

Shuffle Demons bring 80s classics, new sounds to Cultural Centre

The Shuffle Demons burst onto the Toronto scene in the 1980s with a unique blend of jazz, funk, and palpable fun. Now, as they near their 40th anniversary, they're bringing their special brand of music to Aurora.

This Saturday, February 10, in a concert hosted by the Aurora Cultural Centre, the Shuffle Demons will take over the Wirth Theatre stage at St. Andrew's College as part of the Centre's Voices of the World concert series.

"Canada's best-known 'Fashion Assassins' bring their virtuosic jazz and funk playing stage antics for a show like none other," says the Centre. "A hit at festivals all over the world, the Shuffle Demons are a crowd pleasing, full-on musical group that backs up wild stage antics with phenomenal playing by some of Canada's most talented musicians."

The Shuffle Demons came together in 1984 as Toronto buskers.

They quickly gained a following and by the next year their outdoor performances brought huge crowds to a number of locations throughout the city, particularly outside the Eaton Centre.

Their sounds were soon embraced by CITY-TV, and their popular song, Spadina Bus, was adopted as a theme for their Speakers Corner series.

"Word really got out that there were these crazy people doing songs on the street," lead Rich Underhill tells The Auroran. "We played Expo '86 and released a video just after that. We played and did about six sets a day for six weeks" and we didn't really know, but our agent booked us on a tour of university colleges on the way back and, wow, it was suddenly exploding."

As their popularity grew, Underhill says it was heartening to see so many people embrace their jazz fusion, especially the saxophone, and they went from strength to strength.

Following a hiatus, the Shuffle Demons reunited to mark their 20th anniversary and the juggernaut continues in this, their 40th year.

"The chance encounters and the chance musical directions really feel like you're living in the moment," says Underhill, noting this weekend's performance will feature fan favourites as well as material off their latest album. "I often say that making music and improvising is a little bit like jumping off a cliff with your bandmates, making a parachute on the way down and landing safely. That is the excitement I try to get the audience to feel. Anything can happen, things can go wrong, but we're going to make our way out of it and it's going to be a fun and interesting journey."

The Shuffle Demons will be hosted by the Aurora Cultural Centre at St. Andrew's College this Saturday, February 10, at 7.30 p.m. Doors open at 6.45.

For further information, including ticketing, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

By Brock Weir
Editor
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter