

David Wilcox, Haywire to headline Ribfest



By Brock Weir

Get ready for a true blast of classic Canadiana as Canadian rock mainstays David Wilcox and Haywire lend their talents to next month's Aurora Ribfest.

Mayor Geoff Dawe, along with Frank Mete of the Rotary Club of Aurora, made the announcement last Wednesday at the weekly Concerts in the Park ? along with the fact this year's Ribfest concerts will be free admission after last year's wrist band system ?didn't go over so well.?

Singer-Songwriter David Wilcox will take the stage on Friday, August 28. Hailed by the Town as ?a brilliant song writer, a great singer, and one of the most talented guitar players in the world,? Wilcox has such hits under his belt as Bad Apple, Do The Bearcat, Catman, Hot Hot Pappa, and Suzie Q.

Hitmakers from Prince Edward Island, Haywire takes over the party on Saturday, August 29. Known for their platinum hits ?Bad Bad Boy? and ?Don't Just Stand There,? the group's Aurora appearance comes as they launch their new album.

?David Wilcox has been on the radar for some time and the timing of the event worked out with his schedule, which we are really thrilled about,? says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. ?With regards to Haywire, they actually produced a new album over the wintertime and there was a really good synergy with their resurgence. Having David Wilcox being at the one end of the classic rock spectrum and Haywire on the other end is going to give a nice balance at this event.

?Thousands of people have a familiarity with David Wilcox automatically. We knew he would be a really welcomed addition to Ribfest for the community and the demographics that attended. However, I don't feel Haywire has as strong a name familiarity but once people research them I am now getting calls. They are a very strong band and the lightbulb goes off.?

The decision to abandon the wrist band system, which was put in place last year to both turn a profit and ensure the headlining concerts remained an over-18 affair, was ?made corporately,? notes Ms. Ware.

?Weather did impact the forecasted number of wrist bands that were to be sold last year, but because weather is a factor, building budgets based around that anticipated revenue is not a secure revenue,? she says. ?We are very fiscally responsible with budgets, but the sale of wrist bands is very heavily weather dependent and therefore we don't have as much control on the results of them.?

Nevertheless, while she was on the ground at last year's event, she says she received some positive feedback over the system which has now been binned.

?We had one gentleman and it was his 50th birthday and he bought 10 wristbands for Chilliwack night. He couldn't believe he was taking nine of his closest friends to celebrate his birthday with one of his favourite bands for \$50. [After we announced the 2015 bands] on Wednesday night, a few people came to the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex to purchase their wristbands for the

David Wilcox concert. Now we're spending a lot of time explaining that it is free this year, even though we had the fee for just one year.?

Ribfest runs at Machell Park beginning Friday, August 26 through Sunday, August 28. The park is open on Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. The headlining concerts open at 9 p.m. Saturday features performances from the Top 20 contestants in the Hoedown Showdown competition as they are whittled down to 10 in the Semi-Final round.

For more information, visit www.aurora.ca/ribfest.