



CANADIAN NATIONAL EXHIBITION
AUG 21 TO SEPT 7 | 2026
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CNE Teases a “Boombastic” Summer Concert Line-Up Featuring Reggae Superstar SHAGGY; along with Star-Studded Carousel of Canadian Headliners from Rock Icon TOM COCHRANE to Electropop Sensation LIGHTS – and More!

CNE Partners with Billboard Canada and Rolling Stone Canada to Launch the Bell SOUNDSTAGE at the Bandshell; Announces First Round of Performers

Toronto, ON (April 30, 2026) – Summer music season is heating up and will soon be sizzling come August when the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) gets underway with what is shaping up to be one of its most electrifying concert billings to-date. CNE organizers have just dropped the first set of headliners who will be performing during the iconic 18-day fair that includes the likes of Grammy-winning Chicago rapper **Lupe Fiasco** and global reggae-pop hitmaker **Shaggy**, as well as definitive Canadian artists whose songs such as “Life is a Highway,” and “Highway of Heroes,” have shaped generations of music lovers. Among the Canadian headliners announced is eight-time JUNO-winning rock icon and Canadian Music Hall of Fame Inductee **Tom Cochrane**; one of Canada’s most successful rock bands **The Trews**; platinum-selling singer songwriter and Billboard Canada’s inaugural 2025 Visionary Award recipient, **Lights**; and this year’s JUNO Metal/Hard Music Album of the Year nominees, **Silverstein**.

More artists will be announced in the coming months to round out the CNE’s concert line-up across its five music stages including the newly added **NXNE Stage** that will showcase breakout artists on the cusp of stardom, in partnership with the NXNE Music Festival & Conference; and the CNE Bandshell stage that is being renamed the **Bell SOUNDSTAGE at the Bandshell**, in partnership with Billboard Canada and Rolling Stone Canada. These landmark partnerships will amplify the CNE’s music programming for years to come, and with plans to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the Bandshell – 2026 is going to be the Year of Music at the CNE.

“The Bandshell has been the heartbeat of Canadian music for 90 years. Nine decades of artists, genres, and generations, all on this one stage,” says Mark Holland, CNE CEO. “This summer, we’re not just celebrating that legacy, we’re expanding it. Partnering with Billboard Canada and Rolling Stone Canada to reimagine what this stage means is how we ensure music becomes an even bigger part of what the CNE means to Canadians. We can’t wait to welcome fans back to the grounds.”

“SOUNDSTAGE is a future-facing cultural platform launched by ArtsHouse Media Group (AMG), designed to connect live experiences, culture, and music discovery through premium physical venues and large-scale stages,” says Mo Ghoneim, AMG Founder. “From the opening of our flagship SOUNDSTAGE venue in Toronto to the launch of the Bell SOUNDSTAGE at the Canadian National Exhibition in partnership with Billboard Canada and Rolling Stone Canada, we’re redefining the live music experience for the next generation while honouring the rich legacy of the Bandshell that helped shape it.”

All concerts are free with CNE admission. Advance ticket discounts are on sale now with savings up to 35% if purchased until August 20 at www.TheEx.com/tickets. New this year for music lovers, the CNE is offering a Front Row VIP Experience add-on option to their admission ticket with dynamic pricing that includes reserved front of stage viewing area of the Bell SOUNDSTAGE at the Bandshell, access to the VIP Lounge and amenities, a dedicated VIP bar and complimentary drink ticket.

The 2026 Canadian National Exhibition runs from August 21 to September 7. Stay tuned for more music announcements!

Bell SOUNDSTAGE at the Bandshell – 2026 First Round of Performers:

Opening Day - Friday, August 21: LUPE FIASCO - Wasalu Muhammad Jaco, better known by his stage name **Lupe Fiasco**, is a Chicago-born, Grammy award-winning American rapper, record producer, entrepreneur, and community advocate. Lupe emerged onto the scene 20 years ago with his critically acclaimed debut album, *Food & Liquor* (2006), earning him multiple Grammy nominations that quickly established him as one of hip-hop’s most distinct voices. Building on the momentum of his early success, his later albums garnered three Platinum singles,

three RIAA Gold Certifications, 12 Grammy nominations and a Grammy Award for his single, “Daydreamin’” (2008) featuring Jill Scott. Lupe’s other works, *“Tetsuo & Youth”* (2015) and *“DROGAS Wave”* (2018), pushed artistic boundaries and showcased his intricate lyricism, complex storytelling, and socially conscious themes.

