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Like anyone who’s lost her heart to Vacationland, you wait for summer here with such impatience and ill-contained excitement that once it finally arrives in all its sparkling, technicolor glory, the days begin to flash by like playing cards in a dealer’s hand. Before you blink, find a moment to pause and let your favorite season soak in. Our tip? There’s nothing like the throb of bass and collective swaying of a crowd drunk on live music (and, let’s be real, beer) to anchor you in the moment.

**UNDER THE STARS**
Can you remember life before Thompson’s Point? This year marks only the third season of live shows, but it’s hard to imagine a time before we crowded onto this finger of grass that juts into the Fore River to listen to some of the world’s biggest acts under a setting sun. And the stars really do come out at Thompson’s Point: Bob Dylan, Leon Bridges, and Alabama Shakes have all taken the stage in recent years. Savvy concertgoers bring their own picnic blankets and camp chairs and stake claims well in advance, sustained by a rainbow cavalcade of local food trucks representing every corner of the culinary map. You’ll find shade and, crucially, cold beer under the canopy of “The Depot,” a vast steel gazebo left over from the Point’s previous life as a railyard and munitions factory.

This year’s line-up promises to be as diverse as ever, with Lake Street Dive (July 7) and Brandi Carlile and Jason Isbell (July 21) billed to bring the venue to life. Homegrown talent will have its moment in the spotlight too, when Thompson’s Point hosts...
Portland after dark

of the wildest sights you're likely to see

overlooking Custom House Wharf is home
dogs are welcome.
on June 27. Added bo-
don June 25, and
Dominic Lavoie
on June 23, Spooner Band
dwellers can look forward to the

you've hit the jackpot. This summer, deck

to do that?) It may take a few minutes

the water, drink beer, eat lobster, and soak

al destination when you want to sit beside

ghostland (September 1), fronted by Port-
land’s “holler-folk” minstrels, The Ghost of
Paul Revere. A cult favorite among Main-
ers, the band has seen their star ascend this
year thanks to a new album and an appear-
ance on Conan. Catch them on the water
alongside these other local gems: The Ball-
room Thieves, Shovels & Rope, and Max
Garcia Conover.

Summer in the City

E ven if you’ve sworn to stay out-
side for every second of sunshine,
there are a handful of incoming
musical acts to send you racing for the dark
embrace of a concert hall this summer.
From New Zealand the John Butler Trio
comes to the State Theatre on July 13 in a
clamor of drum beats and virtuosic gui-
tar solos. At Port City Music Hall, Hound-
mouth serves up laid-back Cali-cool
sounds on June 23. And you’ll find it im-
possible to be a wallflower when the iconic
sunny funk of Jamaica’s Toots & The May-
tals hits your ears at Aura on August 3.
Credited with popularizing—and even coin-
ing the term—reggae, Toots and the May-
tals are the living legends you can’t afford
to miss this year.

No tickets, just jams

While there’s nothing like watching your
favorite band to make your spirits soar,
all those tickets make your bank balance
take a dive. Lucky for you, Portland’s bars
light up with live acts every night of the
week—no cover required. Commercial
Street boasts three options for any mood.
Hungry? Portland Lobster Company is a
local rite of passage and fail-safe seasonal
destination when you want to sit beside
the water, drink beer, eat lobster, and soak
up live jams. (When do you ever not want
to do that?) It may take a few minutes
of awkward bobbing around the deck to
snag a free table, but once you’re installed,
you’ve hit the jackpot. This summer, deck
dwellers can look forward to the Jason
Scooper Band on June 23, O.C. & The
Offbeats on June 25, and Dominic Lavoie
and Keanu Keanu on June 27. Added bo-
nus? Dogs are welcome.

All fired up? The wide wooden deck
overlooking Custom House Wharf is home
to The Porthole—and, incidentally, some
of the wildest sights you’re likely to see

When Portland Met Harry

INTERVIEW BY OLIVIA GUNN KOTISHEVSKAYA

Harry Connick, Jr’s visit here as summer opened linked Maine’s Acadians with the Cajuns of Connick’s native New Orleans. We caught up with him for some impressions.

How do you connect with audiences in different regions?
Portland and New Orleans are so far apart, but the Acadian/Cajun connection draws us together.

