



Ladies Night: The Music of Legendary Divas at Circle Theatre.

Intimate Space, Unforgettable Concerts at Circle Summer Concert Series

BY BRI KILROY

Circle Theatre's Summer Concert Series manifested from the theatre company's cabaret performances in 2010 and showcases West Michigan vocalists and musicians while creating an affordable concert experience featuring legendary music.

"It's rare that you can find this level of entertainment at this kind of a price," Noddea Skidmore, Circle Theatre's Director of Creative Audience Development, said. "It's a fantastic way to escape and join together as a community to support the local arts while having a great time."

Past Summer Concert Series include tributes to icons like Simon & Garfunkel, Elton John & Billy Joel and The Music of Neil Diamond. Other years have flipped the switch to shuffle, performing the greatest hits of the '80s and classic rock music from a variety of artists. Circle Theatre designs each year's dynamic line-up based on the previous year's audience suggestions of what they'd like to see.

"My favorite response ever was a write-in request for 'Those men from the Neil Diamond show singing whatever they want!'" Skidmore said.

These up-close concerts not only flood the theatre with music that takes you back to the first time you saw

your favorite band live or blasted the volume on your radio when your pump-up song came on, but they also introduce the community to the talent we have in West Michigan.

This year's line-up features four concerts, each with a different theme: Go Your Own Way: The Music of Fleetwood Mac (June 5 and August 14 and 15) charges the room with the music that made the British-American rock band one of the world's best selling groups of all time. Songs by Bruno Mars, James Brown, Sly & the Family Stone and Prince ignite the theatre with energy in Uptown Funk: The Best of the Funkiest (June 12 and August 21). Music from entertainment's leading divas takes the stage during Ladies Night: The Music of Legendary Divas, featuring works by Whitney Houston, Cher, Aretha Franklin, Adele and more (July 17 and September 11). Retreat to beachin' times and soak up cool Cali vibes with California Dreamin', featuring music by The Beach Boys, Jimmy Buffet, Katy Perry and Maroon 5 (July 24 and September 18).

While the performances are centered on specific themes, the setting in which each takes place transforms depending on which play or musical is currently playing at Circle Theatre. Skidmore explains that each concert takes place on a night when current productions aren't going on, yet the set remains intact to add extra—and even contrasting—interest to the experience.

May's Ladies Night and California Dreamin' performances took place on the set of Circle Theatre's production of The Addams Family, pairing the glamorous and upbeat vibes of the music with a mysterious and macabre surrounding. This month's

performances of Uptown Funk and Go Your Own Way are performed on the set of Brighton Beach Memoirs, a play taking place June 1-17.

All the concerts begin at 7 p.m. and invite everyone to make a night of it by visiting the Lobby Bar (open July 17 and 24, and August 14 and 21, 30 minutes before showtime) and grabbing wine or a Michigan craft beer to enjoy either in the lobby or at their seats. Each beverage is served in a souvenir cup that earns you a discount on drinks each time you visit the bar throughout the entire Circle Theatre season.

Circle Summer Concerts single tickets are \$18 and, for those that want to hit every concert in this season's series, a four-ticket concert bundle is available for \$65 at Circletheatre.org or by calling the box office at (616) 456-6656.

What: Circle Summer Concert Series
Where: Circle Theatre, 1703 Robinson Rd. SE
When:

Go Your Own Way: The Music of Fleetwood Mac: June 5 and August 14, 7 p.m.

Uptown Funk: Best of the Funkiest: June 12 and August 21, 7 p.m.

Ladies Night: The Music of Legendary Divas: July 17 and September 11, 7 p.m.

California Dreamin': Cool Cali Vibes Past & Present: July 24 and September 18, 7 p.m.

Tickets: \$18 single ticket. \$16 Season Flex Pass holders. \$65 Concert Bundle (four admission tickets).