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> Studio Bell, Home of the National Music Centre Soft Launch, Gets Rock Star Start



Bob Ezrin, Buffy Sainte-Marie, inductee Burton Cummings and Tom Cochrane. Photo credit: Brandon Wallis

Studio Bell, Home of the National Music Centre Soft Launch, Gets Rock Star Start

🕒 Apr 04, 2016 by Leyland Bradley 💬 0 (/articles/2016/04/04/studio-bell-home-national-music-centre-soft-launch-gets-rock-star-start#disqus_thread)

Eyes and ears have been drawn to the new building construction at the corner of 4th Street and 9th Ave downtown Calgary since breaking ground in 2013. With its commitment to finally giving Canada a place to call home for music, Studio Bell, home of the National Music Centre (NMC), opened its doors for one night on Friday, April 1, offering delegates, industry professionals, and other movers and shakers the chance to catch a glimpse of things to come at this year's Junos Welcome Reception presented by The East Village.

The building—much of it still under construction on the inside—was the site of the Juno Chairman's Reception earlier in the day, where a humbled Burton Cummings placed his name plaque on the wall of the Halls of Fame gallery as this year's Canadian Music Hall of Fame inductee. Cummings is also the first inductee to place his plaque on the wall gallery at Studio Bell.



Burton with Juno CEO/President Allan Reid placing the first plaque in the new home of the Canadian Music Hall of Fame on Friday afternoon.. © Brandon Wallis

Among the group of attendees was Alberta Premier Rachel Notley, former inductees Buffy Sainte-Marie (1995), Bob Ezrin (2004), and Tom Cochrane (2003), as well as Andrew Mosker, President and CEO of NMC. Mosker said watching Cummings place his name plaque on the wall was 'very emotional'.

“(Burton Cummings) is a very modest person. All of this praise is being showered on him and he treats it very

seriously with great respect.

“A lot of those people around him, his first manager, his agent, his former record label, these are people who have been supporting his career for 30 years. It’s emotional for a lot of people.

Continuing, Mosker said: “From our perspective, as music fans, now that we’ve finally got a place to recognize our artists in this country, in a place as great as this, the music that this country has created, coupled with the international quality of this building, to me, are meant for each other.”

Located on the 5th level of the new building, the galleries highlight the important contributions of inductees from the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame Collection, the Canadian Songwriter’s Hall of Fame, and the Canadian Music Hall of Fame.

Cummings’ official induction took place Sunday, April 3rd during the Juno Awards Broadcast.

From the Chairman’s Reception to the Welcome Reception, Studio Bell transitioned from a place of celebration to a place of discovery as guests were invited to explore the Halls of Fame later that evening during the annual’s Welcome Reception.

Although only partially finished—there’s hope for an artifact from Cummings to display in the room—the Halls of Fame gallery sets a precedent for future Studio Bell exhibitions, offering a sneak peek of the kind of dedicated storytelling guests can expect to see in July when doors open to the public.

Adam Fox, NMC’s Director of Programs said the process of obtaining artifacts from an artist to display in the Halls of Fame gallery is “really down to the artist.”

“Getting their artifacts that help contextualize the music that they’ve written, that helps us tell their story; it helps connect people to the artists legacy,” says NMC’s Director of Programs, Adam Fox.

“We just want to let them know about the opportunity that we have here to help tell their story.

“We’re here. We just want artists to know that we’re here.”

Upon entry to the Welcome Reception, guests were treated to the stylistic spinnings of DJ Pete Emes--of Calgary-based DJ duo Smalltown DJs--as they stepped through the main floor entrance and past a sea of people, a who’s-who of fellow industry folk, artists, and media.

The building’s interior is large and vast, with its canyon-like interior walls sloping vertically throughout the building’s five floors. Acoustics were important to the space, with the intent that music could be heard throughout the building no matter which room it was coming from. Music reaches and flows through the building rather than echoing against hard walls.

Drinks, hors d’oeuvres, and polite signage inviting guests to return to Studio Bell in July when the exhibitions are completed, were scattered across all floors. Some rooms were closed off, some were open, and some, like the Halls of Fame, were partially finished.

