

20 ■ MUSIC: Maria-Dunn to perform

Support Castleton mill project at folk concert

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CASTLETON — While progress on Castleton's 180-year-old Purdy Grist Mill seems to be stalled in the process, owners Candace and Mitchell Cox invite you to show your support by enjoying a wonderful evening of song by Maria Dunn on May 3.

The Juno Award-nominated folk singer is making Castleton a stop on her tour, which the Coxes hope will maintain the profile of their beloved project while giving the community an

opportunity to enjoy an exceptional songstress.

The Coxes moved to the Cramahe area three years ago, hoping to restore the old mill as a venue for affordable professional events of this kind, as well as a studio space for their own work and a place to support and develop local arts and culture.

Red tape has slowed them down, but the Coxes will host Dunn's visit in the loft of the carriage house in the farmyard of that property at 1742 Percy St. — which they have renamed the Mill at Piper Creek, referring to the creek which powered the old

grist mill for generations. The concert is not a fundraiser, since all proceeds will go directly to the performers, but it is a good way for Castleton to show its support for the mill's revitalization and the Dunns' quest to promote and develop the arts in this region.

Tickets for the 7:30 p.m. show are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. As seating is limited, advance purchases are recommended. For more information, call 905-344-7119.

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Percy students perform, The Big Bad Musical, a howling courtroom comedy



Students are busy rehearsing for *The Big Bad Musical*, a courtroom comedy that asks the audience to be the jury in a hilarious courtroom trial: from left, Hillary Cudmore, "granny"; Eliza Amos-Brick, the Fairy Godmother; Emily Anderson, Little Red Riding Hood; Olivia Garret, the Shepherd; Charlie Brackenbury, a peasant; Jesslyn Thomas, the Big Bad Wolf. Photo: Sue Dickens

By Sue Dickens

Entertainment - Warkworth — "The Big Bad Musical" a howling courtroom comedy will be performed by students at Percy Centennial Public School, as they bring their talents to the stage next month.

Based on the book by Alec Strum with music and lyrics by Bill Francoeur the play is a favourite with schools across the country and Warkworth's elementary school is no exception.

"I like having all the rehearsals and trying to make it as best as we can for all the people to enjoy from town," said Grade 6 student Eliza Amos-Brick, who plays the part of the Fairy Godmother.

The familiarity with Grimm's Fairy Tales which include the classic storybook fairy tale of the Big Bad Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood come to mind as the plot unfolds however the humour and audience involvement makes this show a different sort of on-stage performance.

"The audience is actually making a decision if the Big Bad Wolf is guilty or not... they are the jury actually," explained teacher Sandra Allanson-Kelly, who, for many years, has helped students with shows and performances at the school.

"The point is that all of us are going against the Big Bad Wolf and the wolf is trying to

be nice and get kids on his side... to confuse the audience," said Olivia Garret, Grade 6, who plays the part of the Shepherd.

Jesslyn Thomas, Grade 8, is the Big Bad Wolf. "I've done plays before but find this one very challenging. I like the storyline of it and how the fairytale creatures are pursuing the wolf for eating the sheep," she told the Trent Hills Independent, at one of the rehearsals.

As the Big Bad Wolf she performs two solos during the play, "a pleading one," and "a rap."

"She's trying to convince the whole court that she is innocent," commented Allanson-Kelly.

And don't forget Little Red Riding Hood. "In this play I'm a spoiled brat... it's fun," said Emily Anderson, Grade 5, who plays that role.

Then there's Hillary Cudmore, Grade 7, who plays the part of the grandmother.

When asked how she is preparing for her role, she replied, "I study my grandparents and see what they do and just try to repeat that."

Charlie Brackenbury, Grade 4, plays the part of a peasant in the play.

He admits this is his first time in a musical as an actor on stage but is taking it all in stride.

"I'm not really nervous," he said.

"It's fun because I've never really been in something this big where I get to do something so important," he added shyly.

He also performs in the chorus. More than 40 children from Grades 4 to 8 are involved with the play.

There's plenty of hilarity during the performance when some of the favourite fairy tale characters file a class action lawsuit against the infamous Big Bad Wolf.

What will the verdict be? Only the jury — the audience can decide.

Performances will take place on Wednesday, May 7 at 7 p.m., Thursday, May 8 at 12:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Friday, May 9 at 7 p.m.

Tickets are available at the school or Eclectic Mix in Warkworth.

The cost is \$5 per seat.