

Blaze your own trail at Trailblazers music festival

By Brock Weir

Have you ever just set out to go your own way? Well, in Jared Stafford's book, you're a definite trailblazer.

Quite simply, they're "people who do their own thing" and the rafters of the historic Aurora Armoury will be rattling with the sounds of people doing just that with the new Trailblazers Music Festival which will take place this Saturday, September 30 as part of Culture Days.

The brainchild of local musician Stafford, as well as Shawna White and Michelle Johnson of the Aurora Museum and Archives, Trailblazers will be a chance for local bands to showcase their original music and for local musicians alike to approach the open mike to "show Aurora what you've got."

Trailblazers has, in some form or another, been over a year in the making. The Aurora Museum & Archives reached out to Mr. Stafford for a music event for Culture Days in 2016 based on the success of his Ambedo Coffee House, a regular jam session for nearly two years held at Second Cup on Bayview Avenue.

Unfortunately, things didn't pan out last year but everything aligned just right this time around.

"The game plan was to focus heavily on original music and [highlight] people from our area who have been writing their own stuff, recording their own stuff, and giving them a spotlight to show our community what our local original talent has to offer," says Jared. "It is a unique festival in that way because it is 100 per cent original bands; not that I have anything against cover bands, but this stands out as something unique."

"Style-wise, I wanted it to be very diverse. We have everything from rock and roll, to acoustic, singer-songwriters, to country. I think there is something for everyone. As for talent, I had a few definite I wanted to be there and there are others who are new to me I have recently come to listen to and I am really pleased with our lineup."

Trailblazers gets underway at the Armoury (southwest corner of Mosley and Larmont) at 12 noon sharp with an open mike until 2 p.m.

"We're going to give people a chance to show us what they've got," he says.

Following a one-hour intermission which will

afford festival-goers the chance to take in art on display and "merch tables" from each of the upcoming bands, six bands will begin taking over the stage at 3 p.m. and on into the evening.

"I have a huge passion for music and I have a huge passion for giving talent a chance to showcase," he says. "The music industry is tough to get noticed. There are so many people who just do it because they love it, regardless of whether they can make money doing it, and regardless of even if they can book a show."

"It is important to me to give people the chance to express that love and that passion and show people what they do. As a visual artist, you just want people to see and appreciate your work. With musicians, it is the same thing. You need that opportunity to show people and have them hear what you're doing. Bring your friends and family. It is open, it's free admission, it is part of Culture Days and we just want as many people to come and bring their family and friends and enjoy this event for what it is. It is a family friendly showcase of Aurora's brightest up and coming artists."