

## NSA in the News!

IN THIS LIFE- CHANTAL KREVI AZUK  
DOCUMENTARY'S BROADCAST PREMIERE

SHOWCASES YOUR NIAGARA SYMPHONY!

Niagara Symphony supporters, take note! IN THIS LIFE &ndash; CHANTAL KREVI AZUK makes its broadcast premiere on Monday January 30th on HBO Canada and The Movie Network. This fascinating one-hour documentary, which runs throughout the week, celebrates the life and career of renowned chanteuse Chantal Kreviazuk and features performance footage of her exclusive engagement with the Niagara Symphony.

On June 25th, 2011, a more-than-capacity crowd enjoyed a thrilling event at the beautiful outdoor theatre at Jackson Triggs Winery. Chantal Kreviazuk delighted her devoted audience with renditions of greatest hits, backed by the lush sounds of the Niagara Symphony under the baton of Music Director and Principal Conductor Bradley Thachuk. The event was recorded as part of the eagerly-awaited documentary of Ms Kreviazuk's life. Viewers across Canada and the United States can see In This Life &ndash; Chantal Kreviazuk on Monday January 30th at 6:45pm on HBO Canada and HBO HD, and at 8:45pm on HBO 2 HD.

Fans of Ms Kreviazuk &ndash; and the Niagara Symphony! &ndash; will be pleased to note that a CD/DVD was produced from the documentary, currently scheduled for release in spring of 2012. Information regarding that launch is forthcoming.

Partnerships such as this collaboration with Ms Kreviazuk underscore the broad appeal of orchestral music and the Niagara Symphony's continuing commitment to expanding musical horizons and outstanding musicianship.

Niagara Symphony scores coup backing up Chantal Kreviazuk

By Angela Scappatura, The Standard

June 25, 2011

When Bradley Thachuk was named the new music director for the Niagara Symphony last year, he wanted to boost the orchestra's presence in the region. It was a goal, but he never expected it to happen so soon.

On Saturday, the symphony will join Chantal Kreviazuk for a sold-out performance at the Jackson Triggs Amphitheatre in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The concert is being filmed by HBO Canada for a documentary and will be recorded for a live CD.

"I feel really fortunate we've had this opportunity in the first year and to have such a wide release TV special and CD," said Thachuk, who officially becomes the music director and principal conductor for the orchestra on Aug. 1. "It's massive exposure for the Niagara Symphony. I'm just happy because it means more opportunities to play and be a bigger part of the community."

Two months ago, the Niagara Symphony was asked to participate in the concert with Kreviazuk. It was a performance that soon became an enormous undertaking, complete with film crews.

Assembling something like it isn't easy, said Thachuk. It has been in the works for two months but wasn't announced until recently because of planning and various negotiations with the musicians union.

Kreviazuk already had a score from previous shows but because the Jackson Triggs Amphitheatre is a more intimate setting, the arrangements had to be rewritten for a 30-piece orchestra.

Three of Kreviazuk's arrangers worked on the music until last week, said Thachuk.

The project is part of an HBO Canada documentary about Kreviazuk and her symphony performances. She shared the stage with several symphonies in western Canada during the 2010-2011 season and has embarked on an unofficial tour of the east. Those performances will take place throughout the 2011-2012 season.

The concert in Niagara will be a unique experience because it is outside, said Kreviazuk.

"I've performed at Jackson Triggs several times and it's so pretty in the evening," she said. "It's going to add a totally beyond magical element to have the symphony orchestra with me and be able to bring that kind of atmosphere to that kind of environment."

Although she has performed short sets with symphonies before, Kreviazuk said there is something special about playing 15 or 16 of her songs live with orchestral arrangements. "It's absolutely gorgeous. It's far bigger than me," she said, then laughed. "I just try to fit in."

Kreviazuk has heard "incredible things" about the Niagara Symphony, she said. And, she's looking forward to working with Thachuk.

"The conductor comes with the group which is a very good thing," she said. "I'm excited this conductor has experience working with the Niagara Symphony. I think that will make for a great show because they've already got a dynamic going."

While the Niagara Symphony has performed with a number of well-known musicians in the past, this is the first time it has done something on this scale, said Thachuk. And he hopes to do more.

When he was named musical director for the Niagara Symphony in May 2010, he began looking at events the orchestra did in the past.

