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May 7th, 2015 By Mike Breen | Music | Posted In: Live Stream, Local Music

Free Summer Music in the Parks

This summer brings another wealth of free musical events to Downtown and Over-the-Rhine

0 Comments

Tags: [Washington Park](#), [Fountain Square](#), [Smale Riverfront Park](#), [Beats by Self](#)



Photo: Jesse Fox

Just a couple of decades or so ago, downtown Cincinnati resembled a ghost town in the evenings. Once 5 p.m. rolled around, most downtown workers hopped in their cars and headed home, rarely staying in or visiting the city's core for any other reason (maybe a concert or sporting event, but that was largely a "parking garage/game/home" process). It's hard to explain to some younger locals just how much the city has changed since then, with the life and energy brought back to Downtown and nearby Over-the-Rhine over recent years becoming the norm.

There are, of course, numerous reasons for the resurrection of the city's center, much of which is covered weekly in *CityBeat* (new restaurants, bars, events and other additions, plus the influx of people deciding to live

in the area). Every summer I'm particularly struck by the huge shift the city has made when I attend some of the many free live, outdoor concert options available to the public most days of the week. Seeing hundreds of people from all backgrounds enjoying free music in a variety of genres is yet another thing that should make our city proud of how far we've come.

Lineups for this summer's music series on Fountain Square and Washington Park, as well as the relative newcomer, Smale Riverfront Park, have gradually been unveiled over the past few weeks. Below is a list of scheduled events so far. All of the series do a great job of spotlight the enormous local talent in the city, and there are also several concerts featuring national touring acts that would otherwise cost you several dollars for tickets (or at least a cover charge of some sort).

Print this out, grab a highlighter and mark your favorites (or, heck, take a chance on something new) and then get ready for another great summer for music lovers in the Queen City. (These are only the weekly music-related happenings; visit [myfountainsquare.com](#), [washingtonpark.org](#) and [mysmaleriverfrontpark.org](#) for all kinds of other events happening this summer in the spaces.)

FOUNTAIN SQUARE

Salsa on the Square

The long-running Salsa on the Square series gets a jumpstart on the other music series on Fountain Square, kicking off today (and continuing through mid-September, which is also later than the other series). Running 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., the concerts feature numerous area Salsa bands, lots of dancing and even some instructors on hand to help you out if you need some tips.

- May 7: Son Del Caribe
- May 14: Tropicoso
- May 21: Kandela
- May 28: Clave Son
- June 4: Stacie Sandoval & Grupo Tumbao
- June 11: Kentucky Salsa All-Stars
- June 18: Son Del Caribe
- June 25: Zumba
- July 2: Kandela
- July 9: Clave Son
- July 16: Stacie Sandoval & Grupo Tumbao
- July 23: Kentucky Salsa All-Stars
- July 30: Tropicoso
- Aug. 6: Stacie Sandoval & Grupo Tumbao
- Aug. 13: Monk River
- Aug. 20: Clave Son



WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING INSTEAD OF THIS?

T	F	S	S	M	T	W
07	08	09	10	11	12	13

ART MUSEUMS

Up at Bat: Warhol and Baseball

Museum hours: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday, May 07 | Free
 From Campbell soup cans, to Elvis and Marilyn Monroe, Pop Art icon Andy Warhol took the subjects of his well beyond "15 minutes of fame." The new Cincinnati Art Museum exhibit, Up at Bat: Warhol and Baseball ... [MORE](#)

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Perkopolis – Always 50% Off

- MVP Sports Bar and Grille** \$20 Voucher for \$10.00
- Pompiios** \$30 Voucher for \$15.00
- Panda Chefs** \$15 Voucher for \$7.50
- The 'Wich on Sycamore** \$20 Voucher for \$10.00

- Aug. 27: Son Del Caribe
- Sept. 3: Afro-Cuban Cartel
- Sept. 10: Tropicoso
- Sept. 17: Latin Beat Project

American Roots

The American Roots series features a variety of acts that cover the wide spectrum that is Americana music today. Most of the top local Roots acts are performing, while touring artists like American Aquarium, Chuck Mead & His Grassy Knoll Boys, Dale Watson and more will also make appearances. Each night features two performers. Music runs 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

