

Auditions now open for annual Aurora Performing Arts Festival

If you're a singer, dancer, or actor 17-years-old or younger looking for a local opportunity to shine, audition reels are now being accepted for the annual Aurora Performing Arts Festival.

Set for Saturday, June 13, at Aurora Town Square, talented youth are invited to submit a performance video of between two and four minutes and filmed within the last three months in the fields of singing, dance and drama.

Successful applicants will be organized into the following categories: Six and Under; Ages 7 ? 9, Ages 10 ? 12, and Ages 13 ? 17.

The winner of the 13 ? 17 Vocal category will also be crowned Aurora's 2026 Teen Idol with several opportunities to perform locally over the following 12 months.

The Aurora Performing Arts Festival was first established five years ago in a partnership between the Town of Aurora and Marquee Theatrical Productions.

Initially hosted at Town Park in conjunction with the Aurora Farmers' Market, the event moved to the Performance Hall at Aurora Town Square last year.

Event organizers hail the move as a game-changer for the festival as the new venue offers not only top-notch professional equipment, but also eliminates all the variables that come with weather.

It elevates the experience for these youth, says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. When they're in the Performance Hall, the performer can focus solely on their goal and their objective at that moment. When you're in Town Park, there are a lot of distractions ? a lot of people moving ? and no matter how focused you are, it does affect your peripheral. It's a far more controlled environment to enable them to focus easier.

Adds Marquee founder Sheryl Thomas: The professional equipment, the setting, the acoustics and all of that is definitely a lot easier, and it's a lot more true than performing outside, especially for vocalists. It's a lot more natural an atmosphere for a performer to perform in a venue like that.

Since the Town and Marquee began accepting audition videos at the end of March, they have seen a significant uptake in the opportunity, particularly in the Vocal category. That said, however, Marquee would love to see more aspiring actors put themselves forward for the Performing Arts festival this year.

Acting is always underrepresented, but it's so important, says Thomas. Acting is a base. A performer, even to sing or dance, if you have acting ability it makes your performance even that much stronger because it's all about telling a story. Dance is telling a story, a song is telling a story. Let me put it this way: when we have two people, and somebody is simply singing the song beautifully but the person up against them is singing the song and connecting well with acting, it shines so much brighter. Acting is a base for all those disciplines and it would be nice to see that.

Whether you're looking to act, sing a song, or show off your moves, Ware says one tip she'd offer to performers is to leave everything on the stage.

Don't hold back ? the stage is for you and the spotlight is for you ? don't leave anything behind, she says.

To register for or learn more about the Aurora Performing Arts Festival, visit aurora.ca/artsfestival. If you are an individual, business, or organization that would like to support the Festival and its artists, reach out to Sheryl Thomas at sheryl.thomas@marqueetp.com.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter