

PRESS RELEASE
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2021 FESTIVAL ANNOUNCEMENT

May 1, 2021 – WATERLOO, ON – It is with deep disappointment that the Board of Directors of the Sun Life UpTown Waterloo Jazz Festival (UWJF) announce the cancellation of the 2021 Festival. The Festival is usually held annually in July and event organizers were hopeful that conditions would be safe enough to hold some type of live event.

“We knew there was no way we could hold our Festival this year in its usual form at City Hall,” said Jackie White, Co-President and Education & Outreach Director of the Festival. “So, we have been working with Bingemans to develop a drive-in format that would permit a safe, live, music experience for our community to enjoy. Unfortunately, under current restrictions, a drive-in event is not possible.”

It takes time to put a quality music festival together and the event organizers felt they weren’t able to put all the elements in place for 2021. “A lot goes into planning our event,” said Cheryl Ewing, General Manager of UWJF. “There are artist contracts to negotiate and sign, a production company to hire, equipment rental to arrange, sponsors to attract and agreements to set up, vendors to find and set up, other onsite support to finalize and volunteers to organize,” she explained. “We have reached the point where it is not possible to organize a high quality festival and current restrictions do not allow the drive-in alternative we were hoping to use.”

“With the help of Mark Bingeman and his team, we thought we had found a creative way to have a safe, live, music event this year,” said Steve Joyce, Co-President and Media Director. “While progress with vaccinations is promising, we do not know when it will be safe to proceed. We support the decisions of our leaders and we continue to follow Public Health guidelines. Our primary focus is always on the safety of our community, volunteers and the artists,” he said.

“There are no words to properly express our disappointment,” added Mr. Joyce. “All we can say is our next festival will be a huge celebration of music and community, whenever that can be safely held. It will be a party!”

The Festival remains committed to keeping the arts sector in Waterloo Region and Canada alive. UWJF recently announced the *Early Career Stage Mentoring Program for Musicians*, which is a new online program to help musicians develop business skills to thrive in the music industry.

UWJF is in touch with other festivals of various sizes and disciplines from across Canada, working to find ways to support each other and the sector and to make certain that when communities can gather in large groups again, they will have the knowledge and skills to put on a safe, live, music experience.

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The Sun Life UpTown Waterloo Jazz Festival is a not-for-profit organization run by local volunteers which has presented the Jazz Festival featuring world class Canadian, local and international performers in the City every year (with the exception of 2020 and 2021) since 1993. The Festival is free and attracts over 20,000 fans during the three-day event.

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