



CUE THE MUSIC

Hot takes on the classics?
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A massive vinyl collection?
.....

**Who's coming to Detroit's
great outdoors?**
.....

**We've got you covered
— and uncovered**

SURE, DETROIT IS THE BIRTHPLACE OF techno and Motown. But we're all that and so much more. Now that the weather's warming up, we visit five of our favorite outdoor venues. Closer to downtown, there's the newer West Riverfront Park and its Mo Pop festival, plus the venerable Chene Park Amphitheatre up the river. Out in the 'burbs, the Michigan Lottery Amphitheatre at Freedom Hill has upped its game the past few years. And to the near north, there's Meadow Brook Amphitheatre and the legendary DTE Energy Music Theatre (or Pine Knob if you're old school). Speaking of old school, we catch up with a DJ/musician whose workspace is pretty much literally covered in vinyl. And let's not forget the opera. We sit in with a group of world-class, 20-something musicians from around the globe who gathered to record compositions by a Detroit classic: MOT founder David DiChiera, who is planning to retire this July. It's just the tip of the iceberg for what's shaping up to be one hot summer of music.

IVAN THE TALENTED

Concert pianist takes on classical music stereotypes — and the compositions of David DiChiera, too

BY STEVE WILKE // PHOTOGRAPH BY NICK HAGEN

Beware the Ides of March isn't usually advice about the weather. Unless, that is, you're from Michigan.

Someone should have warned Annalise Dzwonczyk. On a blustery March 15, the Cincinnati-based mezzo soprano stands in the Jam Handy building down the street from the Fisher Building on West Grand Boulevard, sipping hot water from a to-go cup.

Next to her, donning several layers of clothes, pianist Ivan Moshchuk is rubbing his hands together. In a nearby room, sound engineer Jimmy Dixon sits by a computer, a space heater warming his feet.

Their weeklong "jam" session is to record 26-year-old Moshchuk's next album. "Letters & Fantasies" is entirely the works of Michigan Opera Theatre impresario, David DiChiera, including four Edna St. Vincent Millay's sonnets he set to music.

Booking the Jam Handy seemed reasonable. After all, it was a strange Michigan winter. But a surprisingly spring-like February turned to a wintery March.

DiChiera stopped in a few times during the week. "I'm so thrilled at the talent that came together to [record] my music," he says. "But it was cold."

That's because the heat was off: The Jam Handy's old system makes too much noise.

The times DiChiera did visit he was bundled up like "Nanook of the North." But he's excited to hear the results. "I can't wait," he says, adding that the proceeds go to fund his beloved MOT.

After the session, Dzwonczyk drove back to Cincinnati for her day job as a wealth management coordinator at First Financial Bank.

Her commute, however, was one of the shortest of the weeklong parade of international talent. Caroline Siegers, a resident at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, handled audio production. There's also

violinist Yury Revich from Vienna; Ukrainian-born cellist Aleksey Shadrin; and trumpeter Berthold Brauer from Dresden, Germany. Behind the lens for a video: Stewart French from London. There were a few locals: Angela Theis, soprano, from Detroit; and Dixon, who was Moshchuk's teammate on the Grosse Pointe South High School tennis team.

Here in the city that gave birth to techno and down the street from Motown studio, Moshchuk is sending a message. Fickle weather might be the result of climate change. But this global gathering seeks to change classical music's "staid" reputation.

"We could have gone to Berlin. We could have gone to Abbey Road [where the Beatles recorded]. But we wanted to record in Detroit," Moshchuk says. "I want to create a new culture of classical music. It needs a new aesthetic. Detroit can be that."

Plus, he wants to start a nonprofit called "Detroit Sessions" based on artistic collaborations he began last summer that included Shakespeare in Detroit and the ArtLab J dance community.

Ambitious? Sure. But Moshchuk may just have the chops to pull it off.

THE MAKING OF A MUSICIAN

Moshchuk was born in Moscow in 1990. When he was 4, his physicist father started to work at Wayne State University, then moved on to General Motors. Moshchuk's mother, Ludmilla, a computer science engineer, took on stay-at-home mom duties.

