

Music to the ears

Veteran performers, newcomers boost concert attendance

By **Matt Jachman** • OBSERVER STAFF WRITER • August 15, 2010

A hot summer and cool music that appeals to young and old alike are combining for another successful Music in the Park season in downtown Plymouth.

The noontime Wednesday concerts — there two more yet this summer — are drawing good crowds that Deb Madonna, president of the Plymouth Community Arts Council board of directors, also attributes to the Kellogg Park setting, the city's expert hosting of such events, and perhaps even Michigan's slow economy. The PCAC organizes the concert series, which began in 1984.

The shows bring out newborns, toddlers and older children, their parents and grandparents, and even senior citizens from local assisted-living facilities. Madonna said attendance seems to be up from other recent years.

"The audiences come out ready for a good time," Madonna said. "We have such a wide variety of ages."

Guy Louis and Chautauqua Express were the performers on Wednesday, making their second appearance of the season.

"He packs 'em in," Madonna said of Louis, a Music in the Park veteran.

This season's budget is about \$10,000, and Madonna is pleased that, despite a tough economy, sponsors are willing to contribute to give people some free summer entertainment. She estimated that the series boasts a total attendance of 25,000.

"On Wednesdays in the middle of summer, in the middle of the day, we have a lot of people gathered together to have fun," she said. "And that's something the community can be proud of."

The major sponsor of the series is the Wilcox Foundation. Huron Valley Ambulance, Monroe Bank & Trust, Rotary Club of Plymouth A.M.-Miracle

League of Plymouth and chiropractor Dr. Brian Brackney are longtime sponsors, and Pediatric Dentistry is a new sponsor this year.

"It good times, bad times, people work together, and that's something we've got to keep in mind," Madonna said.

Tom Seley, who performs as Mr. Seley, will make his first appearance in the series on Wednesday. He'll be bringing his four-piece band, the Troublemakers.

"It is rock music but it has lyrics at the intellectual level and the humor level of third- and fourth-graders," said Seley, whose current recording is called Cupcakeasaurus!

Seley, who teaches elementary school in Birmingham, is a longtime musician with experience in rock bands while in high school and college.

His district's cancelation of the elementary vocal music program, and what he sees as a lack of good popular music for children who are no longer toddlers but aren't ready for love songs aimed at preteens, prompted him to start his band, he said.

"I'd never played in a kids band before. I gave it my best shot," said, who leads a weekly after-school singalong for third- and fourth-graders at his school, Birmingham Covington.

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Seley performed last fall in the Saturdays at the Penn series, also organized by the PCAC. "It was great. There were a ton of kids there," he said.

Joe Reilly, an acoustic folk and blues guitarist whose songs have themes of **caring** for the environment and the interconnectedness of all forms of life, will be the performer for the season's final Music in the Park concert on Aug. 25. It will also be Reilly's first appearance in the series.

The Plymouth Community Arts Council accepts donations toward the Music in the Park series. Call the PCAC at (734) 416-4278.

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