



Uplifting Tribute to the Best of Gospel with a Country Twist at the St. Jacobs Schoolhouse Theatre

Friday, September 13, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Spirits will soar this fall as the rousing tribute *Good Ol' Country Gospel* brings heavenly voices and moving melodies to the quaint village of St. Jacobs. From soul-stirring ballads to high-energy songs of praise, this uplifting musical celebration will leave audiences singing their way out of the theatre during its four-month run at the **St. Jacobs Schoolhouse Theatre** from **now to December 22**.

“Packed with humour and heart, *Good Ol' Country Gospel* is a fun-filled tribute to the cherished canon of gospel hits,” says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. “Audiences will be uplifted, inspired, and amazed by the depth of talent on stage.”

One of Canada’s most accomplished artists, **David Rogers** takes a step behind-the-scenes as the Director and Choreographer for this production. Rogers’ phenomenal voice and performance skills have garnered him starring roles in many major musicals over the years; he played both Raoul and The Phantom in the Toronto production of *The Phantom of the Opera*, and Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* and Harold Hill in *The Music Man* for Drayton Entertainment. Rogers is currently the Co-Artistic Director of Victoria Playhouse Petrolia. He also developed the set and costume concepts for the production.

Rogers is joined by Music Arranger **Mark Payne**, Assistant Director **Mark MacRae**, Assistant Choreographer **Monique Lund**, Lighting Designer **Lyle Franklin**, Stage Manager **Charles Russell**, Rehearsal Stage Manager **Laurel Oneil**, and Assistant Stage Manager **Nadene Riehl**.

This high-energy musical revue showcases the considerable talents of artists **Ben Cookson**, **Kevin Dempsey**, **Leah Grandmont**, **Zachary Knowles**, **Mark MacRae**, **Daphne Moens**, **Paul Jerry Schwarz** and **Kate Suhr**.

A recent graduate of the Bachelor of Music Theatre Performance Program at Sheridan College, **Cookson** has already appeared in a number of musicals across the country including *Red Rock Diner* at Stage West Calgary, *Chariots of Fire* at The Grand Theatre, and *Scotland Sings* at Victoria Petrolia Playhouse. This production marks his Drayton Entertainment debut.

In addition to being an in-demand musician and active member in the Toronto jazz scene, **Dempsey** has been in several productions for Drayton Entertainment including *Kings & Queens of Country*, *Anything Goes*, *A Closer Walk with Patsy Cline*, *Country Legends*, and many more.

Grandmont recently appeared in the sold-out musical extravaganza *Fiddler on the Loose* at the Drayton Festival Theatre. She's an accomplished fiddler and has performed across Canada, Germany, and Scotland as a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada.

In addition to appearing in the Drayton Entertainment production of *Million Dollar Quartet*, **Knowles** has been on stage in productions with Stage West Calgary, the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival, and in the National Tour of *HAIR* with Starvox Entertainment.

MacRae makes his Drayton Entertainment debut in this production in the dual role of Assistant Director and a performer. An accomplished actor and musician, he has appeared in productions with Chemainus Theatre, Western Canada Theatre, and Sudbury Theatre, to name a few. He has also appeared on screen in *Designated Survivor* and *Covert Affairs*, among other TV series.

Fresh from her role as the sassy store clerk Gloria in *Rocky: The Musical*, **Moens** brings her vibrant voice and feisty personality to this harmonious revue. A seasoned performer, Moens has appeared on stage with companies across Canada including Theatre Aquarius, Stage West Calgary, The Grand Theatre, and others.

Both **Schwarz** and **Suhr** make their Drayton Entertainment debuts in this production. A graduate of the esteemed Eastman School of Music in New York City, Schwarz is a popular concert performer, and appeared in *The Andrew Brothers* at Victoria Playhouse Petrolia last season. Suhr released her album *Selkie Bride* in 2017, and has appeared on stage as Tess in *Bloom* with 4th Line Theatre, and as the title role in *Mary Poppins* with the LOT in Toronto, among other shows.

Together, this stellar ensemble presents a spirited musical extravaganza that covers the gamut of gospel classics such as "Amazing Grace," "I'll Fly Away," "Peace in the Valley," "When The Saints Go Marching In," and many more – all with a country twist!

Good Ol' Country Gospel is proudly sponsored by **96.7 CHYM FM** and **Home Hardware**. Media Sponsors are **570 News**, **106.7 Country**, and **The Waterloo Region Record**. The 2019 Season Media Sponsor is **CTV**.

Good Ol' Country Gospel is on stage **now to December 22** at the **St. Jacobs Schoolhouse Theatre**. Tickets may be purchased in person at any Drayton Entertainment Box Office, by calling the Box Office at (519) 747-7788 or toll free at 1-855-drayton (372-9866), or online instantly at www.draytonentertainment.com.

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