

Homegrown Gordon Lightfoot tribute set to close Concerts season

It has been a Concerts in the Park season unlike any other, but the popular Wednesday night summer series is set to close next week with further homegrown talent.

On Wednesday, September 2, the curtain will come down on Aurora's 2020 summer concert series with Classic Lightfoot Live, Aurora resident John Stinson's tribute to the Canadian icon.

Pre-registration for the 100 free tickets available for the season finale concert will begin Friday, August 28, at aurora.ca/eplay.

Classic Lightfoot Live is set to bring to life such standards from the Canadian music songbook as If You Could Read My Mind, Canadian Railroad Trilogy, Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald, Early Morning Rain, and more.

Speaking to The Auroran before he performed at a 2018 fundraiser for CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors), Mr. Stinson said he first fell in love with Gordon Lightfoot's music as a teen while learning to play the guitar.

He tried to copy what he thought were Lightfoot's simple sounds, but, after discovering they were more complex than he imagined, the seeds of a passion were firmly planted.

"I loved his lyrics and unique melodies," he said. "You'd buy his latest album, listen, and read through the lyrics as the new songs came across your 2-bit record player. During college parties I would play more than drink, and was always asked to play Canadian Railroad Trilogy. As job and family took up more time and music became a cloudy memory I happened to form a duo and perform in clubs and bars as often as I could and performing pop-folk-rock. Often, I'd be asked to perform a Lightfoot tune, as they thought I sounded a bit like him.

"Moving to Aurora in 1988 and finding Red Shea living here, then taking lessons from him got me more and more excited about Gord's music. Around 2000, the duo was less important, I started to re-awaken my forgotten musical taste for Lightfoot. Hearing all the great tunes again on new CDs and iPods. I created a solo act of all Lightfoot tunes and performed them live in local clubs and bars."

The love affair will only continue at the Town Park bandshell next week.

After some initial uncertainty stemming from emergency restrictions put in place due to COVID-19, the Town forged ahead with a five-concert lineup, a series which was limited to just 100 individuals on-site with the community as a whole invited to watch a live stream of the performances through YouTube and the Town's social media channels.

The series kicked off on August 5 with Durham Street Band & Classic Rock Revival, followed by Fiddlestix, Johnson's Creek, and, most recently, Soul Benefit.

For more information on the final concert, and how to stream the music online, and re-live highlights of past Concerts in the Park events, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.

By Brock Weir