



## Jazz 'n Blues Festival set to stir the soul

Melanie Cummings, Special To Burlington Post

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Music is the glue of human community, according to bass player and producer Robert Hebert.

It certainly defines this city. Witness the abundance of local talent regularly thrust onto the world stage — Finger 11, the Burlington Teen Tour Band and Silverstein to name a few.

Hebert, whose own musical career spans four decades, has put this binding power of music into practice for the past six years, founding and continuing to organize Burlington's annual Jazz 'n Blues Festival.

This year's event begins Friday (July 17) and runs until Sunday from noon-11 p. m. each day.

"This year's line up is consistent with the musical artistry featured in previous years," said Hebert, who aims to attract more than 75,000 people to the three-day event. "The festival is for all live music lovers worldwide."

With a lineup of 15 artists, Hebert sifted through more than 1,000 submissions to come up with the weekend roster, which represents different styles of music from blues, to jazz to rhythm and blues, funk, Dixieland and gospel.

Among the homespun talent in this year's festival are: singer/songwriter Melissa Bel, drummer Joel Haynes and Kim Campagnaro of the band Groove Corporation.

Bel is an emerging artist who fits in well with Hebert's mission. "I like to think that my music has a little something for everyone," writes Bel on her website.

The 19-year-old has been singing since she was six years old. She has since traded in her bathroom mirror audience for larger ones in sports arenas, singing the national anthem, to sharing the stage with Juno Award winner Jack DeKyzer, performing in the festival circuit of late and releasing a self-titled CD with 10 original songs in 2007-08.

Burlington's Kim Campagnaro is the lead vocalist and conga player in Groove Corporation. He is joined on stage by a high-energy ensemble that includes Steve Hilbert on bass, lead guitarist Alex MacDougall, Lily Sazz on keyboards, Frank Vignanello on drums, Rob Gellner on trumpet, and Cole Benjamin and Pete McFarland on saxophones. Festival-goers will be privy to the funk, rhythm and blues, groove and soul sounds from the band's latest album of original songs called, *Record Profits*.

Homegrown talent, drummer Joel Haynes is a popular draw at the Burlington festival. Playing and studying drums since age seven, he has progressed to playing with some of the finest jazz artists in Canada. Haynes has performed at several major jazz festivals in North America, South America, the Caribbean, and Europe, and for popular musical theatrical shows such as: *Cats*, *Urinetown*, *The Rat Pack*, and *West Side Story*. In March 2009, he was nominated as drummer of the year in the National Jazz Awards.



Emerging artist singer/song writer Melissa Bel.



Singer Frank D'Angelo



Guitarist of the Year and composer Johannes Linstead.

"It's our theme, our purpose to enjoy music and feel the good vibes of love and peace in Burlington," said Hebert who expects to double the crowd attending Friday afternoon's United Way Seniors' Day.

Last year, more than 700 gathered under the tent in Spencer Smith Park. This year a \$50 ticket buys a sit-down Italy-inspired lunch at 12:45 p. m. and is followed by two shows, featuring Bill King and the Divas and jazz singer Suzanne Ramsay.

"I want this to be the prominent seniors event in Halton," said Hebert.

And talk about fringe benefits. Those who attend the free event will take home a complimentary energy (and money) saving kit valued at \$35, courtesy of Union Gas.

It's in keeping with the holistic bent of the festival. Using music as the lure, Hebert hopes to inspire attendees to eat well and live well and, therefore, do well by the planet.

A living green energy conservation symposium, holistic expo and healthy food fare are among the festival's attractions as well as a licensed patio pub, kids' play zone, arts and crafts showcase and commercial promenade.

"I use this festival as a platform to gather people, as an opportunity to get the word out about peace, community and the environment on a positive level," said Hebert.

With all of this talent on board, Hebert is hoping for a sunny weekend July 17-19, as the past three out of five years of the festival it has been doused with rain.

But with indomitable optimism, he refuses to let that prospect dampen his spirits for this year's event.

"I love this city and the people here that make this festival happen and those who simply love music," he added.

For more information log on to [www.burlingtonjazzbluesfestival.ca](http://www.burlingtonjazzbluesfestival.ca) .

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