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Local Rotary Club introducing HMF Concert Series

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Live concert music will be heard in Shelburne after a two-year break.

The Rotary Club of Shelburne has announced they will be shifting away from their traditional Heritage Music Festival (HMF) this year, and will instead be introducing a multi-concert event known as the HMF Concert Series. The HMF Concert Series will kick off in June and run until the fall.

Bobbi Ferguson, a member of the Rotary Club of Shelburne, spoke with the Free Press about the decision to shift away from the traditional annual music festival for 2022.

?It came about just by wanting to do something, but not putting all our eggs in one backet by having it all on one weekend. If something did go wrong, we have some other events to fall back on,? explained Ferguson. ?What we're doing now mostly is having different venues that are able to pivot if the pandemic gives us another curveball. For example, if we do an event at the arena, we can switch it to the parking lot.?

The Heritage Music Festival, along with its earlier variations, has been a long-standing annual tradition in the Town of Shelburne.

The first fiddle contest in Shelburne took place in August of 1951, pitched by local resident Cliff McIntosh. Following the first fiddle contest the local festival began to grow to include more classes in the competition, a beauty contest, and the Fiddle Parade. In 2016 the festival was rebranded to the Heritage Music Festival (HMF) and the Canadian Open Old Time Fiddle Championship. The Heritage Music Festival was cancelled in both 2020 and 2021 due to uncertainty surrounding the pandemic.

?Obviously, it feels good to be able to bring back music and the event we've been doing for 70 years, but it's also a little scary,? said Ferguson.

For the Rotary Club of Shelburne, the Heritage Music Festival is their largest fundraiser with the revenue made during the event going directly back into local initiatives.

Some of the local organizations the Rotary Club has supported in the last two years include; ALAS Dufferin; CDDHS Grad Awards; Hamper program; Multicultural Event; Santa for Seniors; Shelburne Minor Hockey; and Shepherd's Cupboard Food Bank.

?We have given to everybody, that's what we do; we raise money to give a hundred per cent of it back to the community,? said Ferguson.

The Shelburne Rotary Club has released the line up of musical acts which will be featured at the HMF Concert Series. Kicking off the HMF Concert Series is the ultimate classic rock experience with Leisa Way's Rock ?n Roll Is Here to Stay at Fiddle Park on June 26. Next, Alberta's country sensation Dan Davidson will perform at the CDRC on August 5, while August 6 is slated for Bands, Brews & BBQ at Fiddle Park.

Ferguson noted that the Rotary has not yet confirmed whether the Canadian Open Old Time Fiddle Championship will go ahead.

Ferguson said they hope the concert series and different genres of music brings rejuvenation to the traditional event for the community.

?I'm hoping it will bring more people out to see it, maybe a rejuvenated interest from existing long-time residents, but also for new residents to bring them out and see what we're all about,? said Ferguson.

The Rotary Club is now on the look out for sponsors for the HMF Concert Series, and Ferguson says the series of concerts will be a benefit for any sponsors.

?They'll be promoted throughout the whole year at every event,? said Ferguson.

Those interested in sponsoring the HMF Concert Series can contact the Rotary Club of Shelburne by calling 519-278-0016 or through emailing at ShelburneRotary@gmail.com.