Mass Choir
With We Were Lovers, Summer Garnes and DJ Daniel Stone
The Fanus Stage (10551-82 Ave.)
Friday, Sept. 2 at 9 p.m.
$10 at yeolive.ca

For those of you who haven’t figured out what your last hurrah of the summer is going to be, Mass Choir is here for you with their release party for their latest album Circle. The Edmonton-based band has a reputation as one of the city’s best local music talents, and the group’s electronic dance beats bring with them a guarantee that you’ll be riveting all night. Make sure you show up with comfortable shoes, because with Mass Choir around, nobody is going to be sitting anywhere.

Movies on the Square
Churchill Square
Friday, Sept. 2-Sunday, Sept. 4 at 7:30 p.m.
Free

Remember the old days when people could kick back in their cars and take in a movie on the outdoor drive-in theatre? Thanks to Movies on the Square, those days are making a comeback — but instead of a car, bring your own lawn chair and house down for a blockbuster hit on a three-storey high inflatable screen right in the midst of Churchill Square. As for pre-movie activities, forget trailers and obnoxious advertising: instead, you’ll be treated to the ultimate outdoor movie experience with live entertainment, a live price giveaways, on-site concessions and pre-movie short films. But these are all just perks — however, everyone was sold from the word “free.”

Symphony Under the Sky 2011
Featuring the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Hurlin
Wetaskiwin Park Heritage Amphitheatre (9930 82 Ave.)
Friday, Sept. 2-Monday, Sept. 5
$20 and up at symphonyedmonton.com

Wrapping up a summer of festivals is Symphony Under the Sky, an outdoor orchestral music experience. Now, I know what some of you are thinking: classical music? No thanks. But don’t be deceived by the genre. There’s more to this weekend than Mannes, Handel and Brahms. If the classical treasures aren’t your thing, the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra also takes on a lighter sound later in the weekend with Broadway and Hollywood favourites. But cut the blanket and lawn chairs, as this will be your last chance to catch some live performances under the stars before the school semester — and winter temperatures — begin to set in.

SONIC Boom 2011 Afterparty
Featuring Sister Grey, White Lightning, The Weekend Kids and more
The Starlite Room (10103-102 St.)
Saturday, Sept. 4 at 11 p.m.
Free with Sonic Boom passes or $5 at the door

You’ve just partied your heart out at Sonic Boom 2011, and you’re still not ready for the weekend to end. On the other hand, maybe you were among the lucky few who couldn’t afford tickets to Sonic Boom in the first place. In case you’re the former, I have good news: the party isn’t over, it’s just changing locations. For the latter, this is your chance to experience a small part of the annual rock festival, featuring a whole other set of performances by former Sonic Band members of the Month.

Pranks and politics with Hollerado

Whether they’re distributing their debut album in a plastic bag of goodies or crafting a website out of hand-drawn Sharpie cartoons, Hollerado has a different way of operating. Working to promote themselves across Canada since 2007, the group’s do-it-yourself ethic has earned them considerable buzz, with critics praising their performances of “beer-soaked rock.”

“Just be descriptive to the clothes at the end of the set, or something,” bassist Dean Baxter laugh. “I got that, and I could see how that would translate to the overall scene of the night. I don’t want to say we’re all about that, but we wouldn’t deny it as a characteristic.”

The power pop four-piece play music fit for a raucous bar crowd, but the band is comfortable performing anywhere the road happens to take them. This summer marks one of the first breaks Baxter and his bandmates have had after three years of relentless cross-country touring, and when they aren’t on stage, the guys of Hollerado are also avid bookers. But this fall, they’re packing the tour van up with a purpose, scheduling a series of dates they’re calling the “Meet the Mayor” tour. They’re currently working on setting up meetings with the mayor of every city they visit in order to talk about issues in the local arts community, and will also be encouraging people in each town to submit their own questions for the mayor.

“Obviously we’ve got too in tune with what’s going on with the youth culture and the whole music and art scene in each city, but we’ll hopefully get some involvement from all the kids out there — get the questions that they want answered put in front of each mayor,” Baxter says.

“Hopefully we’ll raise an awareness to the surrounding politics of each community,” he continues. “I think a lot of kids — a lot of people in our generation, anyway — have felt that they don’t really have a voice, which is kind of weird in a democracy to feel that way. So hopefully, this will encourage people to talk to their representatives whenever they feel they need to.”

“We’re still trying to keep things as unconventional as possible, and hopefully it continues to be that way for the remainder of our career.”

TEEN BAXTER
BROOKE SELWYN

Along with their determination to educate themselves about municipal issues across the country, Hollerado has been gaining international momentum as well. In 2009, the band had the chance to take a brief tour of China as Canadian music delegates through a program aimed at promoting cultural exchange between the countries’ music markets.

“The shows were very interesting — they were not set up for live rock concerts the way that Canada, the United States, Europe or any countries that have experienced rock music for the last few decades are,” Baxter says. “There were some shows where the amps were carried to by Rickshaw from the next town over, and it between the two towns was just a mountain range or something, and it would just be an old man with a cart and biggs attached to a horse. But the kids loved it. It was like they’d never seen it before, and I’m sure most of them hadn’t. They just went absolutely wild every time... It never got old.”

From Manitoki, Ont., the guys of Hollerado grew up on the same small town street together, and their combined history still shines through. Pranks and outrageous bets are a common pastime for Baxter and his bandmates, entertain themselves while on tour, and sometimes leading to some unintended amusement for the people they meet on the road as well.

(Their drummer) Jake (Boyd) is six foot whatever, long brown hair. (And) Chris, for whatever reason before we went on the trip, he had lost a bet and shaved strips in his legs. So he had these prominent St. Sacca stripes going down one of his legs, as I think that caught a lot of people’s eyes. As it would here, so I’m sure it was probably plenty over there.

“I forget what the context (of the bet) was,” he continues. “I’m sure it was something like, you know, how many slices of pizza can you eat? And he fell short by one or whatever, and then he had stripes in his legs.”

Partly a group of young guys goofing off together, and partly a group of musicians serious about politics, Hollerado isn’t content to do anything the same way twice — whatever bizarre album-marketing scheme or tour concept they cook up next is entirely up to chance.

“We’re still trying to keep things as unconventional as possible, and hopefully it continues to be that way for the remainder of our career,” Baxter says.

“We’re a little bit of adrenaline junkies in that we want to be on the forefront of new and exciting, no matter what it is — music or anything in our day-to-day lives. Clips is boring.”