

Education workshops will continue legacy of Aurora Winter Blues Festival

When Music Aurora decided to take the Aurora Winter Blues Festival to the next level, they did so with the community in mind, supporting up-and-coming artists and furthering their opportunities.

This legacy will continue on as the Aurora Cultural Centre takes over the Aurora Winter Blues Festival next month with a series of workshops beginning on Friday, February 27, with Early Instruments of Blues at 5 p.m.

Glenn Marais is joined by Manny DeGrandis (Toronto Blues Society) cigar box, dobro, diddleybow, broom, stomp board, and harmonica are all featured in [Marais'] 'Jook' project and explained in this session, says the Cultural Centre.

The second workshop will take place the following morning, Saturday, February 28, at 11 a.m. with String Bending.

Rewinding from their main concert, this guitar workshop features ten-time Maple Blues Award winner Suzie Vinnick, Ottawa's Tony D (Monkey Junk) with upstart rising star Jay Blues.

Strings remain in the spotlight on Saturday, February 28, with Banjo Man Blues.

Discover the history of Black settlement in York Region with a public interview by Aurora Museum's Michelle Johnson and award-winning Underground Railroad historian and musician David Braithwaite.

The series concludes Sunday, March 1 at 4 p.m. with Blues Harp.

Cabbagetown Steve' Grant, harmonica master from Little Magic Sam's band, joins Alderville First Nations bluesman Dave Mowat in a session guided by local Aurora singer and emcee Steve Falk.

All sessions are located in Brevik Hall, within the Aurora Town Square complex.

The whole thing was about reviving and keeping the music alive, says Music Aurora's Greg Smith, noting that since the Blues Festival was put on hiatus due to the global pandemic, the organization still worked to support community events, including providing honorariums to performers, particularly young musicians, giving them an opportunity to hone their skills and build their confidence.

Derek Andrews, Performing Arts Producer for the Aurora Cultural Centre who has programmed the workshops, says that the Centre is interested in building upon the success of this year's festival to once again further educational and development work going forward into future seasons.

For more information, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca/awbf2026.

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