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Renowned quartet set to play the Lester Centre on Friday

By Gina Clark - The Northern View - October 31, 2007



The Infinitus Quartet will be performing in Prince Rupert on Friday.

by Contributed photo

The sounds of classical, jazz, Latin and hip-hop will fill the Lester Center of the Arts in November when the Infinitus String Quartet comes to town. Formed in 2002, they regularly perform outreach concerts and they also perform with the Sonic Boom Festival and Vancouver Chamber Players.

The group is made up of John H. Littlejohn from Lansing/Midland, Michigan on violin, Ruth Huang,

originally from Taiwan, who started as a pianist and then moved to violin, Anthony Cheung on viola and Alexander Cheung on cello. On this tour, Toronto musician Joshua Belvedere will be substituting for Ruth on violin.

All of them were naturally drawn to music at an early age, but it was not until later in life that they decided to make it their career.

“Twin brothers Anthony and Alex Cheung have two older siblings who played instruments, so their initial interest was to emulate them. They began playing at the age of nine (Anthony started on violin and switched to viola when he was 13). Josh was taken to a classical concert at the age of five. After seeing a violin, he pointed to it and said to his mother, ‘I want to play that.’ John started learning to play the violin when he was ten. From a very young age, he would hum and sing all day. When he finally had the chance to begin an instrument, he chose the violin and began learning in a public-school program,” said Littlejohn.

“Usually what gets us into music is different then what keeps us there.”

The band members have varied tastes in music but one thing they have in common is that they are inspired by anyone doing something new and fresh in music. They all love many forms of music, including hip-hop, classical, Christian, reggae, Latin, gypsy, etc. and there are different artists in each genre that inspire them. Their audience also inspires them. Their shows are highly interactive, so the audience has a lot of say in the flow of the concert.

The pieces they perform in their shows depend on the setting. For educational concerts, they choose music that will connect with and educate the children. For outreach concerts (at hospices, hospitals, nursing homes, etc.) their mission is to bring high quality music to those who cannot reach them. For community performances they choose music that will connect with the audience. They also like to introduce the audience to a few hidden gems by lesser-known composers like Dimitrescu and William Grant Still. Each program usually includes classical, Latin, hip-hop, rock and jazz music, although they usually leave out the hip-hop in the nursing homes. For school shows, they also include easily recognizable tunes like “The Simpsons” theme and “Linus and Lucy.”


“We like to stretch our personal boundaries as well” said Littlejohn.

“We’re always looking to acquire new skills individually and as a group. In the past year we’ve begun beat-boxing while playing and improving our own solos on jazz tunes. Our nightmare is to be the ‘Jack of all trades, masters of none’ so we strive to become proficient and eventually master each new skill.”

The band mostly performs works by other composers, but also perform original arrangements. The quartet will be in Prince Rupert on Friday November 2 at eight p.m. For more information, visit www.infintusquartet.com.

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