

Rockin' In The New Year

Big Leg Emma To Headline Music, Art Show At Fenton Grill On Saturday Night

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By Scott Shelters - Features/Entertainment Reporter On New Year's Eve, local artists will transform the Fenton Grill from a restaurant to a full-blown center for the arts. Highlighted by sets from bands Big Leg Emma and Smackdab, the works of local painters, sculptors and visual artists will be on display at the Fenton on Saturday night. Doors will open at 7:30, and pre-sale tickets are \$15 per person and \$25 per couple. For Big Leg Emma, a band that mixes folk with rock and country with psychedelic, Saturday night's show will make for a new and unique experience.

The six-piece group - made up of Charity Nuse, Steve Johnson, Amanda Barton, Kev Rowe, Steve French and Rad Akers - will share the stage with a digital backdrop, LED light displays, a painter and various Big Leg Emma and Smackdab-inspired works of art.

"We got the green light from the Fenton Grill to basically make the whole place an art gallery," Nuse said.

The Saturday night event will be the debut ARTFusion, VoltVision exhibition. ARTFusion, as its name implies, combines various locally created artistic elements into one display. VoltVision, created by French, will provide the interactive, music-influenced lighting for the Smackdab and Big Leg Emma sets. As the bands play, the LED lights will alter the live paintings on the stage and the other art works scattered around the Fenton.

"French's big vision was to get VoltVision and Big Leg Emma together. It's going to be a different atmosphere," Nuse said.

Artists who contributed work for the Big Leg Emma and Smackdab New Year's Eve show include Nate Long, David Grice, Caren Hurlburt, James Bliss, Jen Randall, Jamie Probst, Mark Goodrich, Kaylea Stoeltzing, Kimberly Hurlburt, Leslie Nalbome and Ellen Feldt.

Some of the artwork will be available for sale, while other pieces will be used during Infinity Visual and Performing Arts Inc. classes led by members of Big Leg Emma. The

band's new merchandise will feature some of the artwork designs.

"No one has really done this before," Nuse said. "We're creating a different kind of community within the arts community."

THE MUSIC

Big Leg Emma will take the stage for the band's first Jamestown area New Year's Eve show since a Jamestown Savings Bank Arena appearance with Smackdab several years ago.

This time around, members of Smackdab will join Big Leg Emma on stage for a couple of tunes.

"They're good friends of ours," Nuse said. "We're looking forward to playing with them."

Attendees will hear a variety of Big Leg Emma songs, including music from what Johnson calls the band's "lost years," or the period of time from 2005-2008. During that span, the band toured extensively and didn't record any new songs.

"We just plan on playing until they shut us down," Johnson said of the Fenton show.

"It's a nice establishment. It's classy, yet casual. It's big enough to cram in 500 people, and we welcome anyone with open arms."

Saturday's show will be the band's first at the Fenton. The band will hit the stage for its first set of the night at 11, playing music that will include tracks from a soon-to-be-released album.

"It's a more mature Big Leg Emma," Johnson said. "It has a more defined sound, but it's still the same, fun Big Leg Emma."

"We're rockin' a little bit more," added Nuse. "We have more of an edge now."

Big Leg Emma has played shows in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina recently.

In the spring, the band will embark on a multi-week tour, which will include several dates on the East Coast, the band's first ever stop in Washington, D.C. and a Bike Week performance in Daytona, Fla.

"That's the anchor of the tour," Johnson said of the Bike Week show. "It's going to be a pretty big party in Daytona; it's going to be fun."

Wherever they play, Johnson and Nuse notice a diversely aged and gendered audience. They recommend the band's shows for anyone from ages 5 to 80. However, only people 21 and over will be admitted to Saturday's show.

"If they like to dance and have a good time in a large crowd, then they'll like this," Johnson said. "We have a sense of family at our shows."

Smackdab will play at 9:15 before Big Leg Emma's 11 p.m. set. The Happy New Year 2012 Toast will be held at midnight, and Big Leg Emma's second and final set of the night will begin at 12:15.

Tickets will be \$20 the day of the show and \$30 per couple. They can be purchased at the Fenton Grill, located at 2 E. Second St., Jamestown, at America's Mattress in Lakewood or on www.biglegemma.com.