

PERFORMING ARTS

Overton Park Shell concerts include Black Opry, Bar-Kays, Bodywerk

By [Elle Perry](#), Daily Memphian

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The Mellowtone perform Saturday, Sept. 3, 2022, at the Overton Park Shell during the Stone Soul Picnic. (Lucy Garrett/Special to The Daily Memphian file)

The Overton Park Shell free concert series lineup has arrived.

From Friday, May 17, through Saturday, Oct. 12, the long-standing outdoor concert venue will play host to more than 30 free shows.

The concerts include a number of local acts, in addition to regionally and nationally based musicians.

“This year, we are crossing all genres and creative programming to give access to The Shell’s mission boldly and without barriers, with special emphasis on Memphis artists,” executive director Natalie Wilson said in a statement.

Pizza Dis Pasta Dat: Overton Park Shell adds resident food truck

Several partner concerts will return, including Sunset Symphony (with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra), the Memphis Country Blues Festival, the Annual Stax Music Academy Showcase, PowerPop Festival, Shakespeare at the Shell (with Tennessee Shakespeare Co.), Opera Memphis and DreamFest Weekend.

New this year are the Memphis Black Arts Alliance Gospel Night featuring Tennessee Mass Choir and New York and Memphis-based DJ collective Bodywerk. Overton Park Shell officials say the latter is the first electronic dance event hosted by the Shell.

Legendary Memphis group The Bar-Kays will host its 60th anniversary performance in the fall.

And Black Opry, the initiative, record label, and touring platform for “Black artists, fans and industry professionals working in country, Americana, blues and folk music” will bring a show to the Shell over the summer.

The City of Memphis and Works Progress Administration built the Overton Park Shell in 1936. Architect Max Furbringer modeled after similar venues Chicago, New York and St. Louis.

Priscilla Presley calls Beale Street site ‘hallowed ground’

In 2005, the Overton Park Shell partnered with the City of Memphis and Mortimer and Mimi Levitt Foundation with plans to renovate the venue and host 50 free

concerts annually. In 2007, it was renamed the Levitt Shell and renovated; it reopened in 2008.

In 2022, the Overton Park Shell became the Overton Park Shell once more.

The Summer 2024 Orion Free Concert Series is as follows. (All shows start at 7:30 p.m.):

- Friday May 17: Sunday, May 19: Dreamfest Weekend
- Friday, May 24: Lukah with Hope Clayburn & The Fire Salamander
- Sunday, May 26: Sunset Symphony
- Thursday, May 30: Black Opry
- Friday, May 31: Bodywerk with Takuya Nakamura
- Saturday, June 1: Laura Denisse
- Thursday, June 6: Sister Hazel
- Friday, June 7: King & Associates
- Saturday, June 8: Perpetual Groove
- Thursday, June 13: Cedric Burnside
- Friday, June 14: Lamont Landers
- Saturday, June 15: Blvck Hippie
- Thursday, June 20: Magnolias
- Friday, June 21: Talibah Safiyah with MadameFraankie
- Saturday, June 22: Sweet Lizzy Project
- Thursday, June 27: Shemarr Allen
- Friday, June 28: Cowboy Mouth
- Saturday, June 29: Annual Stax Academy Summer Showcase

The 2024 Fall Orion Free Concert Series is as follows. (All shows start at 7 p.m.):

- Friday, Aug. 30: MonoNeon
- Saturday, Aug. 31: Power Pop Festival: Matthew Sweet
- Saturday, Sept. 7: Cyrena Wages
- Friday, September 13: Healy
- Saturday, Sept. 14: MBAA Gospel Night: TN Mass Choir
- Friday, Sept. 20: Canti Records
- Friday, Sept. 27: Aaron James (Unapologetic)
- Saturday, Sept. 28: The Bar-Kays
- Sunday, Sept.29: Opera Memphis: Opera Goes to Broadway
- Friday, Oct. 4: Stax Museum Presents: Los Yesterdays

- Saturday, Oct. 5: Memphis Harvest Band
- Saturday, Oct. 12: Memphis Country Blues Festival
- Sunday, Oct. 20: Shakespeare at The Shell: Comedy of Errors

TOPICS

OVERTON PARK SHELL



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A native Memphian, Elle Perry has earned graduate degrees from the University of Memphis and Maryland Institute College of Art. She's written for publications including the Memphis Business Journal, Memphis Flyer and High Ground News, and previously served as coordinator of The Teen Appeal.