

North Perth shows its culture once again during Culture Days

The last Saturday in September was the occasion of an expanded Culture Days display in the Anglican Church hall. This federally



Artist Maria Martens

mandated programme is designed to engage the artistic community with the public by means of free and interactive initiatives in a wide, unlimited variety of disciplines.

New and returning artists exhibited drawings, water colour and other paintings, and photography, with several artists demonstrating their talents. A welcome new exhibit was the entry from the LDSS art students, which showed a large collection in various mediums – painting, drawing, masks, and carving. The many techniques were imaginative, abstract and colourful. A display of stained glass was featured in another exhibit with beautiful window panels and sun catchers.

The Creative Needle Club, first time exhibitors, added a large and brightly patterned display. There were several quilts shown of various types and sizes, as well as place mats, cushion covers, jackets, knitting, pot holders, and

scarves. Lovely designs and colour combinations were made with meticulous skill.

Another new exhibitor was David Long with his display of beautiful wood carvings of birds, realistically painted. He also showed a set of whimsical carved figures, a miniature foursome of golfers.

Fred Haight and a few of his music students provided entertainment. The young guitar players showed great skill and competence, with Fred's guitar added as backup.

The North Perth Players added another new dimension to the Culture Days display. This amateur dramatic group exhibited colourful costumes and props, and made use of the church hall stage to rehearse scenes for an upcoming production.

An assortment of delicious sandwiches and sweets was provided by Joyce King for lunch, along with coffee, tea and cold drinks.

Culture Days provides an oppor-



Creative Stitchery Display

tunity for a wide variety of local artists to show their work, to interact with each other and to learn from each other. The North Perth community can be proud of the

depth and variety of artistic talent it has, and will hopefully continue to foster and encourage new artists in all mediums.

Art Squared proves to be a well contributed and received opportunity

Art Squared proves to be a well contributed and received opportunity. The North Perth Arts and Culture Council was highly successful in hosting its first annual Art2 Art Show. We were very honoured to highlight the exceptional talent of local artists. The quality and diversity of these submissions were impressive. Artists were encouraged to 'think outside of the box' and create a piece of 2-D art mounted on a 12 x 12 backing or a 3-D sculpture that could fit into one square foot. This creative objective allowed artists to explore any mediums and challenged them to consider their perspective into the art making process. We look forward to seeing more innovative creations in the upcoming 2015 Art Show. Be there or be square!



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Soldiers of Song

Sat, Apr 25, 2015 8:00 p.m.



In late 2013 *Soldiers of Song – The Story of The Dumbells* made its debut at Hugh's Room in Toronto. The cast played to an audience filled with descendants of the original members of The Dumbells – a World War 1 concert party.

A member of the North Perth Arts and Culture Council had the privilege of attending this first showing. The people of Listowel have always taken a keen interest in their participation in and contribution to the World Wars. Therefore, *Soldiers of Song* seemed like a great presentation to bring to the community. In partnership with the Listowel Legion Branch 259 and the Air Cadets, this evening of song, skits and story telling is sure to be enjoyed by people of all ages.

Whistle along to “That ever-loving Dumbell Rag”

If nationhood was won on the crest of Vimy Ridge, it was The Dumbells who provided the country with its earliest soundtrack. The soldier-entertainers' journey from Vimy to Vaudeville is now celebrated by award-winning author and two-time Juno Award-nominee Jason Wilson in the new musical-play *Soldiers of Song*. In it, Wilson is assisted by Canadian storyteller Lorne Brown, Toronto stage actors Jim Armstrong and Andrew Knowlton and some of Wilson's own band.

This highly-entertaining show celebrates the songs and stories of Canada's famous First World War Concert Party: The Dumbells. It is also the focus of Wilson's new book *Soldiers of Song: The Dumbells and Other Canadian Concert Parties of the First World War* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012). Both book and show will enlighten audiences on the story of The Dumbells and reimagine the musical fare of the famous comedy troupe founded on the Western Front.

