

NEWS-RECORD

of Maplewood and South Orange

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Brothers excel in lax



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Praying together



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Free concert at NJPAC



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Photos by Joe Ungaro

Above, The Extensions from Asbury Park perform Saturday afternoon during the first day of Maplewoodstock in Maplewood's Memorial Park. Below left, Remember Jones performs as the final act on the first day of the event. Below right, DJ Prince Hakim gets people on their feet during his set. See more pictures, pages 4 and 5.

Heat nor rain can stop Maplewoodstock

By Joe Ungaro
Editor

MAPLEWOOD — Maplewoodstock, the annual music and art festival in Memorial Park, was held last weekend before a large and energetic crowd that dealt with oppressive heat, heavy rain and thunder but still seemed to have a good time.

"Everything went terrifically well," said Tarquin Learned, a long-time member of the committee that runs the event. "Overall with the weather it was still a great event. It was interesting to see how crowded the hillside got at 5 p.m."

The two-day event began on Saturday with Sara Bernadette, singer songwriter from Boston and included several Maplewood/South Orange based acts including Daniel Feinberg, DC and the Desperados, Sheik's Garage, Deadtide and Nation Beat.

New this year, a DJ, performed for a set in the 6 p.m. slot on Saturday. DJ Prince Hakim, a West Orange resident who is the

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Photo by Joe Ungaro

A family atmosphere prevailed at Maplewoodstock, with small children dancing with parents and enjoying the activities set up just for them.

Maplewoodstock celebrates 20th anniversary next year

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son of Robert "Kool" Bell of "Kool & The Gang," played upbeat classics from artists ranging from Journey to Kool & The Gang.

"We like to keep a variety of music," Learned said. "We really do our best to keep it as varied as we can."

The night was closed out by Nation Beat playing "jazz you can dance to" and Remember Jones performing energetic soul and pop. Remember Jones was scheduled to be the penultimate act at last year's event but an approaching storm caused them to cancel. The show last year ended up being shut down a bit early when lightning and rain moved into the area.

Sunday's show also saw heavy rain and thunder pausing the event during the day but the rain was gone by early evening and the show resumed with a sizable crowd returning to close out the weekend.

"We had some thunder strikes and lighting," Learned said. As a result, one act was unable to play and another's set was cut short due to the time constraint.

Tia Holt, who is based out of Newark and the Oranges, played the second to last set before Daniel Donato's Cosmic Country out of Nashville closed out the weekend playing "organic rock" with "plenty of roadhouse twang."

"I really loved last night's closer, Daniel Donato, and his band Cosmic County, they were phenomenal," Learned said.

The numbers for amount raised and total attendance were not immediately available but in past years, the festival has drawn between 3,500 and 4,000 people at its busiest times. There is no fee to attend Maplewoodstock. The

organizing committee raises money in other ways, including the sale of merchandise, renting space to vendors and a partnership with the Elks Club on a beer tent.

In conjunction with Maplewoodstock, an organization called the Maplewood Arts Education Project was recently created to take any money left over from the event and put it towards education in the local school district.

"We will be looking for grants and other charitable organizations we can partner with to help financially support the music and arts in our schools in our district," Learned said.

Raising money for the Arts Education Project and the DJ's performance were among several "firsts" this year that also included a sensitivity area.

A sensory-friendly zone was created, strategically placed away from the stage and crowd to provide a less-intense, more sensory-friendly experience to support neurodivergent or disabled attendees or anyone with sensory-sensitivities. There was also a Sensory Activation Vehicle parked in the field behind the stage. The vehicle has low lighting, reduced sound, and regulating tools and toys to provide a quiet space for individuals with disabilities and sensory differences, according to organizers.

Maplewoodstock was first held in 2004 but the pandemic forced the cancellation of the festival for two years. As a result, next year's event will be considered the 20th anniversary.

"We are officially calling next year the 20th anniversary," Learned said. "In almost every aspect we will do something special to celebrate the anniversary."

Maplewoodstock brings music and the arts to park



The two-day annual Maplewoodstock Music and Arts festival was held July 13 and 14 in Maplewood Memorial Park. More than 20 acts performed during the weekend while a vendor village was filled with artists, food vendors and a beer tent.

Photos by Joe Ungaro



Day 2 of Maplewood stock had plate twirling plus Alessandra and The Small World Band

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