One such gallery is Soundscapes, which features a pastiche of iconic Canadian landscapes and landmarks across its walls. When finished, this gallery will shine an audio/visual presentation onto the walls, blending the sounds of iconic Canadian music with the topography of Canadian places.

“The intention here is to talk about the diversity of Canada’s places. Not only topographically or demographically or culturally. It’s to explore the connections and cultural expressions that these places have to the landscape”, said Fox about Soundscapes.

A Calgary Folk Fest favourite, Eya-Hey Nakoda, a powwow group from the Stoney Reserve of Morley, AB, provided entertainment for the evening with a short dance and drumbeat session in the building’s main floor. An audible gasp could be heard from guests when the first strike was made onto the drum.

Attendance soon swelled as the evening progressed, with people mingling on stairs and standing shoulder-to-shoulder clutching drinks. When the food and drinks started to evaporate and the slow-down was in progress, the crowd began to thin, as guests were now free to venture out into the city.

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Leyland Bradley

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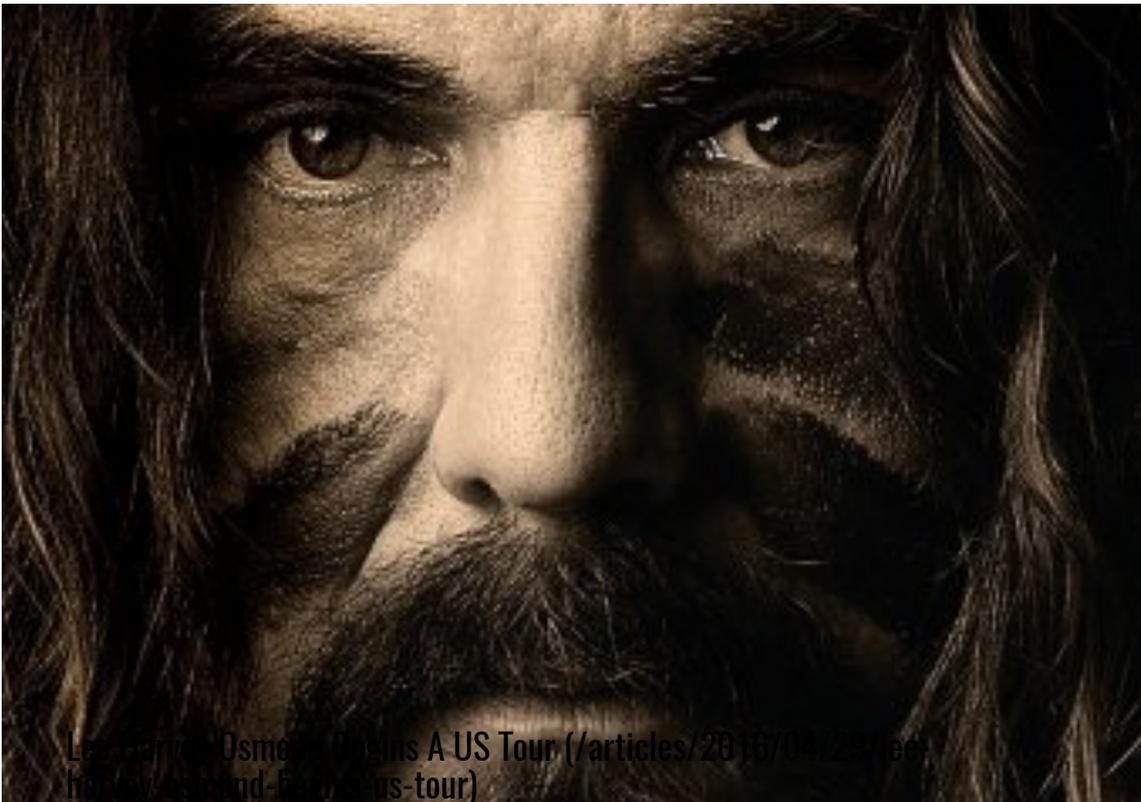
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