



Things to Do

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Q&A

On his new album, Bocelli celebrates the music from classic movies

JOCELYN NOVECK
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Andrea Bocelli's new album "Cinema," a collection of songs from movies, is the culmination of a longtime dream.

The classically inspired singer fell in love with many songs as a child that he didn't know came from the movies.

Now he has gone back to his childhood memories and recorded some of those songs, including classics like "Moon River" and "Cheek to Cheek." Pop star Arianna Grande also appears on the song "E piu ti penso."

Andrea Bocelli

When: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 2.

Where: Talking Stick Resort Arena, 201 E. Jefferson St., Phoenix.

Admission: \$75-\$355.

Details: 602-379-7878, ticket-master.com.

want. And, finally, it is inspired by emotion.

Q: You've had a real crossover career — alternating between classical and pop music. Is there a big difference in how you approach the different forms of singing?

A: There is a difference from the point of view of expression. Because when you sing opera you are very far from the people, you are onstage, and between you and the people there is the orchestra. So you have to launch your emo-

Bocelli, who launches the U.S. leg of his tour at Talking Stick Resort Arena this week, sat down to discuss the album and more.

Question: Why an album of movie songs?

A: The music of the movies is a very inspired and free and beautiful music. It's a music of freedom — like a big field where the composers can gather and run wherever they

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Andrea Bocelli's new album, "Cinema," includes a duet with pop star Ariana Grande.



DREW GURIAN/INVISION/AP

A FIX FOR



Sean Maher as Dr. Simon Tam from "Firefly."



Kevin Sorbo in "Hercules: The Legendary Journeys."



Julian Richings as Death from "Supernatural."



Denise Crosby as Tasha Yar from "Star Trek: The Next Generation."



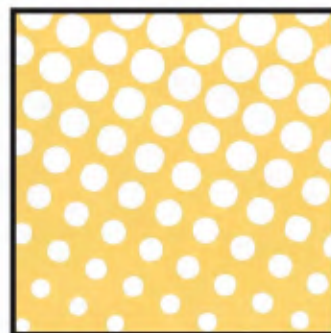
FANBOYS



Robins at the final day of Comicon at the Phoenix Convention Center.



Dirk Benedict as Starbuck from "Battlestar Galactica."



Karen Gillan as Amy Pond in "Doctor Who."



(AND GIRLS)

Fan Fest is an intimate, scaled-down Comicon for those who just can't wait until next year



Madison Jones cosplays as "Harley Quinn."



Zach Maurer, of Hollywood, and Brenna Byrne, of Phoenix, dress up as Hercules and Xena.



Christopher Moreno (left), of Surprise, as "Grimlock" and Justin Chakos, of Goodyear, as "Ironhide."



(From left) Bella Stevens, Whitney Stevens, Beckam Gates, and Justin Pullins.

KELLIE HWANG
THE REPUBLIC | AZCENTRAL.COM

It took the staff at Phoenix Comicon just four short months to put the first Fan Fest together last year.

The three-day event brought out 9,200 guests looking to get their pop-culture fix while waiting for the full-on Comicon in June 2016.

Phoenix Comicon Fan Fest returns this weekend for a second year at University of Phoenix Stadium. It's smaller and more relaxed than Comicon and focuses on three main topics: comic

books, kids and costuming.

There will be celebrity guests, new Fan Fest merchandise including a hoodie and beanie, the inaugural Fan Fest After Dark party and more than 250 vendors. And the tickets will be cheaper.

"We lowered prices overall and organized a better show in response to guest feedback," convention director Matt Solberg said. "Attendees asked about Fan Fest merchandise last year, and it's right before Christmas so people use the event as an opportunity to gift shop."

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Phoenix Comicon Fan Fest

When: 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Dec. 4-5; 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 6.

Where: University of Phoenix Stadium, Loop 101 and Glendale Avenue, Glendale.

Admission: Advance purchase: \$30 for full event; \$10 for Friday only; \$20 for Saturday only; \$15 for Sunday only; \$5 for ages 3-12; free for age 2 and younger. Day-of tickets: \$5-\$35.

Details: phoenixcomicon.com

Fan Fest

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At the stadium, fans will find the main exhibitor area, an artists alley, media guests, costume groups, celebrity photo booth, three rooms for panel discussions and two outdoor event areas. Joe Boudrie is the director of programming. He leads a large team that books the panels, events, parties, contests, games and entertainment for Phoenix Comicon and Fan Fest.