Saturday, August 22: LIGHTS - As a singer, songwriter, producer, instrumentalist, comic book author, and DJ, Lights is a multi-talented force of nature. Her music blurs the lines between genres, such as indie, alternative, and dance. Lights has sold out tours globally, making headlines from Coachella to Comic-Con, and collaborating with artists like Travis Barker, deadmau5, Kaskade, Illenium, Steve Aoki, and Mike Shinoda of Linkin Park. Her new era in support of her latest albums, *A6* and *A6EXTENDED*, has her performing around the world with the Come Get Your Girl headline tour.

Sunday, August 23: SHAGGY - Born Orville Richard Burrell in Kingston, Jamaica, Shaggy rose to fame with his pioneering record “Oh Carolina” in 1993 and later with culture-shifting smashes such as “Boombastic” (1995), “In the Summertime” (1995), “Angel” (2000), and the iconic tune “It Wasn’t Me” in 2000. Shaggy’s recent projects include his Grammy-winning joint-album with Sting on “44/876” (2018), his worldwide dance floor banger “Go Down Deh” with Spice and “Hot Shot 2020” (2020). His single “Banana” (2020) with Conkarah, which he produced and co-wrote, earned over 2 billion digital streams through the viral #BananaDrop challenge. As the only Diamond-selling dancehall artist in music history, Shaggy has sold more than 40 million album units to date, with multiple Billboard Hot 100 hits and seven albums on the Billboard 200. He is the top-selling, living Jamaican artist of all time. His new album *Lottery* featuring duets with Sting, Aidonia, Robin Thicke and Akon, is set to be released May 15th.

Thursday, August 27: THE TREWS - As true rock ‘n’ roll heavyweights, The Trews have been a major force in the music industry. Earning 20 Top Ten Rock Radio singles, multiple Gold & Platinum certified albums, an Independent Music Award, and numerous JUNO Award nominations throughout their career, they have become one of Canada’s most successful rock bands of the past decade. Debuting with their 2003 full-length album *House of Ill Fame* (2003), The Trews took over Canadian radio with their iconic hit “Not Ready to Go” (2003). After playing thousands of shows worldwide on their own and as support for artists like The Rolling Stones, KISS, Guns ‘n’ Roses, Aerosmith, Bruce Springsteen and more, the group is keeping it fresh with their newest album, *The Bloody Light* (2025), featuring the number one single “The Breakdown” released in October of last year.

Thursday, September 3: SILVERSTEIN - Formed in Ontario, Silverstein has solidified their spot as a defining force in Canadian rock, rising from underground roots to the top of the emo and post-hardcore genre. After more than 25 years in the industry, Silverstein is recognized as one of the most prolific rock and metal artists of the 21st century. With over one billion streams, three JUNO nominations, and two Gold Records, Silverstein shows no signs of slowing down. Classics like “My Heroine” (2005), “Smile in Your Sleep” (2005) and “The Afterglow” (2017) have become Silverstein anthems for generations of devoted fans, and in 2025, the group expanded their catalogue with two full-length albums - *Antibloom* and *Pink Moon*.

Saturday, September 5: TOM COCHRANE - Starting as a folk-based singer/songwriter, Tom Cochrane began his illustrious career playing the coffeehouses of Toronto’s Yorkville scene in the early ‘70s. In 1978, Cochrane joined the rock group Red Rider— creating nine albums with hits like “Lunatic Fringe” (1981), “Human Race” (1983), “Boy Inside the Man” (1986), and the chart-topper, “Big League” (1988). Launching his solo career with the release of the famous record “Life Is a Highway” (1991), Cochrane sold more than seven million copies worldwide, hitting certified Diamond status and receiving a Grammy nomination. As a Canadian Music Hall of Fame inductee, Cochrane has won eight JUNO Awards throughout his career. His place as a Canadian music icon is honoured with a star on Canada’s Walk of Fame and a 322km section of the Manitoba provincial highway named in tribute: *Tom Cochrane’s Life Is a Highway*.