

# Billy F. Gibbons, Matt Sorum, and Mike Flanigin to Headline

Three words: *Ernie Boch Junior*.

Did you just sing them in your mind?

If so, you're definitely not alone. Although the Providence-born businessman sold most of his family's third-generational car dealerships a few years ago, we can still quickly recall their radio commercials — and for good reasons. They proliferated local airwaves for quite a while, and they were catchy AF.

Nowadays, Boch Jr. serves as the president, CEO, and spokesman for Boch Enterprises, a \$1 billion operation. He's also the CEO of Subaru New England, and in 2006, he started Music Drives Us (MDU), a registered 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization. Music Drives Us supports music and arts education throughout New England. He seeded MDU in 2004 with \$2 million.

Boch Jr., who's a graduate and former board member of the Berklee College of Music (in Boston), says, "I have always liked music since when I was a kid. When Woodstock hit, I was 10 years old, it changed my life." In the '80s, he met Brad Whitford and the rest of the members of Aerosmith. Since then, Boch Jr.'s forged strong bonds with many more musical artists. His best friend, Paul Geary, is an artist manager and a drummer.

"Then I started seeing music as education and I saw the giant hole. At the time, I discovered VH1's Save the Music." Boch Jr. tells me that it was a one-on-one lunch with one of Save the Music's founders that got the ball rolling for him in terms of creating MDU.

After its launch, he says, "It took a bit to get familiar with the environment. Then we realized there was so much need." To date, he says, "We've put in over 1,000 instruments, completed 300 projects and funded millions of dollars." Recently, for instance, the charity donated instruments to schools in Block Island, Providence, Woonsocket and the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School.

To raise money for their cause, Music Drives Us (MDU) hosts two big events each year. Next Friday, December 13, MDU is hosting The BFG Three, an evening when Billy F. Gibbons, Matt Sorum, and Mike Flanigin rock the stage at the Norwood Space Center in Norwood, Mass. Gibbons was the lead guitarist and singer for ZZ Top and Sorum used to drum for Guns N' Roses. Flanigin is a respected blues rocker who plays the hammond organ.

For Boch Jr., the process of booking acts for his events is personal. "Billy Gibbons stood at my house last year and I got to know him. And I know Matt Sorum. I went to his wedding," he explains. It's good that Boch Jr. knows such talented musicians, because that's what attracts people to attend MDU's event drives, thus forwarding its mission. In the next year, he hopes to raise between \$100,000 and \$150,000 for his philanthropic venture

According to Boch Jr., the BFG is MDU's biggest event of the year. It takes a village to produce the event. At the helm is Jackie Bell, MDU's Director of Development & Special Events. Bell's a seasoned PR pro who's be worked for the organization for four years.

BFG Three drinks will be provided by Castle Island Brewery (of Norwood) and URE Vodka. The food will be prepared by Mansfield, Mass. chef who's worked with MDU for a decade.

General admission tickets for the BFG Three are \$50. VIP tickets go for \$300. With VIP tickets, concertgoers get food and drinks, a meet and greet with the band, and a reserved spots in a special viewing area. This is a 21+ show. To purchase tickets, visit [eventbrite.com/e/the-bfg-three-ft-billy-f-gibbons-matt-sorum-and-mike-flanigin-tickets-79535377455](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-bfg-three-ft-billy-f-gibbons-matt-sorum-and-mike-flanigin-tickets-79535377455)