

Two festivals celebrate anniversaries in State College

The students at Penn State might start heading home in May, but that doesn't mean that the summer is a quiet time in central Pennsylvania. This year marks big anniversaries for two favorite summer events: Summer's Best Music Fest, June 3-4, and the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts, July 13-17.

Now celebrating its 10th year, Summer's Best Music Fest, held in downtown State College, is expanding its lineup to include not only local favorites, but up-and-coming national talent.

"Visitors to this year's festival will be able to see artists that they'll potentially be hearing on the radio within a year or two," said the festival's George Arnold. "For the last couple of years, we've featured a single national level artist, but this year, of the more than 20 groups that will perform, the split will be about 50-50 between local and national acts."

Even though the event is expanding, it will still be held in the downtown corridor to keep its boutique feel, and to enable concertgoers to visit shops and restaurants between sets. "The downtown area is a great setting; a great backdrop to the amazing music," said Arnold, adding that numerous hotels are also within easy walking distance of the event.

Concerts will be held on Friday night, 5:00-

9:00pm, and Saturday, 1:00-9:00pm, with the music scene continuing at local watering holes in the evening. An ice cream festival will sweeten the day on Saturday.

About half of the events are ticketed and half are not; ticket prices and a list of artists can be found at summersbestmusicfest.com. "Even without a ticket, you can still hear great music," said Arnold. "But, a very reasonably priced ticket will get you access to the full festival experience."

A major arts festival, too

The Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts is marking its 50th anniversary this year, and more than 125,000 people will be coming to celebrate. The five-day event will include approximately 60 musical acts on three outdoor stages and in indoor venues, a sidewalk sale and exhibition featuring more than 300 artists from all over the country, and lots of companion events.

"More than 900 incredibly accomplished people have applied for these 300 spots," said the festival's Rick Bryant.

The sidewalk sale showcases baskets, ceramics, jewelry, fiber, painting, photography, and wearable art. "There is something for every taste and pocketbook," said Bryant.

The sale and exhibition has been ranked first on the list of the "100 Best Fine Art and Design Shows in America" by *Sunshine Artist* magazine.

Highlights of the festival include: the Children and Youth Sidewalk Sale on July 13, with performances for and by young people, as well as art and craft workshops and demonstrations; Book-Fest, which will celebrate the art of graphic novels; Italian street painting; 5K, 10K, and 10-mile races; and a concert by the Paragon Ragtime Orchestra, which will accompany the projection of a silent movie while playing the original score.

The Italian Street Painting Festival, which takes place on Heister Street July 9-12, features nationally and regionally known artists creating large works and smaller works being done by high school and college art students.

Insider tip: If you'd rather stay in a dorm than a hotel, you can join the Penn State Alumni Association (even if you didn't attend Penn State) and stay right in the center of the action.

Penn State Alumni Weekend also takes place during the festival.

For more information

Central PA Festival of the Arts: arts-festival.com
Central Pennsylvania Tourism: visitpennstate.org



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