

Fitz and the Tantrums create music that entertains, inspires

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If music is important to you, we encourage you to get out and support it."

"Tuesdays in the Park" returns July 6 after a nearly two-year absence. Multi-Platinum hitmakers Fitz and the Tantrums will headline the 7 p.m. show. Tickets are available at www.artpark.net.

Fitz and the Tantrums

The pandemic grounded touring musicians – and while that was weird for them, it wasn't necessarily a bad thing.

"I mean, it was amazing and challenging and horrible – it was everything," Fitz and the Tantrums frontman Michael "Fitz" Fitzpatrick said. "You know, because on the flip side of not getting to do what I love every day was that I got to be home with my kids. This is the longest I'd spent at home in 12 years. So, there was something really magical about just being in my kids' life every day; waking up with them, putting them to bed every night."

Like Artpark & Company, Fitz looked for other ways to be productive while in lockdown.

"I dug in on the other side of music, which is I love making music and recording music and writing songs. So, I just put all my creative energy into that," he said.

While at home, Fitz recorded an eponymous solo album in the most 2020 way: Over Zoom.

"The process was a steep learning curve," he said. "You know, all of a sudden trying to write with people on a video chat – it's not the same sort of glorious moment of getting to create with people in the same room. But, you know, through trial and error and just doing it, we kind of got ourselves in a groove."

"And I just worked with a couple of my good buddies; so, it kind of served a dual purpose of we were being creative, but we are also using it as a way to stay connected and check in with each other every day. And that was an amazing experience to be creative."

With coronavirus cases waning stateside, the number of vaccinated individuals increasing, and COVID-19 restrictions ending, Fitz and the Tantrums recently resumed touring.

"We just did our first couple of shows two weeks ago and, besides being definitely a little out of shape, it just felt so good to be back out in our natural element," Fitz said.

He explained audiences – who also are getting back into the swing of concerts – offered an interesting response.

"I think that because this is maybe the only event that any of us will experience in our lives that we can say that we all collectively went through it – not just as a city, a state, a country, but the whole friggin' globe – there's something really that I've been experiencing that feels very powerful and connective with other people – even random strangers – is that everybody's had to trudge a road of something different this year. And obviously some people have had to deal with a lot more than other people; but at the end of the day, we all had to deal with this moment together," Fitz said. "And I've just really sensed this deeper sense of connection with all the people I know and hadn't seen in a year, plus people I've never met. And so,



Artpark & Company had its main parking lot painted last summer – one of many creative endeavors staged when, well, the stage wasn't available. (Photo by K&D Action Photo and Aerial Imaging)

to be out on stage, it just feels like this collective sigh of relief; this collective moment of celebration; of enjoying being in the presence of our peers and seeing live music. I mean, you can really feel there's a different energy out there right now. People are just ready to be done with this and ready to dance to some live music."

More than most bands, Fitz and the Tantrums encourage concertgoers to get on their feet.

"Anybody that's seen us knows that we bring a church-of-music kind of vibe," Fitz said. "And if people haven't seen us yet, it's like you got to come to one of our shows with your dancing shoes on, because we don't let you just stand there and shoe-gaze. It's like we want everybody letting their hair down and going crazy."

"And that's what we've always done; and I think we've always given people a safe place to let loose and go crazy and to have fun. And this just feels like everybody needs that moment even more."

While hit songs "123456," "HandClap," "All The Feels," "I Just Wanna Shine," "I Need Help" and "The Walker" certainly encourage dancing, Fitz said they do more than just entertain.

"I think at the end of the day, what I'm really working out in the beginning parts of writing a song is I'm just trying to process my own demons and my own challenges in life – from depression, to stress, anxiety – all the things that all of us deal with," Fitz said. "And so, a lot of times, I'm kind of trying to write that song almost as a theme song or an anthem to remind myself to keep myself in check and to maintain perspective ... and try and hold on – as much as I can throughout any given day – to a positive attitude."

