



New faces to make appearance

By Cathie Braidenbach
special writer

This summer, Meadow Brook Music Festival welcomes stars to the concert lineup who have never before performed on the open-air stage of the Baldwin Pavilion.

On Saturday, July 15 Romanian-born virtuoso of the pan pipes, Gheorghe Zamfir, will play a concerto for baroque flute on his unique instrument. He'll also perform pan pipe renditions of popular favorites such as "Somewhere My Love" and original compositions he wrote for movie sound tracks — all backed by a 65-piece orchestra.

A classic pair of funny men, Milton Berle and Sid Caesar, debut on the Music Festival stage Friday, July 12. With a small backup orchestra and an immense repertoire of humor, the two kings of comedy will do individual stunts on stage, then share the limelight as they thrust and parry one-liners.

STARS OF THE Summer Solid Gold Series (see accompanying story) appearing for the first time at the Music Festival include the talented Ben E. King, as well as popular vocalists billed as The Golden Boys — Frankie Avalon, Fabian and Bobby Rydell.

On Thursday, July 13, the popular group that began as the Jefferson Airplane with Grace Slick as lead singer, changed its name to the Jefferson Airship when original members were replaced by new members and now bills itself Starship will create their exciting sound.

Minimalist composer Phillip Glass and his eight-piece ensemble will play excerpts from compositions "Einstein on the Beach,"

"Akhmaten," and "1000 Airplanes on the Roof" at his Meadow Brook debut Wednesday, July 19. Also on the program will be selections from film scores he composed as well as from "Satyagraha," his opera about Gandhi.

On Wednesday, July 26, British heartthrob Rick Ashley brings his soft-core rock sound and clean-cut good looks to the Baldwin stage. He and his band will play some of the songs that made him a hit in England and are rapidly earning him an American following.

'Plus' job

Panic punctuates talent agent's routine

By Cathie Braidenbach
special writer

MUSIC TAPS directly into memory. Songs, better than anything else, can recreate the good times when we were young, full of sass and first falling love. Most of us remember those days and the music with more clarity and intensity than songs from any other era of our lives.

Kim Thiele, founder of Entertainment Plus, the Rochester company that puts together the Summer Solid Gold Series of shows for Meadow Brook Music Festival, knows how to capitalize on the nostalgic power of music even though she's only 30. She combines acts (she calls it packaging a show) with both a musical era in mind to ensure there will be people in the audience who claim that music and the times they represent as their own.

"The songs," she explained, "from high school and college were 'your' music. They represented 'your' generation."

The first concert, Monday, June 19, in the Summer Solid Gold Series highlights music of the late '60s to mid-'70s with the recently reunited Blood, Sweat and Tears, joined by Tommy James, and the Shondettes. David Clayton Thomas, lead singer for Blood, Sweat and Tears, hit the charts and stayed on top a few decades back with his hits, "You Made Me So Very Happy" as well as "Spinning Wheel" and "When I Die."

Another vocalist whose career peaked during years, Tommy James will sing some of his hits like "Hanky Panky," "It's Only Love," and "Monymony." Popular vocalist of the '80s, Tiffany recently put Tommy James' tune, "I Think We're Alone Now" back on the charts when she recorded his old hit.

THIELE INSISTS THAT good songs are timeless and because they are, they get recorded over and over by new artists. Although she deliberately targets an era when packaging a show, she knows music cuts across categories and generations. When parents bring teenage children to concerts, everybody enjoys the showmanship of the artists, the choreographed movements to songs, and the wonderful harmonies of entertainers who've spent years perfecting their style and the art of putting songs across to an audience.

Fireworks on Monday, July 3, will follow the concert by headliners Ben E.

King and three groups who stamped the '60s with their sound — the Shirelles, the Contours and the Marvellettes.

Many will remember the times when no dance in the high school gym could be a success without playing Ben E. King's romantic hit "Stand By Me" or his "Spanish Harlem." King, who sang with the Drifters before successfully going off on his own, will be debuting on the festival stage.

The Shirelles will be back for their third year at the festival. Thiele calls them "the most most beloved girl group of the '60s." If the group's name doesn't jog memories, their song titles usually will — "Dedicated to the One I Love," "Tonight's the Night," "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?" and "Soldier Boy."

THE ORIGINAL Shirelles split up some year back and each member of the early trio has reconstituted a new group and laid claim in court to the group name. The court decision on the Shirelles is pending, so Thiele looks for credibility based on which group is accepted by the music industry as the original.

Getting nominated to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame or winning a Grammy award clearly indicates industry support. "We run with these opinions," Thiele said, adding that whenever she can, she "lets the courts make moral decisions."

Members of the vocal groups frequently change over the years. The shuffling of talent raises moral questions of how groups can be legitimately be billed. With different members, the groups are not the same as the original although they may come very close to duplicating the original sound.

ALSO ON STAGE with King and the Shirelles will be two popular Motown groups, the Contours and the Marvellettes. The song "Do You Love Me" by the Contours played in the movie, "Dirty Dancing," and the group recently returned from a Dirty Dancing tour featuring artists on the movie sound track. Meadow Brook is flying in the Rocking' Robin Band from Orlando, Fla. to serve as house band for the July 3 concert because they play with rock groups all the time and will help the show flow without cumbersome switching of bands between acts.

Besides originating concepts for shows and booking the talent, Entertainment Plus produces shows. That means lining up house bands and

coordinating the myriad details of scheduling transportation for talent, handling promotions, lining up a master of ceremonies from top local radio stations, arranging stage facilities and pre-show sound checks as well as troubleshooting whatever glitches come up at the last minute.

ON SUNDAY, JULY 16, Meadow Brook bring in the Golden Boys — Frankie Avalon, Fabian and Bobby Rydell. Thiele anticipates no snafus in the show but she knows better than to feel smug. Maybe Frankie won't turn up to croon his hits because Annette Funicello will lure him away to play "beach blanket bingo" the way they did in early teen movies. All three former teen heartthrobs will share billing.

Thiele says, "We think there are a lot of women out there who remember the old romantic days." Men also tune into the romantic moments music recalls. Thiele says she's had men say to her they had their first date when a particular song was a hit or whenever they think of their first kiss, a certain song comes to mind.

The final show of the Summer Solid Gold Series on Saturday, Aug. 18 brings in all-time rock and roll great Chuck Berry, who's been in the industry 30 years and was recently elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Little Anthony, best known for "Tears on My Pillow," "Shimmy, Shimmy KoKo Bop," and "Going Out of Head Over You," was 16 years old in the late '50s when he first topped the charts. He began with the Imperials, then broke off to make it as a single. The Coasters, best remembered for hits like "Along Came Jones," "One Kiss Led to Another," and "Poison Ivy," will add their catchy, playful rock and roll sounds to a Meadow Brook Music Festival celebration of great R & R.

The business of booking and producing shows for Meadow Brook sounds glamorous and Thiele admits she loves "dealing with what makes people happy, with what entertains them."

But the business has its nightmare side. "Being constantly ready for the unexpected keeps me awake at night," Thiele said. "The greatest lesson I've learned in this business is there are only so many things in life you can control. Sometimes I feel like a farmer who can't control the wind and hail. There'd be more security dealing with things that don't think, live and die."