

Abbamania brings popular tribute back to Town Park

They're one of the few tribute shows to headline Roy Thomson Hall.

Now, the popular Abbamania tribute show, which has been wowing audiences for more than 20 years, is set to make another return to Town Park as part of Aurora's Concerts in the Park Summer Series.

The show, which celebrates the music of 1970s hitmakers ABBA, will take over the Band Shell next Wednesday, August 11.

With few chances to perform before a live audience since the start of the global pandemic, the group has hit the ground running since restrictions were lifted, and now have 20 shows booked around Ontario this summer.

'It was like taking Christmas away,' says producer Garry Lichrach of the band not being able to perform before an audience for nearly a year-and-a-half. 'They are dedicated musicians and the best at what they do. We play all over the world with symphonies, everywhere from Malaysia, India, Cayman Islands, and the U.S., and they are the number-one ABBA production in the world. We have the best look, all the people sound exactly like the record, we go into great detail - note for note, chord for chord, sound for sound, to recreate it as if you were watching the real ABBA in concert. It's all the hits like Waterloo, Mamma Mia, S.O.S., Gimme Gimme, Fernando, Super Trooper and it goes on and on!'

Unlike many performers who easily pivoted to livestreaming shows when they were unable to find a stage, it hasn't been as easy a shift for tribute performers, says Lichrach. If you're going to go online to watch a tribute to performers like ABBA or Elvis, there is always the option, after all, of heading over to YouTube to see the real thing for free.

But now they're once again able to wow the crowds in person and this well-oiled musical machine is more than ready to pick up where they left off.

'We have been together for 20 years and we do over 200 concerts a year,' says Lichrach. 'They are employed in 200 shows a year and in 20 years that is more concerts than the Beatles, Elvis, Michael Jackson and Madonna combined. The Beatles only played 117 times in their history. We do that in three quarters of a year. From the vocals, the sound, the costumes, the dialogue, the precision everyone takes in learning their part - from the head engineer on - to recreate the sound where people go, 'You've got to be kidding me.' They're blown away!

'This [performance] will show how incredible our singers are. When this band sells out Roy Thomson Hall four times, that is something. Tribute bands don't play Roy Thomson Hall. Now Massey Hall wants us there next year and we will be the only tribute band to play Massey Hall. Come out [to Town Park] and see a great show. And even people who aren't ABBA fans come out, they say, 'Wow, I'm such a fan now.''

Abbamania will play Town Park on Wednesday, August 11, beginning at 7 p.m. For more information, including registering for a free spot in Town Park and all the health protocols that will be in place, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter