

Countdown is on for Concerts in the Park's 2018 summer season



By Brock Weir

Aurora's 2018 Concerts in the Park season is less than a week away and organizers are promising a new twist on the popular summer series.

Once again sponsored by TD Canada Trust, the 2018 Concerts in the Park Series kicks off next Wednesday, July 4, at 7 p.m., with popular children's performers Team T&J, offering an interactive music and entertainment program with a high-energy and uplifting message.

The fun continues for adults and people of all ages the following Wednesday, July 11, with the Country Legends Tribute Tour, featuring the music of Keith Urban and Garth Brooks.

While these and all subsequent concerts begin at 7 p.m. at the Town Park Band Shell, arrive early because, for the first time this year, running from 5 to 9 p.m., the Aurora Farmers' Market will be holding sample markets in conjunction with the concerts. "We are hoping people come early and experience the sample Farmers' Market," says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. "They are going to strive to have seven to 10 vendors out each week, with two or three of them having food of substance like Gabriel's Café or Katarina's Kitchen. Then, they will also have some of the farmers out and some of the artisan vendors, and the nice thing about this is there is going to be variety and a new experience each Wednesday."

Following the Country Legends concert, the series continues on

July 18 with returning favourite Desire: A Tribute to U2, on July 25 with A Touch of Class Steel Drums, on August 1 with country star Marshall Dane, the homegrown Borealis Big Band on August 8, maritime performer Jared Lutes on August 15, the Fleetwood Mac and Tom Petty Tribute: Fleetwood Nicks and Practically Petty on August 22, before concluding with popular Just Heart: A Tribute to Heart on August 29.

"Once again, we're always excited with our lineup," says Ms. Ware. "We have some new discoveries and some former favourites that will be premiering. One of the concerts that might have the least familiarity, but I am really hopeful for the crowd's response to is the Jared Lutes concert. He is an Acadian musician who also dabbles in folk and indie. He has a whole slew of awards as a single solo artist. The music soundtrack for the TV series Reign is his work. Imagine a Wednesday night at Concerts in the Park and then hearing that type of Acadian music. I think it will be a really good evening."

Over the years, Ms. Ware says she has seen the traditional kick-off featuring a kid-friendly concert only grow in popularity and expects this year to be no exception.

She also says she's particularly looking forward to seeing local talent on stage in the form of the Borealis Big Band, led by Gord Shephard.

"With that being local, it takes a lot of work to get bands ready to go, and with Gord Shephard's leadership, I am really excited to see their performance," says Ms. Ware. "He is very in tune with reading an audience, knowing what they want to hear and being able to lead his band to follow."

"Given that we go from country to Acadian music [with Lutes], to youth and children's entertainers to big band music and steel drums, I think there is a diverse lineup in terms of variety of genres for people to experience, and I highly encourage people, whether that is the kind of music they are really into or not, to come out to experience it because there are always new experiences when you're trying something new or revisiting a genre you're not as familiar with."

Whether you're coming out to hear some of your favourites, or to indeed try something new, concert-goers are encouraged to bring a food donation to the Aurora Food Pantry before the concert starts.

Each reveller who does so is entered for a chance to win upgraded TD preferred seating at the front of the concert ? in comfy green Muskoka chairs, no less ? and two prize packs.

?TD's partnership has been such a blessing for this concert series and we are very grateful for their continued support,? says Ms. Ware. ?I know that TD gets flooded with requests from various similar events, so obviously we're elated they have chosen to partner with us again. I am hoping it is the diverse lineup and the way we have approached the program, which is something that has always piqued their interest. When speaking with the executives, a lot of them do personally attend the concerts and prior to this partnership they hadn't experienced it ? now it is the Wednesday tradition they are looking forward to.

?The series has a lot of moving parts, but each part and each decision made has been focused on the overall experience of the attendees. We want to be the destination where you don't want to miss our series.?

For more on the 2018 Concerts in the Park series, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.