

## Sounds of summer return to Town Park with Music Festival



**By Brock Weir**

Town Park will once again host the sounds of summer as the Aurora Music Festival takes over the band shell this August. Spearheaded by Music Aurora, the August 5 music festival will be headlined by the Juno-award winning Monkey Junk.

“We first featured Monkey Junk seven years ago at the inaugural Aurora Winter Blues Festival,” says Music Aurora President Jamie Macdonald. “It was amazing [the following] this band has.”

Monkey Junk is a mainstay on the Canadian blues scene and in this, the Canada 150 year, they are headlining a lineup with a strictly Canadian theme, highlighting established and emerging musicians from across York Region and beyond.

“This goes back to the mission and mandate [of Music Aurora] which is to really highlight youth music in the community, as well as amateur musicians,” says Mr. Macdonald, noting the spotlight is also falling on professionals.

Louisa & The Planets, and Half Birthday are among the featured youth bands and, in between acts, award-winning Aurora singer-songwriter Lauren Haze will provide the entertainment. Later on, performances will include the popular Bernadette Connors who, in recent years, has acquired a very enthusiastic local following.

“We then roll into the evening part of it and our opening act for the headliner is back to the local theme with the Pick Brothers,” said Mr. Macdonald. “These are three brothers that grew up in Aurora. They went to Williams. They are now opening for larger international acts across Canada. That says a lot for this band. They have a great dynamic sound and a huge stage presence as well. We are thrilled and fortunate to get them.”

With music ringing out from 4 ? 10.30 p.m. on Saturday, August 5, the Aurora Music Festival will fill what Mr. Macdonald describes as a “void” in the Aurora summer calendar.

“We haven’t had a summer music festival for six or seven years, so Music Aurora is happy to be coming back and bringing live music and a live festival to the residents and visitors of Aurora,” he said. “I can’t say enough about the beautiful Town Park here. It is a beautiful backdrop for live music. We did a couple of events here over the years. We did the End of Summer Blues Concert in the Park years ago, the national broadcast of the Tragically Hip last year and I think we had phenomenal turnout for both of those events. There were upwards of 3,000 people at both of those events. We are just thrilled we can bring live events to the community of Aurora.”

This enthusiasm was shared by Councillor John Abel, who sits on Music Aurora’s Board of Directors.

On the day of the Festival, Councillor Abel said the park would be filled with beer and food vendors along the Mosley Street side of Town Park, along with booths from invited “town partners” including the Aurora Cultural Centre and Marquee Theatrical Productions to get the word out on the programs and services they provide the community.

“We have also invited the Newmarket Music Festival to advertise as well to support their efforts and their festival at the end of August,” said Councillor Abel. “It is all about collaborating and working together to make a great community event, unite the community for Canada’s 150. It’s a free event so we expect a great turnout and we’re looking forward to an outstanding music lineup. We’re very pleased with it. It is a little bit of a younger, hipper music lineup and we think that we’re going to attract a new kind of

audience here.?

The Aurora Music Festival is sponsored by, among others, TD Canada Trust and Geranium Homes.