

# Majestic Theatre and Frank Productions plan to merge

[Logan Wroge | Wisconsin State Journal](#)

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The Majestic Theatre and Frank Productions plan to merge, continuing a shakeup in the Madison music scene.

Madison-based Frank Productions, one of the nation's largest concert promoters, will likely combine with the Downtown music spot that also promotes shows throughout the city in the fall, said Charlie Goldstone, president of Frank Productions Concerts.

“What we found over the past couple of years as we’ve worked on a few select projects together is that the companies are much less competitive in they are complementary in terms of what each company’s really good at,” Goldstone said.

Goldstone said the biggest advantage of a merger would be leveraging the companies’ respective experiences and skills.

“They have a lot of experience in developing artists, bringing them up to the club ranks, and we have a lot of experience in being able to take those artists from the clubs to the next level into theaters and arenas,” Goldstone said.

Matt Gerding, who co-owns the Majestic Theatre and music promoter Majestic Live with Scott Leslie, said he does not expect any major operational changes to the popular concert venue at 115 King St., calling the joint venture a “truly exciting thing for Madison.”

“As far as the Madison concertgoer is concerned, there really won’t be a whole lot of difference between the way they experience live music in Madison now versus the way they experience it in a year,” he said.

Gerding said a new name for the merged business will be announced when details are finalized, but added that the Majestic Theatre's name would stay the same.

The move follows Frank's plans to build and operate The Sylvee, a 2,500-person capacity venue set to open next year on the 800 block of East Washington Avenue as part of Gebhardt Development's major Cosmos project.

Madison-based Frank Productions, which was founded in 1965, also plans to **finalize the purchase of the High Noon Saloon** in May, Goldstone said.

Just a block away from Frank's 40,025-square-foot Sylvee project, the High Noon Saloon opened in 2004 when Cathy Dethmers invested \$300,000 to create the music spot in a large redevelopment of the former Buy and Sell Shop .

The merger would total three concert locales in Madison for a combined Frank and Majestic.

Goldstone said talks about a merger came about from discussions on each company's strengths and how they could work together at The Sylvee and on other projects.

Majestic and Frank have teamed up to co-promote concerts before, Gerding said, including at Breese Stevens Field and the High Noon Saloon.

The merger would roll together the businesses' respective properties and companies.

Majestic owns two music venues in Columbia, Missouri, while Frank has several subsidiaries throughout the country, including a promotion company and artist management firm in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Majestic Theatre was originally built as a vaudeville theater in 1906. It was purchased for \$1.35 million in 2007. Gerding and Leslie remodeled the building from the former Club Majestic into its current 600-capacity music spot.

Gerding said the former dance club “had some problems, and then we came in, bought it, remodeled it and opened it as a live music venue.”

The theater will have been open for a decade come Sept. 29.

Majestic Live also puts on the Live on King Street free concert series that features several artists throughout the summer on the street in front of the theater.

Brothers Larry and Fred Frank own the promotion company in their namesake. The company has been booking entertainment since 2007 for the popular Halloween weekend Freakfest event that draws thousands Downtown.

“There’s just a lot of opportunity to share resources and build together,” Gerding said. “Our two companies really have shared interests in the Madison music scene.”