



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Tuesday, December 10, 2024**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Barrie will ring in 2025 with Madeline Merlo as headliner  
*Sonshine and Broccoli return as children's performer***

(Barrie, ON) – Downtown Barrie is once again the place to be to ring in the New Year. This year's free, family-friendly Downtown Countdown celebration on December 31 will include an amazing line-up with a country twist featuring Madeline Merlo, Sonshine and Broccoli as the children's performer, and local artist Kyle Wauchope.

"The Downtown Countdown is such a fantastic way to ring in the New Year—it really brings our city's downtown to life with fun for the whole family," said Mayor Alex Nuttall. "This memorable event has something for everyone including an exciting line-up of entertainment, a variety of family activities, and the grand finale, a spectacular fireworks display. It's the perfect way to come together to welcome 2025!"

Since 1998, the Downtown Countdown has brought thousands from near and far together to celebrate the arrival of the new year at Barrie City Hall. The festivities start at 6 p.m. In addition to the musical performances, the Downtown Countdown celebration will include skating, family activities, roaming buskers, and two fireworks shows – the first following the children's show and the second at midnight.

Every year, the City of Barrie invites local bands to submit for the opportunity to perform on the Downtown Countdown stage. From over 35 submissions, Kyle Wauchope was selected to perform with his band at this year's event.

Barrie Transit bus service will be free on New Year's Eve starting at 5 p.m. with hourly service extended to 3 a.m. Extended schedules can be found on [myridebarrie.ca](http://myridebarrie.ca).

The Downtown Countdown is sponsored by Pure Country 106, Bounce Radio 104.1, CTV Barrie, Mattamy Homes, and South Barrie Community built by Aspenridge, Countrywide, Regal Crest, and Remington Homes.

For more information and announcements to come, visit [barrie.ca/DowntownCountdown](http://barrie.ca/DowntownCountdown).

About the performers:

- **Madeline Merlo** is a rising country star with an old soul and a new school style. After signing a record deal at 18, Merlo earned the CCMA Rising Star award in 2015, competed on Season 2 of songwriting reality series *Songland* with *Champagne Night* becoming a Platinum-certified No. 1 for Lady A, she was named to CMT Next Women of Country class of 2024, and her country/funk and soul single "*It Didn't*" has more than 10 million Spotify streams. Merlo's new project *ONE HOUSE DOWN (from the girl next door)*, including single *Broken Heart Thing* (feat. Dustin Lynch), is her most emotionally insightful project yet and finds her offering a



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message of encouragement to her younger self – and all those who feel a little different.  
[www.madelinemerlo.com](http://www.madelinemerlo.com).

- For 20 years, families across Canada have been singing and dancing along with **Sonshine and Broccoli**, the Juno-nominated duo from Toronto who know how important it is for children to have music they can call their own. With infectious energy and interactive performances, Lisa Sonshine and Brock Burford have always made their fans feel like part of the family. Having met in the Musical Theatre program at Sheridan College, the two have become leaders on Canada's music scene for children, releasing several albums, performing at events across the country, appearing on both local and national television and radio, and opening for the likes of Fred Penner. With six albums, Sonshine and Broccoli continue to share music that builds confidence, celebrates differences, and encourages kids to allow their own unique star to shine. <https://www.sonshineandbroccoli.com/>
- It's been just over 2 years since **Kyle Wauchope** released his first single "*NOT EVEN*", and he has shown no signs of slowing down. Having started his solo career in 2022, Kyle has had over 200 gigs while keeping his day job. Having been an audience member for numerous Downtown Countdowns, he cannot wait to have his shot at rocking Barrie into the new year. It's not often Kyle performs his music with a full band, but audiences are in for a treat as he works towards bigger opportunities in 2025. <https://kylewauchope.com/>

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