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Phillip Phillips ready to bring his sound to Huntington

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AP Photo/Charlie Riedel Phillip Phillips sings the national anthem before Game 2 of baseball's World Series between the Kansas City Royals and the San Francisco Giants Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2014, in Kansas City, Mo. Phillips will perform Monday, Nov. 3 at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center.

The Herald-Dispatch

HUNTINGTON The Marshall Artists Series kicked off its 78th season with back-to-back sold-out nights of legends Jay Leno and Frankie Valli, but now the torch is getting tossed to a voice of a new generation.



Fresh off of singing the National Anthem at game two of the World Series, former "American Idol" winner Phillip Phillips brings his fresh blend of rock, pop and funk to the stage of the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. Monday.

Tickets for Phillip Phillips are \$86.46/\$67.20. Call 304-696-6656 or order tickets online at Ticketmaster.com for the concert, which is done in conjunction with the Marshall University Campus Activities Board and Student Activities.

Opening for Phillips is Saints of Valory, a diverse group represented by three different continents - South America, Asia, and the U.S. In November 2010, they self-released their first EP The Bright Lights, featuring an early version of "Providence." Saints of Valory is back on tour with Phillips, with whom they toured in the summer when Phillips did a co-headlining tour with O.A.R.

Phillips said he was honored to be chosen to sing the National Anthem at the World Series (something he also did two years ago) and even happier to have that performance in the books.

"It was freaking terrifying," Phillips said. "I was pretty good the whole day, at sound check and I had did it once before at the World Series a couple years ago and they twisted my arm and asked me to do it again. I was excited for the game, and then the time came when they were ready and we were heading onto the field and I started getting nervous. And I do get nervous before my shows anyway but when I got to the field my legs started shaking, and I started singing the song way too much before I went on and I was just waiting at home plate and they started yelling, 'Go,go,go, go' and I'm like 'ahahahaha, OK,' I was like 'gee don't yell at me like that.' I think I made it through OK though I didn't mess it up and that is all that matters."



With another National Anthem survival behind him, Phillips is ready to go back 'home' to the stage where he gets to do what he loves the best, rocking out with his six-piece band that loves to keep twisting and working up the songs off his second album, "Behind The Light," the follow-up to 2012's "The World from the Side of the Moon" (a platinum plus-selling album that debuted at #4 on the Billboard Top 200 and featured the 5 times platinum smash hit "Home").

"The first album we did in three weeks and a lot of the tracks were older ones that I had written a few years before and I didn't get to do as much with them as I wanted too and as much as I do with them live," Phillips said. "This album is a lot more lean and guitar-driven with some instrumental parts that have a real live feel."

To record "Behind The Light" (19 Entertainment/Interscope Records), Phillips again teamed up with Gregg Wattenberg (the Grammy-nominated producer behind "The World From The Side Of The Moon," as well as releases from Five for Fighting, Goo Goo Dolls, Train, and O.A.R.).

Holing up in New York City's Quad Studios in the middle of last year's brutal winter and joining forces with the musicians who form his tight-knit live band Phillips dedicated himself to broadening his impassioned brand of rock with an edgy ingenuity he's newly explored through such artists as Radiohead and Peter Gabriel.

Moodier and more darkly charged but full of arena-sized rock anthems, "Behind The Light" features lead single "Raging Fire," an epic and urgent love song that debuted in the Billboard Hot 100 upon its March release and quickly earned raves for Phillips's vocal delivery and guitar work.



Phillips, who honed his craft opening for such acts as Matchbox Twenty and John Mayer and sharing a stage with Bruce Springsteen at the 2013 Rock in Rio festival, said the great things about these songs is that they continue to morph as the band molds them on stage nightly.

"Once everyone got more familiar with them they have such a great response and we get to make up something that grows musically in the jam," Phillips said. "I think that these songs are always on-stage growing. A lot of artists will play their songs and do the same version but for me and my band we like to change it up and that makes it fun for us and for the fans, and that is what keeps it interesting. In my band I am a guitar player first and that has kept me interested in what defines the music."

