

Michael Gabriel on the road of life

Waterloo Region Record

Michael Gabriel's "Strings Attached" is a travelling orchestral concert series that has evolved significantly over the past four years from string and piano accompaniment to the recent addition of new choir arrangements that have taken the show into new and exciting frontiers.

Gabriel says in terms of cast members, Friday's show at Cambridge Community Players Theatre (with partial proceeds going to the Cambridge Shelter Corporation) is the biggest production yet.

The L.A. based singer/songwriter/actor originally from Vancouver, will be working with two Cambridge groups — a choral youth ensemble from St. Benedict's High School, and an adult choir, called The Hoot.

Gabriel's ensemble includes core members Trina Nadeau, cello, and Sandy Ludwig, piano, in addition to Karen Spithoff, violin, and newest member Joy Schuster who will play viola.

Skilfully placed into an orchestral landscape, "Strings Attached" features popular selections from all of Gabriel's works including stirring ballads like radio hit "Angel Eyes" plus "Bye Bye-Bye So Long" and "Penelope Rose." Through a special lighting score that interplays with the concert, the two Cambridge show choirs will accompany Gabriel's inspirational stories told through song.

A self-described "transient carry" Gabriel literally lives "on the road of life," his preferred mode of transport, a 10-metre RV with all the comforts of home. He drove up from California to Canada, and he's been working on this incarnation of "Strings Attached" for the past month.

He credits Karen Murray-Hopf and Cambridge's Idea Exchange for providing the facilities and playing host for his recent preview show (with cellist Nadeau) in addition to Gabriel's youth song writing workshop.

"Idea Exchange sets such a great template for 'Strings Attached,'" says Gabriel, adding his focus for the show is "community integration" through working with schools, libraries, and charities wherever he roams.

"We are just going to keep adding new choir arrangements because I want that to be a focal point. I mean, the strings are powerful but a choir just takes this show to a whole new level," says Gabriel with plans to record a "Strings Attached" studio album.

He has toured extensively and has four EPs and four LPs, including a "Strings Attached" live CD and a boxed set. His solid musical background spans from mastering opera arias, to the role of rock band frontman. Akin to heartfelt songsmiths Jim Croce, James Taylor, and Chris de Burgh, Gabriel, possesses a sage, soothing voice that instantly engages listeners with anecdotes from the road of life and "places along the way."

Gabriel writes stories "from a personal perspective."

"We are all on different roads but so much of what we experience emotionally, mentally, spiritually is very, very similar," he notes. "The show is an escape but it is real escape. We are not talking about parking lots, fast cars and women. We are talking about some real things that we all deal with. But I want us to all collectively go somewhere together. I think actual feelings start to become apparent in the music and lyrics because a lot of people can relate to it. It's the journey of life."

www.coralandrews.ca

Michael Gabriel — Strings Attached

In Association with Idea Exchange

Cambridge Community Players Theatre

Friday 8 p.m. — Doors open 7:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$20

Box Office: (519) 623-4070

www.cambridgecommunityplayers.com

www.michaelgabrielmusic.com



Michael Gabriel and Strings Attached will perform Friday at Cambridge Community Players Theatre.