

David Byrne meets up with Louise Bourgeois? Only at the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

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Mixing it up: David Byrne and St. Vincent *Supplied*

The Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park is into eclectic. With garden specimens ranging from monster barrel cacti to the daintiest of orchid, and sculptures ranging from Auguste Rodin's lovely Eve to Louise Bourgeois's creepy Spider, the Gardens is all about diversity.

So what would you expect from the 2013 Gardens' Outdoor Summer Concert Series but a lineup ranging from Garrison Keillor's A Prairie Home Companion to Big Bad Voodoo Daddy.

"Fred [Meijer] was one of the pioneers in West Michigan in terms of diversity and inclusiveness," said David Hooker, president and CEO of the Gardens. "Our largest

lineup ever follows Fred's vision and reflects our strong commitment to bring a very high-quality group of extremely talented and diverse artists to Meijer Gardens."

And speaking of diverse things, you cannot get any more eclectic than the David Byrne & St. Vincent concert on **July 7**.

Byrne, the creative guru behind the American New Wave band Talking Heads from 1975 to 1991, and Annie Clark, who records and performs as St. Vincent, are touring together in support of their late 2012 collaboration *Love This Giant*.

According to an artistic statement on the *Love This Giant* website, the recording is a "New York City-bred" musical statement populated by "intriguingly enigmatic tales, by turns whimsical and dark, backed by a large brass band in lieu of a traditional rock lineup. There is a magical urbanity to *Love This Giant*: It's as if they're dancing in the streets, their voices soaring over the rhythms, the melodies, the barely contained cacophony of the city."

Apparently, the two singers, their brass band, and programmed percussion lead you on a journey where "urban apocalypse gives way to a garden party."

Yeah, that's right. There's a big heaping dose of eclectic music for you.

About working with the brass band/programmed percussion and St. Vincent, Byrne said: "It was kind of like, how great a variety of sounds and textures and colors and grooves can you get with that set of instruments? Can they do an orchestral ballad? Can they do a funk groove? All kinds of stuff."

The new recording continues Byrne's rambling artistic path that really only started with his Talking Heads days.

"David is always looking to the future of music, and he's not nostalgic about anything," St. Vincent said about the collaboration. "People tend to think of nostalgia as a sweet notion, but I think it's a little cynical... I'm not interested in doing that and neither is David, so we kept pushing each other."

Byrne and St. Vincent have worked together before, briefly, as she sang a song on Byrne's 2010 studio release of *Here Lies Love*, the score for a musical he'd cowritten with Fat Boy Slim about the life of former Filipino First Lady Imelda Marcos. The

musical opened in New York City in late April. (I saw it as a work-in-progress last year at MASS MoCA in Massachusetts; it was amazing.)

But the *Love This Giant* tour is their first traveling musical road show. According to St. Vincent, the touring band will have Kelly Pratt, of the musical project Bright Moments, leading the brass group, joined by drums and keyboards.

“We’ll be doing many of these songs [from the recording] and a bunch of songs that we suspect people will already know—all played by this group,” St. Vincent said.

Whatever this diverse band plays, its sound will likely be like nothing you’ve heard before. And that is just fine with the Gardens.

“It is our hope the eclectic lineup and overall season will not only be embraced by the community,” Hooker added, “but they will come to know and appreciate the internationally-acclaimed sculpture collection and distinctive horticulture that surrounds them in the amphitheater garden.”

Just keep watch out for Bourgeois’s Spider; it creeps up on you.

The Frederik Meijer Gardens Summer Outdoor Concert Series kicks off June 3 with B.B. King and ends September 5 with Indigo Girls; a complete listing is in the summer outdoor concert calendar on page 5. For information on tickets and venue, visit meijergardens.org (Tip: to save a few buck on tickets, visit the admission desk during business hours.)