His parents bought a garage sale piano, and were referred to a piano tuner named Hugh Gullege. "He came over and saw this piano and said, 'There's nothing I can do with this instrument,'" Moshchuk says. "Then I sat down to play [at age 6 or 7] ... and he said, 'You know what, I will tune this piano.'"

Gullege took care of more than the piano. He watched Ivan grow as a musician, then anonymously recommended him for a prestigious Gilmore Young



Artist Award. And although the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation is based in Kalamazoo, Moshchuk is still the only Michigianian to receive the award. He went on to the Peabody Institute and relocated to Paris as a resident of the Cité Internationale des Arts.

But he came back home often.

And he kept in touch with DiChiera, who he met around age 6, through a friend's mother who worked at the MOT. "I told Caroline [Siegers] I'd love to record four songs that Dr. D had written," Moshchuk says. "We had a good result, but not the acoustics we really wanted. That was sent to INNOVA [a Minnesota-based record company]. They went wild." INNOVA wanted a full album. So Moshchuk approached DiChiera for more material.

"He's mentored me in so many things," Moshchuk says. "And he embraced this idea of selecting extraordinary young artists from around the world that could come to Detroit. I appreciate his trust."

EXPANDING THE AUDIENCE

The life of a touring pianist sounds glamorous, but it's not exactly lucrative. "I'm very grateful that I haven't been starving ... [it's] always paycheck to

paycheck," Moshchuk says. Still, he gives back when he can. In 2015, he helped launch a music room at the Downtown Boxing Gym Youth Program.

The Detroit Sessions nonprofit is the next step. "It's not about a record label [or] production company," Moshchuk says, but rather a "kind of a lifestyle movement that people can gravitate toward and an engine to create a new culture of classical music. Maybe we have our first season here in Detroit," he speculates. But taking a cue from the old traveling Motown Revue, he'd love to take the show on the road to New York or Berlin.

DiChiera thinks it's a great idea, especially finding fans outside the confines of the concert hall. "Going to the opera house sounds rather forbidding," he says. "What do I wear? Will I know what to do?"

Of course, outreach is a cornerstone of DiChiera's legacy, as is the establishment of the world-class MOT Studio training program. "Dr. D understands that it's this next generation that's really going to make a mark in classical music," Moshchuk says.

That means breaking a few rules. Moshchuk cites Glen Gould and other "grand interpreters" as inspiration. "The way [Gould] played Bach, people

would say it was completely wrong. But that's exactly the point! This is the mentality that has been so destructive in classical music. We've fabricated certain lanes of interpretation that have become 'acceptable,' ... and we can't deviate."

Moshchuk is deviating even further, collaborating with east-side rapper Vincent McWilliams, who also has a "Kill the Hate" clothing line. He says that the forward-thinking McWilliams believes not all messages need to be about women or money.

"How can we really send a positive message and ... come together and influence culture in a different way?," Moshchuk says. "What I often miss from classical music is that it's not in the moment. We're always recording for the archive and doing programs that we've done many, many times before. Let's do something that's never been done before."

Moshchuk has performed in some of the world's most storied venues, but one favorite memory happened in November 2016, when he performed Beethoven's Choral Fantasy with the combined Grosse Pointe orchestra and choir — in the Grosse Pointe South gym. "I was so moved by the youth and energy of the students," he says.

KEEPING BUSY

At press time, DiChiera announced that he had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. The "Letters & Fantasies" recording was due out in May, just in time for the MOT's Grand Salute reception and tribute performance to honor DiChiera's legacy on May 19.

Not that DiChiera is going gently into retirement. He's been writing music "since my student days at UCLA," he says. "Composing is kind of like an addiction," one he vows to continue "as long as my brain is working and my fingers work."

Moshchuk's next big memory could happen on Sept. 16. Last year, the fear of exposing a Steinway piano to a downpour of rain shelved plans for a concert in Roosevelt Park near the Michigan Central Station. If weather permits, this year's "Piano in the Park 2" could be like that Grosse Pointe gym performance: memorable if not acoustically pristine.

Moshchuk's attitude: Who cares?

