

Soul II—With a Little Help from Our Friends!

The Singers are working hard to do justice to the inspiring and joyous music to be performed at *Soul II: Roots & Rights*—especially those of us who were around for but sort of “missed” the sixties.

Rest assured, though, our professional, award-winning guest artists will keep us in the groove. Aadin Church and Divine Brown are coming to town to help us out. Both have deep roots in gospel and R&B music.

Today, Aadin Church has had many career highlights that go beyond the parameters of his beginnings in gospel music. He has performed around the world and with some of the industry’s best: Patti Labelle, Mariah Carey, and Deborah Cox, for example. He has appeared in hit Broadway productions such as Disney’s *The Little Mermaid*, *The Lion King*, *Miss Saigon*, *Dreamgirls*, and *The Buddy Holly Story*, and most recently, in *Ragtime* and *Guys and Dolls* at the Shaw Festival.



And he has acting “creds” that don’t involve singing. In 2016-2017, he received great reviews in Mary Vingoe’s play *Refuge*, about Canadian immigration policies. “A brilliant Aadin Church,” raved the *Vancouver Sun* about his portrayal of Mebrahtu.

Still, gospel is dear to his heart. “It shows us how people survived the worst of times and celebrated the best of times” (*Brampton Guardian*, 2011).

And where to start with Divine Brown? She has made it in the top-40 world with hit singles such as “Old Skool Love,” “Lay It On the Line,” and “Sunglasses.” Indeed, “Old Skool Love” was ranked as one of the top-10 best Canadian R&B songs ever by the CBC’s *Marvin’s Room*. Watch it below!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bz6YQLhrmOo>





Brown's second album, *The Love Chronicles*, cemented her success as an R&B singer by winning the Juno Award for "Best R&B Album" and reaching the top 15 on the 2010 U.S. Billboard Dance Chart.

And Brown's got theatre credits as well. For example, she co-starred in Raul Bhaneja's *Life, Death and the Blues*. Like Church, Brown received wonderful reviews. "The charming Brown brings down the house, especially with her big gospel number," writes J. Kelly Nestruck of *The Globe and Mail*. "Bhaneja and Brown really do make divine music when they collaborate"—the pun was intended, according to Louis B. Hobson of the *Calgary Herald*. "They send chills

up your spine." This one is perhaps my favourite review: As for Brown, "you see the difference between acting and being. She is effortless and sublime, making every note count" (Richard Ouzounian, *Toronto Star*).