He explained, "This band has been my first real successful band. I made tons of music before and nobody ever heard it. And then with Fitz and the Tantrums, we started to have success. And then I would have the experience of having fans come up and relate to me how much a song meant to them, or an album got them through a difficult period in their life. And it really impacted me to see the power that a song you write can have on other people – even a song you can think sometimes is a little silly."

"And you'll see a fan and they're like, 'Man, I got to tell you that

song like saved my @ss from a bad breakup or got me through like a real hard time after my dad passed away.' A number of times we've had people pull us aside and say that stuff has been powerful."

"A couple years ago, we played a show in Texas and a family wrote to us and said, 'Our daughter has been dealing with some severe health issues, and your song, 'HandClap,' has been her song and our song – our rallying song – through her whole entire nine months of treatment, when we didn't know if she was going to make it.'

"And then they came backstage, and we got to meet them. And it's hard for me even to tell you without like sobbing, because it was so palpable – this energy of what this song meant. And not that I give myself or my music that much importance, but to see what it meant to them – and how much it helped them through this moment – and being a fellow parent where they were like hugging their daughter and they're like, 'You don't know how much your song saved her, and saved us.'

"And we were just all crying there, hugging this family I'd never met. And I was like, 'That's the power of writing a silly pop song, and then it goes out in the world, and it becomes something so important to somebody in their life.' And to be able to be a part of that is so humbling."

"I think I really was caught by that bug of putting positivity out there; putting positive messages. Sometimes people knock me for it and think that it's a little too much of these simple platitudes, and I'm like, 'I don't know; some days I need those simple phrases to get me on the right side.' And seeing that it resonates with other people – I'll let other people write the sad, depressing songs. I want to bring that joy and positivity to the world."

Wedekindt said, "I'm happy we were able to bring Fitz and the Tantrums to Artpark this season. They're one of those bands that not only writes and records great pop songs and are talented musicians, but also really shine in the live setting. They get the crowd moving and bring such a fun, communal vibe. Their appeal also spans a wide audience, from teens to 60-plus. They'll offer a much-needed antidote to what we've all endured for the past year-and-a-half!"

If You're Going ...

Artpark & Company recently announced, "Proof of vaccination will no longer be required to attend events in Artpark venues. Guests will also not be asked to complete a health screening questionnaire or temperature check upon arrival. Social distancing will no longer be mandated, and vaccinated patrons will not be required to wear facial coverings."

"Patrons who are not fully vaccinated are required to wear a mask whenever social distancing cannot be maintained (indoors or outdoors). Those who are not feeling well at the time of an event are also discouraged from entering the park, regardless of vaccination status."

Artpark has tagged this message to its press releases: "Artpark is committed to keeping all visitors, employees and artists safe and continues to work closely with New York state officials to revise and implement health and safety protocols. At this time, all activities are subject to New York state COVID-19 guidelines. For details, please visit (www.artpark.net). As official local health guidelines evolve regarding COVID-19 safety protocols, Artpark may shift seating configurations and increase capacity."

Wedekindt said, "We'd also like to let everyone know that we have intentionally planned for generally smaller capacities and attendance this summer. Therefore, people shouldn't expect a really

TUESDAYS IN THE PARK
Presented by Artpark & Company
Lite

- July 6 – Fitz and the Tantrums
- Aug. 3 – Brothers Osborne
- Aug. 24 – Melissa Etheridge

COORS LIGHT
CONCERTS AT
ARTPARK

- July 1 – Blackberry Smoke
- July 14 – Lettuce
- July 27 – Bright Eyes
- Aug. 20 – Joe Russo's Almost Dead
- Aug. 22 – Dropkick Murphys & Rancid
- Aug. 26 – Wilco + Sleater-Kinney
- Aug. 29 – Blues Traveler
- Sept. 1 – Halestorm

Additional concert announcements are expected. Visit www.artpark.net for tickets or more information.

crowded amphitheater this season, especially in July. There will be room to move about and social distance if you wish. We have a COVID info page on our website at artpark.net that lists the current policies, and will also email ticketholders a day or two prior to the events with any updates.

"And finally, we want to thank everyone again for their continued patience and support."

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