"We could really be chasing this perfection ... perfect studios and perfect sounds and perfect musicians. But ... when you have one experience like that, in a gymnasium, doing Beethoven, you realize just how bigger it is than all of us." ■



ON THE RECORDS

How much does a DJ/vinyl collector love music? There are 85,000 reasons

BY ASHLEY ZLATOPOLSKY // PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHELLE AND CHRIS GERARD



V

inyl first wrote a story in Dezi Magby's life at the age of 4, when his parents took him to Soul Beat Records. They handed him a \$5 bill and said, "pick out what you want."

"Funky Worm" by the Ohio Players was the first record he ever bought with his own money. It was a song he'd play on his child drum set.

"45s were cheap back then," he recalls. "I often couldn't make up my mind, but I'd have that one song I'd have to walk out with."

It was the beginning of a longtime love affair for Magby. The 47-year-old DJ and record collector, who DJs solo as DJ Psycho, is also a part of the famed Detroit techno music collective, Detroit Techno Militia, which he joined in 2006.

Magby now owns more than 85,000 records. Most are stored in warehouses, but 25,000 fill three wall-sized shelving units in his work space he calls "The Dungeon." Eventually, his goal is to find a spot big enough to host them all.

SURROUNDED BY SOUND

Here at The Dungeon, Magby lives and breathes music. Guitars, music merchandise, and DJ equipment fill the space not taken up by vinyl. Around his neck is a turntable necklace, a nod to the one thing that drives him: the art of sound. "It's my communication."

mobile DJ, brought over stacks of records that Magby listened to in the living room. The funky, fresh sounds of Prince were unlike anything the young boy had heard before. Today, Prince is an inspiration and icon for Magby — a framed photo of the pop superstar hangs just above his computer.

Magby also tuned in to the otherworldly radio shows of The Electrifying Mojo — a Detroit radio personality who helped break Prince, The B-52's, and The Cars in the local market by playing their records late at night.

Magby began amassing his own vinyl collection. And what a collection it became.

By the age of 11, he started to DJ and picked up even more records to fill his sets. When he turned 16, he had a serious collection on his hands that had moved past the point of hobby.

Later, while attending the University of Michigan Flint studying English literature and minoring in communication, Magby got a job on-air at Flint's CK105.5. Record labels sent him promo copies on a near-daily basis, and they'd send two copies, which he'd trade with friends.

"The first place I look at in any respectable record store is the dollar bins, because that's where all of the hidden gold is," he says.

Often, people would give him parts of their record collections that they no longer wanted or wanted to "re-home" — especially when CDs moved in and records moved out.

"You do that over the course of 25 years, and it adds up," he laughs. He's gotten all sorts of

that make multiple appearances in his collection, like Yellow Magic Orchestra's self-titled yellow vinyl, of which he has four different editions.

READY, SET, GO

Magby doesn't get ready for DJ sets. His music selection will depend on what he's heard that day, what mood he's in. But when he gets in the booth, he has one goal in mind. "If people on the dance floor are reacting, you win," he says. "It doesn't matter if you're using two sticks and banging them together. If you're not into the music, they're just going to stare at you. And I want them to pay attention."

At Movement Electronic Music Festival in 2012, Magby's daughter, Courtney, joined him on stage. During the set, he spotted the reason for doing what he does, way back in the center of the crowd.

"There's this little girl who gets in the middle of a circle and just starts dancing her heart out," he recalls. "She didn't care who was watching or what was going on around her. She just wanted to feel free right at that moment." He still thinks about the memory to this day, especially when he hears the track that was playing at that moment: Dajae's "Brighter Days (Underground Goodies Mix)."

It's that personal connection that people develop with music, himself included, that makes Magby happiest. "I have a relationship with every piece of vinyl that comes through, especially something that I play out because I have to trust my emotions that I'm going to play for people who are going to get a reaction [out of it]," he explains.

"WHEN I'M HOLDING A RECORD, I'M TRYING TO LEARN EVERY GROOVE. EACH RECORD HAS A STORY ... MY POINT IS TO FIND THE STORY WITHIN."

