



Lights On Stratford 2021 Winter Festival of Lights to Showcase North American Premiere of Sky Castle

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(Stratford, ON) Launched as an economic recovery initiative as 2020 was dimmed by the pandemic, the Lights On Stratford annual winter festival will once again transform Stratford's heritage downtown core and park system with luminous art and interactive light installations.

The Lights On Stratford 2021 theme is JOURNEY – “*an act of traveling from one place to another.*” As we find safe ways to emerge from the constraints of having to stay home, missing our friends, family or favourite places; the sense of wonder and delight experienced within a journey will be celebrated anew. This year, Lights On Stratford brings the adventure of travel to the public spaces of Stratford by showcasing exhibits of light that explore motion, transportation, worldly and other-worldly landmarks.

Market Square will be brought to life with Sky Castle - a dreamy, interactive sound and light installation, featuring a cluster of inflatable arches that span in colourful symphony across the square. As visitors move through the arches, their movement powers and expands the melodic xylophone soundscape stimulating colour changes in each arch. Light, colour and music have been orchestrated to evoke the joy and hope that

rainbows bring after every storm. As more people join the journey, the contemporary score rises in intensity creating a lush soundscape that is different every night as it responds to the flow and fluctuations of people passing through.

The Sky Castle story was developed by Australian studio ENESS during pandemic lockdown as an expression of freedom from isolation and the positive clear skies that come after difficult times. Sky Castle was launched in Melbourne and has travelled to Shenzhen and Hong Kong. It will now journey all the way from Australia to Canada for its North American premiere at Lights On Stratford.

“We’re absolutely thrilled to bring this international interactive public art installation to Stratford this winter,” says Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford and Festival Director of Lights On Stratford. “Sky Castle has a huge footprint of 400 square metres, almost as if it was designed specifically to perfectly fill Market Square, and it looks equally beautiful during the day. With twenty arches each 5 metres high, interactive lights and sounds, this is an experience and spectacle that will bring joy and wonder to our community and visitors.”

The Festival also brings back Made-in-Stratford light displays which will include the Shakespearean Gardens of a 1,000 Lights, and Journey to the Stars which transforms Tom Patterson Island into an interstellar journey of light. As in 2020, storefronts and locations throughout the City will also participate with unique light displays and experiences.

Stratford is home to some of the world’s best artists, lighting designers, props builders and creative minds. Lights On Stratford supports and collaborates with these artists to harness this precious resource of local talent, crafting a truly unique experience that can’t be found anywhere else.

“One of the silver linings from this incredibly challenging pandemic is a collective re-imagining of our City as a 4-season year-round cultural destination. Stratford has a deserved stellar reputation for visitors during the summer and I can’t wait for them to experience Stratford in a different light this winter.”

Free to the public and designed to be safely enjoyed with physical distancing and on-site staff, Lights On Stratford will brighten up this winter starting December 17th, 2021 through to January 28th, 2022.

More information is available at lightsonstratford.ca.

- 30 -

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