

Juno Award-winning Sealy bringing Jazz to Trinity next week

Toronto-based Canadian Jazz icon Joe Sealy and collaborator Paul Novotny will help open the Aurora Cultural Centre's fall performing arts season next week with a presentation supported by musician Thompson Egbo-Egbo.

Set for Friday, October 20 at 7 p.m. at Aurora's Trinity Anglican Church, the piano concert will feature new and classic award-winning pieces from Sealy and Novotny that have kept listeners enthralled through five studio releases, a few standards, and selections from Sealy's Juno Award-winning Africville Suite.

"Paul and I first performed together when I had a band at a place called Erroll's in the 80s and he was the third bass player I found before the job ended and we got along really well," says Sealy. "I got an extended contract at the Four Seasons Hotel in their room for a duo and I hired Paul to play. We had a lot of synergy together and, at one point, we said we should do a recording."

That chance thought was the start of a long-time creative journey for the duo, which netted them many industry accolades, including recognition from the Junos.

"We have had quite a varied career," says Sealy.

The musician says he always knew Jazz had the power to tell a story and he was "limited only by my own experiences and the degree of talent I possess."

While his father encouraged him to pursue a career as a doctor or minister, two professions always in demand, Sealy had other ideas. In part to help address his father's concerns, he joined the Royal Canadian Navy's medical branch at the age of 19, figuring he'd come out of the experience with some practical and job-marketable skills should his musical dreams not pan out.

"My idea was to either get my lab or X-ray technician papers so no matter where I was in the world I could actually work," he says.

But the muse still called and he eventually answered by enrolling in the Berkley College of Music.

"I was 21 when I decided to make music my career. Before that, I had been doing many gigs around Ontario and Quebec, always a working musician but I always thought there was something better for me than the kinds of things I was doing. One of the things that I did was, because I felt I lacked discipline, I joined the Royal Canadian Navy and that was quite an experience for me. My dad always thought music could be problematic "you might not always work."

While in British Columbia for his naval medical training, he had the chance to book a musical gig at a club and pursued it.

"I got a chance to do what I really wanted to do, I accepted, and I was released from the Navy with an honourable discharge to go to Berkley College of Music. That's when I really made up my mind that music was going to be my thing," he continues. "Music is such a wonderful profession to be in. More people who have had business careers and now they are studying music because it is something they can carry for the rest of your life. It gives you a creative outlet that is just wonderful. Every time I sit at the piano, a lot of times I just look for something new that I haven't done before. There are so many possibilities that I really enjoy discovering something I didn't know before. I am never bored with it."

That is a sentiment that is shared by music-lovers across the country "and will be brought home to Aurora on October 20 when the Aurora Cultural Centre presents Joe Sealy & Paul Novotny, accompanied by Thompson Egbo-Egbo.

Tickets are on sale now and can be booked by visiting auroraculturalcentre.ca.

By Brock Weir
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