

Artpark announces organizational & strategic business updates

Organizational changes, selection of new ticketing platform & New York State Film Production Facility designation

Artpark & Company revealed organizational and strategic updates as it works toward continued future growth.

The board of directors announced Sonia Kozlova Clark as president of Artpark. Clark, who has served as the organization's executive director since 2016, will continue to lead Artpark.

Joanne Bauer, chairwoman of the board, said, "Sonia has been instrumental in developing a new vision for Artpark and her accomplishments are numerous. Her appointments to various Artistic committees have been well deserved and exemplify her importance in the arts. Her creativity to keep Artpark relevant during these unprecedented times has been outstanding. She understands the importance of the arts and continues to serve our Western New York community."

Artpark also announced Dave Wedekindt, who has served as director of marketing and sales since 2018, was promoted to vice president of concerts and marketing.

"Dave has been a tremendous asset to the Artpark team. His contributions to our organization are many, and his market expertise is unmatched," Clark said. "Dave's expanded responsibilities toward growing our large-scale music concerts are going to be the key to Artpark's long term development as a multifaceted arts organization."

In addition to these organi-



zational changes, Artpark also shared strategic business updates.

•Artpark has selected Ticketmaster as its new official ticketing services provider. As the organization looks ahead to both continuation and expansion of programming and strategic partnerships, it was determined the industry-leading ticket sales and service company was the best fit. A press release said, "Ticketmaster is on the leading edge in technology, capacity and consumer

experience, and ticket sales will benefit from the broad exposure that Ticketmaster's platform provides. Patrons will enjoy expanded service with comparable fees as in the past."

Tickets for upcoming events can now be purchased at www.ticketmaster.com. Tickets purchased via the former ticketing provider (Tickets.com) for 2020 performances that were rescheduled to 2021 remain valid and do not need to be replaced.

The Artpark box office remains closed for in-person sales as staffers continue to work remotely. Any questions regarding ticketing can be directed to artpark@artpark.net or by phone at 716-754-4375 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays.

•Artpark's Mainstage Theater has achieved status as a Qualified Film Production Facility in New York state under the regulations governing the Empire State Film Production Tax Credit program.

With 10,500 square-feet of space, the theater stage offers significant space for soundstage work. Furthermore, Artpark's picturesque 150-acre park setting provides additional opportunities for filming.

Clark said, "We are pleased to receive this special designation and the opportunity to participate in the region's growing film industry. Through our ongoing master plan process, we have identified areas for new growth, especially in our offseason period. Film activity can not only attract funds to help support Artpark's mission, but shine a national and international spotlight on us as well."

Any queries regarding filming opportunities at Artpark can be directed to Clark at sclark@artpark.net.

While public events at Artpark have not yet commenced for 2021, the community is still welcome to enjoy the outdoor art installations, the Percussion Garden, Native American Peace Garden, "Cover The Water" sonic tour app by the Holladay Brothers, walking trails, fishing and other free opportunities for recreation and relaxation open daily from dawn until dusk.

Patrons are also encouraged to join "Artpark Live: A campaign for a vibrant future." Tax-deductible contributions help the nonprofit Artpark & Company continue its mission to create, nurture and present the arts. Visit www.artpark.net for more information.

Series is an imaginative continuation of 'The Karate Kid' story

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they come from such a place of passion – and it's infectious. It starts at the top, and they love it, and we love it, and Ralph and Billy are just inspiring to work with. I think that it just shows we got heart.

Q: *Ralph has said in different interviews that your creators have really treated this sort of like "Star Wars," respecting the mythology, the characters, the fans. I know all of you came into this series with different levels of experience with the original trilogy. You know, the fans are getting all the feels here. I'm wondering if you've gone back and you've watched the films and you sort of understand, now, why it's so important to treat this almost-40-year-old story with such respect and such special care?*

•Vanessa Rubio: It's such a special story – and I felt it way back when, when I was growing up watching it. You feel that stuff. It's not like you have to dig around for it.

Yeah, we just treat it with respect, because we have really great creators and producers who are the hugest fans and who have really grown this thing. It comes from a beautiful base of a story. And John G. Avildsen was a wonderful director who was able to give that story with so much heart. ... And, of course, Mr. Miyagi. I mean, Mr. Miyagi, it's like we have to do justice by what Pat Morita and Mr. Miyagi gave us. There was nothing fake about that, there was something that was real about it. So, it lives on.

•Xolo Maridueña: I agree with what she's saying. I think we are a little bit lucky that this isn't a remake and it's a continuation. Like, nobody can really tell us what these guys' lives would be like 40 years down the line. We really are, for the most part – and not we – our writers, our creators – are creating this universe that they have to come up with. And I think they did a really great job of setting up that universe in season

one, and fleshing out those characters in season two. But I think season three really is like what they've been wanting to do all along. I think once they've gained the trust of the audience and now, obviously, people enjoy the show, now they can tell the stories that they really want to tell – à la like the Kreese backstory and stuff like that. So, you really start to see that these characters aren't just two-dimensional – like "bad guy." Daniel is "underdog good guy." They really have a great way of fleshing characters out and making you see both sides to the same story. And I think, as long as we're able to continue making the show, that hopefully fans will continue enjoying it.

Q: *Martin Kove and Billy Zabka, they've done a great job of being working actors, they've had good careers; but there are some "Karate Kid" fans*

that certainly know them, most specifically, for their roles in "The Karate Kid." They know them as sort of sleazy '80s bad guys, if you will. What can you tell us about what these men are like in real life?

•Xolo Maridueña: Oh man (laughs). OK, so I'll start with Marty because, although he is like the greatest guy ever, I feel like he just lives (in Kreese). Kreese is Marty – like, there is no doubt about it. I don't know if he was that way before he was Kreese, but ever since I've known him, he's radiated this. And it's not like – it's intimidating without meaning to be intimidating. The guy just walks around with this face of, like, "I'm about to mess some stuff up."

But Billy, on the other hand, is the sweetest man ever. He really is. And they're honestly, they're both such

pleasures to work with.

It really goes to show like, man, people – I don't want to say hated, but for lack of a better word, people hated Johnny when they watch that first movie. And they really were so angry and believed that he was the true villain. And I think it's so cool to see that, just in the first episode of "Cobra Kai" – in 20-something minutes (of) 30-whatever minutes that it is – you can get people who have spent 34,

I think 34 years at that point, being like, "Johnny is the villain." And just in 30 minutes, having them be like, "Actually, I really like Johnny now."

I think it goes to show just how much, not only how good of an actor Billy is, but how believable the universe is.

All three seasons of "Cobra Kai" are now streaming on Netflix.

•Read the full Q&A and see more photos at www.wnypapers.com.

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- June 3-12 - Black Hills/Mt. Rushmore - South Dakota/Notre Dame
- June 18 - NEW - Lucy Tour - LucyDesi Museum/Nat. Comedy Ctr/Lunch
- June 21-25 - Cape Cod/Martha's Vineyard
- July 6-9 - Mackinac Island/Frankenmuth/Casino
- July 12 - NEW - Dolly/Patsy/Loretta - Walters Family Theatre
- July 14 - Grand River Luncheon Cruise/Blaz. Fiddles
- July 21 - NEW - Presley/Perkins/Cash/Lewis - Walters Family Theatre
- Aug. 2 - NEW - History of Country Music Show - Walters Ranch/Lunch
- Aug. 31 - Sept. 1 - NEW - Skaneateles Cruise-Belhurst Castle
- Sept. 8-12 - NEW - Montreal/Quebec
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- Nov. 8-1 - Lancaster, PA - Amish/Queen Esther & Christmas Show
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