

Chad Stoner Brings Soulful Sounds to Music at Miller Park 'To Make Them Ache'

OMAHA, NE, UNITED STATES, July 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Chad Stoner Band will make its Music at Miller Park debut for the final concert of the series on Saturday, August 8. Presented by Omaha Performing Arts (O-pa), in partnership with Nelson Mandela Elementary School and the Minne Lusa and Miller Park Neighborhood Associations, Music at Miller Park is a free, community-sponsored outdoor summer concert series held annually at the Miller Park Pavilion, 2707 Redick Ave.

For bandleader and saxophonist Chad Stoner, the performance is both a new opportunity with O-pa and a return to a community that has helped shape his music.

Stoner's influences include Luther Vandross, Donny Hathaway, Anita Baker and D'Angelo. His band's sound has been described as "elegant with an edge," "stirringly soulful" and "sophisticated swagger," though Stoner is quick to note those are not phrases he came up with himself.

His approach to performing is built around connection. Whether he is playing a familiar R&B favorite or an instrumental arrangement, Stoner wants audiences to feel personally drawn into the music.

That belief comes from his own experience with music as a steady force. Stoner first picked up the saxophone in sixth grade. After high school, he played football for the Huskers, but later stepped away from music during a difficult period in college marked by substance use and mental health challenges.



Celebrate an incredible season with us on Saturday, Aug. 8!

After a suicide attempt, Stoner left college and moved back home with his parents while he recovered. During that time, he bought a bass from a pawn shop and began playing along to U2 songs in his parents' basement.

"I would play and three, four hours would go by," he said. "And in the midst of just a dumpster fire internally, it was an escape, but it also put me in a place of hopefulness again."

He later reconnected with the saxophone after friends invited him to join a garage band.

Music, he realized, was not just a hobby. It was something that kept "pulling me out, not just out of the dumps, but giving me a vision of what could happen with my life."

That experience has influenced much of his work since. Stoner spent 20 years as a pastor. Today, he works in the in-school suspension program at Papillion La Vista South High School, the same district where he grew up and where his own children attended. He also plays saxophone professionally at various venues in the area.

Those roles have given him many opportunities to offer steadiness to others, whether in ministry, at school or on stage.

While Stoner supports others, he also has a well of support himself. He says much of it comes from the North Omaha community.

"North Omaha has been the greatest source of support for me in every way, relationally and musically, in opportunities," he said. "It just can't be overemphasized, the impact and the support, love and embrace I've had. That is really who I am and why I'm doing what I'm doing now."

He is eager to return to the community for Music at Miller Park on August 8. His goal for the concert experience goes beyond playing songs people can vibe with. Stoner scans the crowd, makes eye contact and looks for ways to make the experience feel personal.

"Whether that be in terms of a soulful uplift, or in ballads that draw out some kind of a longing, or something where it meets someone where they are in life, if you reach them there, that can be transformative," he said.

For Stoner, that is not theory. It is lived experience. Music pulled him forward when he did not know what came next. Now, every performance is a chance to offer that same lift to someone else.

"When people come, they get lifted," he said. "When they leave, I want them to feel like life is good."

Music at Miller Park is free and open to the public. For details, visit o-pa.org/mamp.

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