

Saturday Night Fever gets a Canadian spin this September in Downtown Aurora

The fifth-annual Saturday Night Fever, the popular music and dance party that sees Yonge Street shut down between Wellington and Mosley Streets for an evening of revelry, will have a distinctly Canadian spin this year.

Maple Leaf Fever, a patriotic spin on the local tradition, is set to unfold on Saturday, September 6, from 4 ? 11 p.m., featuring an all-Canadian music lineup.

Getting the party started at 4 p.m. will be After the Gold Rush ? A Tribute to Neil Young, which organizers bill as ?the closest experience to the real thing.?

Taking the stage at 6.15 will be Shania Twin ? A Tribute to Shania Twain, one of Canada's most successful tribute bands, and closing out the party beginning at 9 p.m. will be From the Hip ? A Tribute to the Tragically Hip.

Given the sense of patriotism that has spread across the country this year in the face of uncertainty on multiple fronts, Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, said the red-and-white re-think was just a natural extension of that.

?When we start to create themes, we spend a lot of time analyzing, seeing where we want to go, and this has to take place way back in early Spring in order to pull together the bands and the overall visuals,? she explains. ?We all know what was happening in the spring. With so much media emphasis on Canada Strong, Canada Unified, and all the unity themes out there, that's where Maple Leaf Fever came from. One of my colleagues, Sarah, came up with that and we've run with it ever since. I think the importance and reminder of supporting Canadians, supporting Canadian businesses, is just as strong today as it was back in the spring.?

Maple Leaf Fever is also a chance for residents to enjoy businesses in Aurora's historic downtown core.

One participant in the festivities is the Royal Rose Gallery, which is spearheading an expansive art showcase, including a timed art battle featuring York Region artists, where attendees can see fine works of art unfold in front of their eyes. They will also get a chance to vote on their favourite creation.

?Rosa Calabrese at the Royal Rose has been very enthusiastic about it,? says Ware. ?Through her efforts, we're actually going to have three active art installations throughout the course of the night, so it is really nice to bring in the local arts. We've really tried to focus on hands-on activities and we have Bullseye Axe Throwing coming in and setting up one of the paint activations. The public can join in the painting sessions themselves. Then, some local businesses will be out there with additional vendors. The street should be pretty, pretty full, but hopefully they're all going to be engaging activities people can enjoy and return to the stage ? and you'll still be able to hear the bands from Wellington all the way back to Mosley.?

Saturday Night Fever has its roots in a one-off, country-themed preview that served as a precursor to Magna International's Wild West Hoedown. Magna paused the Hoedown due to COVID-19 before announcing in 2023 it would not return.

Saturday Night Fever, however, returned in 2021 as a way for people to get together, have fun, and draw people back to the downtown core, and support local business at the same time as we settled into the ?new normal? after lockdown.

It has had various themes over the years, including disco, as the original ?Saturday Night Fever? name suggests, and Aurora is banking on this year's theme being a winner.

?It will be really awesome if residents helped support our theme by pulling out the red and white and really getting into the Canadian spirit,? says Ware. ?If you haven't been before, come whenever it works for you. There are three bands back-to-back, but come for the entire experience. We're confident you won't be disappointed!?

For more information on Maple Leaf Fever, visit www.aurora.ca/saturdaynightfever.

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