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# Strawberry Moon Festival to feature Blue Rodeo, Pamyua, tribute to Joanne Shenandoah

Artpark's Strawberry Moon Festival will return Saturday, June 18.

The Strawberry Moon Festival celebrates the indigenous cultures of the Western New York region through storytelling, music, dance, and arts and crafts. Guests will participate in an inclusive and engaging Native American community gathering. They will also be entertained by an eclectic lineup of artists performing on multiple stages.

Admission to the afternoon activities (noon to 5 p.m.) in Artpark's lower park is free. Tickets for the evening concert (beginning at 6:30 p.m.) in the Artpark amphitheater are \$20, on sale now at the Artpark box office, 450 S. Fourth St., Lewiston (10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Saturday); and online at [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com).

The first Strawberry Moon Festival in 2019 brought back Native American programming to Artpark after a 40-plus-year hiatus. More than 3,000 guests participated in and experienced indigenous traditions in song, dance and crafts, forging cross-cultural connections and cross-community relationships that continue to this day.

In 2020, the festival took a COVID-19 pause, but the Native American Peace Garden came to fruition at the venue. Artpark stated, "More than just a place to reflect and take in the beautiful setting along the Niagara River, the garden is an outdoor classroom led by Native Elders and knowledge keepers."

Then in 2021, the festival – themed "Rekindling our Roots" – returned with performances by Martha Redbone, Lakota John, Charly Lowry and Tonemah, plus a smoke dance competition.

Now in its third year, Artpark's Strawberry Moon Festival "celebrates the many contributions Native people made in the shaping of our area and the global stage. Built on the Two Row Wampum teachings that promote all Nations walk together in parallel, with respect, compassion, and understanding to cultivate an inclusive community for our shared future, this year's festival will be filled with interactive workshops, activities, teachings and a large Na-



Strawberry Moon Festival (Photo by Jordan Oscar/courtesy of Artpark)

tive vendor section and food trucks."

Kicking off the festival at noon will be a wide variety of free interactive programs located in Artpark's lower park (main entrance), including the Emerald Grove Stage and Artpark's Native American Peace Garden. These programs celebrate diverse and expressive Native American cultures through the arts, food sampling, storytelling, workshops, music presentations, a Native American Discovery Zone, wampum belt workshops and display, a workshop on native dance and drum teachings by Jordan Smith.

The ever-popular smoke dance competition has expanded this year, with a youth (13-17) division and adult divisions. Visitors can also discover unique gifts from more than 20 Native American artisans and food vendors. Admission to the afternoon activities is free.

Then, at 6:30 p.m., Artpark's amphitheater comes alive with a concert headlined by Canada's Blue Rodeo, plus Alaska's Pamyua, and a tribute to acclaimed Native American musician Joanne Shenandoah. Tickets for the amphitheater concert are \$20.

Formed in 1995, Pamyua showcases Inuit culture through music and dance performance. Often described as "Inuit soul music," Pamyua has discovered their own genre. They have been acclaimed as one of the 10 greatest Alaska artists of the millen-

nium by Alaska Magazine, and "the most famous Inuit band in the world" by Rolling Stone.

The concert continues with a tribute to the most critically acclaimed and honored Native American musician of her generation, Joanne Shenandoah. Artpark will pay homage and honor her for the legacies she left and the paths she opened for the next generation. Joanne's daughter, Leah Shenandoah, will be joined by Theresa Bear Fox, Perry Ground and Tonemah in "The Circle: Honoring Icon Joanne Shenandoah."

The evening concludes with Blue Rodeo. In the 35 years since forming, Blue Rodeo has sold over 4 million albums, received dozens of JUNO Award nominations and wins, played more than 2,000 shows, been inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, and received a star on Canada's Walk of Fame.

*Artpark has made a commitment to Indigenous Arts programming and awareness with a full season of Indigenous programs built for and by the local Indigenous community. Programming, conceived and curated by Michele-Elise Burnett (Métis/Algonquin, Bear Clan and Artpark Indigenous arts producer), serves residents from the Indigenous community in Lewiston, Youngstown and beyond, as well as non-Native persons who are interested in learning more about the culture and traditions.*

## NEEDTOBREATHE performs Wednesday at Artpark

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"And so, we had a lot of time on our hands. We felt, after 'Out of Body,' really energized, and like more of a camaraderie than we've had a long time. So, we're like, 'Let's just go do it again.' So, we started writing some songs, and all tested in, and stayed at this house for three weeks together.

"(We) kind of quarantined together for three weeks and made a record called 'Into the Mystery' that we're proud of – and we think it's one of our better records. Not necessarily because the fans love it. I think some of them do. But for us, it was just such a moment in time – like, this will never be able to happen again. We're always on the road, or we're always working on the next thing; but just to be able to stop and know that there was nothing else in the world that we needed to be doing at that moment, and just to create together."

Looking to bottle some of that creativity, so to speak, NTB is presenting these new songs via an acoustic tour. "Into the Mystery" heads to Artpark for a 7 p.m. show Wednesday, May 18.

"We've always loved doing the acoustic tour," Lovelace said. "I've done it a couple of times, and it's

always a fun time for us to sit down and kind of do almost like a storytellers kind of thing, where we're talking about the songs and where they came from. And we're all talking the whole night in our mics, and making jokes, and it's just like you're sitting in the living room with us talking about these songs.

"That is just really fun for us anyway, but I feel like this record, for sure, was like the perfect time to do it."

Over the course of 20 years – not to mention a string of hit singles ("Brother," "Multiplied," "Happiness"), collaborations with Carrie Underwood and Jon Foreman, and tour dates with Taylor Swift – NTB has found success by bridging genres. AllMusic describes the band's musical stylings as pop, rock, alternative, Christian, contemporary, indie, post and grunge. This has allowed the band to win favor with distinctly different music fans.

"We've done all kinds of different styles of stuff. We have banjos and mandolins, but we also use synths and drum machines. We're kind of all over the place," Lovelace said. "But the thing that we always go back to is, is what we're trying to say true? Is what we're trying to

say honest? And is it a reflection of where we're at personally, or just how we view whatever subject that we're trying to tackle? But that, for us, has always been the thing that we've tried to do. I think that that's what has made it kind of unique in some ways."

Lovelace explained, "Our fans kind of run the gamut. We always said that we want to be the kind of fanbase that anybody – no matter what you look like, or what you believe in, or what kind of music you listen to – there's something for you. You may not like everything that we do, and you might not like certain songs or whatever, but I think that, if you come, you'll see so many different kinds of people that are all kind of in the same boat. They just want to be a part of something big, and something that they can tell their friends about, and they can pass the records around."

He added, "When we walk on stage, we don't necessarily know who we're going to be performing to, but we do believe that, through the years, we've hopefully helped cultivate and create this environment where everyone's welcome, and anyone can enjoy the thing for what it is – and have a good time doing it."