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Things you didn?t know about the Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival

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The favourite weekend of the year for many area residents is fast approaching.

The 21st Annual Orangeville Blues and Jazz returns to the downtown core from May 30 to June 1.

While the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to make the Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival a success, might be difficult to truly measure, here are some little-known facts festival-goers may not be aware of.

1. Over 250 musicians across 50 bands will be making their way to the Blues and Jazz Festival this year. The festival's organizers are happy to support Canadian artists with 97 per cent of the acts on the lineup residing in Canada and two acts hailing from Australia. Organizers say their longstanding commitment to showcasing local and Canadian talent has become even more important this year.

2. Active Lives Canada, a local organization that supports children and adults with neurological and autism spectrum disorders, will set up Ontario's first-ever autism sensory dome at the Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival, during the Broadway Ramble on Saturday. The sensory dome is a 20-foot wide, calming, barrier-free retreat right at the heart of the festivities. A soft, inflatable dome, like those used in portable observatories, will transform into a peaceful sensory space. Inside, is dim lighting, tactile activities, noise-cancelling headphones, and a team trained to support anyone feeling overwhelmed by the festival's energy.

3. It costs more than $300,000 to put on the Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival each year. As a registered not-for-profit organization, the festival's organizers strive to operate on a break-even basis with revenues coming from a combination of government grants, sponsorships, ticket sales, donations, and other earned revenue sources. Over 50 businesses are sponsoring this year's festival.

4. The total economic impact of the festival on the entire region is well over $2 million, based on recent studies from the Ontario government's TREIM modelling data.

5. It takes roughly 365 days of preparation to put on the festival, with the planning cycle beginning immediately after the completion of the current year's festival. There's a comprehensive post-event operational analysis, which is part of a strategic planning schedule leading up to the following year's event.

6. It takes over 200 volunteers to plan, set up and facilitate the festival.

7. More than 250 cars are expected to descend upon Orangeville's downtown core for the festival's annual Blues Cruise, all the while pop-up bands and performers on the TD Broadway stage entertain attendees. This takes place on Friday, May 30.

8. Festival organizers are anticipating more than 500 motorcycles will be on display for the annual Blues and Bikes event on Sunday, June 1. All styles and classes of motorcycles are welcome to participate.

9. This is the 12th year the Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival has received the Top 100 Festival & Events Award in Ontario.

10. There's plenty to do and see at the festival in addition to music. There will be a Farmers' Market on Saturday, May 31 and over 20 food vendors set up all weekend-long. As well, there will be 15 craft specialty vendors on site.

11. New this year is a limited number of picnic tables set up by the food service area for patrons to sit down at while they eat.

12. Lots of local restaurants will be featuring bands throughout the Orangeville Blues and Jazz weekend. Participating venues include the Taphouse, Black Birch Restaurant, Tweedsmuir Presbyterian Church and Revival 1863, located in the basement of Barley Vine Rail.

13. The festival is running three workshops this year. Visit the Mill St. Branch of the Orangeville Public Library for a Harmonica workshop with Al Lerman, a guitar workshop with Juno award winner Teddy Leonard, and Blues Trivia with Escarpment Blues Society President/radio broadcaster Ken Wallis.

14. New this year is a licensed area for beer, wine, coolers and ciders, on Broadway close to the TD Broadway Stage. Same as years prior, there will be alcohol available at the TD Main Stage in Alexandra Park and the Opera House.

15. Friday headliner ? Kenny Blues Boss Wayne ? is considered one of the very best blues boogies woogie piano players in the world. His performance is scheduled for 9:30 p.m.

16. Saturday headliner ? Lachy Doley ? plays Hammond organ and clavinet with a whammy bar to create unique sounds you've never heard before. He'll be performing at 9:30 p.m. on the TD Main Stage. Expect to be blown away!

17. The Sunday headliner is legendary Jay Douglas, who will bring his mix of blues, jazz, and reggae with his 10-piece band. He'll be performing at 4:45 p.m. A new documentary about his life has recently been released.

18. The incredible Harry Manx blends eastern Indian music with North American blues and plays an 18-string guitar. He'll be performing at the TD Main Stage on Sunday, June 1 at 3 p.m.

19. The Opera House will feature Canada's premier jazz piano player Robi Botos with Mike Downs on Bass and Larnell Lewis on the drums on Sunday at 3:30 p.m.

20. Steve Strongman, a 2025 Grammy Award nominee, is performing on Saturday in the Opera House at 4 p.m.

21. There will be bands playing on the street all weekend, including during the Blues Cruise, the Broadway Ramble and the Blues & Bikes event.

22. The Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival became a registered not-for-profit in 2004.