

Bands prepare to take over historic Armoury for Trailblazer festival



There aren't that many opportunities for musicians to perform live in front of an audience these days, but when the chance to play before a hometown crowd presented itself, The Beresfords jumped at the chance.

The country-infused brother-and-sister duo will be bring a five-piece band to the historic Aurora Armoury this Friday, October 2, for the first installment of the rebooted Trailblazer Music Festival.

Presented by the Aurora Museum & Archives along with musician Jared Stafford, the Trailblazer Music Festival was first presented at the Armoury in 2017 as part of the Canada 150 commemorations.

Now that the venue has been renovated, restored and re-opened to the public as the new home to Niagara College's Canadian Food & Wine Institute, it is once again a place for local music-makers to do what they do best ? just in time for Culture Days.

From 6.30 ? 9.30 p.m., music will ring out from the Armoury at this free ticketed event which will bring The Beresfords ? Shannon and Brendan ? together with Essa Township's Rob Watts, and a host of up-and-coming performers.

?There aren't that many opportunities [to perform] and even if there were, we would still have jumped on this as we did,? says Brendan. ?In our hometown, this is a very special thing. Every time we get a chance to play in our hometown, it is something we look forward to: seeing familiar faces and experiencing that sense of pride.?

The Beresfords, who grew up in a home infused with country music, used to be solo performers, but have been performing as a duo ever since Shannon brought on her brother to play guitar when she was a finalist in the Hoedown Showdown.

?This is a pretty fun ride to do with your brother and it is special to have it a family thing,? she says.

The Beresfords say they are inspired by the music of Lady A, Brothers Osborne, Carrie Underwood and Brad Paisley. Indeed, their sounds have helped fuel their latest creative streak having spent the last few months working on new original music.

Rob Watts was also raised on the sounds of country.

?I ended up being born into it, but I kind of got away from it for a little while when I was in high school, as I think every musician gets away from their original genre,? says Watts. ?I got back into it naturally ? working for a country music station, dating a girl who was a crazy country girl ? and I ended up falling back in love with what I had known my whole life. I realized how much I was

missing. Now here I am five years later having returned to the country genre and I think I have finally found my home again.?

Watts says he loves the storytelling aspect of country music, which is fitting because song-writing is a creative outlet to express the inspiration he finds in life every day.

?For the Trailblazer Music Festival, I plan on playing a bunch of new stuff I have written [over the last few months] during COVID, along with some covers, stuff that is upbeat and fun to listen to,? he says. ?This is the perfect opportunity for people to come out and enjoy a night of really great quality live entertainment, while still being able to physically distance. I think people should take advantage of this because we're in for a long winter. If people really do value live music, they should definitely be investing their time and effort to come to see this and really enjoy what they love.?

Adds Shannon: ?It is going to be a super-fun night.?

For more information on the 2020 Trailblazer Music Festival, including registration, as well as its second installment on Friday, October 16, visit aurora.ca/culturedays and select either ?Friday, October 2? or ?Friday, October 16? from the drop-down menu.

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