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Summer Out Loud



Back to front: **Lake Street Dive**, **The Ghost of Paul Revere**, and the **Ballroom Thieves** will all rock Thompson's Point this summer.

Turn up the volume—a big season of **extraordinary musical** experiences is on the horizon.

BY SARAH MOORE

LIKE ANYONE WHO'S LOST her heart to Vacationland, you wait for summer here with such impatience and ill-contained excitement that once it finally arrives in all its sparkling, technicolor glory, the days begin to flash by like playing cards in a dealer's hand. Before you blink, find a moment to pause and let your favorite season soak in. Our tip? There's nothing like the throb of bass and collective swaying of a crowd drunk on **live music** (and, let's be real, beer) to anchor you in the moment.

UNDER THE STARS

Can you remember life before **Thompson's Point**? This year marks only the third season of live shows, but it's hard to imagine a time before we crowded onto this finger of grass that juts into the Fore River to listen to some of the world's biggest acts under a setting sun. And the stars really do come out at Thompson's Point: Bob Dylan, Leon Bridges, and Alabama Shakes have all taken the stage in recent years. Savvy concertgoers bring their own picnic blankets and camp chairs and stake claims well in

advance, sustained by a rainbow cavalcade of local food trucks representing every corner of the culinary map. You'll find shade and, crucially, cold beer under the canopy of "The Depot," a vast steel gazebo left over from the Point's previous life as a railyard and munitions factory.

This year's line-up promises to be as diverse as ever, with **Lake Street Dive** (July 7) and **Brandi Carlile and Jason Isbell** (July 21) billed to bring the venue to life. Home-grown talent will have its moment in the spotlight too, when Thompson's Point hosts

Ghostland (September 1), fronted by Portland's "holler-folk" minstrels, **The Ghost of Paul Revere**. A cult favorite among Mainers, the band has seen their star ascend this year thanks to a new album and an appearance on *Conan*. Catch them on the water alongside these other local gems: **The Ballroom Thieves**, **Shovels & Rope**, and **Max Garcia Conover**.

SUMMER IN THE CITY

Even if you've sworn to stay outside for every second of sunshine, there are a handful of incoming musical acts to send you racing for the dark embrace of a concert hall this summer. From New Zealand the **John Butler Trio** comes to the **State Theatre** on July 13 in a clamor of drum beats and virtuosic guitar solos. At **Port City Music Hall**, **Houndmouth** serves up laid-back Cali-cool sounds on June 23. And you'll find it impossible to be a wallflower when the iconic sunny funk of Jamaica's **Toots & The Maytals** hits your ears at **Aura** on August 3. Credited with popularizing—and even coining the term—reggae, Toots and the Maytals are the living legends you can't afford to miss this year.

NO TICKETS, JUST JAMS

While there's nothing like watching your favorite band to make your spirits soar, all those tickets make your bank balance take a dive. Lucky for you, Portland's bars light up with live acts every night of the week—no cover required. Commercial Street boasts three options for any mood. Hungry? **Portland Lobster Company** is a local rite of passage and fail-safe seasonal destination when you want to sit beside the water, drink beer, eat lobster, and soak up live jams. (When do you ever not want to do that?) It may take a few minutes of awkward bobbing around the deck to snag a free table, but once you're installed, you've hit the jackpot. This summer, deck dwellers can look forward to the **Jason Spooner Band** on June 23, **O.C. & The Offbeats** on June 25, and **Dominic Lavoie and Keanu Keanu** on June 27. Added bonus? Dogs are welcome.

All fired up? The wide wooden deck overlooking Custom House Wharf is home to **The Porthole**—and, incidentally, some of the wildest sights you're likely to see



When Portland Met Harry

INTERVIEW BY OLIVIA GUNN KOTSISHEVSKAYA

Harry Connick, Jr.'s visit here as summer opened linked Maine's Acadians with the Cajuns of Connick's native New Orleans. We caught up with him for some impressions.

How do you connect with audiences in different regions? Portland and New Orleans are so far apart, but the Acadian/Cajun connection draws us together.

Portland is great. Audiences are unique—individual people. I try to connect with them. That determines the show. New Orleans is pretty laid back [by comparison]. It might have to do with the weather down there. But we have a great musical culture, an incredible restaurant scene, Mardi Gras, Jazz Fest. We're celebrating our tricentennial.

This issue includes a story on Emeril Lagasse. Did you know he worked in Maine before he went to New Orleans? That's very cool.

Many may consider the soundtrack for *When Harry Met Sally* as your big break, what do you think it was? I had a big break when I signed to Columbia Records when I was 19, but in terms of propelling me to a national and international spotlight, it was *When Harry Met Sally*. After I did that music, I became visible to a lot of people.

Do actors make better musicians, or do musicians make better actors? You can't really say. The only thing you can say about music is that there are probably more finite things that you need to know how to do if you're a musician than if you're an actor. That's a dangerous thing to say, but we all know how to speak, we all have emotions, and those are the basic tools for actors. Whereas if you play an instrument, you have

to know about something—where to put your hands on the guitar or on the keyboard.

How does a mega talent stay down-to-earth? My parents raised me and my sister in such a way that we have our heads on straight. We respect our elders; we have strong faith and good work ethics. Life is too short to get caught up in the silly things that don't have any worth. I love my career and love the things that accompany being successful, but ultimately my family and friends are paramount in my life. It's not like they keep me grounded because that's just like breathing. It's something so integral to who I am, and everything else comes after that.

Which one of Sinatra's "suicide songs" is your favorite? He did an album called *Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely*. The title track to that is one of the most remarkable vocals you'll ever hear, and it was accompanied by an orchestration done by Nelson Riddle. It's just a very high level of American music, about as high as you can get. If you put on some headphones and sit back and listen to how he sings, the heartbreak of those lyrics is very powerful.



FROM TOP: BACKGROUND: COREY TEMPLETON; COURTESY HARRY CONNICK JR.

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String Section

Merrill Auditorium hosts an impressive roster this season, including **Lyle Lovett** and his Large Band on August 1. **Lindsey Stirling** performs on August 2.

Stone Mountain Arts Center welcomes **Peter Wolf** and **Mary Chapin Carpenter** to their rustic stage.

on a night out in Portland. Once you've crammed yourself onto the creaking wooden boards and wrestled your way to the bar, find a spot where you can really move to the music and put on a show for the diners at Scales across the water. On a good night the atmosphere is electric.

Winding down? Just a few doors along, you'll find **Andy's Old Port Pub**, an under-the-radar staple of Commercial Street. Andy's may not boast a waterfront deck like its cohorts, but what it lacks in views, it makes up for in excellent beer offerings and reliably good live music almost every night of the week. On Thursdays Andy's hosts Boston singer-songwriter **Kali Stoddard-Imari**, and Maine's own **Freddy Dame** performs June 25 and July 29.

LIVING ON THE EDGE

Maine's answer to the Jersey Shore is a mere fifteen-minute train ride from Portland. Leave your dignity on the peninsula when you head for **Old Orchard Beach**. (Who doesn't crave that electrifying cocktail of bright lights, sugar, and bad behavior once in while?) After you've explored the strip and unleashed

some pent-up aggression on the bumper cars, head to the heart of the action: **Old Orchard Beach Pier**. Bounce around **Hooligans** and **Sunset Deck** for beers and fried clams to gather strength before diving into the action at the **Top of the Pier** nightclub. DJ Lenza keeps the dance floor filled every Saturday night. Fireworks light up the sky and ocean every Thursday.



Nashville-based duo **Freddy and Francine** will be at Stone Mountain Arts Center Friday July 27.

INTO THE WOODS

Take a break from the city clamor and turn your compass to roads less traveled to experience some of Maine's most unique mu-

sical events. A 40-minute drive from Portland—ending in a bumpy ride along an un-posted track—delivers you to a charming timber-framed theater in the Brownfield woods. **Stone Mountain Arts Center** was launched by acclaimed musician Carol Noonan in 2006. This intimate, out-of-the-way oasis has since become an unlikely magnet for musicians of international stature. Guests sit at long tables or on the mezzanine level (book the pre-show supper and gorge on vast portions of homemade food) before acts like **Peter Wolf** (July 12 & 13) and **Mary Chapin Carpenter** (July 21 & 22) take the stage.

For four days in July, a quiet, grassy stretch between the Ossipee River and the foothills of the White Mountains is transformed into a rustic haven for roots and bluegrass fans. **The Ossipee Valley Music Festival** is the kind of place where you walk barefoot among the vendors and artists sharing food and beers. This year, **The Wood Brothers**, **Billy Strings**, and **Dust-bowl Revival** headline July 26-29. Ossipee has the added bragging rights of being the only four-day festival in the country free to kids under the age of 17. ■

MEAGHAN MAURICE (2); COURTESY THE JOINT CHIEFS; JESSICA ROBLES