

Great Artists Series ushers in winter and spring concerts at Cultural Centre



As the Aurora Cultural Centre celebrates their 15th anniversary of bringing performing arts to Aurora, their busy winter season kicks off with the next edition of the Great Artist Music Series.

The Great Artist Music Series has been a staple in the Cultural Centre's calendar almost since its inception, made possible through the sponsorship and coordination of Grammy-winning artists, producers, and Aurora residents Bonnie and Norbert Kraft.

The first performance at the Cultural Centre in Winter of 2025 will be the Campbell, Fagan, Park Trio, which will perform in the Aurora Town Square Performance Hall on January 17 at 7.30 p.m.

'Experience the magic as three exceptional musicians come together for an unforgettable performance where you will be captivated by the beauty of their artistry,' says the Centre. 'Esteemed clarinetist James Campbell, alongside world-renowned soprano Leslie Fagan and Angela Park, one of Canada's most sought-after pianists, unite for a relaxed and entertaining recital of chamber music and song. Alongside compositions by Debussy, Saint-Saëns, and Schubert's 'Shepherd on the Rock,' soprano Leslie Fagan will enchant the audience with selections from popular operas and musicals. An evening of pure musical delight celebrating our 15th anniversary!'

The Performance Hall will be back in action on January 25 when the Centre hosts QW4RTS at 7.30 p.m.

The Centre describes them as a 'sensational Quebec a cappella vocal quartet' ready to 'swoop in to win the hearts of Aurora with their dazzling harmonies and boy band charm.'

'Enjoy their incredible swagger, humour, dance moves and unadulterated entertainment as Aurora Cultural Centre celebrates fifteen years with a vocalized party.'

The same venue will hear the iconic sounds of Leonard Cohen ring out on February 1 at 7.30 p.m. with Micah Sings Leonard.

'Alma/Universal Recording Artist Micah Barnes salutes Montreal's favourite son in an intimate concert of Leonard Cohen classics,' says the Centre. 'Micah's rich baritone voice brings a new perspective to Leonard Cohen's powerful lyrics 'honouring the intricacy of the storytelling and the depth of musicality in these much-celebrated songs. Join Micah (vocals, piano) and his quartet of top flight musicians including guest vocalist Rique Franks on a magical journey through Leonard's world!'

Family Fare will, of course, be the order of the day as February brings forward a number of activities for Family Day ' and the

Aurora Cultural Centre is no exception. The Centre's historic performance space, Brevik Hall, will play host February 15 to Kattam and his Tam-Tams, with a show beginning at 2 p.m.

The Moroccan Quebecois percussionist brings his worldwide kit bag of drums and extensive performance experience with Cirque de Soleil, Bollywood, Olympics and the release of 'Timbuktu to Bombay' that chronicles his musical journey, says the Centre. Kattam and his Tam-Tams is a rollicking trip for the young world traveller.

Next up, on February 22, will be Kellylee Evans, who will take over the ATS Performance Hall, supported by Sammy Jackson, at 7.30 p.m.

Internationally celebrated as a pure and joyful voice of soul and jazz, Ottawa's Kellylee has had a life like no other, says the Centre. Struck by lightning in her home, the chanteuse halted a career in ascendance, but once healthy, returned to continue with her tribute Nina Simone and original songs.

Sammy Jackson is a fresh new face on the Canada jazz scene [who has] earned the respect of her audience early by winning the Jazz Vocal Juno Award with her sophomore EP, 'With You.'

Newberry & Verch is the next presentation by the Aurora Cultural Centre in the new Performance Hall. Set for March 1 with a 7.30 showtime, the performance showcases Ottawa Valley fiddle sensation April Verch with Missouri Ozark clawhammer banjo legend in Newberry & Verch.

Joe Newberry was a staple at Garrison Keiller's Prairie Home Companion radio broadcast but has found a spark with the step dancing upstart. April Verch was the first woman to win both the Canadian Grand Masters and Canadian Open Fiddling Championships and has released 14 recordings with JUNO and Canadian Folk Music Award trophies that acknowledge her rank worldwide.

The next offering in the Great Artist Music Series will take place on March 7, 7 p.m., back in the Performance Hall, with the New Orford String Quartet.

Four Canadian musicians with equally stellar pedigrees come together to form the JUNO Award-winning New Orford String Quartet. Toronto Symphony and Montreal Symphony concertmasters Andrew Wan and Jonathan Crow will be joined by Montreal Symphony's principal cellist Brian Manker and the dynamic violist Sharon Wei, says the Centre. Together, they bring passion, freshness and joy to each performance. The program will include Schubert's powerful 'Death and the Maiden' quartet, as well as a new piece commissioned by the Quartet from the esteemed Canadian composer Ian Cusson. Of Métis (Georgian Bay Métis Community) and French-Canadian descent, Cusson's work explores the Canadian Indigenous experience and intersection of Western and Indigenous cultures.

Prior to the show, Norbert Kraft will lead a talk with composer Ian Cusson.

Rounding out the winter roster in the 2024-2025 performing arts season will be Quest for the Moon, a family show set for the Performance Hall on March 15 at 11 a.m.

One night, says the Centre, the Moon goes missing so the fox must summon the courage to search for his friend. Along the way, he discovers a newfound independence and the wonder of the world beyond his den. A heartwarming and engaging story about the friendship between a young fox and the Moon told with the magic of shadow puppetry, music, and theatre, and the perfect March Break entertainment.

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

Next Week: Spring begins with a note of Calypso

By Brock Weir