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Burger with Relish: Music

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Todd Rundgren will string quartet ETHEL in Park City this weekend

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A string quartet usually consists of two violins, a viola, and a cello.

If you're in Park City this weekend, a string quintet will consist of two violins, a viola, a cello, and **Todd Rundgren**.

Photos



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The 64-year-old rock icon and guitarist will participate in a unique collaboration with **ETHEL**, America's premier post-classical string quartet.

It's an innovative relationship that began in 2005 when Rundgren and the New York-based ETHEL first met. Rundgren had been asked to write the music for the Beatles' third movie. The production never happened, but the piece was produced as part of a Central Park concert series, featuring Rundgren, English musician Joe Jackson, and ETHEL. It was a roaring success, with the most applause coming when Rundgren and ETHEL played alongside one another.

"Things seemed to work with us since the beginning," said Rundgren, who was in Utah, last year, as part of Ringo Starr's All-Starr Band at Usana Amphitheatre. ETHEL has been in the midst of its "Tell Me Something Good" tour, a celebration of the culture and sounds of the 1970s.

The Park City show will feature a short set by ETHEL,

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followed by a solo performance by Rundgren and then they will share the stage.

The program, a cross-cultural exchange of music and ideas, will include Lou Harrison's 1972 Quartet Set, ETHEL's own arrangement of Arvo Pärt's "Spiegel im Spiegel," arrangements by Sun Ra and new works by rising star Judd Greenstein.

"What an incredible way to close one of the best seasons we've ever presented," said Teri Orr, executive director of the Park City Performing Arts Foundation, which is presenting the concert. "This collaboration is not only entertaining, it's downright magical."

ETHEL has been a post-classical pioneer since it was founded in 1998. The group includes Dorothy Lawson on cello, Ralph Farris on viola and Kip Jones and Tema Watstein on violin. ETHEL has premiered more than 50 new works and has collaborated with the likes of Jill Sobule and David Byrne.

Working with Rundgren might seem out of the ordinary to audiences, but not to the performers.

"[Rundgren's] fans are very dedicated, because he's very intelligent," Lawson said in a recent interview. "Todd is actually a genius and a polymath ... He wrote what he wanted, and was unapologetic."

Rundgren shared the compliments. "ETHEL is very adventurous," he said. "The things they enjoy the most is not what a [typical] string quartet does."

While Rundgren is best known for the novelty hit "Bang the Drum," he has been a songwriter, video pioneer, producer, recording artist, computer software developer, conceptualist and interactive artist since fronting the 1960s group The Nazz. Raised in Pennsylvania, Rundgren's solo 1972 debut "Something/Anything?" — on which he played all the instruments, sang all the vocal parts and produced — launched his career. Later, he created the hit singles "Hello It's Me," "I Saw the Light," and "Can We Still Be Friends." As a producer, he worked with everyone from Cheap Trick and Patti Smith to Meatloaf and The Band.

Rundgren's next project is a new solo album, his 24th, called "State." Due April 9, he called the electronica — yes, electronica — album a "somewhat modern kind of record," full of "cautionary tales that may seem to be about one thing, but they might be about another thing."

ETHEL, one of the country's premiere classical quartets, will perform with rock icon and guitarist Todd Rundgren of "Bang the Drum" fame.

When • Saturday, April 6, at 7:30 p.m.

Where • Eccles Center, 1750 Kearns Blvd., Park City

Tickets • \$20 to \$67 with discounts available for Summit County students and teachers, seniors and children 16 and under. Call 435-655-3114 or purchase at the box office, which opens at noon on the day of show

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Gary 'Toddicus' Arnold

On Seeing This, I Just Love It, Brings Back a Lot of Memories / Emotions From the Time. I <3 'Liars' & the Way This Was Performed Was Excellent. When You Getting Together With Todd For an Album?

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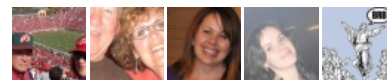
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