is

what I was listening to.'

"I do see a lot of young people now at our shows that are either with their parents or without, and it's really cool to see a new generation that appreciates not only songs that they may recognize, but also getting into a band and knowing who the different players are, and if they're good at guitar, drums, bass – whatever it is – because I think a lot of music today is very singer/songwriter-orientated, where it's like the focus is not so much on the band, or how they play together. It's more about the song and the lyrics – which are obviously very important – but having a band that can play, and can elevate or take you someplace else, just with the music alone, is special. I think a lot of people realize that."

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Family-friendly SliceFest at Academy Park

SliceFest debuted Saturday at Academy Park in Lewiston. The brainchild of Ghada Have It Mediterranean Home Cooking restaurant's Bashar Srouji and musician/promoter Ray Barry showcased pizza purveyors while raising funds for Lew-Port Youth Football and Cheer and Wrestling programs.

The event included a cornhole tournament, activities for children, live music on the Alphonso I. DiMino Memorial Band Shell, and local artisan and merchandise vendors.

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