

## Combining passions lands Aurora musician, filmmaker international TV deal



Photo courtesy of NBC

**By Brock Weir**

Chris Hau loved to sing while growing up. He also loved to play the guitar, loved to make films, and loved to get up on his paddleboard to unwind.

In fact, he still does. But, after combining these four passions together, the Aurora resident is on the cusp of a new career.

Can't be done? If that's what you think, you're among the nearly 100,000 YouTube viewers who have logged on to see for themselves, videos which recently had NBC come knocking on his door right here in Aurora.

Last week, a film crew from the Peacock Network were in Town to film Chris for their upcoming summer series 'Caught on Camera with Nick Cannon.' NBC expressed interest in Chris nearly a year ago, initially eyeing his unusual approach to singing and song writing for their hit series America's Got Talent, but after finding a good fit in their new series, they joined him in Aurora, around Lake Wilcox, and Preston Lake to get a handle on what makes Chris tick.

'I had a video with Go Pro that went viral back in March that got a lot of attention,' explains Chris. 'From there, producers loved the idea of bringing both my passions together into one thing. [After talking with NBC], it came down to a point where they said there was no way they could physically get all the people they needed out to the lake to see what I can do, but they didn't want to lose contact so they switched it over to a different show.'

When the film crew arrived, they sat down to delve into Chris' world: his love of surfing, the development of his music, and a sneak preview of upcoming tracks.

'It is super-exciting,' says Chris. 'These are a lot of the dreams I had when I was younger, but at the same time I didn't expect it to get to the level it did. To get a call from Rockefeller Centre, as someone who studies radio and television, that is the gold standard and it is pretty exciting to even have those people reaching out. It is a little surreal at times. I am this Aurora boy. I am still hanging out here and getting these calls, and travelling and doing all these things is exciting.'

If this is surreal now, it is a feeling Chris Hau is going to have to get used to sooner rather than later. In addition to NBC, his videos also caught the eye of the Nautical Channel, a station based in the United Kingdom with airplay in nearly 50 countries in four languages.

They are collaborating on the first season of 'What SUP?', a new show, hosted by Chris. The pilot aired this past fall and after receiving favourable reviews, was picked up for a 12-episode season.

For the uninitiated, the 'SUP' in 'What SUP' stands for 'Stand-Up Paddleboarding.' Slated to be shot around Lake Wilcox and Preston Lake, Hau likens the format as 'The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon meets Top Gear.'

The general idea of the show will see Hau conduct interviews with musicians, celebrities 'And whoever I can get access to', and they will be put through a series of challenges and games on the lake, before a finale with a musician performing on a stand-up paddleboard in the middle of the lake.

'The broadcaster loved [the pilot], the audience really responded to it, and I had all these people from France, Germany and Latvia reach out saying they loved the show,' he says. 'I want to bring in a lot of actors who are going to be travelling through, maybe touching base with some of the actors when they come in for TIFF in the fall, and try to get some interviews because it is such a unique angle.'

It won't all be about the entertainment, however. Through the series, Hau hopes to raise public consciousness of environmental initiatives and other worthy issues.

'I never thought when I did this video it would lead to a TV show and this and that. You take the opportunities as they get presented to you,' says Hau, whose next single, *I Could Get Used to This*, drops in early July. 'From this exposure to an American audience of four or five million people [on NBC], maybe I will gain some new fans that will allow me to go and tour in the States [or lead] to a record deal in Canada so I can expand my music career even further and go into radio.'

But, as he looks to expand, his eyes are also firmly focused on his roots.

'York Region has so much untapped potential,' he says of shooting the show in the area. 'It is easy to just go to Toronto and do all the work there, but as someone who works so heavily with a lot of the government agencies as well and just loves Aurora so much, there is so much beauty in these areas.'

'It can be used, number one, as a promotional tool for the area, and number two, to hire talent coming out of school who can't afford to live in Toronto but want work and want to work in the industry. That is important to source local talent as well as gain exposure for that area.'