Growing up in Flint, the music of Otis Redding, Sam Cooke, and James Brown filled his childhood — played by his mother, Bessie, and his father, Moses. At breakfast, especially, music would be playing.

Using a trait learned from his father, Magby can recall experiences by what he was listening to at a specific moment in time. When he talks about a record, the first words out of his mouth are the year and month it came out, and where he was when he first heard it.

Take, for instance, a 1978 Thanksgiving dinner. That's when Prince's debut album *For You*, changed Magby's life at the age of 9. His uncle, James, a

collections, from '60s and '70s rock to electronic music when a DJ no longer wished to play vinyl.

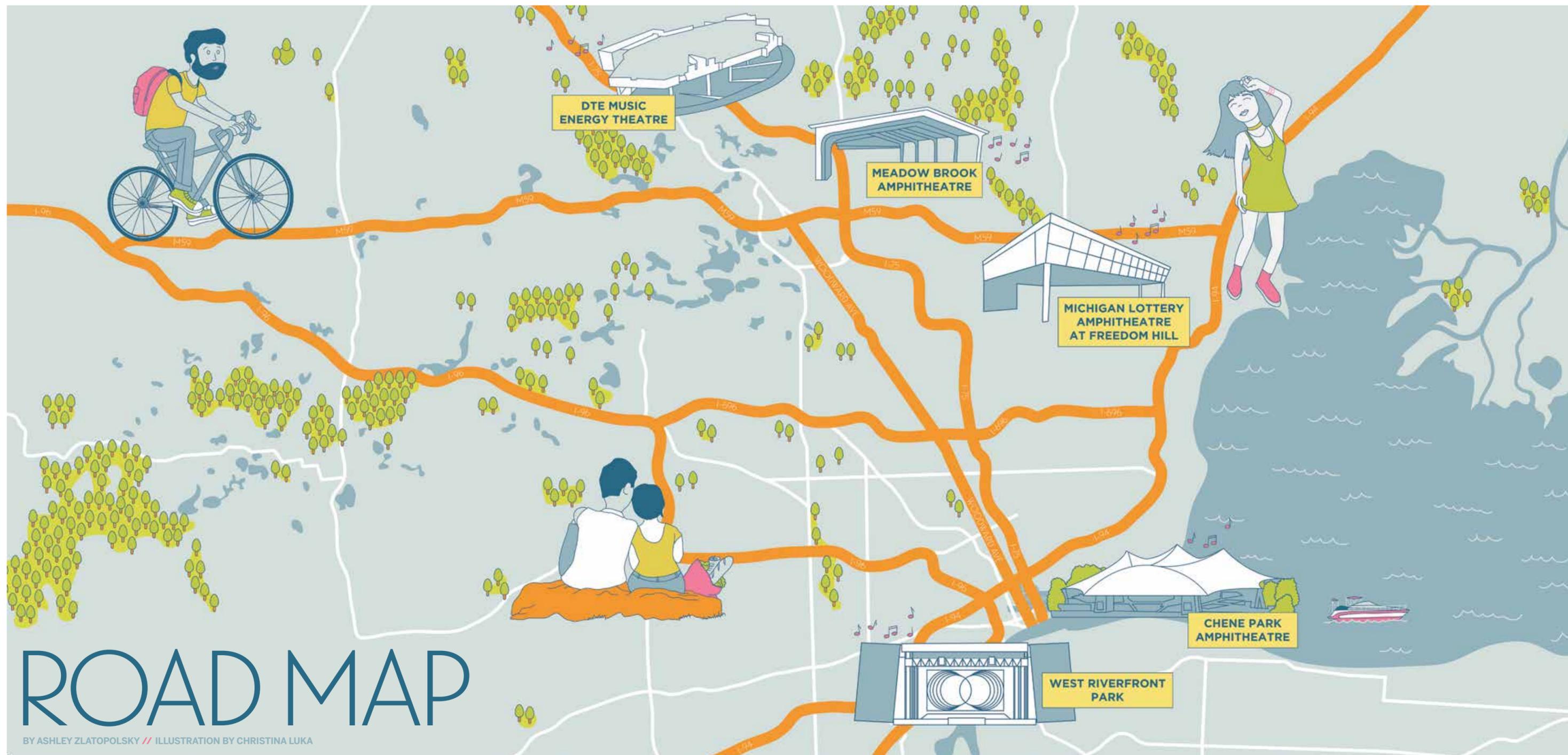
Even when vinyl suffered its drop and consequent resurgence in pop culture — 2015 sales of vinyl records were up 32 percent, their highest level since 1988, according to the RIAA — Magby never lost his passion for what was physical and tangible.

