

Sons of Rhythm promise fun at Blues Bash ahead of album release

By Brock Weir

As they put the finishing touches on their new EP, the Toronto-based Sons of Rhythm are preparing to blow the roof off Highland Automotive on Saturday at the 2018 Blues Bash.

Sons of Rhythm, along with a number of youth bands, will showcase their talents at the annual Bash, which signals the start of the Aurora Winter Blues Festival season.

The Blues Bash, which has become a favourite event on Aurora's arts and entertainment calendar, not only offers live music and great food, but a chance for the Festival to play tribute to the charities and non-profits that will benefit from this year's proceeds ? namely Community & Home Assistance to Seniors (CHATS), and Music Aurora's Youth in Music program.

But none of this can happen without the music and this year's headliners are Sons of Rhythm, a group founded by three friends based on a ?mutual love for blues music, good wine and pasta? ? a tradition continued by Mick Maratta on lead vocals and bass, Federico Luiu on the electric guitar and Mike Carbone on drums.

?We were really good friends and we all had similar passions, music-wise,? says Maratta. ?It was just a matter of even the first couple of times we played together we knew we had some sort of chemistry together and it was never a challenge of trying to fit or squeeze in our individual styles. It just gelled instantly.?

Maratta, the lead songwriter for the group, says the passion for the blues was instilled in him from a very young age. His dad, he says, is a guitar player who used to play with his sons, and, before long, he was studying soul, and R&B. What held his interest were the singers, particularly John Lee Hooker.

?It was the way he told a story,? he says. ?It was just so different. There were songs where he was almost just talking and I had never heard anything like that. He was talk-singing, stomping his feet, and it was just different, raw, and really cool how he built the stories.?

Now, Maratta too builds the stories.

He says he finds inspiration anywhere and he'll often bring ideas to the band where they will work on developing them together.

?My inspiration comes from just everyday things,? he explains. ?It can be an ad on TV, something I see just going for a walk, or even writing down ideas that come to me during the day and working them out. With our first EP, we're trying to convey our live performance, which really is based around having a whole lot of fun. We have a lot of fun on stage because we're all good friends and we just want to see the audience have a good time. But we have a couple of tracks on there that are a little more serious, like ?You've Got a Friend.'

?Mental health is a big issue right now and they are realising just how important it is. In this digital era, it is so easy to feel alone even though you are connected. I have 1,000 friends on Facebook, but you can still feel by yourself. This is just a song about reaching out, that you have people, have a support group of family, friends and people who care about you.?

For the most part, however, the album is looking to have fun and bring a ?good time kind of vibe? to the listener ? and that is just what they, as a group, hope to bring to the showroom of Highland Automotive this Saturday night.

?Just seeing people dancing, just really mesmerized by a solo or just having a good time is really rewarding for me,? says Maratta.

?We're all about having fun ? having fun on stage, the crowd having fun and being interactive. If you want to have some fun, dance, sing and feel the spirit, come to the show.?

The Aurora Winter Blues Festival's Blues Bash will take place this Saturday, February 3, at Highland Automotive. For event information, including tickets, visit musicaurora.ca/blues-festival/blues-bash.