
ENTERTAINMENT LOCAL

Park hosts Sultans of String

By Steven Wagers, Sherwood Park News
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The Sultans of String will visit Sherwood Park for a concert at Festival Place on Friday, Oct. 11. Photo Supplied

The Sultans of String will swing by Strathcona County on Friday to serenade citizens with songs from their latest CD, *Symphony!*

Band leader and violinist Chris McKhool noted that the tour, which started on Sept. 21, gives them an opportunity to visit places all over the country while still allowing them to spend time at home with their families between shows. They have played in Sherwood Park before and McKhool added that they are looking forward to coming back to play at Festival Place.

“The folks there, throughout Alberta, are super friendly,” he said. “The Sherwood Park community, I remember that as being a really fun audience. We were actually playing in the (Qualico) Cafe Series, which I think they plan on it holding about 100, but they kept on bringing out more and more chairs. That was really fun, (that) there’s a little bit of excitement about us arriving, so that’s always a great thing. They were just really engaged and really friendly people.”

Also on the tour, McKhool said the band will be playing some educational shows by visiting schools and allowing the children to get up on stage to play some of the unique instruments from around the world.

“There’s a lot of kids who wouldn’t make it to a concert hall, whether it be for financial reasons or just not knowing if they would enjoy (it),” he said. “When you bring the experience to them, you can get an entire school community celebrating in a concert performance and it brings a really high energy and sense of fun to the whole event.”

As a world music band, the Sultans of String draw influence from many different kinds of music.

“We love to mix together all kinds of styles,” McKhool said. “Everything from Spanish rumba-flamenco to gypsy jazz from Eastern Europe, Cuban rhythms, Arabic rhythms, east coast Celtic and one of the fun things with Sultans of String is to throw it all into a big old musical blender and push Puree and see what comes out.”

As the title of their latest album would lead one to believe, the Sultans of String tossed a bit of symphony into the musical blender as well for the recordings.

“I grew up playing violin (and) I grew up playing in symphony orchestras, so I’m no stranger to that world,” explained McKhool. “I really love the symphony sound and I thought it would be a really interesting mix to (combine) the lushness, grandiosity and beauty of a symphony with these world music compositions of ours.”

This past year the band was also nominated for the Sirius XM Canadian Indie Award for World Group of the Year.

“The awards are fun, because they can help spread the word a little bit about our music,” McKhool said. “For us, I just think of it as a way to connect with more fans and have more opportunity for people to hear us.”

The group consists of Kevin Laliberte and Eddie Paton on guitar, Drew Birston on bass, Chendy Leon on Cuban percussion and McKhool.

The Sultans of String will play at Festival Place at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 11. Tickets are \$20 each and can be purchased by phoning the Festival Place box office at 780-449-3378 visiting the Festival Place website (www.festivalplace.ab.ca) or through Ticketmaster.

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