Vinyl requires time and investment. His records receive top care: You'll never catch Magby leaving a record out of its sleeve for too long if it's not up on a turntable, and his giant shelves of vinyl are precisely and methodically organized by style of music, artist, and type of record. Some records

Even though he's been DJing for 35 years, Magby is still learning, still discovering something new. "I'm always a student of the music," he explains. "When I'm holding a record, I'm trying to learn every groove. I'm trying to understand what went into it: who did the production, the artwork. Each record has a story."

And some, like that little girl dancing at Movement, set the foundation for new stories to write themselves.

"My point is to find the story within," Magby says. "If I feel like I know it all, then this stops becoming fascinating to me." ■



ROAD MAP

BY ASHLEY ZLATOPOLSKY // ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA LUKA

Once summer rolls in, the best place to catch a concert is in the warm evening breeze. Kick back at one of these five outdoor venues, which play host to a diverse range of talent. From the Detroit Riverfront north to Clarkston, here's where to go and a few of the people to see:

WEST RIVERFRONT PARK: Situated along the picturesque Detroit River, West Riverfront Park is a perfect summer getaway within the confines of the city. Purchased from the *Detroit Free Press* in 2007, the newspaper printing facility property was transformed into a 20-acre green space by the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy. Home of the MoPop Festival, the two-day event takes place July 29-30 and leans indie rock and hip-hop with Foster the People, alt-J, and Solange on this year's roster. detroitriverfront.org

MEADOW BROOK AMPHITHEATRE: Rochester's Meadow Brook Amphitheatre was revamped in 1994 after being acquired by Palace Sports & Entertainment, including improved staging, sound, and seating. Among the acts to visit the 7,700-capacity venue this summer include alternative rock band Wilco (June 7), piano icon-singer John Legend (June 16), blues guitar virtuosos Buddy Guy and Jonny Lang (July 8), Country Music Hall of Famer Kenny Rogers (July 14), and '90s alt-rockers the Goo Goo Dolls (Aug. 3). palacenet.com

CHENE PARK AMPITHEATRE: At east-side Detroit's Chene Park, boats float by while the riverfront-situated venue kicks into gear during summer concert season. As neighboring Windsor, Canada's red-tinged lights illuminate the water, the unique, white dome-like structure reflects the cityscapes of both sides of the Detroit River. Coming up, Chene Park will play host to soul singers Joss Stone and Charles Bradley (June 22), R&B singers Monica and Ashanti (June 23), and Motley Crue's Vince Neil (July 22).

MICHIGAN LOTTERY AMPHITHEATRE AT FREEDOM HILL: Upping the ante with bigger-name bookings the last two years, Sterling Heights' Michigan Lottery Amphitheatre at Freedom Hill was built in 2000 where the 120-acre Freedom Hill County Park at Metropolitan Parkway once stood. Last year, it saw the likes of rockers Jane's Addiction and alternative metal band Deftones. Coming up, Deftones return (June 10), country musician Hank Williams Jr. appears (July 3), and alternative funk group Primus will play a roaring set (July 20). palacenet.com

DTE ENERGY MUSIC THEATRE: Arguably the granddaddy of all outdoor Detroit music venues, Clarkson's DTE Energy Music Theatre — formerly Pine Knob — is the pit stop for major touring acts. Throughout its history, it's seen the likes of Black Sabbath (and Ozzfest), Nine Inch Nails, and Drake. Opened each Memorial Day weekend with a trademark performance by Eddie Money, DTE will see rare performances by rockers Tool (June 7) and iconic synth pop band Depeche Mode (Aug. 27). dteenergymusictheatre.org