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Home / Arts/Life / Entertainment / Sultans of String breaking musical barriers

### Sultans of String breaking musical barriers

By NICOLE LeJEUNE/For The Tribune  
Posted 1 day ago

WELLAND — Often the term “world music” leads to mental images of the 1970s and patchouli incense, but with Toronto-based group Sultans of String it’s all authenticity and no gimmick.

As the fourth performers on this season’s Welland-Port Colborne Concert Association program, Sultans of String will be highlighting their eclectic mix of Spanish flamenco, Arabic folk, Cuban rhythms and French Manouche Gypsy-jazz at Welland Centennial Secondary School Saturday evening.

After having performed together for some time in 2004, founding members Chris McKhool and Kevin Laliberte soon realized how well McKhool’s six-stringed violin playing blended with Laliberte’s flamenco guitar sounds. It inspired finding the missing pieces for what would become the Sultans of String.

The final members to come aboard were Eddie Paton (guitar), Drew Birston (bass) and Chendy Leon (percussion); combined they produce some very other-worldly music.

The group has released three highly successful albums since its debut on the music scene as well as earning a Juno nomination, winning the 2009 Toronto Exclusive Magazine’s artist of the year award and having their first album, Luna (2007), hit No. 1 across Canada on top-10 national radio charts for international and world/folk categories.

Sultan members exude a casually cool vibe that seems to balance perfectly with their seriously high impact performances. As much as their audiences get into their shows — singing, dancing and stomping along — it would seem these Sultans are the ones having the most fun of all. There really is no better indicator how well a group plays together as one than to see them having such a good time doing it.

The Sultans also aren’t afraid to experiment with their songs as well as put their own spin on other well-known tunes such as The Who’s Pinball Wizard, which they perform for excited audiences; while McKhool’s violin playing almost literally speaks for itself in a familiar Peter Frampton-esque way.

Concert association members are sure to be dazzled when Sultans of String bring their infectious sounds of culture and help break down musical barriers for us to discover along with them.

People interested in purchasing memberships to the Welland-Port Colborne Concert Association or who wish to attend specific performances may contact membership secretary Hilda Belcastro at 905-788-1648. Season tickets are \$130 for adults and \$65 for students.



Supplied photo The Sultans of Swing comprise, from left, guitarist Eddie Paton, bassist Drew Birston, six-string violinist Chris McKhool, guitarist Kevin Laliberte and percussionist Chendy Leon.

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