That band-centric dynamic's long been key to Phillips, who formed his first group as a teenager in Leesburg, Georgia. An acoustic outfit, the band included Phillips's older sister and her husband Benjamin Neil, through whom Phillips first learned to play guitar and soon found himself mastering riffs from classic-rock tracks like Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water" and Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train."

After graduating high school, Phillips started studying industrial systems technology at Albany Technical College in Georgia and continued playing music and cultivating his own sound and style.

"I grew up on musicians and bands from the '60s and '70s, stuff like Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin," says Phillips, who also names Eric Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughan as two top inspirations for his guitar work. "Then as I got older I found Damien Rice and Dave Matthews and John Butler, which is what really set it off for me in terms of finding my voice as a musician."

Phillips said that deep-rooted love for rocking guitars and an equal passion for great songs has him trying to create a complex canvas of songs with heart but technical musicality.

"I learned as much as I could listening to The Beatles and Dave (Matthews) and John Butler play these songs and at the same time be playing these different parts on the guitar while singing incredible melodies," Phillips said. "That really drew me into songwriting while also playing something interesting. It keeps me interested and challenged."

Phillips said with the new record and tour, he just hopes to continue to share his musical vision that was launched after winning "American Idol" when Phillips released "Home," a hit that was the most successful coronation song of any Idol winner as well as the highest debut on the Billboard Digital songs chart, with 278,000 downloads sold.



"That show was great as a flat forum and it helped me learned to play on live television," Phillips said. "It was a great stepping stone but after that you have to work hard and have to know what you want. I already knew who I was, and although I am constantly learning new things about myself as a guitarist and a singer, I knew the direction I wanted to go. A lot of people who go out for the show they are great singers but they don't know what they want to do. I knew what that was and I had been playing shows when nobody would come out, and that will keep you humble because not everybody likes you. So you've got to keep a humble mind and just work hard."

If You Go:

WHAT: Singer-songwriter and "American Idol" winner, Phillip Phillips and opening act Saints of Valory.

WHERE: Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center, 825 4th Ave., Huntington

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 3:

HOW MUCH: \$78 and \$60.

GET TIX: Call 304-696-6656 or order tickets online at Ticketmaster.com for the concert, which is done in conjunction with the Marshall University Campus Activities Board and Student Activities.

REST OF THE MAS FALL SEMESTER:

7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 6: Dancing Pros Live -- The world's finest dancers battle it out live on stage and the audience picks the winner at the Keith-Albee. Hosted by Alan Thicke, the show features pro dancers from "Dancing With The Stars," "So You Think You Can Dance," and competitions around the globe will dance off against each other in competition. Ticket prices are \$85, \$70, \$60 and \$54.

Fall International Film Festival: Nov. 7-13: at the Keith-Albee. Featured films include: "The Lunch Box" (India), "Wadjda" (Saudi Arabia), "Instructions Not Included" (Mexico), "The Great Beauty" (Italy), "Like Father, Like Son" (Japan), and "Twenty Feet From Stardom" (USA).

7:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 17: "Elf-The Musical" comes to the Keith-Albee based on the hit movie "Elf." Ticket prices are \$85, \$70,\$60, \$54.



7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 4: "Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer -- The Musical" at the Keith-Albee. Ticket prices are \$58, \$40, and \$25.

7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 12: Two-time Grammy-Award-winner and two-time Country Music Association "Female Vocalist of the Year," West Virginia's own, Kathy Mattea, brings the sounds of the holiday season home to the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center. Ticket prices are \$59.50 and \$40.

Welcome to the discussion.

Keep it Clean. Please avoid obscene, vulgar, lewd, racist or sexually-oriented language.

PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR CAPS LOCK.

Don't Threaten. Threats of harming another person will not be tolerated.

Be Truthful. Don't knowingly lie about anyone or anything.

Be Nice. No racism, sexism or any sort of -ism that is degrading to another person.

Be Proactive. Use the 'Report' link on each comment to let us know of abusive posts.

Share with Us. We'd love to hear eyewitness accounts, the history behind an article.

