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The Heritage Music Festival - the Canadian Open Fiddle Championships

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The great Canadian Open Old Time Fiddle Championship is now a part of the Heritage Music Festival in Shelburne. Still the same weekend and the venue but bigger and with a fresh face to its format.

This will be its 68th year and never doubt that it constitutes an very important place on the calendar of Canada's musical life. There was some question whether the fiddle was an instrument waning in popularity.

On the contrary, so Festival Chair, Bobbi Ferguson, was clear to say, ?There's a revitalization. A lot of fiddlers are getting more people in playing. A truckload of schools in Toronto are putting out fiddle students.?

The champion fiddlers themselves are the ones very concerned that this premier fiddle competition in Shelburne not only survives but is re-invigorated for future generations.

Said Ms Ferguson, ?Linsey Beckett and her brother, Tyler, along with Scott Woods, came to the office. Scott is doing a tour of 50 shows and promoting the festival to other fiddle players and musicians. Louis Schryer, a Canadian Champion ? they have banded together to spread the word that may attract many new competitors to come, which would be wonderful. Today there are many new fiddlers registered.?

She began to sum up the scheduling for the Heritage Music Festival: ? On Wednesday, August 8,? she said, ?is the Country Jamboree, starting in the evening at 7:00pm.?
This sets the weekend up with a far reaching jamming session.

Ms Ferguson explained: ?Local people come to jam ? this is always really successful. There's square dancing, and singing. People bring their instruments to play. It's a lot of fun.?

Thursday, August 9, the excitement begins with a return engagement of the Beckett family, Linsey and Tyler Beckett, opening at 7:30 pm. Back to the festival by popular demand since their terrific concerts in 2014 and 2015 at the show, the Beckett siblings are bringing their fulsome range of fiddle music, from ?Western Swing to Bluegrass.?

There will be ?exhilarating step dancing? and all the fun that comes with the best of fiddle music is the meat and potatoes of this concert. The show will rock with traditional fiddling and special guests. Four generations of fiddlers in the Beckett Family back to their great grandfather, is a musical tradition worth celebrating.

The Trews with the Pop Machine are the headliners rock band on Friday, August 10.
Ms Ferguson was delighted to tell the Free Press, ?There's a lot of buzz about that. We're expecting a crowd of about a thousand people.?

Needing no introduction, the Trews have done a thousand concerts world wide during their ten years of being one of Canada's most successful rock band. While a great many of their appearances are their own concerts, they have also played with such other big names as the Rolling Stones, KISS, Guns ?n' Roses and Bruce Springsteen. Along with numerous other awards, the quartet has won 17 Top Ten Rock radio singles, a CIMA Road Gold Award and several JUNO Award nominations.

This concert begins at 7:30 pm.

Saturday, August 10 is given over the Canadian Open Old Time Fiddle Championships.
Beginning at 10:00 am at the Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex (Shelburne Arena),
with the playdowns, with the ?Young and the Young at Heart?, ages nine and under, 10 to 12 and 56 and over classes. These are

followed by the remaining classes which are Gospel, Group, Novelty, Bluegrass and the Open Class.

Shelburne will treated to a grand Fiddle Parade and, in the afternoon, there will be entertainment galore with Bands and Brews at the Fiddle Park, an open air market and a pork BBQ.

Come the evening at 6:30 pm, are the ?crowning? of the Canadian Open Champion and the Open Junior Champion. Multiple Canadian Old Time Fiddle Champion, Louis Schryer and the judges' showcase will keep the entertainment hopping.

Sunday, August 11, Ms Ferguson informed us, ?There is a huge non-denominational church service at which the Barrel Boys provide the music. A thousand people come to it.?

In supporting the Heritage Music Festival, you are by extension also supporting the very long list of charities to which the proceeds of the festival go, including Music for Memories, the digital imaging department at Headwaters Health Care Centre and Shelburne Girl Guides and Boy Scouts to mention just a few.

The Heritage Music Festival and Canadian Open Fiddle Championship is sponsored by the Rotary Club.

For all the details, check the website: www.HeritageMusicFestival.ca