

Joshua Maloni's top celebrity interviews of 2020

BEHIND THE SCREENS WITH JOSHUA MALONI

2020 was the year that wasn't. Normally at this time of year, I'd be recounting tales of legendary Artpark shows or Western New York concerts with pop culture flashback favorites.

But, once March came it like a lion, concerts went out like a lamb for slaughter.

Live music was nowhere to be found, and we were left with ... well, come to think of it, TV dried up, too; movie releases were few and far between - and certainly not the blockbusters we were promised.

Though many of us displayed shelves of books in our Zoom backgrounds, those were just for show.

In short, entertainment was hard to come by. I mean, there's only so many times one can Netflix binge "The Floor is Lava" or "Nailed It."

TV, music and movies took on new importance in 2020 as we unexpectedly found ourselves in short supply of new and creative works.

Fortunately, these entertainers still managed to make a mark this year - several of them coming to the rescue to debut new projects while in quarantine - or braving out into the wild to go back to

work and amuse us.

In alphabetical order, here are my favorite entertainers and interviews from 2020:

• **Jessica Camacho**, star of "All Rise"

• **Echosmith**, creators of "Lonely Generation"

• **John Eisendrath & Jon Bokenkamp**, executive producers of "The Blacklist"; and star **Hisham Tawfiq**

• **Fitz and the Tantrums**, "All the Feels Winter Tour 2020" (pre-pandemic)

• **for KING & COUNTRY**, "burn the ships" tour

• **Sean Giambrone**, star of "The Goldbergs"

• **David Giuntoli and James Roday Rodriguez**, stars of "A Million Little Things"

• **Doug Jones**, lead on "Star Trek: Discovery"

• **Amanda Schull**, star of "Project Christmas Wish"

• **Sidewalk Prophets**, virtual tour

• **Henry Simmons**, star of "Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D."

• **Rebecca St. James**, creator of "Dawn" and "Rebecca St. James Friends & Family" podcast

• **Nik Wallenda**, dude who crossed the Masaya volcano

√ Read the full interviews, see photos and watch videos at www.wnypapers.com.



Pictured, clockwise: for KING & COUNTRY with Dolly Parton, (Image courtesy of PFA Entertainment Media & Marketing/CMA Media Promotions) • Doug Jones as "Saru" on the CBS All Access series "Star Trek: Discovery." (Photo by James Dimmock/CBS © 2020 CBS Interactive. All rights reserved.) • James Roday Rodriguez and David Giuntoli star in ABC's "A Million Little Things." (ABC photo by Jack Rowand) • Amanda Schull stars in the new Hallmark Movies & Mysteries film star of "Project Christmas Wish" (Photo by Geoff Neufeldt/©2020 Crown Media United States LLC)

First Night Buffalo announces virtual entertainment lineup

The 32nd annual First Night Buffalo, sponsored by the Independent Health Foundation, in partnership with The Children's Hospital of Buffalo Foundation, will be celebrated virtually for everyone looking forward to the promise of the new year in 2021.

"First Night Buffalo has always been about offering families a safe and healthy, drug- and alcohol-free way to celebrate New Year's Eve together," said Michael W. Cropp, M.D., president and CEO, Independent Health. "The new year presents the opportunity to make commitments to improving our personal health. First Night Buffalo is a great place to celebrate that fresh start. Keeping that tradition alive this year, we're proud to present a safe and healthy way to celebrate virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic."

As the Independent Health Foundation's signature event, First Night typically has drawn capacity crowds of up to 5,000 to the Buffalo Niagara Convention

Center for an affordable, drug- and alcohol-free celebration full of activities, music and entertainment for everyone. This year's virtual event will provide families a fun, engaging way to celebrate New Year's Eve safely in their own homes. Families will be able to enjoy many of the festivities of years' past, along with entertaining new features.

"With change comes opportunity. Our new virtual format will allow us to keep the First Night Buffalo tradition alive and it's our hope we'll have more families than ever celebrating with us this year!" said Carrie Meyer, executive director, Independent Health Foundation. "The show will go on!"

Families can also purchase limited quantities of First Night Buffalo family party packs now available for \$20 at 15 participating Tops Friendly Markets' customer service desks. Each party pack includes everything a family of four needs to celebrate New

Year's Eve at home. Some of the contents include party hats, disco ball light bulb, balloon drop and balloon animals, noisemakers, glow sticks and resolution/wish jar.

A complete list of participating Tops Friendly Markets locations is available online at www.firstnightbuffalo.org.

First Night Buffalo is also partnering with the Fairgrounds Festival of Lights "2020 Style." The First Night Buffalo party pack includes one admission ticket, good for one vehicle, to attend the annual event that is a drive-thru only experience at the Hamburg Fairgrounds. The ticket can be used any one night through Dec. 31 at the Festival of Lights (except Christmas Eve/Christmas). This year, on Dec. 31, there will be a twist on new year's celebrations: While driving through the lights, a fireworks display every hour (on the half hour between 5:30-9:30 p.m.) will provide families the opportunity to ring in the new

year from the comfort and safety of their vehicle.

"I know this has been a challenging year, but together we can get through this," Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown said. "Let's show the world why we are the City of Good Neighbors. Join us virtually, like never before, and turn to

the new year with a sense of hope and renewal."

First Night Buffalo family entertainment will be accessible and free for everyone to enjoy online at www.firstnightbuffalo.org, beginning on New Year's Eve.

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