

Local musician jazzes up Town Square, fosters youth talent

For many seasons, local music lovers flocked to the home of James Brown in Aurora's historic downtown core for a series of house concerts with Brown's love of jazz on full display.

Now, he's venturing beyond the porch to bring jazz to Aurora Town Square and Aurora Town Park.

The acclaimed Brown hosted the first gig of his new Aurora Jazz series season at the Aurora Town Square café on April 26, with a second gig in the same location set for Saturday, May 17, from 3 ? 5 p.m.

This weekend, however, he's bringing the show to Aurora Town Park with a Young Artist Concert from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., hosted in conjunction with the Aurora Farmers' Market.

?The Aurora Jazz Series grew out of the house concerts and last year and I received the Aurora Partnership Grant last year and put on three concerts at Trinity Anglican Church,? says Brown. ?I applied and got the grant for a second time and when looking for venues, I thought the new Town Square had just been completed and maybe it would be a good idea to book space there. There was the potential to open up the café windows and have the sound bleed to the outside.

?On Saturday, May 10, it's the Young Artists component of the series. I decided to feature a young artist by the name of Jacob Pozin, a young Auroran who plays the trumpet, and he's bringing his trio to Town Park at the Farmers' Market.?

He will be joined by Ian MacPherson on keys and Robert Eourre on bass.

Brown has had a long-time love for jazz. A self-described ?jazz improviser,? it's that organic element of the genre he hopes to impart to the community ? and it's also what keeps him coming back for more.

?We're taking standard material, whether it is an original tune of mine, a Beatles cover or a jazz standard, we're basically improvising around the structure of that. It's the artform of improvisation I am hoping people will experience because it is not mainstream music,? he explains. ?It's a nice style of music and it is more of a city kind of thing, but regardless I think it is very entertaining and people respond to it when they are hearing musicians playing, singing along, improvising in solos and that type of thing.

?It's the creative element. I was trained as a classical guitarist ? I love that and I excelled at that ? but the thing about jazz that drew me over was the improvisation. Literally, I can create what I want in a given performance on the spot. It demands a lot more skill in the area of understanding the theory of music, harmony, melody, scales and all that stuff ? you have to really spend a lot of time developing those skills to get to a certain level.

?Live music brings people together. It's the ultimate kind of celebration of community, I think. The House Concerts, or if we're doing a concert at the Church or Town Square, it's a social event where anyone can come out, listen and experience the artform together. I think it inspires every other element of our lives, really.?

The May 17 set, back at the Aurora Town Square café, will feature the talents of Carla Walker, a vocalist and pianist, with Brown accompanying on guitar.

?It will be a bunch of her tunes ? she's a composer ? as well as a few jazz things and a few things that are more in the pop vein,? says Brown.

In addition to jazz, residents will also have the chance to see a different side of the James Brown songbook when his rock band, North of the Border, performs at Town Park on June 30 as part of the Town's Canada Day-eve Dance in the Park lineup at Town

Park.

By Brock Weir