

Bridging the Gap Between Folk and Jazz Fests in Newport: Bridgefest

The quaintness of Newport makes it the perfect location to spend a summer night, whether you're listening to music at Fort Adams or just grabbing a drink at one of the many bars that lie on Thames Street.

The last two weeks of July, however, usher in an unparalleled wonder in the form of the Newport Folk and Jazz Festivals. But with four days between the two festivals, music junkies become antsy for their next fix. Fear not, music junkies, the Newport Festivals Foundation, the organization responsible for Folk and Jazz Fests, is bringing Bridgefest to the masses of Newport from July 25 to 28.

"The Newport Folk Festival and Newport Jazz Festival have contributed to Newport's narrative as an ultimate summer destination throughout the years," said Jill Davidson, festival director of the Newport Festivals Foundation. "Bridgefest aims to do the same by keeping the festival spirit and excitement going strong during the week between the festivals."

On April 28, the Arts & Cultural Alliance of Newport County sold their ownership of the prodigious festival to the Newport Festivals Foundation in hopes of extending the reach of the seven-year tradition. Luckily for us music lovers, that means four days of nonstop beats and rhythms that will shake Newport to its core.

"There wasn't much to 'fix' about Bridgefest," said Davidson. "Just like at the Newport Folk Festival and the Newport Jazz Festival, it all comes down to the music, and what you'll hear at Bridgefest this year is akin to the great folk and jazz you've come to expect from our festivals."

Everywhere from Bowen's Wharf to the Newport Vineyards is contributing to the grandeur, and with music going until 1am, Newport will certainly never remain quiet for too long.

To the surprise of many, no plans have been made for any artists from either of the bookend festivals to join in the festivities, but time will tell. I mean, **Norah Jones** is in town for both weekends, so who knows? "It's always a possibility for the future as Bridgefest continues to grow," added Davidson.

Easily the most enticing music-esque event of Bridgefest is the Tribute to Miles Davis occurring at the Jane Pickens Theater the night before the Jazz Fest kickoff. **The Doug Woolverton Sextet**, the house band for the evening, will run through Davis' 1958 Jazz Festival performance, which, in case you haven't heard, is the pinnacle of live jazz albums, providing a proper segue into Jazz Fest weekend.

Bowen's Wharf, most notably, will be the only venue all weekend offering free music nightly during Busking at BOWENS. This scenic venue will host a variety of local acts including **Panoramic View** and **Thatcher Harrison**, with Coole Swan pouring some of their famous Superior Irish Cream Liqueur every night.

Coming to Newport with kiddos? Fort Adams will host a folk and jazz-centric family concert on

Wednesday, July 27, featuring the delightfully playful **Alastair Moock** and the smooth stylings of the **Newport Jazz Assembly**.

Other notable music ventures during the week include the **Sights and Sounds of Shangri-La** at Doris Duke's Rough Point Estate on Wednesday, July 27; **Steve Deconti** at the OceanCliff Hotel on Monday, July 25; and **MatthewFest** at Greenvale Vineyards on Tuesday, July 26.

Looking for food? On Tuesday, July 26, the Canfield House will host an upscale dinner for all you folks with a taste for the finer things in life while on Thursday, July 28, the Newport Vineyards will host a Jazz & Wine Clambake with local clams from McGrath Clambakes. Shuck yeah!

Unlike previous years, music will undoubtedly be the central focus of the festival with little to no options outside of the musical and culinary realms. This, however, will play to the Newport Festivals Foundation strengths, allowing for a deeper emphasis on their mission rather than providing a hodge-podge of events.

"Community is what the Newport Festivals Foundation comes down to, from the bonds that we've formed with Newport and our festival audiences over the years to the students who benefit from our music education initiatives," explained Jay Sweet, executive producer of the Newport Festivals Foundation. "An opportunity like this, to expand the ways we can bring music to the Newport community and the broader music-loving public, is what we're all about."