

PEACE RIVER NORTH FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

By MARGARET MAY

Festival time is approaching and young performing artists are working on putting the finishing touches on their musical pieces and their dances before taking to the stage from March 14 to March 21 at the Cultural Centre. Preparations began as far back as last summer when visiting teachers choreographed dances at local dance studios, and many hours of practice have been put in since then.

Music Festivals have a long history in Fort St. John with mention of children feverishly practicing their pieces as far back as spring of 1930. In 1946 the Festival was revived with an impressive 166 entries in drama, vocal and choir, dramatic speech, piano and violin. In that year Miss Evelyn Jonasson tied with the

Misses Dorothy and Marna Stewart for the Bowes & Herron Grand Trophy Shield for the highest mark by pupil or group. By 1948 dance was a part of the festival with pupils of Mrs. Dorothy Forrester very much to the fore. Rural schools that have long since disappeared, such as Montney and North Pine, were prominent in those early reports, participating in choral speech, a category that has recently been revived in our own modern version of the festival.

Styles have changed and the children of Fort St. John have opportunities to train in music and dance that the Misses Stewart could only dream of, but the enthusiasm to perform and the butterflies when getting ready to face the adjudicator probably have not changed very much over the years.



The Outstanding Dance Group from the 2009 Peace River North Festival of the Arts. Standing, left to right: Cassandra Aarinson, Hayley Powell, Kendra Coulter. Centre: Mariah Boot, Sarah Wilkinson. Front: Elean Miller, Jeannotte, and Kelani Siusster.

2010

The 2010 version of Fort St. John's "Musical Festival" will include classes in a wide range of disciplines starting with strings on Sunday, March 14. Instrumental classes start things off on Monday, March 15, after which the energy level in the Cultural Centre will take a sharp rise when seven bands perform in the afternoon. Three bands from Fort Nelson will join our four local bands and it promises to be an exciting and entertaining afternoon.

Voice and choir take over in the evening, then piano takes centre stage through March 16 and 17 with a wide range of style on display from Classical to Popular and Jazz. There is sure to be some impressive music coming from some very small hands over two packed days of piano classes.

Our new category of speech will be introduced on the morning of Thursday, March 18, and the festival organizers are excited to put this skill on display for the first time in many years.

On Thursday afternoon, things will really start jumping when five dance studios descend on the Cultural Centre and adjudicators will be busy with this exciting and highly competitive category with very few breaks until the afternoon of Sunday, March 21. Solos are

performed during the day with group sessions scheduled for each evening and duos being feature on the Sunday session.

On Sunday evening the "Best of the Fest" will be on display as the best of every category from throughout the week will perform and delegates to the Provincial Festival in Duncan will be announced. This show is a wonderful showcase of the outstanding talent in this community and it never fails to be an entertaining evening of music and dance. All sessions throughout the week are open to the public for a small admission fee of \$3.00 per session while tickets to the "Best of the Fest" honours show can be purchased at the Cultural Centre box office. These young performers deserve our support and their hard work and talent never fail to make us all proud.

The 2010 Peace River North Theatre Festival May 4-9, 2010

- May 4 - I Claudia - by Kristen Thomas - Stage North FSJ
- May 5 - Sex, Drugs, Rock and Roll - by Eric Bogosian - Bridge to Broadway FSJ
- May 6 - The Melancholy Minstrel - by Cynthia Livingstone - Fort St. John Players
- May 7 - Toronto Mississippi - by Joan Macleod - Stage North FSJ
- May 8 - Sylvia - by A.R. Gurney - Dionysus Theatre DC
- May 8 - November - by Don Nigro - Grizzly Valley Players TR

All shows at the North Peace Cultural Centre in Fort St. John. Weekday evening curtain at 7:30pm. Saturday matinee at 1pm and Sunday evening at 6pm.

For tickets call: 250.787.0342. Email: info@psj.com

Peace River North
FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

band
piano
dance
speech
instrumental

BEST of the FEST

March 14-21

2010

March 21 - 7 pm

North Peace Cultural Centre

2010