

"If you don't want it printed, don't let it happen."

# Aspen Daily News

## TACAW's robust summer roundup

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The Arts Campus at Willits is rolling out a sizable summer lineup. Hosting national comedy acts, regional film screenings and local rock bands, the performing arts center invites the Roaring Fork Valley community to discover its many offerings.

With new collaborations, series and programming in place, TACAW's momentum can be experienced in many different ways this summer.

One way is through laughter, as the organization has really leaned into curating a top-notch comedy series, said Executive Director Ryan Honey. Tonight at 8 p.m., stand-up comedian Billy Wayne Davis takes the stage. Originally from a small town in Tennessee, Davis currently lives in Los Angeles and has been featured on TV shows and countless podcasts. He's also worked on the movies "Who is America" and "Borat 2."

Tickets for the seated show at TACAW range from \$22 to \$32. Doors open at 7 p.m.

TACAW's comedic roster continues with the Colorado-based comedian Sam Tallent coming July 23, followed by the



Emmy- and Grammy-nominated comedian and performer Tig Notaro on Aug. 3 — a national act that, to Honey, represents TACAW's growing reputation and chapter ahead.

"We do comedy at least once a month, we're consistent with it and it's definitely become a series here at TACAW," Honey said. "And I think we have the best room for comedy — you have to go pretty far to find a better room for comedy."

TACAW's multi-use theater room also lends itself extremely well to music, adds Kendall Smith, director of programming for the arts center.

"We've got a room that I think

is one of the best listening rooms in the valley ... the sound is great and it's an intimate feel — you're close to the artist," Smith said. "And the facility changes with the number of bodies or the type of musical content you put in there."

The space, which can hold up to 245 seated guests and a standing crowd of 400 people, will cultivate a diverse range of musical performances this summer.

Just looking at June, TACAW's music offerings differ across genres, cultures and audience engagement — from "honky tonkin" on the dance floor with the local

country band Highway 82 to the return of Salsa Night, rocking with The Samples and entering an evening of Latin Jazz with Josefina Mendez' musical group.

The rich range of music continues throughout July and August, and a handful of these summer shows are free with an RSVP, Smith said. TACAW also is partnering with the town of Basalt to host a free concert in Lion's Park featuring Eli "Paperboy" Reed on Aug. 24. The event serves somewhat as a "teaser" for what's to come, Honey said, explaining how a new bandshell is being built in Basalt and TACAW will collaborate in the programming of a free music series starting in summer 2023.

On the cinematic side of programming, TACAW is partnering with 5Point Film to host the 5Point Summer Film Series, which kicks off on July 7 with "Fire of Love." Subsequent events in the three-part series are scheduled for Aug. 4 and Sept. 8 and film titles will be announced soon.

Of the many important conversations that TACAW is bringing to its space include the Queer Voices Story Project on July 12 and the second Equity Speaker Series discussion featuring Adriana Alvarez on July 26.

Smith said he is working with other local organizations to incorporate more environmental-type discussions into TACAW programming in

an attempt to leverage issues pertinent to the valley, such as Western Slope water issues.

When it comes to collaborating with other local organizations, TACAW has been a central space for entertainment, culture, thought and community in the valley. And as the arts center enters its first summer hosting events within its new, fully finished facility, both Honey and Smith look forward to exploring the organization's place in the valley's cultural ecosystem.

"I'm excited to see where we fit into the summer ecosystem and how people are going to respond to us when all the other things are back running full speed ahead," Smith said. "And I'm excited to convert some audiences to come here and maybe step out of their habits."

Honey also mentioned that he hopes to reset habits this summer through TACAW's diverse offerings.

"We want to encourage our audience to trust different programming and come see artists that maybe they don't know," Honey said. "But we realized too, after a couple years of being inside and the pandemic, that people's habits have to be reset. ...We want to train people to come out and have artistic discovery, music discovery and comedy discovery — there's some really great stuff on the lineup."

For updates and information on TACAW's summer line up, visit [tacaw.org](http://tacaw.org) or follow "tacaw\_org" on Instagram.