

Christmas Concert coming to Hockley Village

By **Danielle Williams**

Hockley Historic Community Hall and Church is putting together its first-ever Christmas Concert featuring three talented solo musicians who will take the stage on Sunday, December 17, to indulge the community with the joy and warmth of Christmas.

A variety of songs will be showcased, including traditional favourites like "O Holy Night," thoughtfully performed in both French and English to recognize both of Canada's official languages.

"It's going to be a beautiful mixture of traditional music, audience participation, and soloists singing, both traditional as well as fun holiday songs," said Angela van Breemen, one of the performers for the Christmas Concert.

The concert will feature three Canadian musicians: Kalon Young, a baritone who trained at Hit That Note vocal studio; Angela van Breemen, a soprano soloist who frequently lends her voice to charitable causes; and Cynthia Fox Fucile, a world-renowned pianist.

These three performers generously donated their time for a free performance open to the public.

A distinctive feature of this community event is active audience involvement, inviting everyone to join in the festive cheer.

Janice Mason, Secretary of Hockley Historical Community Hall and Church, expressed her gratitude to the performers for choosing to utilize their historic building, which has been part of the village for over 150 years.

"It's great that it's going to be used to bring Christmas into the village," said Janice.

However, operating entirely through volunteers, the unforeseen challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic posed an obstacle for the church. The restrictions and safety concerns brought on by the pandemic hindered its ability to host events and rent out spaces, dealing a "significant blow" to its usual sources of income.

Janice emphasizes that the donations the church receives will be placed into their reserve funds. Despite some financial challenges, the organization continues to preserve the cultural heritage embodied in the church and community hall.

"We will probably use the proceeds to build up our funds again, because there is always work that needs to be done here and they're always projects," said Mason.

With expectations of a full house, Angela van Breemen, a long-time resident of Adjala-Tosorontio and soprano soloist, shared that Christmas is not just about attending a concert but about collective participation.

"I think part of Christmas is not just going to a Christmas concert but all of us singing together," said van Breemen, emphasizing the communal spirit at the heart of the event.

In support of the church's ongoing efforts, donations will be collected at the door during the concert, although it is free to attend, and all are welcome.

As the village prepares for this inaugural Christmas Concert, it is not only an opportunity for festive merriment but also a celebration of unity, heritage, and the enduring spirit of community.