



Acclaimed Canadian Crooner Michael Vanhevel Set to Thrill Audiences at Huron Country Playhouse

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Kick off the summer theatre season with a salute to the greats – from Bing to Bubl  – in the nostalgic musical journey *The Crooner*, starring acclaimed Canadian vocalist **Michael Vanhevel**. This upbeat production is on stage at the **Huron Country Playhouse** from **July 5 to July 22**.

The Crooner celebrates iconic voices throughout the decades with that distinctive smooth and snappy style. This charming production is packed with well-loved songs made famous by legendary singers like Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Nat King Cole, and Bing Crosby, mid-century stalwarts like Tony Bennett, Andy Williams, Perry Como, Paul Anka, and Bobby Darin, and modern-day superstars like Michael Bubl .

This upbeat musical production has been crafted to showcase the irresistible crooning talents of Michael Vanhevel. Originally from Grand Bend, Vanhevel was discovered on YouTube at the age of 20 by **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment, after he posted videos of himself singing various Sinatra tunes. He was then chosen to appear as a featured vocalist in the successful production of *Big Band Legends*, conducted by legendary composer Howard Cable in 2013. Vanhevel went on to do many concerts with the music icon, including a full-length symphony show that toured across Canada before Cable passed away in 2016.

“Michael is one of the best modern crooners in Canada,” says Mustakas. “We’re excited to bring this unforgettable production to Grand Bend, and for Michael to have the opportunity to perform in his home town. Audiences are in for a real treat!”

This nostalgic production was conceived and directed by Mustakas, who has helmed over 100 productions for Drayton Entertainment and other theatre companies across Canada. The rest of the creative team includes Musical Arranger **Mark Payne**, Music Director **Jim Hodgkinson**, Set Designer **Dayton Taylor**, Costume Designer **Jenine Kroeplin**, and Lighting Designer **Jeff JohnstonCollins**. The Stage Manager is **Nadene Riehl**, with Apprentice Stage Manager **Jeri Leader**.

Vanhevel has appeared in numerous productions and concerts including *Come Fly With Me*, *The Songs of Sinatra*, and *Hollywood Sings* with Drayton Entertainment. His other stage credits include Elvis Presley in *Million Dollar Quartet* with various theatres across the country (Magnus Theatre, Thousand Islands Playhouse, Sudbury Theatre Centre, Theatre Calgary), and *Starbright Christmas, Songs We Love*, and Norm Foster's *Outlaw* with Victoria Playhouse Petrolia. Vanhevel is also a recording artist, and has released three albums including "Michael Vanhevel with the Jimmy Stahl Big Band" (2020), "Swinging on a Star" (2020), and "On The Rocks" (2014).

Vanhevel is backed by a stellar three-piece band including Music Director **Jim Hodgkinson** on piano, **Junior Riggan** on bass, and **Kevin Dempsey** on drums.

The Crooner is proudly sponsored by **White Squirrel Golf Club**. The Design Sponsor is **Commercial Print Management Inc.** The Media Sponsor is the **Exeter Lakeshore Times-Advance**. The 2023 Season Media Sponsor is **CTV**.

Regular performance tickets are \$55 for adults, \$34 for youth under 20 years of age. Tickets for select Discount Dates and groups of 20 or more are \$45, and small groups of 10-19 are \$50. HST is applicable to all ticket prices. Tickets may be purchased by calling the Box Office at **519-238-6000** or toll free at **1-855-drayton (372-9866)**, or online at www.huroncountryplayhouse.com.

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