- May 26: American Aquarium and Ben Knight and the WellDiggers
- June 2: Buffalo Wabs & the Price Hill Hustle and Wild Carrot
- June 9: Chicago Farmer and Shiny and the Spoon
- June 16: Chuck Mead & His Grassy Knoll Boys and Jeremy Pinnell
- June 23: The Shook Twins and G. Burton
- June 30: The Quebe Sisters and Howlin' Brothers
- July 7: Dale Watson and Straw Boss
- July 14: TBA
- July 21: Quiet Life and Crow Moses
- July 28: The Brothers Landreth and Josh Eagle and Harvest City
- Aug.
- 4: Arlo Mckinley and Wilder

- Aug. 11: Young Heirlooms and The Hiders
- Aug. 18: Bulletville and Noah Smith
- Aug. 25: Elk Creek and Frontier Folk Nebraska
- Sept. 1: Dallas Moore and Pure Grain

Reggae Wednesday

Joining the usual array of some of the finest Reggae bands in the city and region this year for Reggae Wednesday are numerous touring bands, including St. Louis' Taj Weekes & Adowa, Jamaican natives Yabba Griffiths and Jah Messengers Reggae Bnad and Brooklyn's New Kingston. Reggae Wednesdays run 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

- May 27: Areesaa Iyah & The Eastwind Band
- June 3: Taj Weekes & Adowa
- June 10: Yabba Griffiths & the Traxx Band
- June 17: Ras Bonghi Reggae All-Stars
- June 24: Positive Mental Attitude
- July 1: The Flex Crew
- July 8: The Ark Band
- July 15: The Cliftones
- July 22: Gizzae
- July 29: Oriel Barry and the Revoluters
- Aug. 5: New Kingston
- Aug. 12: Ukombozi
- Aug. 19: All Star Jammerz
- Aug. 26: Jah Messengers Reggae Band
- Sept. 2: Anthem Reggae Band

MidPoint Indie Summer

Sponsored by the popular late September MidPoint Music Festival (which, full disclosure, *CityBeat* runs), this year's Indie Summer concerts (held each Friday) feature some of the biggest acts in the series' history, alongside some of the best Rock/Indie/Alt/Electronic bands in Cincy. The Indie Summer shows showcase four acts and begin at 7 p.m. each week. (More artists are to be added to certain dates.)

- May 29: Surfer Blood; The Yugos; Automagik; Harbour
- Jun 5: The Mowgli's; One Day Steady; Nevele; Beloved Youth
- Jun 12: Kopecky; Broncho; Coconut Milk; Near Earth Objects
- Jun 19: Buffalo Killers; Ohio Knife; Mad Anthony; Go Go Buffalo
- Jun 26: Sloan; Mother Mother; Old City
- Jul 3: Red Wanting Blue; Young Heirlooms; Motherfolk; Chris Salyer
- Jul 10: Saint Motel
- Jul 17: The Ting Tings; Brick + Mortar; Black Signal
- Jul 24: Givers; Prim; Even Titles

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Jul 31: The Whigs; Multimagic; Pop Goes the Evil; The Never Setting Suns

Aug 7: Tweens; Leggy; Smut; Shark Week

Aug 14: Judah & The Lion; Seabird; Matt Hires; Along the Shore

Aug 21: San Fermin; Lemon Sky

Aug 28: Wussy; Pike 27; The Perfect Children; JetLab

Sep 4: The World is a Beautiful Place & I am No Longer Afraid to Die; Injecting Strangers; Moonbeau; Edison

Beats by Self Diploma

Local production/promotion crew Self Diploma has always done a fantastic job of bringing in some of the hottest acts on the EDM and Hip Hop circuits, making its Saturday night showcases some of the biggest of all the series. Last year, the group opened things up to other genres and offered audition opportunities to artists of all sort. Though still heavy on DJs, Electronic/Dance music and Hip Hop, this year's lineup also includes things like Country Pop and live R&B and Funk. Music starts each Saturday at 7 p.m., with the last act going on at 10 p.m.

