

'Disney on Ice' returning to Buffalo

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The world of "Disney on Ice" is centered on traveling and performing. Ochitwa said she loves to perform for audiences: "I've always been a giver my entire life, so whatever I can do to make other people happy and stay the happiest. It definitely helps in the job that I do, because we get to give everything to our audiences and make them so happy; and it fills me right up."

Performing with "Disney on Ice" is more than a job, Ochitwa said. Every week finds her in a different city.

"I have been almost all over the United States," she noted. "I've loved performing in Boston. We were just outside of Queens, in New York. We were at the brand-new New York Islanders arena, and that was a really cool experience. We were the first 'Disney on Ice' show to play at the new arena. I've gotten to play in a lot of shows. We were in the Staples Center in Los Angeles. I've gotten to do shows in my home town in Denver, and that was so special. So, I've been almost everywhere, at least in the United States. I haven't gotten to go too far internationally yet, but I'm hoping that opportunity comes at some point."

She said working in a touring production is a lifestyle: "You have to sacrifice a lot because, at the end of the day, the job is my entire life. Every week is a new experience. Just outside of your window is a new city. There are new people to see and places to go. Also, I experience all of this with some of my closest friends that I get to



work with. We think that some of the things that we do on the ice are magical, but even getting to experience what we do every week, I think is magical."

She acknowledges that she still experiences stage fright before a show.

"As much as I do sometimes experience stage fright, I think that it's less of nerves and more that it reminds me that I am still excited that I get to do what I do," Ochitwa said. "It reminds me that I am still excited to get on the ice every day and perform in front of audiences, and I haven't lost what's keeping me in this job. When I'm on the ice, nothing else matters, that sort

of feeling. They are my friends who are portraying these characters, but I still feel like a little kid every day. Oh my gosh! How cool is that!"

Ochitwa said she has formed a bond with the other skaters in the show: "We do spend a lot of time together, but I am so thankful for it because these will be the people that I'm close to for the rest of my life. No matter where we end up, we all got to share this experience together, and that's something that we're going to hold near and dear to us for the rest of our lives."

In addition to her job with "Disney on Ice," Ochitwa is taking college classes online.

"While I'm living the absolute dream, I am slowly, but surely, working toward the future, where I may end up," she said. "I feel like I've switched my major so many times. I started school as an English major, then I switched to marketing. I've gone so back and forth with everything. I think, as long as I keep taking steps toward my future, it doesn't matter where I end up as long as I'm happy. I would love to stay in the performance world in some way, shape, or form because I've just fallen in love with everything that it takes to make a production

like 'Disney on Ice' happen. So, I think that I would love to stay in this world in whatever way I can."

she said. "I think that it keeps life interesting, and it keeps me interested in a lot of things, especially with a job where we are doing the same thing every day. It's nice to have ways to step away from that. Going back and reading a book or coming back to the hotel and drawing for a little bit. These different little things take my mind off of reality. It definitely helps keep me grounded."

She said that, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, she feels safe performing in the shows: "We have very specific COVID guidelines in place, and they do everything that they can to keep us safe and our audiences safe, so we never feel worried about what's going on, because they take such good care of us, and they do everything that they can to keep us safe."

Ochitwa encourages people to come to the performances: "If you're able to come for the show, we would love for you to come down and see your favorite Disney characters and just share all of the Disney magic with everybody. It is so fun."

Show times are 7 p.m. Jan. 27-29; 3 p.m. Jan. 29; and 4 p.m. Jan. 30. Tickets can be purchased online at www.ticketmaster.com or in-person at the KeyBank Center box office.

The Head And The Heart to perform at Artpark on May 28

Tickets on sale Friday

The Head And The Heart will bring their "Every Shade of Blue" North American tour with special guest Jade Bird to the Artpark Mainstage Theater at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 28. Reserved seats go on sale at 10 a.m. Friday, Jan. 21. The concert is presented by Live Nation.

"It's wild to think that by the time we get back on the road this year, it will have been over two and a half years since we last toured," the band said. "We're so excited to bring new songs to life on stage every night, traveling alongside artists who inspire us. We can't wait to get out there, doing what we do with an even

greater sense of gratitude." The band will also release a new song titled "Every Shade of Blue" on Jan. 21.

Reserved seating tickets, priced from \$29.50 to \$79.50, will be available for purchase online at ticketmaster.com. The Artpark box office will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday.

Additional 2022 concerts at Artpark currently on sale include: Lake Street Dive (May 29); Bon

Iver (June 7); Trombone Shorty's "Voodoo Threaxdown" (June 14); Patti LaBelle (June 21); Barenaked Ladies with Gin Blossoms and Toad the Wet Sprocket (July 5); Tedeschi Trucks Band with Los Lobos and Gabe Dixon (July 12); "Weird Al" Yankovic (July 29); Earth, Wind & Fire (July 31); Jack White (Aug. 21); Dispatch & O.A.R. with G. Love (Aug. 23).

Visit artpark.net for more information.

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