

Lineup announced for 21st Annual Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival

By **Sam Odrowski**

Excitement is growing for the 21st Annual Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival, as organizers have released the official lineup for the three-day event that will return from May 30 to June 1.

The festival's founder and artistic director, Larry Kurtz, who hires the talent each year, said he's excited for the community to experience this year's lineup.

"We are especially proud to highlight an incredible roster of Canadian artists. With over 40 acts scheduled, the 2025 Festival will feature some of the finest talent in blues and jazz music," he enthused.

"Putting together the lineup is a balancing act. I try to include a variety of styles within the Blues and Jazz genres while supporting Canadian artists as much as possible. It's important to keep current with new musical acts but also bring back festival favorites while staying within our budget."

The TD Mainstage at Alexandra Park, TD Broadway Stage at the Broadway/Second Street intersection and Opera House Stage inside of Town Hall (87 Broadway) will feature several different headliners over three days. Some big names on the lineup include Harry Manx, Robi Botos, Steve Strongman, Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne, and Lachy Doley.

"Our Saturday [May 31] headliner Lachy Doley is an award-winning blues artist from Australia. He plays Hammond organ and clavinet with a whammy bar to create a sound unlike anything you have heard before," said Kurtz. "It's quite amazing and he puts on a dynamic show."

Harry Manx, a world-touring musician from British Columbia who blends Indian folk melodies with slide guitar blues, will be another headliner to watch out for, according to Kurtz.

"He plays an 18-string guitar called a Mohan Veena for a truly original sound," he said.

In the Opera House, Kurtz said to keep an eye on the Robi Botos trio, featuring Mike Downs on bass, Larnell Lewis on drums and Robi on the piano.

"Robi, who draws comparisons to Oscar Peterson, is widely considered a master piano player and is a multi-award winner," said Kurtz.

Other performing artists include Maple Blues Band, Raoul & The Big Time, Jay Douglas & The Allstars, Canefire, Johnny Max Band, Tia Brazda, Al Lerman & The Country Fried Band, Larry Kurtz & The Lawbreakers, Murray Kinsley & Wicked Grin, Erin McCallum Band, Rosie's Smokehouse Deluxe and Danny Boy Phelan.

In addition, Stan Chang, Jazz Society Band, Turbo Street Funk, Danny Marks, James Anthony Band, Mike McCarthy Band, Voodoo Pawnshop, CJ Lee, Dwayne Laforme, Gail Gunnis & The Dirty Roosters, Little Joe & The Werewolves, Campfire Poets, Soul Collective, Heather Katz, Itchy & Scratchy will be playing.

As well, The Supervoids, Traveling Wannabes, Puslinch House of Blues Band, Flashback, ODSS Jazz Band, The Shed Hawks, ODSS Teachers Band and Orangeville Community Band will be performing at this year's festival.

The celebration of blues and jazz music fosters a strong sense of community while transforming downtown Orangeville into the region's largest music festival and special event venue.

“On behalf of the Festival Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers, we are thrilled to present another three-day weekend of exceptional music and events for thousands of local residents and visitors,” said Festival Board of Directors President Nancy Claridge.

“This incredible event is made possible with support from the Orangeville Business Improvement Area, local businesses, the Town of Orangeville, government funding agencies, our featured performers, and the enthusiastic audiences who attend.”

The festival has been on the Top 100 Festivals and Events in Ontario for 12 years in a row and has a reputation as one of the strongest medium-size blues and jazz events in the province.

The majority of events taking place within the Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival are free of charge.

At no cost, attendees can enjoy the TD Broadway Stage, Classic Cars Blues Cruise, Blues & Bikes Show & Shine event, New Orleans-style Jazz March, Broadway Ramble, performer workshops at the Mill Street Library and pop-up street performances.

“New this year will be a beer garden on the street next to the Broadway Stage, which features great local talent,” Kurtz said.

Weekend passes for access to the TD Mainstage and Opera House from Friday to Sunday are \$40. Single-day tickets for Friday or Saturday are \$20 each and a single-day ticket for Sunday is \$10.

Tickets can be purchased online at ticketscene.ca/events/51445.

“In a time when many festivals are struggling, we want to ensure the festival remains a vital part of what makes Orangeville such a great place to live and work. The best way to show your support is to buy a ticket to the main stage,” said Kurtz. “We know it is one of the best values for your money you will find anywhere.”

He added that he would encourage members of the public to join the festival's fantastic team of volunteers.

Visit orangevillebluesandjazz.ca/volunteer to learn more.