

Summer shows: Zepparella, McCartney and Woodstock

John W. Barry, Poughkeepsie Journal 12:09 a.m. EDT September 4, 2014

The Beatles, Led Zeppelin and the famous festival neither performed at all added up to one heck of a summer.



(Photo: John W. Barry/Poughkeepsie Journal)

With the weeks until fall winding down, the time has arrived to look back on the summer concert season and take stock of some pretty good gigs I was fortunate enough to attend.

My top three musical experiences of this past summer revolved around a pair of driving forces behind the British Invasion and the historic music festival at which neither band appeared.

Let's start with the performance by Zepparella at the Chance in Poughkeepsie on July 18. This all-female Led Zeppelin tribute band packed one of the country's most famous concert halls and lead singer Noelle Doughty, a Dutchess County native who now lives in California, chatted up her hometown crowd plenty. The grandeur with which Doughty and her bandmates delivered the music of Led Zeppelin gave their renditions a regal air. The

manner in which Doughty seemed genuinely tickled to be playing for friends and family gave this performance an intimacy and accessibility that one rarely finds in the music industry today.

Nearly two weeks prior to that show, I attended my first Paul McCartney concert. McCartney performed at the Times Union Center in Albany and for just about three hours unleashed a musical barrage that was unlike anything I had ever experienced. From the explosive pyrotechnics that punctuated "Live and Let Die," to the surrender declared in "I've Just Seen A Face," to the gentle encouragement and resiliency of "Blackbird," McCartney tagged multiple touchstones that encompassed a range of emotions and pop culture eras while offering insight into various identities he has assumed over decades. Together, the former Beatle and the thousands of us who assembled before him had a grand old time on a Saturday night.

Contrasting quite sharply with both evenings of music was an event held in Bethel, Sullivan County, on the site of the Woodstock Music and Art Fair, on the 45th anniversary of one of the world's most historic gatherings, musical or otherwise. Bethel Woods Center for the Arts on Aug. 15 turned the famous festival field over to the public and screened the documentary about the concert. The air was crisp, the night sky was clear and the atmosphere was calming on the property once known as Yasgur's Farm. And the whole experience proved that whether making a sonic statement with stacks of speakers or simply the quiet recollection of a timeless memory, rock 'n' roll never stops raging.

John W. Barry's column appears every Friday: jobarry@poughkeepsiejournal.com, 845-437-4822  Twitter: @JohnBarryPoJo

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