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Note: Images are available in the [online media gallery](#).

SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA

2019

PRESS RELEASE

Charleston-based Artists to Open the Wells Fargo Festival Finale featuring Curtis Harding

The Artisanals and Benny Starr perform on the main stage beginning at 6:00pm

Sunday, June 9, Riverfront Park | Gates open at 5:00pm
1061 Everglades Ave., North Charleston

May 17, 2019 (Charleston, South Carolina) — Special musical guests The Artisanals and Benny Starr will perform on the main stage during Spoleto Festival USA’s Wells Fargo Finale on Sunday, June 9, at Riverfront Park in North Charleston, overlooking the scenic Cooper River. The Artisanals—Johnny Delaware, Clay Houle, Josh Hoover, and Eric Mixon, whose sound is “a blend of Americana charm and southern rock swagger” (*Billboard*)—first take the stage at 6:00pm. Hip-hop artist and activist Benny Starr, who “feels things deeply...voices his thoughts with a razor-sharp clarity” (*Charleston City Paper*), performs at 7:00pm. Headliner Curtis Harding follows at 8:30pm, and the evening culminates with the Festival’s signature celebratory fireworks display.

Gates at Riverfront Park open at 5:00pm. Attendees are welcome to bring blankets, chairs, and picnics to the event; outside alcohol is prohibited. Beverages, including wine and beer, will be available for purchase; downtown restaurant and bar Vintage Lounge is providing Vigneti del Sole Pinot Grigio, Rosé de Printemps, and Vigneti Del Sole Montepulciano d’Abruzzo (all by the glass or bottle \$8/\$26), as well as two offerings from Edmund’s Oast: Something Cold American Blonde Ale and Bound by Time American IPA (both \$8). Food trucks, including Roti Rolls and First Name Basis, will also be onsite.

Tickets to the Wells Fargo Festival Finale may be purchased online at spoletousa.org, over the phone at 843.579.3100, or in person at the Charleston Gaillard Center. Tickets are \$35 for adults and \$15 for children ages 6 to 12. Children ages 5 and under are admitted for free, though tickets will be required and can be reserved by calling the box office. Onsite parking is \$10; ride-sharing to and from the event is encouraged. The event is rain or shine.

Curtis Harding

Curtis Harding conveys pleasure, pain, longing, tenderness, sadness, and strength with his voice—a full gamut of emotions. This singer-songwriter, drummer, guitarist, and producer was born in Saginaw, Michigan, where his mother—a singer herself—exposed him to the sound and spirit of gospel music; his sister introduced him to rap. These and other influences marinated, and Harding put down roots in Atlanta. He sang back up for CeeLo Green and formed the band Night Sun with Cole Alexander of Black Lips. His well-received 2014 solo debut, *Soul Power*, synthesized these experiences, as did his 2017 studio album, *Face Your Fear*—the most recent iteration of Harding’s blend of experiences. The magazine *GQ* described *Face Your Fear* as “a journey into the roots of soul music, but also an exploration of what the genre can still become, freely reclaiming elements from contemporary rock and pop music to establish something decidedly progressive.”

Benny Starr

Through his masterful flow, lyricism, and magnetic stage presence, Pineville, South Carolina’s Benny Starr is an artist both timeless and perfectly poised for his time and place. The buzz around Starr’s talent has been growing for years through his singles, EPs, mixtapes, and freestyle performances, leading to the release of *Free Lunch*, his first LP in 2015. *Charleston City Paper*’s Kyle Peterson described the record as “a soul and R&B sample-infused effort that showcased the emcee’s formidable technical skills and keen political and social consciousness, music that harkens back to hip-hop titans Nas and Talib Kweli.” Starr’s sophomore album and most recent solo project, *A Water Album*, was recorded live with his fellow band mates The Four20s at Charleston Music Hall and is slated for a Juneteenth 2019 release. It will continue to highlight Benny Starr as an undeniably powerful artistic force.

The Artisanals

Fronted by Johnny Delaware, who grew up in a small town in South Dakota and now resides in Charleston, South Carolina, The Artisanals features guitarist Clay Houle, drummer Josh Hoover, and bassist Eric Mixon. The band formed in late 2016 following Delaware’s departure from SUSTO, and soon after the group dropped its first EP *Literally, Anywhere*. Their self-titled full-length debut album was released in September 2018, produced by Wolfgang Zimmerman and recorded at the Magic Barn, an Iowa-based studio that houses recording gear from the famed Magic Shop Studio in New York City. With sonic influences ranging from heartland rock neo-psychedelia to dream-pop, The Artisanals’ 10-track LP showcases Delaware and Houle’s knack for writing hooks as well as their ear for quality production. The

album features such wide-ranging instrumentation as a gong, organ, piano, sitar, French horn, trombone, koto, and a string section sourced from the nearby University of Iowa.

Spoletto Festival USA

Founded in 1977, Spoleto Festival USA is an annual 17-day performing arts festival in Charleston, SC, that presents leading artists in classical and popular music, opera, jazz, dance, and theater. The 2019 season takes place May 24 to June 9 in various locations on the downtown peninsula, including the historic Dock Street Theatre and the Charleston Gaillard Center. Spoleto Festival USA is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization.

Artistic Leadership

Nigel Redden, Spoleto Festival USA General Director | [Bio](#)

John Kennedy, Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities | [Bio](#)

Joe Miller, Director of Choral Activities | [Bio](#)

Geoff Nuttall, The Charles E. and Andrea L. Volpe Director of Chamber Music | [Bio](#)

Tickets

Tickets are on sale to the general public beginning January 16 at 10:00am online at [spoletousa.org](#) and by phone at 843.579.3100. **In-person box office operations** are located at Charleston Gaillard Center.

Tickets may be purchased Monday through Sunday, 9:00am to 5:00pm.

Go Spoleto! hotel-and-ticket packages are available in partnership with eight Charleston hotels:

Ansonborough Inn, The Beach Club at Charleston Harbor Resort & Marina, Belmond Charleston Place, The Dewberry, Francis Marion Hotel, Hyatt House Charleston-Historic District, Hyatt Place Charleston-Historic District, and The Vendue. Guests can book a room with one of the Festival hotel partners and receive a code to purchase a range of specially priced performance tickets. For more information, visit [spoletousa.org/gospoleto](#).

Festival gift certificates can be purchased in any amount and used towards performance tickets, merchandise such as Festival posters, or charitable contributions to Spoleto Festival USA. To purchase gift certificates, order online at [spoletousa.org](#) or by phone at 843.579.3100.

Images

A selection of high resolution images can be found in Spoleto Festival USA's [online gallery](#).

For more information, visit the [press room](#).