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?Vitamin joy from outer space? will fill Cultural Centre this Family Day

?Zany? music will be the order of the day this Family Day as the Aurora Cultural Centre hosts children's performer Matt Gerber for a free community celebration.

Part of the Aurora Cultural Centre's tenth anniversary celebrations, Gerber will perform two concerts ? at 1.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. ? in Brevik Hall, entitled ?Ladybugs and Dandy Lions.?

Ladybugs and Dandy Lions is also the title of the children's album Gerber released in 2017. In his music, Gerber, who balances his love of music with his day job as a structural repair engineer at De Havilland Aircraft of Canada, also tries to find the balance in appealing to both kids and adults.

?As a singer-songwriter, I have always enjoyed singing in different genres to begin with, but I found I always leaned towards writing a lot of quirky-style songs,? he says, noting he would be just as comfortable playing the set he's prepared for the Cultural Centre at a pub as he would in a school.

Audiences regardless of age pick up on the playfulness of his work, he says, thus bridging the generation gap.

Gerber's love of music surfaced at a very early age. He always had an affinity for singing and music, discovering his ability to harmonize on long road trips with his mother where singing in the car was the order of the day. It's a love he fostered throughout his youth, but it wasn't until he was nearly finished university that he started picking up instruments and honing his skills.

?I found that when I was by myself, I would start humming a tune and having an idea, but was never able to do anything with it,? he says. ?Once I was able to start learning some of those instruments, I figured out how to lock that stuff down and start my own process of song-writing. It seemed a very natural thing for me that there would be some form of music I was involved with, either just singing, or now writing and recording. It has been an interesting process.?

There is no single instance he can pinpoint on when he realized he was on the right track turning his hobby into something more, but Gerber says seeing the reaction to his music from kids and parents alike powered him forward.

?I saw this over the course of multiple different live shows where I was always getting similar reactions, drawing people to come out in front of the stage and getting the little kids to start dancing and running around,? he says. ?I felt this was something really speaking to them and that

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really got me focused on developing sets that paid more attention to that audience. Seeing first-hand results and reactions from young kids and getting feedback from parents and colleagues of mine [fostered] that realization and then it became a pretty straightforward thing to push ahead.?

Monday's Family Day concerts, he adds, will feature his irreverent songs, accompanied by such instruments as the guitar, ukulele and kazoo ? along with a number of other elements to ?catch audiences by surprise and delight them.?

?This isn't the type of music they have heard before,? he says. ?Sometimes I describe my music as ?vitamin joy from outer space.'?

To hear the music straight from lift-off, head over to the Aurora Cultural Centre this Monday afternoon, February 17. For more information, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

By Brock Weir