

Concert association finds replacement for Peter Appleyard

For the first time in its 38-year history, the Orangeville Concert Association (OCA) last week lost a contracted performer with the death of famed jazz musician Peter Appleyard, 84.

Mr. Appleyard, who died of natural causes at his farm home at Eden Mills, Ont., was to have opened the OCA's 2013-14 season in September. The vibraphonist, percussionist and composer's final performance was in May, when he and a group of his decorated friends — including Basso on trumpet, Jane Bunnett on sax and Terry Clarke on drums — gathered for a night of jazz in the Appleyard barn.

His death led to an immediate search for a replacement, and last Wednesday, OCA announced that the September concert will go on, with jazz singer Heather Bambrick as the artist.

Bambrick has been singing for about as long as she's been talking. Born and raised in St. John's Newfoundland, she began singing at a very young age, and continued this pursuit with a number of award-winning chamber choirs, vocal jazz ensembles, and dinner theatre productions.

In 1993, Bambrick moved to Toronto to begin her studies in the world of jazz. As a graduate of the University of Toronto Jazz Studies department, she has studied and performed with such Canadian jazz talents as Phil Nimmons, Alex Dean, Mike Murley, Carol Welsman and Kenny Wheeler. She was a lead soloist in the U of T Vocal Jazz Ensemble, with whom she recorded a CD in 1997 and won the DownBeat Magazine Award for Outstanding College Vocal Group.

Bambrick was a founding member and lead soloist of the Toronto-based Vocal Jazz/Pop ensemble The Beehive Singers, performing with such artists as Darmon Meader of the Grammy Award-winning New York Voices (RCA), and playing to "standing-room only" audiences at several regional, national and international music festivals. The Beehive Singers twice toured Central and Western Canada, performed repeat sold-out engagements in New York, entertained for a Regent Holidays Western Caribbean cruise, recorded works for the Millennium Celebrations in Mexico and the opening ceremonies for the 2000 Calgary Stampede, and entertained at the 2000 Gemini Awards.

Heather also recorded a number of concerts for CBC's The Vinyl Café. Other radio and television appearances include: Canada AM (CTV), The Mike Bullard Show (CTV/The Comedy Network), Bravo! (CHUM-City), TVO's Studio 2, the 2000 Sick Kids' Telethon, and CBC Radio's Sound Waves and This Morning.

As an educator and clinician, Bambrick has worked with groups at the Huntington Society Jazz Camp, the Toronto District School Board, Ontario Vocal Jazz Festivals, Musicfest Canada, the Labrador Creative Arts Festival, and the Calgary Stampede. She is currently a vocal instructor in the Jazz Studies Department at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music.

The OCA season, with four concerts at the freshly renovated Orangeville Town Hall Opera House, opens with the Bambrick concert Sept. 20, and continues with the Dave Young/Terry Promane Octet Oct. 4, True North Brass Jan. 31 and the Toronto Consort April 25.