

Frampton's garden party

REVIEW

By Cassandra Kyle
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He's a rock star who smiles; a music legend who's happy to be on stage.

Standing comfortably in jeans and a white button-up shirt, he does what he loves to do — no grand backdrop, no dancing girls required.

When you're as good as he is, distractions aren't required for the audience. If the ticket-holders are smart, they're paying attention to the music and nothing else.

Yes, Peter Frampton came alive Sunday night before a crowd of 1,600 people at the Delta Bessborough Gardens. He's older now, of course, than when he first rose to fame, but that just means he's had more time to perfect the art of the electric guitar.

When he plays, it's as if the instrument is an extension of his body — as it should be after 40 years in the business. Frampton's talent, his music, has become part of the root of the new generation of rock.

Still, many would argue, classic rock has a more honest advantage over modern music, and when you hear a song such as *Show Me The Way* it's easy to hear why. It's not muddled with needless sounds that are so audible in today's music.

Frampton's songs are clear and steady and raw and memorable — surely one of the reasons why he's still playing shows today.

Sure, the man has more pedals than

the Saskatoon Auto Mall (maybe that's a bit of an exaggeration), but he doesn't over-use any of his audio tricks. It's simply just good music — even when Frampton's guitar talks.

And, may I say, the word "Saskatoon" has never sounded cooler than it did when he and his guitar sang it out at the beginning of the show.

Playing to a crowd — the majority of whom were in their youth when *Frampton Comes Alive!* was released in 1976 — that was typical in its polite, reserved nature, Frampton went back and forth between classics such as *Lines on my Face* and *All I Want to Be (Is By Your Side)* and newer tunes from 2006's instrumental album *Fingerprints* and 2010's *Thank You Mr. Churchill*.

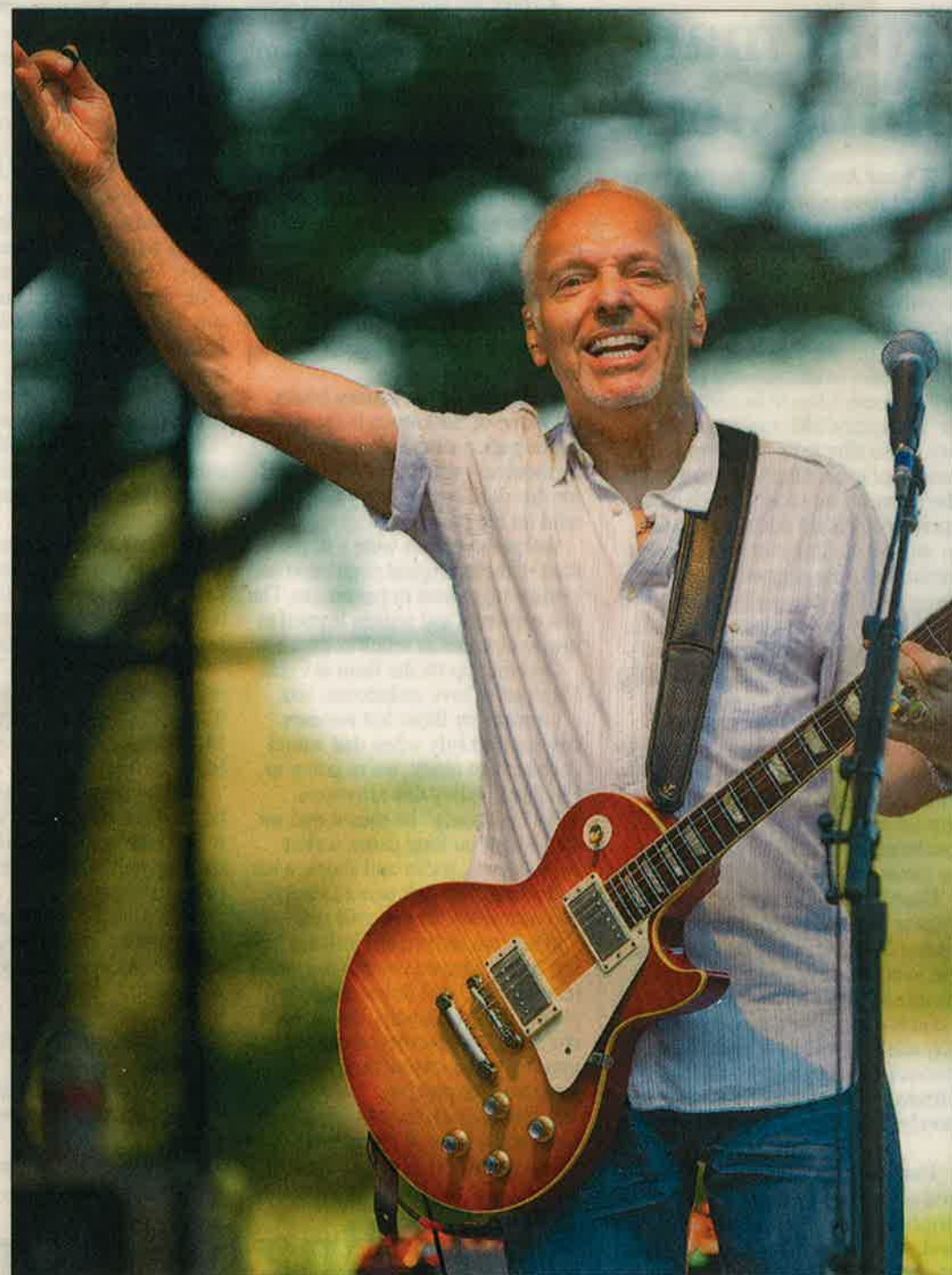
The show started strong, enthusiastic men and women danced in front of the stage and songs ended to a roar of appreciation. But somehow, these sounds of summer lulled the crowd first into a lazy ease, and then into a mild disinterest by the time Frampton and his band took a 30-minute break shortly after 8 p.m.

Maybe the crowd needed it too — everyone seemed to have a little more energy when the musicians returned to the stage.

And as the sun set on a clear contender for one of the most perfect summer days of the year, the band continued to play, people started to dance and an atmosphere of relaxed contentment filled the Gardens once again.

Frampton, meanwhile, was still smiling.

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—SP Photo by Greg Pender

Peter Frampton plays the Bessborough Gardens Sunday