

Aspiring singers, dancers, actors to compete at Aurora Performing Arts Festival



Aurora's annual Teen Idol competition has seen dozens of teens and tweens step forward and showcase their vocals since its inception.

Now, youth whose talents might be in drama or dance, or anything in between, will also have their chance to step into the spotlight with the new Aurora Performing Arts Festival.

The Aurora Performing Arts Festival was launched by Marquee Theatrical Productions and the Town of Aurora last week. Spearheaded by Marquee, the new festival and competition format will be open to all of York Region and will take place Saturday, June 11 at Town Park.

Competitors who successfully audition will be categorized in three different age brackets (12 to 17, 8 to 11 and 7 and younger) and in the areas of singing, acting or dancing.

There will be winners in each category with the winner of the 12 to 17 vocal category earning the title of Aurora's 2022 Teen Idol.

"I have been thinking about something like this for the longest time, then I thought it would be neat to find a way to partner with Aurora Teen Idol," says Marquee founder Sheryl Thomas. "I came up with the plan, pitched it to the Town, and it just worked. The budget was great and everything seemed to fall into place.

"Beyond the singing, we wanted to include acting and dancing components. There are a lot of dance schools in the area and a lot of arts and music schools ? there's a lot of talent and not just in Aurora."

Holding festivals is part of Marquee's mandate and, from Ms. Thomas' perspective ? and that of Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora ? everything aligned just right.

"The Town has always focused its efforts on Teen Idol," says Ms. Ware. "Marquee's concept of expanding this to theatre and dance is a really nice evolution of this and I think it is going to open up the doors for more performing arts opportunities, not only for youth aged 12 ? 17 but the other two age categories. We have focused on vocals and Sheryl and her team excel in vocal, dance and theatre. We're really confident that this is going to be a tremendous partnership between the Town and Marquee, and also the

community as well to participate without any restrictions.?

Interested participants are invited to register online at marqueetp.com/apa-festival and submit a video of their performance by Wednesday, June 1.

?You should always just go for it,? says Ms. Thomas on encouraging talented youth to try something new. ?What's really important is a lot of people are afraid to try because they don't have any training or experience, but that is so unnecessary. Some people just have this natural gift and we should just share it and go for it. It's free to enter, so what have you got to lose??

Adds Ms. Ware: ?I think missed opportunities are greater misses and I really want to encourage youth to take a chance, step out, and just see where it can go. Even if the outcome isn't necessarily being the winner, sometimes doing something where you're nervous or you're not sure how it is going to turn out, that's where some of the biggest growth opportunities can happen for you personally as well as professionally. The sky is the limit after you take the stage for the first time. It might reaffirm that this is where you are meant to be in the future.

?This event is for the community but we're also relying on the community to help us collectively build this Festival to what it will become and what we hope it will become. Anything in its infancy always takes a bit of awareness. If you know a cousin, a niece, a friend or even if it is your own child, encourage them to take these chances. These are growth opportunities and the Town and the community are as supportive as possible.?

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