"Fan Fest is a scaled-down, intimate version of Comicon, and with only three programming rooms, we have very little room to work with," Boudrie said. "We assemble core content in the three focus areas ... and try to pick ideas that are practical and entertaining."

Naturally there will be Star Wars programs in advance of the highly anticipated "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" movie opening on Dec. 18. Kids will love the BB-8 Obstacle Course, where participants can race various spherical droids. BB-8 is a new droid character in "The Force Awakens." Panels include Marvel vs. DC, Star Wars Comics: Now and Then, Red vs. Green: The Holiday Wars, Geeks Who Drink, Inspired Gaming Hour and Game of Thrones: House Feud Edition.

Solberg said Fan Fest has an event better celebrity guest line-up than expected. Karen Gillan gained recognition as one of the companions in the long-running British series "Dr. Who" and recently played Nebula in the hit movie "Guardians of the Galaxy." Gareth-David Lloyd played Ianto Jones in "Dr. Who" and the spin-off "Torchwood." He will host a screening of his new horror/sci-fi film "I Am Alone" on Friday after-

noon. Julian Richings is a Hollywood veteran who has appeared in TV shows "Orphan Black" and "Supernatural," and films including "Man of Steel."

Sean Maher starred in Joss Whedon's film "Serenity," based on the short-lived but critically acclaimed series "Firefly." Kevin Sorbo is best known for his role on the TV show "Hercules." Actor Tom Lenk, who appeared in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," will host a screening of his new documentary "Nerdgasm" on Saturday afternoon.

A costume stage will feature cosplay meet-ups and fashion shows all weekend, with different genres from "Dr. Who" to fantasy to anime every half hour. Many cosplay groups will have booths, including Arizona Autobots, who make elaborate robot costumes based on the 1980s cartoon series. The group has 26 members, including kids who represent the smaller robots.

"Most of the group grew up in the '80s and remember the original cartoon," said group founder Jay Zarecki. "With this second influx of membership, we have guys that are good with lighting, electronics, sanding or painting. Everyone has their specialization ... and gains a brand new skill set."

The group is the subject of a fan-made live-action movie called "Generation 1" that will be released in December.

Gus Matos, founder of Heroes Limited AZ, started his group two years ago and represents all superheroes, not just those from Marvel or DC Comics. The group has about 60 members ranging in age from 18 to mid-40s. The group does outreach and community events, working with the Phoenix School District and St. Vincent de Paul.

"We do self-promotion at the event and let people know who we are, and what we're about, and also promote the charities we work with," Matos said. "It's



JEFFREY LOWMAN/THE REPUBLIC

People dressed up as characters from Guardians of the Galaxy take a photo during the Phoenix Comicon on May 29 at the Convention Center.

good networking for us. We meet quite a few different coordinators and help with other events. Our group is about the community's love of costuming coming together."

Last year many fans wanted something to do after the convention. This year, the unofficial Phoenix Comicon fan group Blue Ribbon Army will host Fan Fest After Dark at the Solana Ballroom at the Renaissance Phoenix Glendale Hotel & Spa.

With more than 250 vendors, Fan Fest is a good place to find holiday gifts for friends and family. Ashley Maul, 29, of Glendale, will be selling geeky scarves,

purses and hair bows. Items include infinity scarves with Star Wars storm troopers and "Walking Dead" prints, and a hobo purse with a Wonder Woman design, also sold on her Etsy site SewAsh-tastic.

"I'm a stay-at-home mom and I started this as a hobby," she said. "I grew up loving comic books and wanted to make geek-chic items. At first it didn't sell a whole lot and I had to get stuff custom printed, but now it's so easy to get comic book and pop culture-style fabrics, and it shows how popular it is."

Maul volunteered at Fan Fest last year and has attended Phoenix Comicon many times. She is looking forward to this year's event. She made several dresses to wear, including a 1950s-style Captain American-themed frock.

"I was really excited when I heard Fan Fest was being renewed again," she said.

"I'm ridiculously excited to meet Kevin Sorbo, and I'm impressed by the actors and guests there."

Also returning is the fan-made comic book. Last year, writers and artists teamed up to create a two-page comic book introducing the Valley's own superhero, Blaze. This year, Blaze's arch nemesis will be introduced, and fans again will be asked for their contributions.

"With feedback from past events, we realized fans want the event to be more exciting than just sitting in a room listening to someone talk," Boudrie said. "People don't want to just watch but actually do something."

Maul said she's excited to meet up with friends and make new ones.

"It's a great place to make friends, and I actually met my current best friend at (Comicon)," Maul said. "I really go for the people experience, and it's super easy to meet people even if you're shy or introverted."