

Let the music guide you in Library writing contest

By Brock Weir

Does music fuel your imagination? If so, pick up your pen, pad or keyboard and set down what comes to mind for the Aurora Public Library's writing contest, held to coincide with One Book One Aurora.

Friday is the deadline to submit your writing pieces ? fiction, non-fiction, poetry, or prose ? inspired by a jazzy set list prepared by author Kim Eichlin.

Ms. Eichlin's novel, *Under the Visible Life*, is the centrepiece of this year's One Book One Aurora campaign. She wrote the book to a background of jazz standards and similar pieces. Consequently, the music features prominently in the novel.

?We usually start off with a certain theme or sentence, but this one is a little bit different,? says the Aurora Public Library's Reccia Mandelcorn about the 2016 writing contest. ?I asked Kim about Jazz because she loves jazz so much and it has such a presence not only in this book, but in other pieces of her writing. She told me she always has a playlist behind her as she writes. Her friend put together a YouTube playlist of the music she listened to while writing [and she shared it with us].

?We're asking people to use Kim's playlist and whether it is just an inspiration from the whole style of music, or if there is any particular piece that sets them off, to use that as a muse for their own writing.?

And it's truly up to you how you run with it. The contest is open to poetry, short stories, prose poetry and anything else you can think of ? as long as it is kept to a maximum of 10 pages double space.

?We have had teens and adults with submissions so far and the youngest submission so far identifies as being 16 years old,? says Ms. Mandelcorn. ?I can't not read them when they come in. They are fabulous and it is the best ever! We have had writing contests before, but I think because we opened it up to so many different avenues of writing that is what makes it so interesting. One of the submissions relates to a particular piece of music and mentions that piece in it. I can see, having heard the music, where that poem has come from in relation to the music. Somebody else didn't actually say which piece, but it actually reads just like a jazz piece in terms of the format and the discordance of it. I find that really interesting.?

Also adding to Ms. Mandelcorn's interest in this contest is the method of writing is so far removed from her. As an avid writer, she says she requires absolute silence and being alone with her thoughts when setting out a story or a poem.

?No one can be there, nothing can be on the radio,? she says. ?When I started receiving submissions, I asked the Aurora Public Library's writers group ?Do you list listen to music?' and almost everybody in the group does and many of them have a playlist depending on the type of writing that they are doing and I am the only one that needs total silence.

?But, sometimes you just need the spark to get you going, whether it is to polish something you're working on start something new.?

If you let music be your park, send your submissions to writingcontest@aurorapl.ca. Winners will be announced during the Aurora Public Library's Ontario Public Library Week Open House on October 17, and subsequently by email or phone. The winner will receive a \$100 gift card to Chapters-Indigo while the runner-up will receive a card for \$25.