Portland is great. Audiences are unique—in-
dividual people. I try to connect with them.
That determines the show. New Orleans is pretty laid back [by comparison]. It might have to do with the weather down there. But we have a great musical culture, an incred-
ible restaurant scene, Mardi Gras, Jazz Fest. We’re celebrating our tricentennial.

This issue includes a story on Emeril Lagasse. Did you know he worked in Maine before he went to New Orleans?
That’s very cool.

Many may consider the soundtrack for When Harry Met Sally as your big break, what do you think it was?
I had a big break when I signed to Columbia Records when I was 19, but in terms of pro-
pelling me to a national and international spotlight, it was When Harry Met Sally.
After I did that music, I became visible to a lot of people.

Do actors make better musicians, or do musicians make better actors?
You can’t really say. The only thing you can say about music is that there are probably
more finite things that you need to know how to do if you’re a musician than if you’re
an actor. That’s dangerous thing to say, but we all know how to speak, we all have emo-
tions, and those are the basic tools for actors. Whereas if you play an instrument, you have
to know about something—where to put your
hands on the guitar or on the keyboard.

How does a mega talent stay down-to-earth?
My parents raised me and my sister in such a way that we have our heads on straight.
We respect our elders; we have strong faith and good work ethics. Life is too short to get
captured in the silly things that don’t have
any worth. I love my career and love the

Which one of Sinatra’s “suicide songs” is your favorite?
He did an album called Frank Sinatra Sings For Only the Lonely. The title track to that is
one of the most remarkable vocals you’ll ev-
er hear, and it was accompanied by an or-
chestration done by Nelson Riddle. It’s just
a very high level of American music, about
as high as you can get. If you put on some
headphones and sit back and listen to how
he sings, the heartbreaking of those lyrics is
very powerful.

SUMMER IN THE CITY
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on a night out in Portland. Once you’ve crammed yourself onto the creaking wooden boards and wrestled your way to the bar, find a spot where you can really move to the music and put on a show for the diners at Scales across the water. On a good night the atmosphere is electric.

Winding down? Just a few doors along, you’ll find Andy’s Old Port Pub, an under-the-radar staple of Commercial Street. Andy’s may not boast a waterfront deck like its cohorts, but what it lacks in views, it makes up for in excellent beer offerings and reliably good live music almost every night of the week. On Thursdays Andy’s hosts Boston singer-songwriter Kali Stoddard-Imari, and Maine’s own Freddy Dame performs June 25 and July 29.

LIVING ON THE EDGE

Maine’s answer to the Jersey Shore is a mere fifteen-minute train ride from Portland. Leave your dignity on the peninsula when you head for Old Orchard Beach. (Who doesn’t crave that electrifying cocktail of bright lights, sugar, and bad behavior once in a while?) After you’ve explored the strip and unleashed some pent-up aggression on the bumper cars, head to the heart of the action: Old Orchard Beach Pier. Bounce around Hooligans and Sunset Deck for beers and fried clams to gather strength before diving into the action at the Top of the Pier nightclub. DJ Lenza keeps the dance floor filled every Saturday night. Fireworks light up the sky and ocean every Thursday.

Stone Mountain Arts Center welcomes Peter Wolf and Mary Chapin Carpenter to their rustic stage.

INTO THE WOODS

Take a break from the city clamor and turn your compass to roads less traveled to experience some of Maine’s most unique musical events. A 40-minute drive from Portland—ending in a bumpy ride along an un-posted track—delivers you to a charming timber-framed theater in the Brownfield woods. Stone Mountain Arts Center was launched by acclaimed musician Carol Noonan in 2006. This intimate, out-of-the-way oasis has since become an unlikely magnet for musicians of international stature. Guests sit at long tables or on the mezzanine level (book the pre-show supper and gorge on vast portions of homemade food) before acts like Peter Wolf (July 12 & 13) and Mary Chapin Carpenter (July 21 & 22) take the stage.

For four days in July, a quiet, grassy stretch between the Ossipee River and the foothills of the White Mountains is transformed into a rustic haven for roots and bluegrass fans. The Ossipee Valley Music Festival is the kind of place where you walk barefoot among the vendors and artists sharing food and beers. This year, The Wood Brothers, Billy Strings, and Dustbowl Revival headline July 26-29. Ossipee has the added bragging rights of being the only four-day festival in the country free to kids under the age of 17.