

New discipline offered at Truro Music Festival



Harmony's Hannah Grinton, 13, will perform three songs in the guitar discipline, which is new to this year to the Truro Music Festival. The festival begins with the musical theatre and jazz classes on March 18, with other disciplines, including guitar,...

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'It's a good chance to compete and have a good time'

TRURO – There are a number of changes to the Truro Music Festival this year.

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Not only are there a few new members of the executive, including a president, but a new discipline – guitar – has been added to the lineup. The festival begins with the musical theatre and jazz discipline on March 18, with piano, guitar, voice, choral and band spread throughout April.

Hannah Grinton, 13, is excited about the new discipline.

"It's a good chance to compete and have a good time," said the Grade 7 student at Redcliff Middle School.

"I enjoy playing guitar. It gives me something to do and something to look forward to. I really try to do my best."

Hannah has been taking guitar lessons for about three years with local musician Amy Brandon, who was instrumental in having guitar added to the festival this year.

While it may be her first time competing in the festival on the guitar, Hannah has been a part of it in the past.

"I've sang in it with my choirs with school for about three years, but this is my first solo (competition)," she said.

Along with guitar, Hannah also takes piano lessons with her mother. She also plays the harmonica, xylophone, recorder and drums.

"Basically anything that you put in front of me I can play," she said with a smile.

In the festival, Hannah will perform three different songs in the guitar discipline – one Celtic song with her friend, Robbie Lynn Gordon, one Celtic song by herself, as well as a solo country song.

"I like mostly country and Celtic music. I'm a fan of Taylor Swift and Carrie Underwood. I think my favourite songs are 'Two Black Cadillacs' and 'Blown Away,' she said of two Underwood songs.

Kent Loughead is the new president of the 91st annual festival.

"I'm extremely comfortable being in this position because we have a strong cast of committee chairs," said Loughead, 63, who had volunteered in the past but wanted to do more.

"I was honoured to be voted in (to president) in the fall. The transition has been somewhat seamless and that's because of the support of the executive."

Along with Loughead, the Truro Music Festival also has a new treasurer, Christina Wyllie, registrar, Corrie Spearman,

and web master Rene Wall.

Growing up, Loughead remembers the festival well thanks to family ties.

“My mother, who just turned 93, competed in piano, and my sister also competed in piano in the early 1960s. So to be a part of the process is pretty fulfilling for me,” said the retired athletics administrator with the former Nova Scotia Agricultural College. “Music has been a part of my life. I come from a musical family.”

Musical theatre is Loughead’s passion, and he’s been a member of the Cantabile Singers for 32 years. He’s directed the youth drama club at the Old Barns United Church for 24 years, and is into his 14th year with the now-Dal AC Theatre Society (formerly NSAC Theatre Society). This is his second year directing Truro Junior High School’s musical theatre program and sings in the Old Barns United Church choir.

While the festival now includes guitar, it has eliminated its pop discipline for two reasons – low registration numbers and difficulty finding adjudicators.

With more than 90 students registered, Loughead credits area teachers for keeping the festival going this long. It’s the third-oldest music festival in Canada behind Edmonton and Montreal.

“Truro and music are just synonymous. We have such dedicated teachers here – they are the lifeline of the music festival.

“It all starts with the teachers. It’s incredible when you think about the people we’ve had (participate).”

For more on the festival, visit www.truromusicfestival.ca.

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IF YOU GO:

WHAT: 91st Truro Music Festival.

WHEN: Begins March 18 with musical theatre and jazz, but then takes a break until April.

WHERE: Venues include the Marigold Cultural Centre, St. Andrew’s United Church, St. James Presbyterian Church and Cobequid Educational Centre.

DISCIPLINE DATES: March 18-21: musical theatre and jazz at the Marigold; April 15-17: junior piano at St. Andrew’s United, senior piano at the Marigold; April 18: guitar at St. Andrew’s United; April 18-20: voice at St. James Presbyterian; April 22-24: choral and band at CEC.

FINAL CONCERTS: Musical theatre and jazz will be at the Marigold on March 24; all other disciplines will perform at the Marigold on April 28.