

## Celebrate your Canadian playlist at the Aurora Community Centre Saturday



**By Brock Weir**

Back in 1978, and with his \$25 winnings from a local public speaking contest burning a hole in his pocket, Dave Heard made his first fateful purchase.

After taking the prize at the Royal Canadian Legion, the budding music lover immediately hit the record store and bought three vinyl record and promptly pinned the artsy covers on his bedroom wall.

He held a torch for vinyl over the years, becoming a regular DJ on the local scene, but these flames were stoked into a blaze once again four years ago and now he's ready to light your fire.\*

The playlist has been set, the fine details hammered out, now all that's left to do is get spinning for this Saturday's The Great Canadian Songbook, an all vinyl admission-free dance party for all ages celebrating Canadian hits from the 1950s stretching through the 1990s.

The Aurora Community Centre, which is celebrating its 50th birthday this year, will be transformed back to its days as a popular concert venue, complete with a fully licensed vinyl lounge, an indoor classic car show, and curated displays of Canadian music memorabilia.

"I started this playlist and have gone out and asked people for their input on songs, and there is a lot of community in this," says Mr. Heard. "I think the first song will make people feel exceptionally proud, but then, after that, it is time to party. This is about celebrating Canadian music and I am going to do my best to recreate a live experience at the area just like some of the band who have played there."

Mr. Heard has had opportunities over the years to talk to some of the bands who once played at the Aurora Community Centre, and, in addition to his artwork in which he dissects the art from cover albums and creates picture discs on the original vinyl, has become a curator of these stories.

The love of music was rebooted inside of him about four years ago when he went through what he describes as a "traumatic experience" helping someone else in crisis.

"I kind of needed something to bounce back to," he says. "Out of nowhere, I reached into my record collection, pulled out an old beat-up one, all scratched and destroyed, and I started working on an artwork."

Showing the finished product to one of his coworkers, she asked if he would donate it for a silent auction to benefit one of her favourite causes and, in the end, it went for nearly \$400.

That was certainly a "good motivator," he said, and it sent him on a quest to scour thrift stores and second hand stores across Southern Ontario collecting vinyl. Along the way, he amassed huge collections from the remaining inventory of Peter Dunn's Vinyl Museum, and a large cache of records uncovered in a locker by the stars of Storage Wars Canada.

"When I have time and need a bit of stress relief, I sit down and start an artwork, creating a picture disk out of a beat-up copy; everything in this collection is being utilized in some way," says Mr. Heard, noting that each of the tracks spun on Saturday will be

done from the best available copies, some of them being unsealed for the very first time.

Adding that donations will be accepted to Kerry's Place Autism Services, he say, "It's all for enjoyment; sharing it through the Songbook. Analogue has value in so many different capacities: visually, auditory, and I think spiritually do. Curating this collection is like Christmas every day. Every song means something special to someone and that is why I am trying to share this."

And you're being asked to share too.

"Because it is music from the 50s through the 90s, we would really encourage people, if they can, to dress in their favourite music era, or as a favourite artist," he concludes. "Let's just celebrate Canadian music."

The Great Canadian Song Book on Vinyl takes over The Aurora Community Centre this Saturday, July 22, from 7 ? 11 p.m. For more information, visit [cdnsongbook.ca](https://cdnsongbook.ca).

\*Okay, so that's not a reference to a Canadian track, but we try our best.