

Coltrane Festival set to return

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HIGH POINT — Organizers of the John Coltrane International Jazz and Blues Festival in High Point say they're optimistic about the return of the event late this summer after postponing it last year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Joe Williams with Friends of John Coltrane said public health experts, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, have advised that outdoor events like the festival, which is scheduled for Sept. 4-5, can probably be held safely as long as precautions are taken.

"Not too long ago, there was a special presentation that Dr. Fauci did for the

entertainment community, and he was answering questions for us, and he's pretty optimistic that an outdoor event is the way to go," Williams said. "He's more concerned about indoor events, due to some of them not having the right ventilation systems."

Williams said with no fixed seating at Oak Hollow Festival Park, there is room for social distancing. Organizers are planning for some level of state capacity restrictions for mass gatherings to still be in

place by the time of the festival.

"We have a great deal of space out there," he said. "Our crowd is a courteous crowd. We've never had any situations. I think people will be respectful of each other. But we're going to do all the necessary protocols, from sanitizing stations, eliminating buffet-type environments. In our VIP area, we hope to have maybe a box lunch, ver-sus where they go through a

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The John Coltrane International Jazz & Blues Festival at Oak Hollow Festival Park will return this year after being canceled last year due to the pandemic.



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FESTIVAL

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line. We'll do everything that we can to kind of keep people from congregating. But it's on a lake. There's a constant breeze. So it's the perfect environment for a safe event."

This will be the 10th anniversary of the festival, which honors Coltrane, a jazz legend who grew up in High Point and graduated from William Penn High School, now Penn-Griffin School for the Arts.

Organizers announced

Thursday that Grammy Award-winning and multiplatinum-selling trumpeter Chris Botti will headline the opening day of this year's festival.

Some of the artists who were slated to perform at last year's festival will play this year, and other regular features like the student essay competition and instrument giveaway are planned as well.

"We may eliminate some of the opening pieces, but we should, for the most part, have the same amount of top-tier artists," Williams said.

Ticket information and festival details are available at coltranejazzfest.com.