

entertainment

■ NIAGARA SCENE

Fiddler really does appeal to all ages



Lori Littleton
OUTTHERE

While some musicians try to claim their audiences range in age from three to 90, Chris McKhool's fans really do encompass several generations.

McKhool will perform for both his young audience and his more mature fans on Sunday as part of the free entertainment lineup during Folk Arts in the Park, which runs today until Sunday in Montebello Park.

McKhool will perform Fiddle Fire for children at 1 p.m., and with the more adult-minded Sultans of String at 7 p.m.

"(They are) really different audiences. They're polar opposites," he said during a phone interview. "The kids are all about the party and getting up on stage. With the adults, we try to up the musical energy to get them dancing.

"With kids' music, you have one or two chances to get the song working. Then, if it's not working, you have to pull it from the set. You know immediately if they're enjoying a particular song. With adults, it's a little trickier. Adults are more polite," he said, laughing.

McKhool first thought about becoming a children's entertainer while he was in university as a way of marrying his musical, songwriting and environmental passions.

"I had a eureka moment. I figured I could write songs for children about saving the planet. That was four CDs ago and it's been quite a ride," he said.

Over the past decade, McKhool has toured all over Canada, as well as the U.S., England, Cuba, Guatemala



Supplied Photo

The Sultans of String, featuring Chris McKhool, centre, are performing at 7 p.m. at Montebello Park on Sunday as part of Folk Arts in Park. Earlier in the day, McKhool will perform Fiddle Fire for children at the same venue.

and in Tibetan schools across the Indian Himalayas. He has also appeared on Mr. Dressup, YTV's Treehouse, TVOntario's Crawlspace and the CBC.

In 2005, he won the Green Toronto Award of Excellence and was a finalist for the Environment Canada Action Award.

His CDs include Earth, Seas & Air, Celebrate! Holidays of the Global Village, Turtle Island, and the 2008 release, Fiddle Fire!, which was nominated for a 2009 Juno Award for children's album of the year.

Fiddle Fire! combines a wide range of musical styles, from jazz and flamenco to funk and dance party music, McKhool said.

"The really fun part of (performing) is getting the kids involved and families involved," he said. "I bring all

your
weekend
entertainment, events, movies

kinds of percussion instruments from all over the world and the kids get up on stage and perform with us."

Joining McKhool, who plays fiddle and violin, on stage Sunday will be the Sultans of String — Kevin Laliberte and Eddie Paton on guitar, Drew Birston on bass and Cuban percussionist Chendy Leon.

The group released its debut album, Luna, in 2007, which they followed up with Yalla Yalla last year. The group's music features Spanish flamenco, Arabic folk, Cuban rhythms, jazz, classical and

French Manouche gypsy-jazz styles.

"There is so much incredible music that has been brought to Canada through immigration and we're trying to reflect the Canadian world music scene. We tell a lot of stories in the show to link the songs to issues," McKhool said.

For example, the song Luna tells the tale of an orca whale that got separated from its pod and appeared in the harbour of a small aboriginal village off Vancouver Island several years ago.

Sable Island, which appears on Yalla Yalla, is located about 200 kilometres off the east coast of Nova Scotia. Legend has it that a shipwreck 500 years ago, in which everyone perished, spared the horses onboard. Today, there are about 350 wild horses running around

the island, McKhool said.

"We really love discovering interesting stories of Canada and sharing them with people," he said.

Chris McKhool presents Fiddle Fire on Sunday, at 1 p.m., as part of the Folk Arts in the Park weekend concert series. He will also perform with the Sultans of String later the same day at 7 p.m. Entertainment runs tonight, Saturday and Sunday in Montebello Park, free of charge. For information, visit www.folk-arts.ca/Festival2009. For information on McKhool, visit www.fiddlename.com or www.sultansofstring.com.

The Lakeside Players' second production of its 2009-10 season opens tonight and runs until June 28, at the Port Mansions Dinner Theatre, 12 Lakeport Rd. in Port Dalhousie.

Marc Camoletti's Boeing

Boeing follows the story of playboy Bernard, an English architect living in Paris, who uses airline schedules to maintain relationships with three flight attendants concurrently. But when an American friend arrives in town and is unable to find a hotel room, Bernard's life becomes unexpectedly complicated.

The show will open tonight at 8 p.m., and will also run Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

Regular performances are Wednesday to Saturday, at 8 p.m., and Sunday, at 2:30 p.m. Tickets for the show only are \$25 on Wednesday, Thursday or Sunday, and \$30 for Friday and Saturday. Dinner and show tickets are \$38.95 for Sunday, \$49.95 for Wednesday and Thursday and \$54.95 of Friday and Saturday. For information or tickets, visit www.lakeside-players.com or call 905-934-0575 ext. 226.

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The man who designed the flag of St. Catharines will be at St. Barnabas Church on Sunday as Primavera Concerts presents Flags, Fanfares and Feasting at 3 p.m.

Bishop Ralph Spence, who has a large personal collection of flags, will display some rare and unusual flags dating from the Renaissance to the present. Spence has also designed the flags of the Diocese of Niagara and the City of Burlington, and was recently appointed Herald Extraordinary to the Governor General.

Sunday's event will also feature music, performed by organist Lesley Kingham and soprano Sarah McPherson, and will be followed by an English cream tea.

Tickets are \$25, and are available at the door. St. Barnabas Church is located at 33 Queenston St.

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