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Peter Frampton comes full circle

Iconic guitarist went from being a serious musician to being a teen idol and then back to being a serious musician again.

By James Grant, nsfeatures@news-sentinel.com
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Peter Frampton, who will perform Sunday evening at Foellinger Theatre, has had quite the varied musical career.

Best known for his multi-platinum selling album "Frampton Comes Alive!" from 1976, Frampton began his career in England in the late 1960s playing with various groups, including The Herd and Humble Pie, all before he was 20 years old.

Frampton's prowess on the guitar enabled him to interact and work with some of the cream of British rock as he cultivated a career as a serious guitarist and performer.

As the 1970s dawned Frampton did session work for several legendary British musicians including playing on George Harrison's epic "All Things Must Pass" triple album as well as John Entwistle's (bass player for The Who) album "Whistle Rymes."

With the release of 1972's "Wind of Change" Frampton's solo career took flight, and by 1975 he had released three more albums while touring constantly.

The result of Frampton's constant touring produced his biggest triumph, "Frampton Comes Alive!" — a double live album that was released at the beginning of 1976.

Though major commercial success eluded him previously, everything dramatically changed for Frampton with the release of "Frampton Comes Alive!" as it spawned three hit singles and sold more than 10 million copies worldwide, vaulting Frampton into mega star status.

Despite Frampton once being considered a serious guitarist, the success of "Frampton Comes Alive!" thrust him into uncharted territory — teen idol of millions of young fans.

With his face plastered on all the leading teen magazines and legions of screaming fans, Frampton began to lose sight of the direction his career was taking him.

In 1978, Frampton added to his teen idol status by starring, along with 1970s iconic superstars the Bee Gees, in the ill-fated "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" movie, which was inspired by The Beatles album of the same name.

Frampton's career slowed down after a car accident in the Bahamas in 1978, and while he still continued to record and release music he could never reach the commercial heights of the mid-1970s, and he seemed to lose his way musically.

It was David Bowie, an old friend of Frampton's who was taught art at Beckenham Technical School in England by Frampton's father, who helped steer Frampton's career back toward being taken more seriously as a musician by inviting Frampton to play guitar on his album "Never Let Me Down" as well as on its accompanying tour in 1997.



Peter Frampton will play at the Foellinger Outdoor Theatre on Sunday. His concert will feature all his hits, as fans expect, and also acoustic versions of some of his classic songs. (Courtesy photo by John Lill Photography)

More Information Peter Frampton in concert

WHAT: Iconic guitarist or 1970s pop star? Both.

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Sunday

WHERE: Foellinger Outdoor Theatre, 3411 Sherman Blvd.

COST: \$49-\$79

ETC.: Buy tickets online at www.fortwayneparks.org or call 427-6000 or 427-6715 after 6 p.m. day of show or buy tickets at any Wooden Nickel Records location

To hear audio excerpts of our interview with Peter Frampton, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNf1CLB3wiw>



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Since then, Frampton has continued to tour and record and has found his musical voice again with the 2006 Grammy-winning album titled "Fingerprints."

Frampton says his current tour, which is in support of his newest CD release called "Acoustic Classics," will feature all the hits and some deep album cuts played as fans expect but also will feature acoustic versions of some of his classic songs.

While Frampton is known for his intricate electric guitar work, recording his "Acoustic Classics" CD and playing all acoustic shows has been a rewarding experience for him.

"I never really thought I would do that, but I noticed that a lot of artists were redoing their material but just redoing it as per the record so they would own the master," Frampton said in a telephone interview about making the "Acoustic Classics" CD.

"I've never been one for repeating myself as far as doing that kind of thing, so I did notice that a couple of people had done them acoustically and that appealed to me much more."

"Last October we went out on the (acoustic) tour and that was halfway through recording 'Acoustic Classics' and Gordon Kennedy and I, just the two of us, went out and did the acoustic tour which was a really big success," Frampton continued.

"I never thought I would do a complete set of acoustic, and I never thought I'd do a complete CD of acoustic."

"But the end result was that I really enjoyed it, and it's 180 degrees different from playing with the band, which I love, but I also found that this is another avenue that I really enjoy, too, so it's the best of both worlds," Frampton added.

Having had such a long career in music, Frampton has seen the focus of the music industry change from artists making money on selling records to artists making more of their living from live performances.

While Frampton has been renowned as a live performer throughout his career, he still has a desire to write and record new material, even though financially it may not make sense.

"I heard what Roger Daltrey (lead singer of the Who) said the other day - 'what's the point, you know, of making another record?'" Frampton said.

"And I agree with him. There isn't any point really financially, but artistically there's all the reason in the world to put out new material.

"Just because someone's not going to necessarily pay for my music, whether they do or not, I can't get up tomorrow and sit down at the guitar and say wait a second I mustn't write a song. I've never needed a monetary reason to create.

"I'm one of the lucky people that really enjoys it (touring), and also I'm known for my live show, so it's a wonderful position. ...

"And they know they're going to (hear) old stuff and new stuff, so I don't sit back on my laurels and just say, OK, I've written everything I'm going to write and that's it. I can't be like that," Frampton said.

Frampton says resigning with A&M Records, the record label that released "Frampton Comes Alive!," was the catalyst for his musical renaissance.



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