

SPEAKEASY

By **Jane Taylor & Reccia Mandelcorn**

Welcome to The Speakeasy, a monthly column highlighting arts and culture in Aurora. This print edition features stories from the radio broadcast, which airs the first Wednesday of each month at 10 am on CHOP-FM 102.7 and is available through social media channels at the Aurora Cultural Centre and Aurora Public Library.

Shawna White, Curator of the Aurora Museum and Corrie Clark, playwright and actor, stopped by to talk to us about The Temple of Fame. This upcoming production, with multiple performances over the weekend of May 11 ? 13, is a remount of a performance that took place in Aurora on May 10 ? 11, 1918. The Temple of Fame was loosely based on a popular poem by Alexander Pope, and was staged frequently in the late 19th century. The action of the play originally featured famous men and women in history presenting their case to ?The Goddess of Fame,? with the winner receiving a crown of glory for the worthiest claim.

It is fascinating to hear how the script came into Shawna's office.

In 2015, former Aurora resident John McIntyre passed along an original copy he had from his grandmother Della Webster, who had been one of the organizers of the 1918 production. John's treasure trove also included original press reviews, accompanying notes and letters that together gave a fulsome picture of community intent. They discovered that the Aurora Overseas Auxiliary mounted a two-night production as a fundraiser to support area troops stationed overseas at the time. Given the historical context and times from the original, Corrie's work as playwright needed to balance the historical significance of the 1918 production with a much-needed updating of the cast of characters to reflect modern cultural awareness and representation. She also wanted to ensure that a sense of humour infused aspects of the script. The result is a highly entertaining and made-in-Aurora updated version featuring heroes that are recognizable for modern-day audiences accompanied by original live music.

The Aurora Museum is currently featuring Temple of Fame: Staging Women's Roles, an exhibit to accompany the production. The exhibit lends a deep historical context to the Aurora production, and the motivation to support the war effort on the home front.

For more information about tickets and exhibit details, visit www.auroramuseum.ca

Aurora Public Library welcomes Canadian author Kerri Sakamoto on Wednesday, May 23 at 7 pm. Sakamoto, a Governor General's Literary Award-nominee and winner of the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, will present her newest book Floating City. Described as ?Citizen Kane reimagined?, the novel tells the story of a fiercely ambitious boy who overcomes humble beginnings and hardship in British Columbia to become a wealthy property developer in Toronto, but cannot escape the ghosts of his past. Tickets are free, and available online at www.aurorapl.ca.

When you're at the library, drop by the Colleen Abbott Gallery to enjoy landscapes, portraits and a touch of the whimsical in a collaborative exhibit by Local Colour Aurora. On exhibit to June 2.

The Aurora Cultural Centre is hometown proud to present The Pick Brothers Band on May 11 at 8 pm. You might have caught their energized show last summer at the Music Aurora Summer Festival during the August long weekend in Town Park. All three brothers (yes, they are brothers!) went to school in Aurora ? and bring an incredible, energetic live show. For ticket information, visit www.auroraculturalcentre.ca.

After being cooped up all winter, we're ready to enjoy the variety of arts and cultural activities once again in the great outdoors. A great place to start is the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair, now back in action for the season. Check them out each Saturday in Town Park from 8 am ? 1 pm.

Jane Taylor is Events & Communications Manager at the Aurora Cultural Centre, and Reccia Mandelcorn is Manager of Community Collaboration at Aurora Public Library. They co-host The Speakeasy on the first Wednesday of each month on CHOP-FM 102.7.