

Harlequin and David Wilcox to headline Ribfest



By Brock Weir

Canadian rockers Harlequin and David Wilcox will headline Aurora's 2017 Ribfest.

The fan favourites were announced by Mayor Geoff Dawe and Wendy Browne of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce at last Wednesday's Concerts in the Park series.

Traditionally, the Mayor builds anticipation for the big reveal by throwing out a few teasers to the hundreds of concert-goers and while Harlequin themselves let the cat out of the bag when it came to their Friday, August 25, gig, the return visit of David Wilcox the following evening his second trip to Ribfest in as many years came as more of a surprise.

With David Wilcox hitting such a grand slam home run last year and I could not keep up with the call volume asking him to come back it seemed really logical to bring back by popular demand, says Shelley Ware, Special Event Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, of the musicians famed for his songs Bad Apple, Do The Bearcat, Cat Man, and Suzie Q.

As for Harlequin, the Winnipeg-bred band have long been on Ms. Ware's radar, and everything aligned perfectly this year.

I am really excited they have the chance to perform, says Ms. Ware of Harlequin, who hit the charts with Innocence, I Did It For Love, Superstitious Feeling, and Little White Lies. They are a very active band, very busy, so we're fortunate to actually get them in Ontario. I think there are a lot of gems in their albums that some people might not identify as Harlequin, and that is where the dialogue of music comes into play. There are going to be songs where you will say, 'Oh, that was Harlequin?' and I am excited to surprise a few attendees.

Harlequin is a Canadian rock band originally formed in Winnipeg during the mid-seventies. The band began their recording careers in New York with Jack Douglas, legendary producer of John Lennon, Aerosmith and Cheap Trick. They are still heard frequently on the radio.

Their stellar performances and music are legendary, says Ms. Ware, who dubs Wilcox as 'one of the most talented guitar players in the world. He has been described as the 'songwriter's songwriter.' His talent as a performer and storyteller is incredible.

Harlequin takes the stage on August 25 at 9 p.m., while Wilcox takes over August 26 at the same time.

The party, however, gets started a bit earlier this year when original band The Kings performs at Town Park on Wednesday, August 23 at Town Park as part of the Concerts in the Park series.

It is kind of a wave of classic rock taking us through the weekend, says Ms. Ware.

The entertainment lineup also got the Mayor's seal of approval.

I am a big fan of any Winnipeg-based rock and roll band some of the best talent in Canada comes out of Winnipeg going back to Terry Jacks and the Guess Who, he said. I am really pleased to see David Wilcox coming back; he was fabulous and just really put on a great show. There was a lot of energy there for a three-man band. It will be a great night for live music and it doesn't get much better than live music!

The headliners aren't the only chance to experience live music at Ribfest, however, as Magna will present the semi-finals of the 2017 Hoedown Showdown talent competition, a more recent and popular addition to the Ribfest lineup.

Ribfest gets underway at Machell Park (Aurora Heights Drive just west of Yonge Street) Friday, August 25 at 11 a.m. running through 10 p.m. on Sunday, August 27.

Admission is free. Age of majority after 8 p.m.