

California Dreamin? this weekend at Town Park

By Brock Weir

Guitarist Jamie Shear prides himself on being a very versatile fender bender, but being a ?nostalgia buff? brings him back to tunes tried and true.

He comes by it honestly ? he grew up with the sounds of the sixties, a time when one could get a full blast of summer just by turning on the transistor radio and hearing the music of the Rascals and the Mamas and the Papas. It was music that got him up on his feet, and music he hopes will get you up on yours this weekend as he brings his band California Suns to this weekend's Celebrate Aurora Music Festival at Town Park.

?We base our show on keeping the summer alive with the music people would remember from the 1960s ? all the hits from the Beach Boys and other favourites that dominated the charts that captured that sound,? he says.

All the leaves won't be brown, and hopefully the skies won't be grey when you hear ?California Dreamin'? from the Bandshell and experience tells Mr. Shear that even if they are, the sounds will brighten things up.

?I put together the show based on the love of the music, but also to share it with other people who do remember it. We have taken the show to a lot of theatres to sell-out houses. The music transcends generations because a lot of it is used on current movies. My own daughters are 17 ? 21 years old and actually know all the lyrics to California Girls and that song was released in 1965. To them, it is something current.?

As a kid of the sixties, Mr. Shear truly got his start in the music business in the early 1970s, heading out on the road often playing six nights a week in the bar scene, a hotbed of talent in those days. From there, he moved to Huntsville, Ontario and was hired as musical director for an already existing show around the time he was 20.

He stayed there for quite a while and became the in-house show person and musical director for the Deerhurst Inn. It was there he became connected with many established and up-and-coming stars ? including a young girl from Timmins who came through the door in 1987.

Eileen, as she was known then, came through the door with fellow country singer Mary Bailey. She struck a chord with the management and everyone else in the Inn and was soon snapped up to entertain the guests. Eileen Twain since changed her name to Shania, and she and Mr. Shear stay in touch to this day.

His work experience at the Deerhurst Inn made him the go-to musical director for many touring acts and musicians visiting Canada including the Rascals, and Bowser from Sha Na Na.

But, however successful he has been as a musical director, he is still a guitarist at heart.

?It's not just playing old music, I am constantly on a learning curve with playing and being a studio musician,? he says. ?I have to know exactly what to engage in when a certain sound or a certain type of playing is called for. From a musical point of view, I am enamoured with writers. When I start working new songs, I think, ?Oh my God, how do they do this? How do they get this idea.?

Perhaps it is not surprising that one of his key influences over the years has been Brian Wilson.

?This will be a beautiful day, a beautiful weekend which relates to the great summer sounds of California in the 1960s,? he says of the upcoming gig for the California Suns. ?If you're into the Beach Boys or you're into some great 60s music, come out and have a great time. It is all about fun and it is going to be a fun afternoon.?