

Singers bring real meaning to term 'musical ability'

Hello, Hooray! What do these classic words from acid rocker Alice Cooper have to do with the stage at Performance Works on Granville Island? Well, they're linked to Rolf Kempf, a local songwriter who composed the above hit song for Cooper's 1973 album, *Billion Dollar Babies*. The song also achieved lasting recognition on Cooper's *Greatest Hits* album.

In December, a select audience soaked up the lunchtime atmosphere at Performance Works and listened in appreciation to an acoustic feast, including performances by Kempf, plus local contemporary folk and blues performer Jeff Standfield and emerging local jazz diva Jayne Dinsmore with her three-piece band, Jayne's Gang.

Aside from Alice Cooper, there is a thread that links these three performers and provided this event's *raison d'être*.

Each has a significant physical disability. The lunchtime musical showcase was presented by the Vancouver Adaptive Music Society, a Vancouver-based, non-profit association working to open doors for musicians with physical disabilities.



Jayne's Gang on stage at Performance Works in December

In addition to Cooper, Kempf has written songs for artists such as Judy Collins and Canadian legend Ginette Reno, and has also performed solo.

Songwriter Standfield has performed his personal blend of contemporary acoustic folk and blues for about 15 years. He started playing guitar at 10, but didn't perform on stage until his late 20's. He is a driving force behind the "open stage" music scene at Myles of Beans Coffee House in Burnaby. The event

showcases musicians from the disabled community while helping others gain experience.

Standfield writes about "personal challenges and insights which transcend disability and reflect human experiences."

Although she has sung most of her life, Jayne Dinsmore only started exploring jazz and blues about five years ago through VAMS, where she made an indelible impression and was encouraged to perform. She formed her band, Jayne's Gang, and has since recorded a demo CD. Once, she says, "I wouldn't even do karaoke. I was too scared. So I've come a long way since then."

For more on this story, visit www.disabilityfoundation.org/news

Local arts and culture group kickstARTS disability art movement

Joining art with advocacy, Geoff McMurchy, executive director of the Society for Disability Arts and Culture (S4DAC) in Vancouver, proves that artistic spirit defies disability.

S4DAC is known best for kickstART, a four-day visual arts, dance, comedy and theatre fest embracing local and international talent from a broad range of disabilities. This year, kickstART runs Sept. 16-19 at the Roundhouse Community Centre.

McMurchy was a budding artist when, in 1977 at the age of 21, he broke his neck in a diving accident. He became swept up in the disability advocacy movement and started S4DAC in 1998. S4DAC is involved with workshops, dance presentations,



Julie Milano, *Scary Spice*

visual art and theatre training, exhibits, and Artsmarts - a resource book for artists with disabilities.

Another S4DAC project, *Borg Again*, an exhibit of cyborg culture, showed recently at the Pendulum Gallery on West Georgia featuring the work of seven disabled artists.

McMurchy says Canada is "way behind" other nations in promoting disability arts and culture. "That was part of the impetus for us forming as an organization," he says.

"In fact, that was how kickstART, the name, was coined, because we were trying to kickstart the movement in Canada."

For information, visit www.s4dac.org or call 604-685-3368.

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