It used to perform at the Jackson Triggs Amphitheatre but that stopped about five years ago, he said. So, he visited the site and tried to find out why.

"A year ago when I was talking to them and thinking how great it would be for the orchestra to have some summer activity in the region at Jackson Triggs, I thought it would be for a few concerts," he said. "I didn't think the first foray back into Jackson Triggs would be such a massive project."

While it has been slightly overwhelming, Thachuk said it's all part of a plan to become "part of the cultural fabric" of the region.

"We want to be more relevant to the region and serve the community better by being out in all the different cities in the Niagara region," he said. "There are big plans, but Rome wasn't built in a day."

"Maestro for a Moment" Mr. Patrick Little leads the Niagara Symphony in "Can-can" by Jacques Offenbach

A prominent local lawyer Mr. Patrick Little bravely took to the podium as "Maestro for a Moment" last Sunday, February 27 conducting Offenbach's famous "Can-can" at the Niagara Symphony's POPS! 3 concert "Hey, Niagara, You've Got Talent". Mr. Little won the unique opportunity at the symphony's Annual Silent Auction last November.

For those who missed the Sunday POPS! 3 concert, click on the link below to see Mr. Little's conducting debut.

Mr. Patrick Little - Maestro for a Moment

Symphony Unstuffed

By Cheryl Clock, The Standard

February 24, 2011

Want to show your unruly side at a Niagara Symphony performance? Go ahead and clap your loudest, keeping in time to the rhythm of Tchaikovsky. If you like what you hear, hoot and holler. Cheer. Be bold and stomp your feet. Right in the middle of a movement that stirs your soul.

You get the idea. Suffice to say, a traditional symphony audience sits quietly. Politely. No more. This weekend, the fiddling Doherty twins (and a few others) might just challenge that tenet of orchestral etiquette.

It's likely the orchestra hasn't heard what will surely be a forte of cheers since its principal conductor Bradley Thachuk appeared last season at the symphony's Classics Rock! concert in torn jeans with electric guitar in hand, and proceeded to perform a Jimi Hendrix classic.

It's all part of the orchestra's desire to connect with the community, says its executive director Jack Mills. To offer something unexpected. To break from the traditional mould. Even, to dispel a few symphony myths.

"There is a stuffy impression of a symphony orchestra," says Mills. And there's a couple things he'd like the community to know. "A -- we're not," he says, laughing. "And B-- we have got to get the message out that we're not."

Included in the efforts to unstuff the symphony this Sunday will be a St. Catharines lawyer, who will step onto the podium and conduct the orchestra through the high-kicking classic, the Can Can. Patrick Little won the chance to be Maestro for a Moment during a silent auction fundraiser last November, and has since had a few lessons with associate conductor Laura Thomas.

And then there's those St. Catharines brothers, 17-year-old Brennan and Connor Doherty. They'll stir things up a little too during the POPS! series, Hey, Niagara, You've Got Talent concert, on Saturday and Sunday. They will be featured with six other guest soloists who auditioned last spring for a chance to perform front and centre, with a full symphony orchestra backing them up. The Doherty's will pull two French Canadian fiddle pieces from their repertoire and join 13-year-old fiddler, Amanda Botts, and three other orchestra members, in a Fiddle Summit medley that will end the show with a bang.

The French pieces-- La Ruisseau Francaise and fittingly, Les Jumelles au Camp (Twins at Camp) -- are favourites of the Doherty's, one off of Quebec violinist Andre Brunet's CD and the other taught by Brunet himself. They learned them by ear, as they do most of the fiddle pieces. It's a throwback of sorts to their days as young violinists who began in the Suzuki tradition of rote learning.

They enjoy playing around with the harmonies. Having fun. Putting their musical stamp on a piece. "We can make it our own," says Brennan.

The informality and freedom to play around musically is a big part of the allure of the fiddle. It's not an indulgence the brothers, who are also violinists with the Niagara Youth Orchestra, are permitted with their classical pieces. While it's easy to put their own spin on an Irish piece, "You can't play Brahms like Mozart," says Brennan.

The brothers were five years old when they squeaked out their first notes on the violin. Not completely surprising since their mother, Mary Beth, is a violinist with the Niagara Symphony. "Our mother being a professional musician, we basically didn't have a choice," says Brennan. (His mother is the one laughing now.) It was a good choice.

While their roots are in classical violin (Mary Beth eventually transitioned them to a Royal Conservatory program with its requisite structure of exams and technique), it was their uncle who introduced them to the free spirit of the fiddle. It was an easy sell.

"Maybe we were getting a little bored with classical music," says Brennan. "We had studied it for so long." Truth is, the boys were listening to rap and rock, and they longed to play along with their favourite bands. But rap on a violin? Reality was harsh, but timing was perfect. The fiddle came into their lives at a time when they were searching for something new. "It was the rock of our instrument," says Brennan.

They watched Celtic and French Canadian-style fiddlers. It was nothing like they'd even seen from classical violinists. They were impressed by their animation, how they moved to the beat of their own music, and the ease with which they connected to their audience. They liked the gritty, abrasive, powerful bow sounds. And the fact they played really, really loud. "It has a driving force behind it," says Connor. "You're always going to the next note, the next bar."

Every summer for the last few years, they've attended a week-long program at the Celtic College in Goderich. There they learn from fiddlers the likes of Andre Brunet, and play with musicians whose roots are as diverse as classical to Celtic. Truth is, it's a perfect fit. They pick up a piece better by ear than by sight reading.

"It's easier to know what's on the page, if you can hear it in your head," says Connor. "It's like having to read a book before you write an essay on it." And they welcome a boisterous, hootin' 'n hollerin' audience. "There's more pressure when everyone is sitting in their seat, staring at you," says Brennan.

Click on the link below to see the sneak preview video of the Doherty's fiddling:

## The Doherty Brothers

St James students call the tune

By Julie Greco, The Standard Staff

November 10, 2010

There was no fiddling around in Anne Marie Holmes' Grade 5 classroom Monday morning at St. James School. Eyes were peeled and ears pricked up for their special visitors from Niagara Symphony.

Composer and associate conductor Laura Thomas, who is leading the five-day composer in the classroom program, was accompanied by four musicians: Doug Miller, principal flute; Charlene Nagel, principal second violin; Marlene Dankiw-Bath, principal viola; and Gordon Cleland, principal cellist.

With a sense of seriousness that seemed well beyond their years, students spent 90 minutes fine-tuning the melodies they began developing last week by listening critically as their music was being played by professional musicians, and letting their creativity and new-found musical knowledge guide their direction.

Monday was Day 4 of the composer in the classroom program at St. James, an experience that began last week and will culminate in a concert performance of their work by the four symphony musicians Wednesday.

The program, which began in 2002, offers students the opportunity to explore the compositional process, develop musical ideas and experiment with musical elements. Students steer the decisions about harmonic style, melody, form and orchestration.

For the grand finale Wednesday, the world premier performance of the pieces they wrote will be performed by the Niagara Symphony musicians at a school concert.

"You don't get a chance to tell professional musicians how you want your music played very often," said B.J. Armstrong, educational co-ordinator with Niagara Symphony. "There are composers all across this country who would die for this opportunity and our kids here in Niagara have it."

Julia Miele, 10, was one of about 50 students at the school participating in the program, which is being offered to Grade 5 and 6 classes. She said she was enjoying the experience.

"I think it's amazing to hear the professional musicians play the sounds we make," she said.

"I'm going to feel really proud at the concert when I hear the musicians playing. I'll be really happy about what I did." Her classmate, Nico Tripodi, 10, agreed. Hearing their music played by the professionals was the highlight of the program, he said. "It made me feel really good," he said.

"Making all the decisions made me feel like it was really our piece and we were in charge."

Their teacher, Anne Marie Holmes, said watching the students progress and collaborate has been a heart-warming experience. "To see what they did a week ago Monday and to see how it's come and unfolded today is just phenomenal," she said. "They started out tapping on the xylophone and they've created these compositions that are actually very moving to listen to when you hear them being played by the orchestra."

Thomas, who has led the program at various schools since 2004, said she was pleased by the way the compositions were turning out. "The Grade 5 class has been very into it, very enthusiastic," she said. "It's always better in composer in the classroom if kids are willing to take a risk and to try something new, and they've been really enthusiastic about doing that."

The composer in the classroom program is presented annually at different Catholic and public school boards throughout Niagara.

For a video report of the Composer in the Classroom at St James school, follow the link below:

CITC at St James video