

Oakville musician performs at local café

Patrick Ballantyne will share songs off his upcoming album *Days of Rain* tomorrow

by Julia Le

Oakville Beaver Staff

Oakville musician Patrick Ballantyne is stepping into the limelight with the upcoming release of his second album *Days of Rain*.

For years, the 53-year-old River Oaks resident spent his time behind the scenes, crafting his talent as a songwriter.

Besides a self-titled album he released about seven years ago, he's mainly collaborated with other artists, co-writing with The Trews, Big Sugar, Wide Mouth Mason, Meredith Shaw, Tim Chaisson and Shane Chisholm to name a few notables.

His upcoming 13-track album set to be released in June is a compilation of songs that he simply wanted to share with the public, he said.

Recorded in a studio in Windsor, Ont., and in his home studio in Oakville, the songs are based on life experiences and events that have occurred over the years.

Ballantyne, whose style can be described as British rock and roll meets country soul, said *Days of Rain* is named after one of his tracks based on the Nashville, Tennessee flood that took place four years ago.

The musician, who began writing and playing the guitar when he was 14 years old, noted how the devastation of the 1,000-year flood (a rare event that has one-in-1,000 chance of happening) ended up being overshadowed in the media by other arguably big news stories that included the Times Square car bombing attempt in New York.

"It was a tragic story and a massive flood that took over a week or two," he said, adding that it surprised him how little the national news covered the story and deaths involved.



Oakville musician Patrick Ballantyne will perform at the Moonshine Café, 137 Kerr St., tomorrow (Thursday) at 8 p.m. | photo by Alex Stevenson

Keeping with somber feelings, he said the death and illness of some friends and family also impacted his writing.

"Some of the songs are about coping with loss, seeing the positives and trying to dwell on the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel rather than the pain of the loss," he said.

Ballantyne adds there's a certain satisfaction creating a record from scratch, "fitting them together thematically" and then performing them live.

He'll share it with an Oakville audience at

the Moonshine Café, 137 Kerr St., tomorrow (Thursday) at 8 p.m.

It's in local intimate venues like Moonshine Ballantyne feels at home, he noted.

"When I do play, it's in a venue that focuses on original music and draws crowds that are appreciative of that kind of music and they're there to hear it," said Ballantyne.

He hopes to have a few copies of his upcoming album to sell at the show.

For more information, visit www.patrickballantyne.com.

Comedy tour raises funds for the blind

A fundraising comedy tour is making a stop in Oakville to bring blindness to the centre stage.

Comic Vision will be dropping by the Oakville Conference Centre on Wyecroft Road on April 23 to spread not only laughter, but some hope as well as part of a seven-stop tour across Canada in support of Foundation Fighting Blindness.

Showtime is 8 p.m. and features comedians Dave Hemstad and Rebecca Kohler alongside tour host Steve Patterson of CBC's *The Debaters*. There will also be live and silent auctions and laugh-out-loud fundraising games.

Tickets cost \$175 each or \$1,750 for a table of 10.

They can be purchased online at www.comicvision.ca or by calling 1-800-461-3331.

The annual comedy tour, which was created in 1999, has raised more than \$5 million for sight-saving research at hospitals and universities across the country.

Each Comic Vision event brings together an average of 500 local community leaders, influential business executives, eye health contributors and many friends and family members truly wanting to make a difference.

"You don't realize how much you take your eyesight for granted, until you lose it and can't get it back," said Foundation Fighting Blindness volunteer board member Catherine Tillman in a press release. "Funding research is vital, and Comic Vision is a great and fun way to raise money and build hope at the same time."

Tillman has lived with Stargardt disease, a condition that causes the loss of central vision, for more than seven years and no longer has any remaining central vision.

She's among more than one million Canadians living with blinding eye diseases that include Stargardt disease, retinitis pigmentosa and age-related macular degeneration. As of yet, there are no cures.

Last year, Comic Vision events had a total of more than 2,500 attendees and raised more than \$930,000 for critical sight-saving research projects.

For more information, visit www.comicvision.ca/gta-west.

Picture in Music features Maple Grove students

A collaboration between Oakville's Intrada Brass and the Grade 6 classes of Maple Grove Public School will be on display at the St. Paul's United Church stage April 26.

Just before the British brass band performs at the Rebecca Street church beginning at 7:30 p.m., students will share their artistic interpretation of Modeste Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

Tickets for the event, *Picture in Music – A picture paints a thousand notes*, cost \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors and students and free for children under age 12. To purchase, email Intrada Brass at info@intradabrass.ca, call 905-827-0561 or pick them up at the door.

Rita Arendz, Intrada's guest conductor, explains how the students were tasked with listening to Mussorgsky's song as part of their music class and challenged to bring their feelings and ideas to life through art.

Mussorgsky's work was originally inspired by the artwork and passing of his friend Viktor Hartmann.

"We are thrilled to be able to bring this



Rita Arendz

music alive for both our audience and our young collaborators and excited to see how they interpret this piece," said Arendz.

The works will be on display before and during the concert, which features the North American premier of *Annie Laurie, Variations for Cornet and Brass Band* by Wilfred Heaton, which will be performed by the band's Cornet soloist Robert Venables.

The band will also perform pieces like *Brazil* by Ary Barroso, *Invictus March* by Williams Himes and *Three Brass Cats* by Chris Hazell to round out the performance.

For more information, visit www.intradabrass.ca.