

Cultural Centre looks to new era with Voices of the World



'Voices of the World' descend on the Aurora Cultural Centre this fall as the organization looks forward to its future in Aurora Town Square.

The Cultural Centre launched the Voices of the World performing arts season last week at the historic Aurora Armoury. Billed as 'Phase One: In the Community Performing Arts Season,' the program kicks off on October 20 with Joe Sealy, supported by Thompson Egbo-Egbo on piano.

'The Aurora Town Square building is sitting off on the horizon waiting to be finished and when we get the keys we will be going into Phase 2,' says programmer Derek Andrews who joins the Centre team this season. 'We are using the phrase 'Voices of the World' to acknowledge that we want to mix cultures and genres and give people voices. Voices of the World is sort of the macro of the concert program and as we're coming through this time, the micro is that we're in the community.'

After the season opener with Toronto-based jazz musician Sealy, who will be accompanied by collaborator Paul Novotny on bass for a special performance, the season continues with Basia Bulat on November 4 at the Aurora Armoury.

'A Montreal-based singer-songwriter of Polish heritage, Basia mixes hammer dulcimer, autoharp, and many instruments with her buoyant and poignant songcraft,' says the Centre. 'Basia is the darling of the alt-folk community, making the Polaris Long List multiple times. Her sixth release, The Garden, received a Juno nomination in the Adult Alternative category.'

This concert with Bulat is a re-booked event after the scheduled 2022 performance was postponed due to the birth of her baby.

Next up at Trinity Anglican Church on November 16 is Philip Chiu, the first performer in the latest season of the Centre's popular Great Artist Music Series, facilitated and sponsored by Grammy-winners and Aurora residents Bonnie and Norbert Kraft.

'An acclaimed accompanist, coach and recitalist, Philip is much in demand and travels extensively throughout Canada and the United States,' says the Centre. 'He collaborates with the Toronto Symphony and l'Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal.'

Multiple Juno Award-winner David Francey next graces the Aurora Armoury stage on November 24. A Scots-born folk poet and singer, he has collected numerous awards over the course of his enviable career.

'David chronicles the lives of working Canadians with humour, and 'open hearted' singing style and acute observations in his storytelling,' says the Centre.

Supported by Suba Sankaran and Dylan Bell's band Freeplay, headlining the December 2 show is Windborne, a unique a capella quartet with deep traditions in harmony.

?Known for the innovation of their arrangements, their harmonies are bold and anything but predictable,? says the Centre. ?Boston-based Windborne are adherents to folk music's long-time alliance with social activism, labour and civil rights, and other movements that champion the oppressed, the poor, and the disenfranchised.?

The Aurora Armoury will be the scene for a family show on December 16 when Ariko takes the stage.

?A Lafontaine family band that draws on Franco-Ontario folk tradition, three sisters join mom and dad Lefave in a romp through fiddle frenzy and vocal harmony,? says the Centre. ?Performing as a family, Nicole, Kelly and Jill front Ariko (French for haricot snap bean) in a joyful roots and zydeco blend of foot-stomping good times.?

Rounding out Phase 1 at locations to be determined are The Last Waltz: A Musical Celebration of The Band Live on January 19, and singer-keyboardist Elizabeth Shepherd, supported by Charlotte McAfee Brunner, on January 27.

And then, the upcoming performance hall that is at the heart of Town Square indoor amenities will open all sorts of new possibilities for the Centre.

?The performance space is kind of a dream,? says Andrews. ?There are ideas where we're going to be able to expand that excitement, but I don't want to say too much about that yet [but] I think Aurora is really going to flourish with this new facility once it is finished.?

For more, including ticket information, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter