

SAGA, Northern Pikes to headline Ribfest 2024

Canadian rockers SAGA and Northern Pikes will bring crowds to Machell Park this month as Aurora gears up for Ribfest 2024.

The headliners were announced by Mayor Tom Mrakas at last Wednesday's Concerts in the Park event, teasing festival-goers with clues on each band before the big reveal.

‘They are a Canadian rock band with both gold and platinum albums worldwide,’ said the Mayor, dropping hints about SAGA. ‘This band was the very first ever digital live by a rock group and also filmed over 20 music videos which were on heavy rotation on MTV. This band is very busy performing more than 30 concerts annually and all around the world with the strong presence in Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the United States, and with a rare performance in Canada at Aurora's Ribfest.’

Platinum and Gold also led Mayor Mrakas' tease of The Northern Pikes.

‘Their sound blurs the genres of rock and pop and even I would suggest one of their songs, Things I Do For Money, are along the vibe of Depeche Mode,’ he said. ‘This year they are celebrating their 40th anniversary.’

SAGA will take the stage on Friday, August 23 at 9 p.m., with a performance from Desire ? A Tribute to U2, warming up the stage at 5.30 p.m.

The Northern Pikes headline Saturday evening's program at 9 p.m.

Earlier on Saturday, the stage will offer something for everyone. The fun begins at 11 a.m. with X & Y ? A Tribute to Coldplay. They will be followed at 1.15 p.m. by Jukebox Heroes ? A Tribute to Foreigner, at 3:30 by Sheer Heart Attack ? A Tribute to Queen; and at 5.45 by Monkey Wrench ? A Tribute to Foo Fighters.

Sunday's entertainment begins at 11.30 a.m. with professional Ribfest judging; at 12.30 p.m. by Aurora Teen Idol Charlotte Clementine Kolas; at 1.30 p.m. by Just Heart ? A Tribute to Heart; at 3.30 p.m. by The Natural Woman Show ? A Tribute to Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight, and Chaka Khan; and 5.30 p.m. with Hard Soda, with their own blend of classic rock from the 70s, 80s and 90s.

It's shaping into a fun weekend for Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, who has been working hard behind the scenes to make Aurora's tastiest annual festival just as sizzling as ever before.

The Ribfest headliners, she says, showcases a range of Canadian talent.

‘The Northern Pikes is very excited to be coming specifically to Aurora and Ontario, and I can see why as the response to the announcement has been so strong,’ she says. ‘I think their sound, although they are a rock group, have a bit of a pop sound to them so I think it is going to be really nice to have that? and I am quite looking forward to seeing them live. I think with these bands it's going to be a joy from start to finish.’

‘We're very fortunate to have the two bands in Ontario at this time. The Northern Pikes travel a lot, but SAGA actually spends the majority of the year in so many different countries performing, so even being able to see them in Ontario will be a really big success.’

For more information about this year's Ribfest lineup, visit aurora.ca/ribfest.

By Brock Weir