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This Week in Buffalo: Events with an edge

By Ben Tsujimoto

Jul 22, 2019



The Struts and Luke Spiller will play Canalside on Thursday, while Buffalo Infringement Festival kicks off the same day. (Chuck Alaimo/Special to The News)

By Ben Tsujimoto

The son of an evangelical Christian preacher, the Struts frontman Luke Spiller was **drawn from gospel to glam rock** after hearing the Darkness' "flamboyant, dangerous" music.

Perhaps it's human nature, but a portion of Buffalo's event-goers seems drawn to activities with an edge, or at least a rebellious attitude, enticed by the same recklessness that appealed to Spiller. They're a healthy outlet for channeling more base desires.

This week is blessed with a few opportunities, from the Struts' in-your-face sound to the start of the 11-day Infringement Festival, which provides a platform for critical voices, even those crossing the boundary of political correctness. Then there's a slew of parties to recognize Christmas in July, such a strong dichotomy that it has to fit within this edgy premise.

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The Struts, 5 to 10 p.m. Thursday, July 25 at Canalside (44 Prime St.). Cost is \$5 or \$35 for VIP; **full ticket details**.

The trajectory of English glam band the Struts is sharply on the rise: Spiller and friends served as an opener for a who's who of rock bands before rapidly earning major headlining slots, **selling them out** with regularity. Both of the band's albums – "Everybody Wants" in 2014 and "Young & Dangerous" in 2018 – have placed in the top 15 of the Billboard rock charts in the U.S.

UB Spectrum's Brenton J. Blanchet **interviewed Spiller** (who will not be eating wings) before the band's visit to Canalside; the Struts represent one of the summer's biggest bookings on the waterfront. With the Glorious Sons – who **sold out Rec**

Room well in advance this year – as the chief opener, you'll want to arrive early.

*[More photos: **Smiles at the Struts in Rapids Theatre in 2017**]*

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Buffalo Infringement Festival kicks off, events around the city, running through Aug. 4. Check out the **behemoth list**.

The Infringement Festival is a celebration of everything alternative, experimental and countercultural. It's partly to remove the muzzle from the PC message, partly a tribute to off-the-radar bands and artists with the intention of giving everyone a voice, as critical as some may be.

The website's mandate lends a deeper look: "Celebrating freedom of expression and designed as a real arts democracy, this festival is a critical response to the oppressive neoliberal worldview and all its billboard trucks, televisions, flyers, advertisements, jingles, made-for-TV wars; and the depoliticisation of people through this diversionary Spectacle."

Thursday's schedule is highlighted by two sets from **Brass Pro**, at the Nickel City Housing Cooperative, then Nietzsche's, with an assortment of gallery openings.

*[Look back at a previous Infringement Festival event, **the Prince vs. Bowie dance party**]*

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Weird Al, 7 to 10 p.m. Tuesday, July 23 at Artpark (450 S. 4th St., Lewiston). General admission is **\$22 to \$42**.

Weird Al's shtick is a blend of satire and comedy, and his four-decade longevity – and four Grammys – is largely due to his flair for witty covers of mainstream music, attention to pop culture at large and even his willingness to try something new, such as his orchestral accompaniment planned for Artpark on Tuesday.

Even the "Strings Attached" tour name is funny, and we could all use the health benefits of more belly laughs. According to the Raleigh News Observer, Weird Al's fleet of "**Star Wars**" remakes is even more epic with an orchestra.

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Botanics and Brews, 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, July 25 at Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens (2655 South Park Ave.). Cost is \$35 for Gardens members and **\$40 for general public**.

This chill, outdoor food-and-drink event in the serene setting of the Botanical Gardens is a smooth move to lead into Friday.

A solid selection of beers and wines should create some excitement, with a 42 North sour, Big Ditch Hayburner and even a **Fat Head's** appearance. Food will be provided by Salvatore's and Cabot Cheese, while JJ Swing handles the live music.

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Taste of Orchard Park, 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 24 at Four Corners in the Village of Orchard Park. Free to attend.

Tantalizing bites and refreshing desserts will take over the Four Corners – at West Quaker and North Buffalo streets – for the 15th annual Taste of Orchard Park. There's a nice blend of specialty eateries such as the Blend and Kettle Corn, classics such as Ilio DiPaolo's and Danny's, and enough sweet vendors to give the entire village a spring in its step.

Find the **full menu for the event**, peek at **Smiles from last year's festivities** and consider these **five foods to try** at the Taste of Orchard Park.

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Cobblestone Live pre-party, 8 p.m. Thursday, July 25 at Buffalo Iron Works (49 Illinois St.). Cost is **\$12 in advance** or \$15 at the door.

Blues-rock-jam band Andy Frasco & the U.N. is back to lay grooves for the build-up to one of Buffalo's biggest summer music festivals. Frontman Frasco shunned his drugs-and-women lifestyle for something more sustainable (and, frankly, healthy), prompting the band's honest "Change of Pace" album from February.

Frasco, a Cobblestone Live alumnus, will whet palates at Iron Works for the **two-day music festival** scheduled for Aug. 2-3.

*[Related: **Smiles at Cobblestone Live in 2018**]*

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Hospice Summer Affair, 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. Thursday, July 25 at Buffalo RiverWorks (359 Ganson St.). Individual tickets are \$50 and include two drinks and dinner; VIP is available for \$100. **Full details.**

This fancy fresh-air fundraiser on one of RiverWorks' elite patios boasts a full dinner, cocktails, auctions and a photobooth, benefiting Hospice Buffalo – which focuses on end-of-life care for patients and support for their families.

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Bar Della Citta grand opening in EXPO Market on Hertel, 5 to 11 p.m. Wednesday, July 24 at 1488 Hertel Ave. Free to attend.

The new bar in the North Buffalo food hall – formerly known as **PK Eats** – is a good chance revisit a project whose owners have worked hard to reshape after **a rocky start**. The umbrella of Newbury Salads, Sun Cuisine and now **Bar Della Citta** – an extension of EXPO Market vendor GBGB and DBGB on Allen – is now dubbed EXPO Market on Hertel.

Among the perks: Complimentary hors d'oeuvres from all three businesses, live music by Michael Nanula inside and patio beats by DJ Dovey outside.

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4 Christmas in July parties

- Party at **Santora's Pizza Pub & Grill**, 7800 Transit Road, East Amherst. 8 p.m. July 24.
- Party at **Thin Man Brewery**, 492 Elmwood Ave. 5 p.m. Thursday, July 25.
- Beer exchange at **Rusty Nickel Brewing**, 4350 Seneca St., West Seneca. 6:30 p.m. Thursday, July 25.
- **Village of Lancaster** captures the spirit, at the heart of the village. 5:30 p.m. Thursday, July 25.

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BONUS: University at Buffalo Athletics summer party, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, July 25 at Hertel Avenue Poutine & Cream (1488 Hertel Ave.). After a banner year for UB's biggest sports – men's and women's basketball, as well as football – Thursday marks a chance to hang out with some of the personalities and even sample Poutine & Cream's wacky freakshakes.

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Sold out: The Menzingers at Rec Room; Cocktails on the Lawn 2.0 at the Mansion on Delaware (rescheduled after rain date).

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5 events to look forward to this weekend

Kingdom Bound at Darien Lake

Pappy Martin Masten Jazz Fest, Part II

Glen Park Art Festival in Williamsville

Flaming Lips at Artpark

Niagara USA Wine Festival in Lewiston

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