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BETHEL WOODS CENTER FOR THE ARTS RANKED #13 ON POLLSTAR MAGAZINE’S LIST OF THE TOP 100 AMPHITHEATERS IN THE WORLD

2019 Year in Review
Nonprofit cultural center celebrates three million visitors and 50th anniversary of historic festival

February 14, 2020 (BETHEL, NY) – Bethel Woods’ Season of Song & Celebration – highlighting the impact of the greatest festival of all time during its 50th anniversary year – delivered unique and memorable experiences for those who journeyed to the historic site throughout 2019. This year, the 501(c)3 nonprofit cultural arts center exceeded the three million visitor milestone since its opening in 2006.

Pollstar Magazine’s list of the Top 100 Worldwide Amphitheaters for 2019, released last month, ranked Bethel Woods Center for the Arts at #13 – the highest ranking for the Center yet. Over the course of the Pavilion season, Bethel Woods welcomed over 220,000 guests to 23 Pavilion shows. Highlights included sets by comedian Adam Sandler and performances by Chris Stapleton, Dave Matthews Band, and more. Bethel Woods also welcomed Mountain Jam – one of the Northeast’s largest rock n’ roll music festivals – for its first year at its new home.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary, Bethel Woods hosted a variety of special programming for those attending Anniversary Weekend (Friday, August 16th – Sunday, August 18th). The weekend included performances by Arlo Guthrie, Ringo Starr, Santana, and John Fogerty, plus a free screening of the Warner Bros. Academy Award-winning documentary,
*Woodstock: The Director's Cut.* Over Anniversary Weekend, 45,000 guests also enjoyed a multitude of other festivities, including two additional stages of live music highlighting local talent, craft vendors, art making activities, and games.

More than 3,500 guests enjoyed intimate, indoor shows at the Event Gallery throughout the year, including highly-anticipated performances from Woodstock greats Sha Na Na, John Sebastian, and Graham Nash. A select number of these Event Gallery performances were enhanced by pre-show farm-to-table dinners. The family-style, multi-course meals featured delicious recipes using locally-sourced ingredients that guests enjoyed in the Market Sheds overlooking the historic festival field.

The Museum at Bethel Woods opened its doors to almost 60,000 visitors throughout the year. The 2019 Special Exhibit "We Are Golden" was met with much praise and acclaim for its focus on the festival and careful curation, receiving the 2019 Award for Excellence from the Greater Hudson Valley Heritage Network. The exhibit compared the desires of the youth of 1969 to those of today and featured a large collection of authentic Woodstock artifacts such as instruments, clothing, equipment, art, and photography.

Additionally, The Museum made immense strides in preservation efforts with the opening of the Bindy Bazaar Trails, which now allows guests to explore the historic marketplace of the Woodstock festival. Renowned textile artist Carol Hummel's large-scale installation highlights the art, craft, and sense of joy embodied by the Bindy Bazaar and the festival itself.

As a growing nonprofit organization, fundraising remains critical to Bethel Woods' mission. In 2019, the Anniversary Paver Campaign allowed philanthropists and fans to make their mark on the historic site by purchasing a brick paver, etched with a personal message. The year also saw the eighth annual Wine Pairing and Fundraising Dinner, featuring an evening of wines and fine dining with a live and silent auction. All proceeds are utilized by the Center to curate museum and creative programming while preserving the historic site.

Specifically designed to explore the impact and inspiration of the 1960s as part of the year-long celebration of Woodstock’s Golden Anniversary, Bethel Woods hosted the Vibrations series, bringing together change makers, artists, and influencers to inspire thinking and awaken purpose. Events included Deep Field – a sold-out screening of Grammy-winning composer Eric Whitacre’s piece of music of the same name, plus a panel discussion with NASA astronauts and scientists to discuss space exploration as a scientific venture as well as an artistic one.

The Museum Education and Creative Programs department successfully executed 325 programs, serving over 21,000 attendees. Participant ages ranged from one month to 98 years. Offerings included P.L.A.Y. Music and Theater, which welcomed 75 students for eight weeks of music, theater, and dance in celebration of 1969 and the journey to Woodstock. The Bethel Woods on Main program brought opportunities to local Teaching Artists to reach over 1,800 students from throughout the region interested in art, science, and innovation.

It is important to note that the success of these programs and events are contingent on the participation of volunteers. In 2019, 286 volunteers contributed nearly 20,500 of service to the organization.

A season of engaging and successful festivals brought tourists to Bethel Woods to enjoy the bounty and beauty of Sullivan County and the region. Overall festival attendance grew 14% over the previous year. With over 24,000 attendees, Sundays in the fall brought families to the Harvest Festival to enjoy a farmers market, live music, and hands-on experiential arts and crafts. The Craft: Beer, Spirits & Food Festival, The Wine Festival, and Holiday Market gave guests the opportunity to shop, drink, celebrate, and eat local on the spectacular Bethel Woods grounds.
With the dust settling on the Center’s biggest year to date, Eric Frances, Bethel Woods’ newly-appointed Chief Executive Officer stated, “This is the beginning of the next chapter of our story - we will continue to offer programming for our community; we will strive to bring the best, most memorable performances to the stage; and without a doubt, we will ensure guests leave feeling inspired by arts, music, and the history of what happened here in 1969.” Frances, who has been with the center for nearly 14 years added, “We aspire to create shared experiences that will be lasting memories for the next 50 years.”

Looking ahead, new programming and initiatives for the year include:

- Museum Memberships designed to enhance the guests’ experience.
- An Augmented Reality Tour providing the opportunity to see and hear the historic site like never before.
- The first-ever spring beverage festival, The Big Sip, on Saturday, May 23rd.
- On August 22nd, Spartan Race – the largest obstacle race and endurance brand in the world.

For more information and a complete list of upcoming events, visit [www.bethelwoodscenter.org](http://www.bethelwoodscenter.org).

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About Bethel Woods Center for the Arts
Bethel Woods Center for the Arts inspires, educates, and empowers individuals through the arts and humanities by presenting a diverse selection of culturally-rich performances, popular artists, and community and educational programming. Located 90 miles from New York City at the site of the 1969 Woodstock festival in Bethel, NY, the lush 800-acre campus includes a Pavilion Stage amphitheater with seating for 15,000, an intimate 440-seat indoor Event Gallery, the award-winning Museum at Bethel Woods, and a Conservatory for arts education programming.

Through the in-depth study and exhibition of the social, political, and cultural events of the 1960s, as well as the preservation of the historic site of the Woodstock Music and Art Fair, Bethel Woods educates individuals about the issues and lessons of the decade while inspiring a new generation to contribute positively to the world around them. The not-for-profit organization relies on the generous support of individuals, corporations, and foundations to develop and sustain programs that improve the quality of life in the region and beyond.