

Mudmen to bring Celtic sounds to Concerts in the Park

They've been praised by the CBC, applauded by The Queen, and have a few tunes under their belt that are well-known to hockey fans across the country ? now The Mudmen are bringing their Celtic sounds to Aurora next week as part of the Town's Concerts in the Park series.

The band will take the Town Park Band Shell stage on Wednesday, August 24, beginning at 7 p.m., with some audience favourites, along with some fresh tunes from their new album Farmer's Tan.

?We like to perform and stay busy,? says band co-founder Sandy Campbell of being able to perform again after the worst of the global pandemic. ?COVID was a tiny bump in the road for us compared to what we have been through. There was more time to sit down and actually work on new songs and materials. Our brand-new album, Farmer's Tan, came out just a few weeks ago. It was recorded after the pandemic, but we were writing songs during the pandemic ? so the creative [outlet] was there.?

While they were creating during the pandemic, the Mudmen were also recalibrating. A couple of members went in different directions during those long two-and-a-half years and new musicians were brought into the fold.

In Sandy's words, ?we pretty much put together a whole new band? of ?extremely good, top-level musicians? including current vocalist Colin Amey, who was nominated as Best Independent Male Vocalist previously at the Canadian Country Music Awards.

?The lyrics (on Farmer's Tan) a lot of songs talk about good times and positive messages,? he says. ?Farmers Tan talks about being raised right ? they raised us right, they made us strong, and they taught us how to get along. It's about having a good sense of community.?

Sandy and his brother Robbie started the band several years ago and, since its inception, they have experienced many career highlights, including playing with the Irish Rovers, John McDermott and The Chieftains. They have created music for television shows including Shameless and The Black Donnellys, and even for Don Cherry's Rock ?em Sock ?em videos.

Their music was also used for the new CBC version of the Hockey Night in Canada theme for more than seven years.

?We started off pretty traditional and then we came out with a fairly wild rock and roll band, which I think we had to do to get people's notice,? he said. ?Many people have a misconception of bag pipes; they think you're going to be a pipe band marching down the street, so we decided to come out pretty hard and heavy when we signed with EMI Records.

?We just want audiences to have a good time and enjoy themselves. We're going to tell stories and have some fun ? and we're going to visit after with anyone who wants to meet us. I think audiences will have a good time, love the stories, and I am pretty sure they're going to leave feeling happy and hopefully with a really good feeling.

?We're all about the good times.?

The Mudmen are the penultimate band of the Town's Concerts in the Park series.

After their August 24 concert, the series will wrap August 31 with Epic Elton: A Tribute to Elton John.

Concerts run at Town Park each Wednesday from 7 ? 9 p.m. through August 31. Admission is free but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter