

Disney's Night of Joy to Rock With 'Fields of Joy'

Disney's Night of Joy is moving from its longtime location to an athletic complex for the first time.

On Sept. 9 and 10, the two-night Christian music festival will be held at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., near Orlando.

In 1983, the event debuted at Magic Kingdom (aka Disney World) and remained there until a two-year period at Disney's Hollywood Studios in 2008 and 2009. It came back to Magic Kingdom from 2010 to 2015. Both nights of the popular event sold out last year, drawing thousands of church and youth groups.

Scheduled performers for Friday, Sept. 9 includes MercyMe, Casting Crowns, Chris Tomlin, Francesca Battistelli, Crowder, Matthew West, Stars Go Dim and Zealand Worship.

On Saturday, Sept. 10, Night of Joy artists will be Newsboys, For King & Country, Young & Free, Switchfoot, Red, Thousand Foot Krutch and Tim Timmons.

The Wide World site will feature both indoor and outdoor concerts, including performances at Champions Stadium, where baseball is normally played, Disney officials said.

"I love the energy and the excitement that all these youth group and young people bring," West said in a video posted on the official Disney Parks Blog that showed him walking through the grounds of ESPN.

Disney Creative Entertainment Show Director John Phelan said Night of Joy 2016 will feature more spirit with "Fields of Joy."

"Come on down to our premier sports fields and play a fast-paced game of 4 vs. 4 soccer," he said. "Kick a field goal. Clock your pitching arm. Showcase your free throw skills and many other sports challenges. With all that activity, you'll want to test your taste buds with a variety of food trucks to satisfy any big league appetite. The Fields of Joy offers a great opportunity for families, friends, groups or even strangers to simply have fun, laugh and share in some fellowship."

In addition, Christian comedians have been added to the lineup for both nights as well as FanFest at Jostens Center.

"FanFest will include a fun, interactive area that includes video games, 60 second challenges, Imagination Playground and oversized versions of popular games such as foosball, connect four and chess," Phelan said.

"All these activities and, for the first time at Night of Joy, exclusive merchandise from many of the Night of Joy artists appearing each night will be available in the Jostens Center," he added. "To top it all off, Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse, along with some of their friends, will be there to meet their fans from 5:00 -11:00 p.m. each night."

Exclusively offered for Saturday night only, FanFest will include an opportunity for guests to participate in multiple question and answers sessions with some of the artists appearing at Night of Joy.

"These stars may also be available for photo opportunities and, who knows, they may even wander over to play some games," Phelan said.

Night of Joy 2016 features several ticket options, including one with theme-park access. A one-day ticket for Friday events will be \$39 in advance, \$45 on the day of show. Another option includes one day at one of the Disney World theme parks and then the Saturday night concerts for \$99 (in advance) or \$114

(day of show). Admission to both nights of concerts and one day at a theme park is \$119.

For more information, go to . {eo}

Eric Tiansay is a freelance writer for .