May 30: Alex Angelo; Ezzy; Aprina; Justin Stone

June 6: Ja Rule; Trademark Aaron; Diamond Star Russell; Mayo

June 13: King Chip; Cameron Grey; Razook; Sarob

June 20: Nappy Roots; Packy; Ajax Stacks & Nate Paulson; Alexa Lusader

June 27: OnCue; Cato; Rhett Wellington

July 4: Ground Up; DJ Kev the Goon; Swah; David Zup

July 18: Milk N Cookies; Panzer; Reaux; Button Mashers

July 25: Futuristic; Marc Goone; Puck; The Media

August 1: No Sleep; DJ Drowsy; CopyCats; Gold Dash

August 8: Huey Mack; Kid Quil; Lauren Vanatsky; Kid Slim

August 15: Kap Slap; Saranate; RandiFloss

August 22: Academy; TJ Hickey; Sh3llz; Benji

August 29: JMSN; Oregonia; Tana Matz

September 5: The Jane Doze; Gateway; Halogen

WASHINGTON PARK

Washington Park has stripped back to two weekly music series this year, but both offer plenty of exciting performers.

Bandstand Bluegrass

The Bluegrass shows return this year to the centralized gazebo/bandstand stage every Thursday (except Aug. 6, which sees the return of the popular Lumenocity multi-media extravaganza). The "Bluegrass" part of the name is a bit of a misnomer; Bluegrass bands are on the schedule, but so are plenty of other Americana/Country/Roots/Folk acts. I guess alliteration is more fun than bad puns (or maybe Dick Clark's production company would sue if they went with "Americana Bandstand"). Music starts at 7 p.m. and there are usually two acts per night. This year's lineup includes an appearance by Country Blues favorite Charlie Parr, diverse Michigan ensemble The Appleseed Collective and a few other national acts.

May 28: The Mamadrones

June 4: Mustered Courage and Blair Crimmins

June 11: Willow Tree Carolers

June 18: Jake Book and New Country Rehab

June 25: Woody Pines and Barefoot Movement

July 2: Casey Campbell and Charlie Parr

July 9: Mipso and Railsplitters

July 16: The Appleseed Collective and The Tillers

July 23: Buffalo Wabs & The Price Hill Hustle

July 30: Red Cedars and Blue Rock Boys

August 13: Hu Town Holler and Town Mountain

August 20: Mike Oberst and My Brother's Keepers

August 27: Comet Bluegrass All-Stars

September 3: Al Scorch & Friends

Friday Fusion

Fridays at Washington Park, R&B and Jazz acts from all over the country (there are some real legends in this bunch) will provide the sounds for Friday Fusion. The concerts rotate between the Bandstand stage and the Main Stage (across from Music Hall). Music begins at 7 p.m.

May 29: Midnight Star (Main Stage)

June 5: Dixie Karas Group (Bandstand)

June 12: Michel'le (Main Stage)

June 19: Eddie Brookshire Quintet (Bandstand)

- June 26: Hot Magnolias (Bandstand)
- July 3: Delfeayo & Jason Marsalis (Main Stage)
- July 10: Zapp Band (Main Stage)
- July 17: Straight Ahead All-Female Jazz Band (Main Stage)
- July 24: Tim Warfield Quartet (Main Stage)
- July 31: Marc Fields Quintet (Main Stage)
- August 14: Soul Pocket (Main Stage)
- August 21: Vernon Hairston Trio (Bandstand)
- August 28: Kathy Wade with the Cincinnati Contemporary Jazz Orchestra (Main Stage)

SMALE RIVERFRONT PARK

Cocktails and Crown Jewels

Washington Park previously hosted the weekly Crown Jewels of Jazz concerts, but this year the series moves to one of the city's newer green-space gems, Smale Riverfront Park (near the river and The Banks). Now called Cocktails and Crown Jewels, the concerts are heavy on Jazz acts but also include some R&B, Salsa and the melange of styles crafted by funky party crew The Cincy Brass. Music starts at 7:30 p.m. The concerts take place on the park's Schmidlapp Event Lawn & Stage most Thursdays throughout the summer. The shows are free but attendees can also pay \$25 to enjoy the music from the special VSP Area (with some food and drink included).

- May 28: Alex Bugnon
- June 4: The Cincy Brass
- June 11: Urban Jazz Coalition
- June 25: WOW featuring Tim Warfield and Bobby Floyd
- July 2: FrenchAxe
- July 16: Craig Bailey and the Cincy Jazz All-Stars
- July 23: Orquesta Kandela
- Aug. 6: Ingrid Woode & the Woode Tribe Orchestra
- Aug. 13: fo/mo/deep
- Aug. 27: Sound Body Jazz Orchestra

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