

TRURO Daily News

Truro Daily News > Living > Arts > Entertainment

Local performer, teacher prepping for annual music festival

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'The music festival is great for these young people because it builds confidence'

TRURO – Knowing just how the Truro Music Festival has benefited him, Andrew Morrisey is now working with local performers in preparation for the annual event.



Morrisey, 24, started performing in the festival when he was about seven years old.

"It was really fun," the Truro native said. "I continued with the festival for 11 years until I graduated high school. The music festival is a great chance to perform in front of people."

After graduating from the international cabaret conference at Yale University in August of 2012, Morrisey decided to take a year off to try to save money before deciding whether to continue with school.

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Emily Robertson, left, and Megan Brocklehurst rehearse 'Some Things Are Meant to Be' from Little Women for their upcoming musical

That's when he started to teach voice lessons to about 20 students locally, ranging from ages seven to late-20s.

theatre duet 16 and over performance at the Truro Music Festival. The festival, now in its 92nd year, begins on Monday.

perform individually," he said.

Teaching the students since September, Morrisey said he's surprised at how much he enjoys it and is learning quite a bit himself.

"The most difficult thing is learning how to teach the students and tell them what I know in a way that they will understand and learn it," he said. "It is different for every single person, so it's about learning to communicate with each student individually."

With the Truro Music Festival starting on Monday, Morrisey and the students have been working hard toward their performances. There are only about three who aren't performing, and those who are have been entered into more than one discipline.

"The music festival is great for these young people because it builds confidence," said Morrisey, who hosts a one-man show in Truro each summer that is always sold out. "I've watched shy students transform into confident people by taking on a character full of confidence. It's after playing these characters that they learn they can be that in their own lives."

By pushing the students a little outside their comfort zones, Morrisey said that's when they learn the most about themselves.

"They all know the music festival is not about winning; it's about doing your absolute best and learning from other people."

Morrisey said he's been teaching the students that telling the story is the most important thing.

"No matter what class it is, they need to be able to tell the story to their audience," he said.

While he's been teaching the voice lessons in his living room, Morrisey had the opportunity to take the students to the Marigold Cultural Centre last week for a rehearsal.

"It was really interesting to see them rise to the occasion of being in a new space," he said, adding some of the parents stayed to watch the rehearsals. "And to see how they reacted to performing in front of an audience. I was very proud of them."

"My students have inspired me in many ways. I'm inspired by their hard work, dedication and passion."

He said the students inspire him to be a better teacher and performer.

"We raise the bar for each other."

Morrisey is hoping a lot of people will take in the performances of the music festival this year.

"I think the music festival is a great opportunity for the students to show off what they have learned. It's great for kids to have the chance to perform because there are not a lot of places to

"The performers have worked so hard – where can you get cheaper entertainment that's really good? I've told my students the next step is for an audience. That's the last thing we need. And plus, it's more fun in front of an audience."

For the full schedule of the Truro Music Festival, visit www.truromusicfestival.ca.

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IF YOU GO:

WHAT: 92nd annual Truro Music Festival

WHEN: March 17-19 (musical theatre, jazz/blues, song and dance, monologues and recitations); March 30 (musical theatre concert); April 14-16 (junior and senior piano); April 17 (guitar); April 22-25 (choral, band, school music); April 28-30 (voice); May 4 (closing concert)

WHERE: Various places, including Marigold Cultural Centre, St. Andrew's United Church, Cobéquid Educational Centre, St. James Presbyterian Church

FOR MORE: www.truromusicfestival.ca.