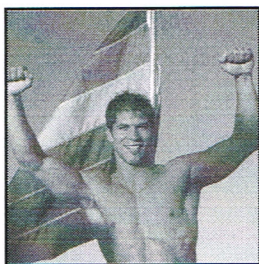




Ladies to jam and inspire at PrideFest

June 11, 4:39 AM · Dustin Alexander - Milwaukee Top News Examiner



PrideFest is this weekend at Maier Festival Park in Milwaukee. The weather forecast is warm and the music promises to be even hotter.

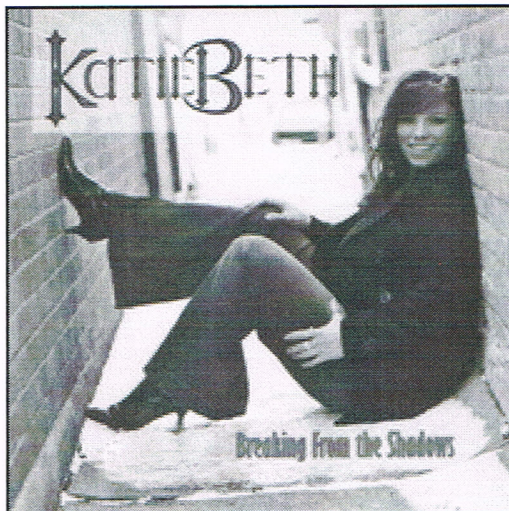
The Examiner interviewed the following stars that will be appearing at PrideFest. From Indie, to folk and country rock, from coast to coast, each lady brings their own style to the live stage. The artist's name, where they're from as well as when and where they will appear at PrideFest is included.

Anna Gutmanis, Toronto, Ontario, Canada – Saturday 2:15 p.m. - PrideFest Rainbow Stage

Winning the 2009 Pride Song Award, Gutmanis will be doing a mini Pride tour this summer. Her music video for the film *I Am Who I Am* will be shown at the International GLBT Film Festival in Virginia on June 26th.

What brings fans to her shows? Gutmanis said, "I'd like to think it's the strength of my songs and voice. I think my songs are memorable." The single *Then Came You* from her debut album is still getting airplay on Canadian commercial radio stations.

Gutmanis is heading back into the studio next year with the hopes of recording an entirely new album. "I performed in the U.S. for the first time last year. It was a blast!" One of Gutmanis favorite artists is Patti LaBelle who will be playing the Miller Main Stage Saturday at 10 p.m.



Katie Beth, Milwaukee & Nashville – Friday 3 p.m. - PrideFest Pump Pavilion

Country rock is what Katie Beth performs. "If people can take a 1/2 hour out of their day to relax and forget about the rest of the world, that's what I hope people will do when they hear me play."

When Beth's not on stage, she's busy with causes that are close to her heart. During the May flooding in the Nashville area, Beth boarded a plane and volunteered her time to assist the American Red Cross relief effort, in the devastated area.

Beth will be playing at "I Love Nashville Flood Relief Benefit" Sunday, June 27th, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Milwaukee Harley-Davidson dealership, 11310 W. Silver Spring Rd, Milwaukee. There will be food, beverages and great local talent.

After 24 years Beth still gives credit to those who have helped her get to where she's at today. "My family and close friends have always been supportive of everything I do and try to accomplish. I'm so thankful. Without them, I wouldn't be where I am."

Lojo Russo, Davenport, Iowa – Sunday 1:15 p.m. - PrideFest Rainbow Stage

A mixture of Ani DiFranco and the Indigo Girls describes acoustic rocker Lojo Russo. The singer-songwriter of almost 2 decades released her album "Little White Box" in 2008. "I do have a project in the beginning stages hopefully released in 2011." Her music is available on her website, CD-Baby, iTunes and also in person at PrideFest.

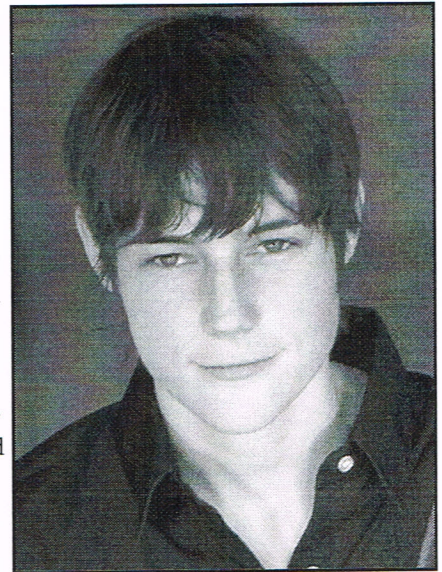


Melissa Ferrick, Boston, MA – Saturday 11 p.m. - PrideFest Rainbow Stage

At the tender age of 5, Ferrick started playing the violin. Then it was the trumpet. Her love of music won her scholarships to the New England Conservatory of Music as well as 2 years at Berkeley College. "I played in the East Village when I was 16 and 17. It was a great experience." Ferrick says that Edie Brickell and The New Bohemians and Tracy Chapman were inspirations.

"I'm a very energetic performer. When I start to play, is the only time I'm not thinking. Usually I think too much, most of the time. Performing is an escape for me. I haven't found anything else that makes me feel connected and not connected to my body at the same time."

Ferrick plays in Milwaukee and Madison as often as possible. "I like the blue collar feel that Milwaukee offers." She recollects fond memories of touring with the late Chris Whitley and looks forward to every opportunity to visit and perform in the Midwest. She'll be at the Chicago Theater and has a U.S. Fall tour planned.

Ellis, Minneapolis, MN – Saturday 8:50 p.m. - PrideFest Rainbow Stage

Right before the fireworks display at the festival, Ellis will perform her acoustic pop style of music. The Examiner had an exclusive interview with Ellis and has found out that she has a new CD in the works. The single, "You Are Royalty To Me" is a song she wrote for her "granny." It's a personal thank you for all the wonderful things her grandmother has done for Ellis.

The rising star in the independent music scene has won numerous awards and released 6 albums in the past 12 years, according to her [website](#). "Break The Spell" is Ellis' most recent album.

Ellis said, "People have come up to me after a performance and said, 'I'm leaving better than when I came.' That's a powerful thing!" She feels that many people are too worried about fitting in. "We all want to belong and be liked. We're all yearn for a connection with each other; to figure out the struggles and joys of life together."

Terri Mazurek, Ellis' manager said, "Ellis is a remarkable person and musician. She is transformational!" Ellis' music is available on her [website](#), Amazon.com, iTunes, CD Baby and at [PrideFest](#).

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