

Jazz favourite Barbra Lica brings live entertainment back to Cultural Centre

Her powerful stage presence has brought her acclaim from around the world, and now jazz singer Barbra Lica is bringing her trademark style and quartet to Aurora next Friday, November 5, for an indoor concert hosted by the Aurora Cultural Centre.

This will be not only the first indoor in-person concert for the Cultural Centre in their fall season, it will be the first indoor in-person concert for Lica and her team as well ? but not just for the fall, since the start of the global pandemic.

?It is both terrifying and exciting because, on the one hand, I am just so excited to be with the guys again and I love them a lot and being on stage with real people and having that exchange of energy, I think I am personally starving for it!? says Lica, who received a Juno Award nomination for Vocal Jazz Album of the Year in 2017. ?At the same time, I haven't done a live concert with them since February of 2020. We have done digital things, we've done empty venues, and sure it is nice but it is weird playing for an empty room and looking at empty chairs.?

There is no doubt that fans of live music are equally starving for live entertainment and at the November 5 concert, which will take place before audiences at the Aurora Armoury with a live feed for ticket-holders who don't feel quite comfortable yet heading out for an in-person show, will feature the jazz standards audiences have come to love from Lica as well as new tracks from their upcoming album.

?I'll be performing for an audience for the first time some of the new songs that are going to be on the upcoming project,? she shares. ?I am releasing it as a song a month once [the tracks] start coming out and it will be compiled at the end.

?I am a bit of a sap and I am trying out new love songs,? she continues with a laugh. ?It has been a goal of mine for years, possibly my entire lifetime as a huge fan of rom-coms and chick flicks. I am always trying to write the next chick flick song, always the big explosive love song that happens. It's a goal of mine to have my music featured in the next big rom-com.?

Not every song will be that big, explosive tune that comes with the proverbial fireworks when the two leads kiss for the first time. Jazz of all varieties is a passion for Lica who first became interested in jazz listening to the works of Ella Fitzgerald and particularly Fitzgerald's duets with Louis Armstrong.

?I just put it on, they started singing together and I have never had that feeling before; I remember falling backwards,? she says. ?I think when you go through childhood and you have this feeling that is lacking a kind of awareness and you just live moment to moment but you never really have that sense of identity that comes from really loving something ? but I just remember that moment because it is the first time I just really loved and got excited about something just independently. They sounded amazing so I wanted to be where they are.?

It was an interest that, in retrospect, she played almost close to the chest.

With professional musicians for parents, she says joining the ?family business? was the last thing she wanted to do, pursuing microbiology and immunology at university. But as soon as she graduated, she knew she couldn't hide her passion any longer.

?Music just kept taking off,? she says. ?I would try to make it not work, I would literally attend my jazz combo rehearsals in my lab coat and then run off to nighttime laboratory ? I even remember the other musicians would get pissed at me and the guy I am married to was in one of my combos and he always talked about how much he didn't like me because they were all there to take things seriously and I was running off in my lab coat.

?On the day I graduated, I finally gave in. You can't fight music. It's a bug. I am so addicted to it and it is something I love to do every day.?

For her, the perfect song ?just feels like the perfect marriage of words and music,? and it is this pursuit that fuels her.

?I am not a hippy-dippy person, I tend to be very logical, I love spreadsheets, but when it comes to music there is some kind of energy, whether it is between you and the other band members, you and the audience?it just energizes you in a way that you can't emulate with anything else.?

If you would like to be a part of that energy, the Aurora Cultural Centre will present Barbra Lica and her live quartet at the Armoury on Friday, November 5. Performance is at 7.30 p.m. with light food options available for purchase in advance of the event. Tickets are \$35 a head for the in-person show and \$15 for the live stream. For more information, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

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