

## Community backs culture in Aurora Cultural Centre's 2025-2026 season



From the British Invasion, to Caribbean beats, to a splash of famed children's author Robert Munsch, the Aurora Cultural Centre is offering something for everyone in its upcoming performing arts season – and they're doing so with significant community support.

As the Centre formally launched its 2025-2026 Performing Arts Season in the Aurora Town Square Performance Hall on June 26, it was as much of a celebration of what's to come as the community partnerships and contributions that have come together to make it all possible.

Speaking to the assembled audience that evening, Cultural Centre Executive Director Suzanne Haines saluted long-time supporters Desjardins Insurance and Meridian Credit Union for their steadfast contributions from the very start.

"They've been here since the beginning and they're showing their leadership and love for the community by supporting our family programs," said Haines. "They really do believe in what we are doing, and they have come back and helped us grow those programs. They're here because they want those prices to be accessible and available to the community."

Picking up from where The Auroran left off last week in its preview of fall and early winter programs, performances and showcases made possible by Desjardins and Meridian in 2026 include "Fireside Munsch" on Saturday, March 21, at 11 a.m. and again at 2 p.m.

"Get ready for belly laughs, silly surprises, and outrageous fun," says the Centre. "Fireside Munsch brings four of Robert Munsch's most beloved stories to life in one wildly entertaining solo performance [featuring] 50 Below Zero, PIGS, Something Good, and The Paper Bag Princess."

Further family programming includes champion fiddlers The Fitzgeralds on Saturday, April 18, at 2 p.m., and A WeeFestival Performance on Saturday, May 16, at 11 a.m. (part of the Centre's Magic Carpet Series).

Supporting additional performances and program elements are Amica, Chartwell Retirement, IG Wealth and Bell Financial, and the Maple Cross Foundation, among others.

An extra bow can be taken by Serpa Motor Sports, which has the distinction of being the Season Sponsor.

"I have had the pleasure of getting to know the wonderful people who run this company, who continuously show us their strong

values and ties to the community," said Haines of Serpa, which proudly displays a selection of their vehicles outside the entrance to Aurora Town Square ahead of each performance. "Over the last few months, Serpa Automotive Group exhibited their community leadership and connection with us. They connected on multiple innovative ideas, resulting in a strong and lasting partnership that speaks volumes about how they run their business and how they treat their customers. Frank and Stefano have helped us build this season you're about to witness as true partners."

Stefano in turn said he and his father "really believe in the community around us" and have been active supporters of such initiatives since 1995.

"The community is so important to us and, like Suzanne said, when the stars align and your company aligns with programs such as this one, it just makes it that much easier to enjoy it, to have fun, and support it, and we really look forward to a fantastic season."

The 2026 portion of the upcoming season begins with British Rock and Caribbean Roots on Saturday, January 24, with John Sheard's British Invasion & Charmie at 2 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. A Canadian icon will be in the spotlight on Saturday, January 31, with Lance Anderson's "Oscar Peterson: The Jazz Legend and the Man I Knew" at 7.30 p.m.

February's programs begin on February 6 as the Centre's perennially popular Great Artist Music Series Continues with the Blain & Milatz Duo at 7 p.m.

The hallmark of February's programs will be, as The Auroran reported last week, the return of the Aurora Winter Blues Festival, which will run February 26 - March 1, featuring performers Jack de Keyzer; Suzie Vinnick with special guests Kevin Breit and Toby D, supported by Jay Blues; Glenn Marais' Jook; Dominique Fils-Amie; Harrison Kennedy, supported by Brock Stonefish and Dave Mowatt; and Little Magic Sam.

As spring approaches, Jane Bunnett & Maqueque return to the Centre with an evening of Afro-Cuban jazz on March 14. The musical "and geographic" pendulum swings to different climes on Saturday, March 28 when Scottish-Canadian artist Jason Wilson brings his blend of jazz, folk and reggae to the stage with Ashara. They are joined on the bill by Kazdoura, a Toronto-based Arabic fusion band.

April shows include Champagne Weather (James Hill & Anne Janelle), supported by Jaron Freeman Fox on April 11 at 7.30 p.m., while the Great Artist Music Series presents Mark Fewer's "The Seasons" with the U of T String Virtuosi on April 25 at 7 p.m.

A further degree of heat arrives in May when flamenco artist Tamar Ilana & Ventanas hits the stage on May 9 at 7.30 p.m.; The Ostiguy & Habib Duo's A Tribute to Piazzolla on May 10 at 2 p.m., in a further offering of the Great Artist Music Series; and an evening of guitar with Don Ross, supported by Maneli Jamal on May 23 at 7.30 p.m.

The Great Artist Series heads the home stretch of June, hosting the Cultural Centre return of Charles Richard-Hamelin on June 6 at 7.30 p.m., while Dala closes out the season on Friday, June 19.

"With lush harmonies, heartfelt songwriting and irresistible stage presence, Dala "featuring Amanda Walther and Sheila Carabine" has become one of Canada's most beloved folk-pop duos," says the Centre. "Winners of the 2010 Canadian Folk Music Award for Vocal Group of the Year and Juno Nominees, these lifelong friends blend ethereal soprano and rich alto vocals into something truly magical.

"Drawing inspiration from legends like Joni Mitchell, The Beatles, and Bob Dylan, Dala's music is at once nostalgic and refreshingly original. Their songs are intimate, insightful, and disarmingly honest, while their engaging onstage banter turns every performance into a unique and memorable experience."

For more information on the 2025-2026 Performing Arts Season, including tickets, visit [auroraculturalcentre.ca](http://auroraculturalcentre.ca).

**By Brock Weir**