

Local Rhythm & Blues Legend Ila Vann Returns to the Limestone City Bluesfest with “KokoVann”

Kingston area R&B legend Ila Vann has teamed up with a world-class bandleader and some top notch local talent to entertain Limestone City Bluesfest-goers at Megalos this August 28th and 29th.

Vann has been singing since the age of 5, performing in a gospel choir with her sisters. Since then, she’s shared the stage and lent her voice to recordings from such luminaries as Mahalia Jackson, Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles, Sam Cooke, the Blind Boys of Alabama, and Bluesfest headliner Mavis Staples. She eventually settled in Eastern Ontario, performing regularly throughout the last two decades in and around Kingston, gaining a large local following.

After taking a break from performing over the past couple of years, Vann has hooked up with Ian Kojima, a sax player and band leader who has recently moved to Kingston. His resume includes a long stint as Chris De Burgh’s bandleader during his run of #1 hits in the eighties and nineties, and recordings & tours with B.B. King, funk legend Rick James, the Stampeders, and a host of other touring artists. He’s put together an all-star band including Jay Euringer on guitar, Zak Colbert on bass, Chris Jackson on drums and Ken Hall on keys.

The band will play some of Ila’s hits from the 60’s, along with some blues classics and funky numbers that will appeal to those who are looking for an authentic Rhythm and Blues experience. “Many Kingstonians have no idea that they’ve got world-class talent right here in town,” says Kojima. “While the focus during bluesfest is often on touring headliners, there’s a good and healthy 100-mile blues diet available to folks at Bluesfest this year.”

Megalos has been a hidden gem of a venue during Bluesfest for the past number of years. The band will be set up in the lounge on the lower level of the building. “It’s interesting because from the street, passersby can only see the upstairs dining area. Opening the door to hear music and coming down the stairs gives folks the feeling that they’re sharing a secret juke-joint with others who’ve come to hear the blues,” says Jackson.

“While we’re not regularly a music venue, we’re happy to support an event like Bluesfest while sponsoring a showcase of incredible local talent,” says Megalos Manager Elia Anagnostopoulos. Music starts after the mainstage concerts on Friday, August 28th and Saturday, August 29th. Admission is free with your Limestone City Bluesfest bracelet for those who are 19 or older.

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