Monty Python, *Wayne and Shuster*, *SCTV* and *Saturday Night Live* owe a lot to the Dumbells, who are considered the pioneers of sketch comedy. Formed by members of the Canadian army's Third Division—and named for the red dumbbell in the Division's emblem—The Dumbells bolstered troop morale during the First World War with live “concert parties” featuring irreverent humour that often skewered senior officers and the military system itself. After the war, the troupe regrouped and toured across Canada, as well as staged a run in London's West End and scored a hit on Broadway—the first Canadian production to do so. Forced to disband in 1932, The Dumbells reunited for concerts in 1939 and 1955.

Artist Spotlight

By Wendy van Leeuwan

Actor Andrew Knowlton's career in the theatre has often led him to roles in Shakespearean productions. He has appeared in a number of productions with the Humber River Shakespeare Company, as well as with several other outdoor summertime Shakespeare companies.

He was also a company member with Classical Theatre Project, which performed Shakespeare for high school students. He currently lives in Toronto with his wife, but has many family connections in the Listowel area, where his parents still reside. Andrew has a degree in acting from the University of Windsor and a diploma from the Moscow Art Theatre School in Russia. His performance as Orsino/Feste in Classical Theatre Project's *Twelfth Night* was nominated for a Dora Award (the Toronto equivalent of the Tony awards), and the production as a whole was nominated for an award as well.

Andrew is currently preparing to take a leading role in an upcoming production at the Listowel Legion, “*Soldiers of Song: A Tribute to The Dumbells*.” This is a tribute to a talented group of Canadian soldiers who performed Vaudeville-style acts for the troops on the western front during the First World War. After the war The Dumbells continued to tour and enjoyed national and international success. They became the predecessors of such comedy groups as *Wayne & Shuster*, *Kids in the Hall*, and *Royal Canadian Air Farce*. The *Soldiers of Song* production tells the personal stories of the soldier-performers, as well as recreating one of the many shows they gave to improve the morale of the men on the front lines.



Original members of the Dumbells

Music Director **Dr. Jason Wilson** (piano, vocals) is the well-known, two time Juno Award nominee, Toronto musician who has been described as “one of Toronto's music treasures”. His *Soldiers of Song* about The Dumbells (Wilfrid Laurier University Press) was published November, 2012. Another of his books is *Lord Stanley: The Man Behind the Cup*. Wilson's research has included works on Canadiana, pop culture, the First World War, hockey, immigration and, of course, music. His musical tours have taken him across Canada, the United States, Britain, and



Marcus Ali (saxophone, vocals) Born in Toronto to Trinidadian immigrants in 1974, Marcus is one of Canada's preeminent saxophonists. A mainstay in Jason Wilson's band since 2000, this York University graduate has also recorded and performed with various other acts including: Matt Dusk, Tomson Highway, the Ali Bros, and Mr. Something Something.

Storyteller **Lorne Brown** is a singer of old songs and a teller of old tales. A co-founder of Storytelling Toronto, his 3-CD album “Lorne Brown – A Link in the Chain” was the Storytellers of Canada/Conteurs du Canada StorySave CD of 2011. Lorne's dad staged The Dumbells in France while on active duty as a stretcher-bearer in the Queen's Field Ambulance. The Dumbells have been a part of Lorne's family lore ever since.



Jim Armstrong (actor) holds a BFA in acting from the University of Windsor. Outside of the theatre, Jim has been seen angrily trying to board a streetcar in a recent episode of *The Murdoch Mysteries*, being hacked to death in the independent film *The Killer God*, and most recently dancing around dressed as a giant M&M (yellow, to be precise) in Leicester Square, London.



Patrice Barbanchon (trumpet, vocals) is a trumpeter, composer, and educator who has performed extensively across North America. Patrice has also been a full time member of the Toronto Jazz Orchestra since 2009, and is a current member of the Latin ensemble Conjunto Lacalu. Patrice has also had the pleasure of playing alongside musical greats such as Rob McConnell, Phil Nimmons and Guido Basso, and is currently a full time faculty member at Pickering College.

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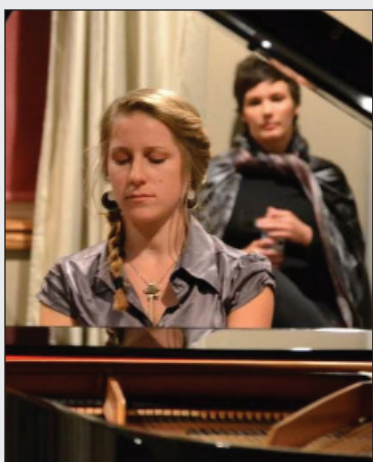
Becky Reesor produces a well received eclectic music series

Collaboration is a sought trait in today's world and collaboration was the name of the game in a 3-part music series produced by Becky Reesor.

Supported in part by the North Perth Arts and Culture Council, the series included a variety of local and areas artists in three different music styles. Classic and Contemporary Keys showed off the piano skills of Reesor and her former teacher, Agnes Marie Henderson.

The concert shared a variety of performing talents including singer Kathleen Skinner, actress Jessica Hamilton, and visual artist Claudette Martinez. Rock, Country, and that Banjo Guy brought the Legion to life with upcoming sensation Karli June and her band. Becky showed a different side of her keyboarding skills with Sammy Duke and "G" Harvey.

The third concert in the series produced by Becky Reesor played to a capacity audience at Hardwood Haven B&B in Listowel. The musical trio made



Becky Reesor performs one of her many classical pieces

up of Tom Cummings on vibraphone, John Wiebe on guitar, and Becky Reesor on keyboard and vocals presented a variety of musical selections that appealed to the audience in the intimate atmosphere of the grand reception room.

NPACC would like to thank Becky for her energy, talent and time in making this trio of worthwhile experiences possible.



Kathleen Skinner sings while accompanied by Agnes Marie Henderson.

Karli June sings with her band



5th Annual Kitchen Ceilidh has toes tapping once again

Our annual Paddyfest Ceilidh had a last minute change of performers. Due to a family death, "Kettle's On" were unable to entertain, but were able to put us in touch with Shane Cook and Brian Pickell as replacements.

Shane is a championship fiddler with a string of Canadian and American titles to his name, rated one of the top in the world. Brian is a composer and talented guitarist. Both are recording artists with international acclaim.

Together, these performers treated the audience to an informal, relaxed evening, as much like a jam session as a concert. Their music was from many sources and included compositions from both Brian and Shane, ancient Irish tunes, hornpipes and reels, as well as bluegrass, all with a Celtic flavour. Brian and Shane gave interesting and humorous background information about the music.

Shane's amazing talent on the violin was complemented by Brian on guitar, banjo and vocals. For a couple of numbers, Shane's feet provided percus-



Leslie Louvelle dances to the music of fiddler Shane Cook and guitarist Brian Pickell.

sion. Irish dancer Leslie Louvelle added another dimension to the entertainment with her graceful and spirited dancing. Leslie explained the difference between the soft shoe numbers that are supposed to be soundless, and the hard shoe dances that are to be as noisy as possible.

The enthusiastic audience, whose toes were tapping all evening, left with happy smiles.

5th Annual Amateur Photography Contest shows "The World Around Us"

The World Around Us encompasses the world of art, music, history and culture coming together from coast to coast. This year's theme encouraged artists to share the world we live in and to communicate their perspective in a photograph.

The North Perth Arts and Culture Council was honoured to host our annual contest to celebrate the creative vitality of our communities. There were various age categories as well as youth alphabet art categories.

Winners included: Rob Leach, first in 20-plus; Chloe Hemingway, first, second and third in 12-and-under; and Keira Schaefer, first in student alphabet. Pictured here is Leach's winning photo.



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