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Music legend Bob Dylan plays Friday at Parkview Field

Ballpark hopes concert can boost interest for other shows.

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel
Monday, August 27, 2012 - 10:13 am

Folk/rock legend Bob Dylan will take the stage Friday night, come rain or shine, for a concert at 8 p.m. at Parkview Field.

Dylan, who performed in Fort Wayne at the former Memorial Stadium on Sept. 5, 2006, and at Memorial Coliseum on April 22, 1994, needs no introduction to major fans of both folk and rock music.

One of the premier songwriters of the 20th century and beyond, Dylan went from his early days as a folk troubadour and hero of folk purists to blasphemous rebel incorporating electronic rock instruments and beats into his music in the mid-'60s. He then journeyed through his less popular yet no less interesting Christian "born again" phase of the late '70s and early '80s and then into the last decade and a half of critical and commercial success that has produced some of his strongest work.

Not only has Dylan's music sold well for almost 50 years, but he is considered one of the most important and influential figures in popular music.

Dylan's style of writing led most of his contemporaries (including The Beatles) to broaden the scope of their music to include more introspective and sometimes controversial topics. His influence led to the maturing of rock music and its being taken more seriously as an art form.

Dylan also continually lands in the top 10 of most critics' "best of" lists, including being named No. 2 in Rolling Stone magazine's 100 Greatest Artists of all time list published in 2004 and 2005 and updated in 2011.

Casual fans of Top 40 radio may think they know little of Dylan's work, but they may be surprised to learn he wrote some of the most recognizable hits of the 1960s, including "Mr. Tambourine Man," by The Byrds; "Blowing in the Wind," by Peter, Paul and Mary; "All Along the Watchtower," by Jimi Hendrix; and "It Ain't Me Babe," by The Turtles.

Dylan also had hits of his own including "Like a Rolling Stone" (a No. 2 hit from 1965), "Positively 4th Street" (a No. 7 hit in 1965) and "Rainy Day Woman #12 & 35" (a No. 2 hit in 1966 with its famous refrain, "Everybody must get stoned").

Dylan is also celebrating his 50th year as a recording artist this year by releasing his latest album, "Tempest," on Sept. 11. The album is said to be rather dark themed and includes the 14-minute title song, "Tempest," about the sinking of the Titanic, and a song about John Lennon called "Roll on John."

Mike Nutter, president of the Fort Wayne TinCaps, says ticket sales for the Dylan concert at Parkview Field are going well so far with more than 3,000 tickets sold.

He says Jam Productions, which is promoting the show and bringing Dylan to Parkview Field, is doing another promotional push in local media, which he hopes will drive ticket sales to the 4,000 or 5,000 mark, or beyond.

"The way this concert works is we're not taking on any of the risk," Nutter said. "Jam is paying for Bob to come in and all of the risk.

"Obviously, we have a major incentive to make it work to get shows back and to reap the rewards financially off the concessions and those kind of things, so that's why we're putting it out there on our website (www.tincaps.com) and so much at our games — it's very prominent.

"I think if we get in that 4,000-5,000 range (of tickets sold), that'd be great," Nutter added. "If the weather's good and folks turn out like they may, we may be well north of 5,000 (in ticket sales). Time will tell."

Another aspect beyond financial reward is the reaction from hardcore Dylan fans, not only from the Fort Wayne community but from surrounding regions as well.

Nutter says he's been contacted by bands from southern Indiana and Ohio looking to see if there's any opportunity to perform as an opening act for Dylan because they were so influenced by his music.

"Bob's just not doing opening acts on this one (show)," Nutter said.

"We would love him to, but it's just one of those things. He's wants to play it himself, he's going to play for a while and it's going to be a great show.



More Information

Legend in concert

What: Bob Dylan and his band in concert.

When: 8 p.m. Friday; doors open at 7 p.m.

Where: Parkview Field, 1301 Ewing St.

Cost: In person, cash, \$51; in person, credit card, \$52; credit card by phone, \$57; and Internet orders, \$57 plus fees. Children age 12 and younger get in free with each adult ticket holder. Tickets are available at the Parkview Field box office, local Wooden Nickel Music stores, charge-by-phone at 482-6400 and online at www.TinCaps.com or www.parkviewfield.com.

"There's a local bed-and-breakfast just around the corner from us here at Parkview Field," Nutter added. "The guy that runs it is a huge Bob Dylan fan. He said if the guy's tired of staying in the regular hotels, I'd like to offer up my place at a preferred rate type of thing. It's kind of neat to hear people come out and support it (the show)."

Nutter says the Dylan show is also attracting people who aren't necessarily big fans of Dylan's music. He's been contacted by people who want to support Parkview Field and also want to support more live acts being brought to the ballpark.

"When we first announced the Dylan show, a guy emails in and says, 'You'd know me if you saw me,'" Nutter said. "I come to 20 TinCaps games a year. You always make eye contact and wave. I'm one of those thousands of people that loves coming out there but you don't probably know me by name.

"I just wanted to tell you something. I'm not the biggest fan of Bob Dylan. I bought two tickets this week. I think this is great. I want to come out and support live music in your venue. You hooked me with the TinCaps; if you book a live guy (act) down there I'm coming."

Hopefully, with the success of the Dylan concert and the previous concerts they've had at the ballpark, Nutter says they can do more concerts next year.

"We've got three dates on hold next June," Nutter said of Parkview Field's concert plans. "No acts have been identified. We think that we can do two shows in three days. It's rock 'n' roll one night and country the next, ... one of those types of things where we can put the stage down once.

"We are extremely excited about it. Our folks in this market come out like they do for the minor league sports teams. They love live music."