

Fleetwood Nicks and Practically Petty keep the music alive at Concerts in the Park

By Brock Weir

The homegrown Fleetwood Nicks and Practically Petty have been bringing the sounds of Tom Petty and Fleetwood Mac to audiences across Canada for nearly 15 years, paying tribute to the timeless artists that transcend generations.

But, Tom Petty's untimely death last October at the age of 66 was a gamechanger for the group and, since his passing, they have doubled down their efforts to keep both his and the music of Fleetwood Mac alive and accessible.

Fleetwood Nicks and Practically Petty have become local favourites and recent years, and they will grace the Band Shell at Town Park next Wednesday, August 22, in the penultimate Concerts in the Park show of 2018.

Fleetwood Nicks and Practically Petty came together just under 15 years ago, a collective of talent from Aurora, Stouffville and Thornhill.

They all started out as big fans of Fleetwood Mac and Tom Petty, but their tribute band came into being simply by chance.

"Our singer kept having people come up to her and say she sounded like Stevie Nicks and people were saying the same thing to me about Tom Petty, so we thought, why not give it a shot?" says singer Gerry Parsons. "We went right into it and once we were getting compliments on some of the songs we were doing, we went into the catalogue of both bands and tried to emulate it as close as we could with the looks and the sound. We were such fans of both of these bands that we wanted to do a good job and pay tribute to them. Every demographic loves their music and they come out to see that everywhere we play."

Since coming together, Fleetwood Nicks has played all across Canada and parts of the US.

Each gig is special in its own way, says Mr. Parsons.

"We are very privileged to get to do what we get to do and it is our pleasure to entertain people and especially bring this music and pay tribute to this band," he says.

But this privilege and pleasure has taken on added poignancy since Petty's death.

"It is unfortunate," Mr. Parsons continues. "It really made us all sad, but it makes us want to play that music even more and get it out there so artists like that aren't forgotten."

Fleetwood Mac has had its ups and downs over the years, with members coming and going, and artists going through some very public struggles. But, they have weathered the storm and so has Fleetwood Nicks.

"Bands are like marriages and they never end well and you never know how long they are going to be together," Mr. Parsons jokes.

"We all get along and the secret behind our formula is we have a real good bunch of people involved and they are all dedicated to what they do and there is nobody better I have found playing this type of music than these guys we have in our troupe."

"Come out to Town Park and see two bands play tribute to two of the best rock and pop bands in musical history."

Answer the call and go their way to Town Park this Wednesday, August 22. Concerts begin at 7 p.m. and are preceded by a miniature version of the Aurora Farmers' Market, which begins at 5 p.m. and runs for the duration of the performance.

Admission is free and donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged.