

Warm up this winter with Craig Cardiff and a 'cozy' Cabaret

Warm up this winter with a 'cozy' cabaret next Friday night as the Aurora Cultural Centre hosts Juno-nominee Craig Cardiff in an evening of folk and roots music.

Cardiff takes the stage at 7.30 p.m. on December 10 overlooking Town Park's Christmas lights at the Armoury, which has served as the Cultural Centre's live music venue since the historic Church Street School was closed for the duration of Town Square construction.

'Winter Tunes with Craig Cardiff' will include cabaret seating and virtual options.

'Cardiff sings songs that expose the human condition, putting a magnifying glass to the clumsier and less proud moments,' says the Cultural Centre. 'He can turn any setting into an intimate affair, infusing his music and lyrics with uncompromising humanism. Cardiff makes it a point to keep the relationship with his fans personal, inviting and accepting any opportunity to make his audience as much a part of the experience as he is.'

These chances to connect with audiences and make them a part of the experience have been few since the start of the global pandemic.

Since venues were allowed to re-open, he and his band have notched just a few in-person performances under their belts, but they're eager to hit the ground running next week.

'It feels like we're to be of service and useful again,' Cardiff tells The Auroran. 'I have only done a handful of events in person and I have never experienced anxiety before. At some of these events, I am breaking out in a cold sweat like, 'What is happening?' Speaking to friends, they have said that it is probably a panic attack or anxiety, but it is one of the things of getting to come back and do what you have always done, in some new ways. I am working through it, it passes quickly, and I am so excited about these opportunities because it is like you have to keep doing them to move through the rust.'

As part of the cabaret, Cardiff will be sharing selections from his new album 'All This Time Running,' one which was written and recorded during live tour dates just before the pandemic, and produced and completed during quarantine.

This will be one of the first shows in Ontario where they have been able to present the record, one he says he is very proud of.

'I know it is very un-Canadian to brag, but I want people to hear it,' he says. 'Part of that is touring and connecting with audiences and being on stage and there is that extra excitement when we get to start. [The album] gave us focus when there was all this uncertainty. I felt like we were all in a bit of a snowstorm. It was like we were holding onto each other working our way through a snowstorm and that was the focus of finishing.'

In creating his work, inspiration is boiled down to 'people and stories.' The more people you connect with, the more you learn about them, he says. It might not shed insight on 'all the joy, the aches that makes their internal universe,' but the simple act of connecting can help tell that story.

'I don't know what it is like for carpenters and people who do really fine craftsmanship, but it is the element of bringing out this really unique idea or story that is perfect and beautiful with just the right number of words,' he says. 'Even talking about it I get excited.'

'I am mad about lyrics and I love words, first and foremost. With this album, it is the beautiful skin, muscles and bone of musicians who made the songs into something far bigger than I would have achieved just doing an acoustic release. This will be our test: I want the words to stick in [audiences'] heads and when people come to the show, providing we're meeting with local health

directions, I want everybody singing along with me because I have missed that immensely, the energy and vibe of a room where everyone is singing together and connecting is one of the most special things.?

For more information about December 10's Winter Tunes with Craig Cardiff, including ticketing options for both the in-person and live-streamed performances, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter