

Leave your mark at Sunday's Street Festival



By Brock Weir

You will have a chance to leave your mark this Sunday, June 2, as tens of thousands are expected to converge on Yonge Street for the annual Aurora Street Festival.

Hosted by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, over 500 vendors representing local businesses, restaurants, and service clubs will line Aurora's busiest street from Wellington Street to just south of Murray Drive, offering good deals, free samples, and ample free entertainment.

New this year, young local talent will have a chance to get up close and personal with one of their Canadian idols.

Ahead of July's Celebrate Aurora Music Festival, which will be held at Town Park on July 27 and 28, younger Aurorans will have the chance to audition for 'Aurora's Got The Voice?', a component looking for local talent overseen by Canadian Idol judge Farley Flex.

Season Five Canadian Idol winner Brian Melo will be on hand to judge aspiring singers in the Habachat booth, located on the east side of Yonge Street between Kennedy Street and Cousins Drive, looking for standout singers and performers that will do Aurora proud in the new music festival.

'It goes a lot further than just being a technically good singer,' says Mr. Melo. 'What I am looking for is something that is authentic and something that is real. I want whoever is up there to be believable and I'm forgetting I am actually judging them and someone who is just sitting there enjoying the show. The most important thing is people really showcasing their personalities and what is true to them and showing their uniqueness.'

'One of the pitfalls for a lot of singers is they step outside themselves and they think, 'I need to conform with this because this is what's hot now' and they lose sight of what is resonating with them. If it is not resonating with you, don't do it. Don't think too much about what the judges want to hear but go with your heart.'

A stone's throw from the audition area will be booths from the Town of Aurora, the Aurora 150 Committee, and the Queen's York Rangers.

Members of the Committee will be on the streets to give a flavour of some of the upcoming events in the packed calendar to Celebrate Aurora's 150th anniversary.

First up are the Canada Day Weekend celebrations, which kick off Saturday, June 29, with a ?Youth Music Extravaganza? in Town Park featuring a Showcase of the Bands and a Much Music Video Dance Party with live performances by Much Cover winners.

The music continues on the Sunday with Dance in the Park, hosted by the Rotary Club of Aurora in conjunction with the Town. The evening of music will culminate in a free performance from the legendary band Lighthouse from 9 ? 11 p.m.

Canada Day itself is capped by the celebrations with the traditional Canada Day Parade down Yonge Street and all-day activities and fireworks at Lambert Willson Park.

In addition to finding out what's in store for the rest of the year, including September's Multicultural Celebrations at Ada Johnson Park, there will also be a chance to have a more permanent memento with a special Sesquicentennial Instagram booth, and artefacts representing the last 150 years.

For more on the Street Festival, visit www.aurorachamber.on.ca/street_festival. For a full roster of Aurora 150 activities, head over to www.aurora150.ca.