

Q&A

STAR POWER

BEFORE TAKING THE FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS BOCA STAGE, PATTI LUPONE REFLECTS ON HER STORIED CAREER

BY JUDY ALEXANDRA DIEDWARDO

Who better than Broadway royalty to mark a performing arts milestone? The Festival of the Arts Boca will return to Mizner Park Amphitheater for its twentieth season February 27, delivering 10 days of live music, discussions, and performances culminating with the one-and-only Patti LuPone March 8.

“Patti embodies the spirit of excellence and passion that has defined our festival for two decades,” says Joanna Marie Kaye, the festival’s executive director. “Her appearance is the perfect finale to our milestone year—a celebration of world-class artistry, fearless storytelling, and the transformative power of live performance.”

The recipient of three Tony Awards and two Grammy Awards, LuPone will perform her “Matters of the Heart” solo show. “It’s a twenty-fifth anniversary tour of a concert I did 25 years ago,” LuPone explains, “with love songs written by Rodgers and Hammerstein, The Beach Boys, Joni Mitchell, Judy Collins, Stephen Sondheim, and John Bucchino, among others.”

Ahead of the show, *PBI* caught up with LuPone to discuss her career and longevity. (festivalboca.org)



***PBI:* You won a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Musical for your role as Eva Perón in the original 1979 Broadway production of *Evita*. How pivotal was that role for you?**

LuPone: It changed my life. The show itself was quite controversial, so I had that to contend with while trying to succeed in the most difficult role I’d ever been given. I’m grateful for the experience I gained, and I’m blown away that the show and *Evita* herself remain a fan favorite.

You were in the first graduating class of drama students from New York City’s prestigious Juilliard School. Is that where your ferocious work ethic began?

It is indeed. Juilliard was a rigorous study of

physical and vocal technique 13 hours a day, six days a week, then performances of classical plays. I was miserable, exhausted, and happy at that school. One had to commit completely to remain in the program, which had eliminations every year.

What continues to fuel your trailblazing spirit?

My desire to perform and to continue to learn my craft.

Do you have any pre-show rituals?

I do. I’m at the theater two hours before curtain so I can live in that space, which I love—the backstage, the doormen and women, the stagehands, the dressers, the dressing room—and

prepare for the show. I sit in my chair, look in the mirror, and create the character I’ve rehearsed. And my door is always open so people can wander in and out. We gossip—we’re told who’s in, who’s out—we hear street noises, the carriage trade, which is the audience. That’s my prep.

What do you attribute the longevity of your decades-long career that includes recent roles in the *Sex in the City* sequel, *Palm Royale*, and the Broadway production of *The Roommate* starring opposite Mia Farrow?

I don’t know except I think it’s because I was born to do this.

What’s next on your wish list of roles to play?

I don’t know what’s next. I love surprises!



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