

Father son duo bringing comedy show to Fire and Ice Festival]

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A father and son duo from the Shelburne community have teamed up to bring a highly anticipated new event to the 2023 Fire and Ice Festival.

Alton Mill Art Centre general manager Martin Kouprie and his comedian son Oliver Kouprie, will present the inaugural 'Hot Mics' Comedy Show to a sold-out crowd on Saturday (Jan. 23) at 8 p.m.

"When we started planning for the Fire and Ice Festival, Oliver had been doing a number of gigs around Toronto so the question came up, if he would produce a comedy show for us, and he jumped on the chance. We made it a part of the schedule and it's a sold-out event," explained Martin.

Initially joining the Alton Mill Art Centre to help open a restaurant in the facility, Martin took on the role of general manager a little over a year ago. This year's event will mark his first-time planning the Fire and Ice Festival as general manager of the arts centre.

Oliver started his journey into comedy this past year, doing his first open mic in the spring of 2022. With booking gigs being a big part of comedy, he began diving into the producing side along with his performance. He regularly produces a comedy show called Guy Being Dudes at the Backroom Comedy Club in Toronto.

A new addition to the Fire and Ice Festival schedule, the comedy show has already seen some early success, selling out in just five days.

"They've never had an event that sold out in five days," said Martin. "We could have sold it out twice over."

"I'm honestly so shocked that it sold out so quickly because most of the shows I've produced are in the city, and those ticket sales are very last minute. It was a really encouraging sign when it sold out so quickly and weeks before the show," said Oliver, who was tasked with producing the comedy show.

The 'Hot Mics' Comedy show will feature comedians Kristian Warburton, Hannah Veldheon, Jwalit Bharwani, Monica Gross, Jordan Brown, Tyler Hartley and Oliver Kouprie.

"Stand up comedy, I have found, is such a personal art form to so many people. So, the topics will vary from comedian to comedian. It might go to relationships or a little bit into politics or just about funny stories," said Oliver. "I feel like it's going to be a great time and hopefully it's the first of many to come."

The Fire and Ice Winter Festival will take place on Saturday (Jan. 28) from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday (Jan. 29) from noon to 5 p.m. at the Alton Mill Art Centre.

For more information about the festival and a complete schedule of events, visit www.altonmill.ca.