

Cultural Centre's upcoming season invites Aurora to get ?Up Close & Musical?

Aurorans are invited to get ?Up Close and Musical? with acclaimed Canadian and international performers as the Aurora Cultural Centre prepares to launch its 2024-2025 performing arts season in their new space at Town Square.

The Aurora Cultural Centre launched its 15th anniversary performing arts season this week, announcing Juno-nominated singer Barbra Lica is slated to be the first performer of the season to take over Aurora Town Square's 250-seat performance hall on September 27, supported by trombonist Charlotte McAfee-Brunner.

?Up Close & Musical? is the overall theme for the season ahead and Performing Arts Manager Derek Andrews says its designed to ?match the growth of the facility? which, while expansive, retains an intimacy.

?In the surrounding GTA venues of Markham, Richmond Hill and other spots, the venues are probably twice the size of our 250-seat venue, the Performance Hall, and that means people will be up close, literally, and enjoy a concert experience that is really special,? he says. ?It's not the stadium or the big concert hall experience, it's something that is going to be unique to our space and that is going to be a characteristic and attribute for Aurora Town Square that will distinguish it from other GTA performing venues.?

Concert-goers will be able to have an array of up-close-and-personal experiences with performers specializing in everything from Blues to Bollywood, each of whom will be supported by a supporting act.

Following Lica's concert on September 27, laughter will ring out through the hall as Nicaraguan-Canadian comedian Martha Chaves returns to Aurora for the first of two shows. The first, ?I Got My Papers? will take place on the evening of October 5. She will return to the Hall on April 26, 2025, with another program, ?The United Colours of Canada.?

On November 1, the Cultural Centre will present Old Man Luedcke, whose banjo-playing has earned him multiple Juno Awards, supported by Mehdi Rostami.

?Mehdi is famous in Iran and Europe and has landed in Canada a couple of years ago,? says Andrews ?The newcomer to Canada is a maestro in his own right and just getting established. The show will help him grow his profile in what we know is a large Persian community here.?

The following evening, November 2, the Cultural Centre presents ?Byrds, Byrds, Byrds,? a tribute to The Byrds, who pressed such hits as ?Mr. Tambourine Man? and ?Turn! Turn! Turn!?

The music of Latin America will be showcased on November 16 as Amanda Martinez, a performer with Mexican and South African Roots, will bring flamenco and jazz to the stage, supported by Eliana Cuevas.

The busy November continues on November 22 with Canadian Brass, part of the Centre's perennial Great Artist Music Series, sponsored by Grammy winners and Aurora residents Bonnie and Norbert Kraft; and on November 30 with Steven Taetz, a jazz performer and crooner who will make his Aurora debut.

As the holiday season approaches, acclaimed pianist and singer Laila Biali will present ?Wintersongs? with special guest Jane Burnett.

The 2025 program will get underway Friday, January 17, with the Campbell, Fagan, Park Trio of James Campbell, Leslie Fagan and Angela Park, the second of the Great Artist offerings, while the quartet, QW4RTZ, will showcase the pop stylings of Louis Alexandre Beauchemin, Francois Pothier Bouchard, Philippe Courchesne Leboeuf and Francois Dube, on January 25.

Jazz will return on February 22 with soul and jazz performer Kellylee Evans, supported by Sammy Jackson, while folk will bow on

March 1 with April Verch and Joe Newberry.

Additional concerts and performances for the spring of 2025 will include the New Orford String Quartet on March 7, Danny Michel supported by Drew Gonsalves on March 22, Genticorum on March 29, Genius + Soul = The Music of Ray Charles on April 5, The Cheng2 Duo on May 3, The Once on May 24, and Angelique Francis on June 7, before culminating on June 21 with acclaimed Blues artist Sue Foley and her ?One Guitar Woman? program.

In addition to the main season, children and family programming is as strong as ever.

The Aurora Cultural Centre's historic Brevik Hall within the Church Street School building will host Pop Pop! by Carousel Players, part of the Centre's Magic Carpet series, on October 26. The Magic Carpet series continues in Brevik Hall on March 15 with The WeeFestival's Quest for the Moon.

The Centre's popular Kaleidoscope Family Series will begin December 7 in Brevik Hall with Fireside Munsch! by M. John Kennedy, who will share the work of famed children's author Robert Munsch, and will continue in the Performance Hall on February 15 with Kattam and his Tam-Tams; dance champ and Vancouver-based Bollywood performer Karima Essa on April 12; and on May 10 with Russell Sprout.

?I want audiences to have an open mind about music and the live music experience,? says Andrews. ?I think people are spending too much time in front of screens, and performing arts is about the intimate experience of the artists' offerings, their songs, their messages.

?Come with us to explore and discover artists that you have never seen before and trust us that what we're bringing is of a quality Aurora deserves. We want to celebrate the 15th anniversary and celebrate the launch of a remarkable new space. Aurora Town Square is going to be talked about all around the GTA because what the Town is getting this fall is a real gift and we want to make that gift special by putting in the right ingredients.?

For more information about the upcoming season, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca. Tickets will go on sale July 11.

By Brock Weir