

Jazz coming to Heartwood

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- R. MICHAEL WARREN R. Michael Warren is a Sweetwater Music Festival supporter who lives in Owen Sound.



Life is a lot like jazz... it's best when it's improvised.

- George Gershwin

Jazz has all the elements of other music. It has melody, the tune of the song, the part you are most likely to remember. It has harmony, the notes that make the melody sound fuller.

It has rhythm which is the heartbeat of the song.

But what sets jazz apart is this cool thing called improvisation.

If you like great jazz being created in front of you by world class musicians, May 25 at 8 p.m. is a date you should set aside. We are all in for a real treat. The SweetWater

Music Festival has organized a highoctane evening at Heartwood Hall. An evening of swingin' strings featuring the Festival's artistic director Mark Fewer and some of his talented friends. The evening is inspired by Stephan Grappelli & Joe Venuti. Never heard of them? They are arguable the best jazz violinists in the world. Together they broke new musical ground as jazz violinists. Both have won Grammy Awards. Much of the evening is inspired by these two incredible performers. Over the years SweetWater has been host to some of the world's great jazz artists including Gene Di Novi, Phil Dwyer, David Braid, Mark Kelso and the legendary Dave Young. SweetWater's annual mid-September music festival is more than chamber and baroque music.

Audiences come back again and again for some of the best improvised musical art in the country. We've also heard featured artists who move easily between the classics and jazz like James Campbell, John Novacek, Dean McNeil, Joseph Phillips and SweetWater's own Mark Fewer.

Fewer had this to say about the May 25 session: "From the moment Drew Jurecka finished his first SweetWater solo show back in 2013, I started receiving texts, emails and phone calls about having him return. I'm delighted he will be with me again on May 25, with another SweetWater favourite, Joseph Phillips playing bass. Joining in will be a new face for our audiences: Nathan Hiltz on guitar. It should be a fun evening."

Through SweetWater's annual Luther event last September, Drew Jurecka connected with Flesherton-based Mark Schnurr. Drew is now performing regularly on one of Mark's finely-crafted instruments. The Luther event is an opportunity to see beautiful string instruments up close and meet the talented local instrument makers displaying their incredible creations. Both Drew and Mark will be playing on Schnurr violins on May 25th.

The concert will include favourites like Sweet Georgia Brown, Dark Eyes, Minor Swing and Nuages. It will also feature a cool, swing version of the famous Bach Double Concerto for two violins. I've heard it. It's a thrilling, romp through an improvised piece of classical music. Myles Davis would've loved it.

Tickets are \$25 and are available in advance at Heartwood Home, 939 2nd Ave. E., Owen Sound or online at sweetwatermusicfestival.ca, or at the door.

SweetWater is also focusing once more on education and mentoring. The evening before the concert Mark Fewer and Thomas Wiebe, two of Canada's leading string players and teachers, will be conducting a special string workshop at the Harmony Centre.

The workshop is open to all levels of performers including students and teachers of all ages and community players of classical, jazz and folk. Area string players (violin, viola, cello and bass) up to a maximum of 25, are invited to participate in the workshop.

There are still a few places left. It's a chance to be inspired, learn new techniques, improve practising routines and have questions answered.

Mark and Tom are motivational teachers who work in a very positive and relaxed way. The goal is to build a stronger string instrument playing community. The workshop is supported in part by the Community Foundation Grey Bruce and the Leflar Foundation.

May 25 offers a taste of what jazz fans can expect this September. An all-Canadian jazz concert is planned for Sweetwater 2017 on Saturday, Sept. 16.

In the meantime, I hope to see you on May 25 at 8 p.m. for some Swingin' Strings jazz at Heartwood Hall.