

Concerts aim to bring down the house

Series gets underway next Friday

By Stephanie Hounsell
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

When Miltonian Rose Brooks prepares for an upcoming season of her successful concert series, she doesn't book a large venue, look for performers with No. 1 hits or rent impressive sound or lighting equipment.

What she does look for are quality independent Canadian musicians — often award-winning — who tend to fly under the radar and enjoy performing in smaller, more intimate settings with great acoustics.

The Just Milton Folks concert series has a crowd capacity of just 60 people when it's held in its regular venue, Hugh Foster Hall, and the performers don't so much perform as interact with the audience.

Together with her husband, Ed, Rose is part of the house concert movement, a bandwagon the couple first jumped on five years ago when they organized their first concert.

Now there's a loyal group of attendees who wouldn't miss any of the five or six Friday night concerts each year. But there are still many residents out there who've never heard of a house concert or who are intimidated to give it a try, Rose said.

And she's trying to change that. Next Friday at 8 p.m., the sixth season of Just Milton Folks will

kick off with a concert featuring singer/songwriter Tony Turner, who delivers melodic stories in a rich, baritone voice.

Revealed through his songs is his love of Canadian history and landscapes, a respect for working folk and the importance of community.

Tickets cost \$20 and include dessert and coffee.

Due to renovations at Hugh Foster Hall, this concert will take place at the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre, 500 Childs Dr., which will accommodate up to 100 people.

Who should come?

"Someone who's looking for something a bit different from the usual concert experience," Rose said.

House concerts are not-for-profit, with the proceeds going directly to the performers, allowing them to keep great Canadian music alive, Rose said.

"You feel good knowing you're supporting the musician."

House concerts aren't dictated by any specific musical style. Just Milton Folks has welcomed folk, jazz, country and blues musicians, with both solo artists and duos.

But there is a bent toward a "roots" style.

"Roots (music) is really about expressing your personal experience within a broader social context," Rose said. "In Canada, a big part of the roots movement is aboriginal."

The cozy, informal setting of a



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YOU'RE INVITED: Organizers Ed and Rose Brooks welcome music lovers to their new season of Just Milton Folks

house concert is conducive to storytelling, and the performers often talk about their lives and music with the group, Rose said.

They don't have to compete with chatter or the clinking of glasses the way they would at a club, making it an enjoyable experience for both performer and audience, she said.

At intermission, musicians are more than happy to autograph CDs and talk with people.

Rose is quick to say the size of an audience has nothing to do with the talent of the performer.

Previous seasons have featured three Juno award-winning artists.

"People are initially blown away by the calibre of talent," Rose said. "They assume they're going to hear someone who busks on street corners."

Although Just Milton Folks concerts aren't held in a house, many are.

Rose remembers the first time she and Ed attended one, which was inside somebody's house — and a rather small one, at that.

"For us, it was a very bizarre experience," she said.

And yet they were drawn in enough to organize their own a short time later.

Rose is calling the upcoming

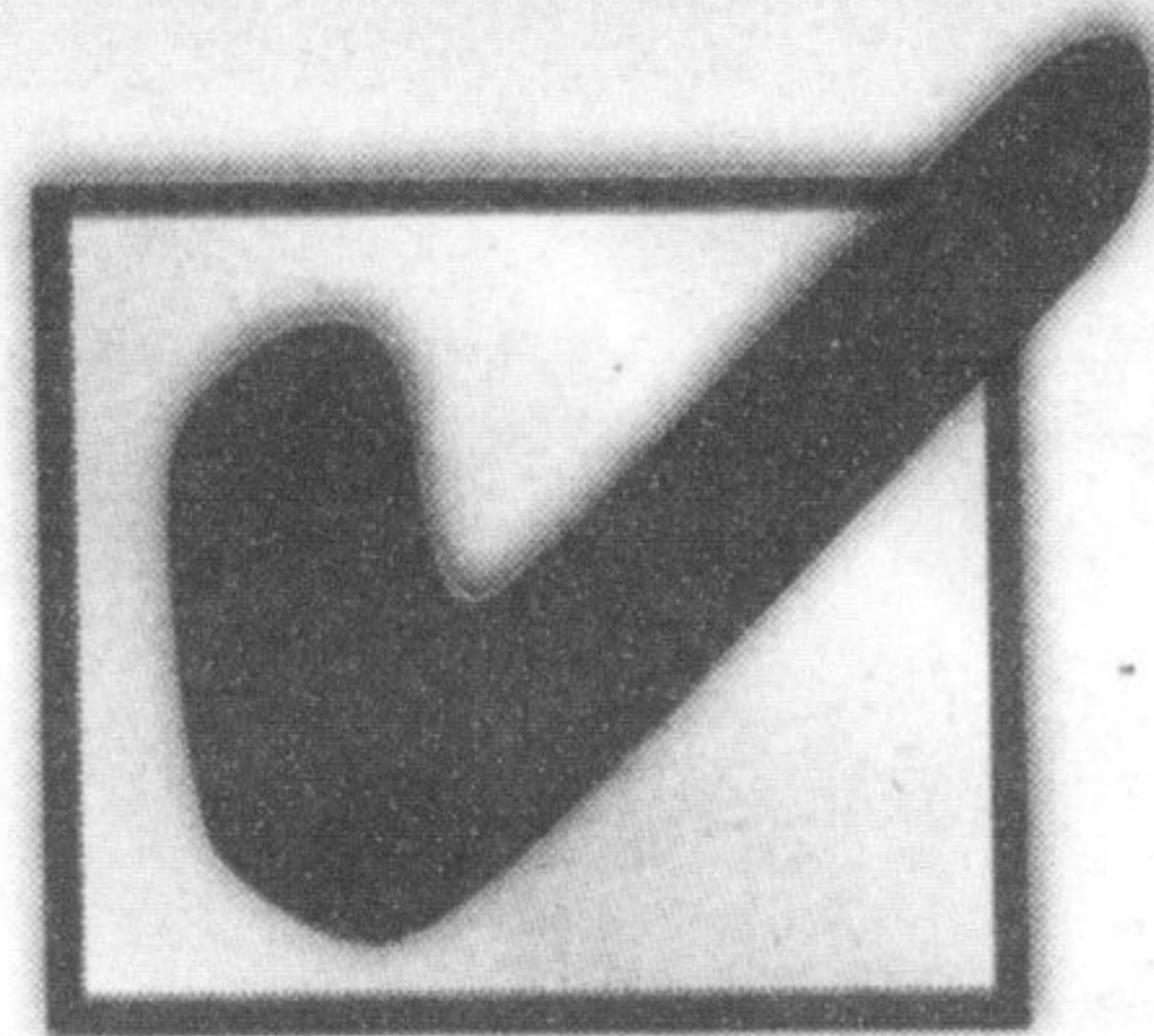
season 'Talkin' 'bout Our Generation' since all five evenings feature songwriters with strong connections to familiar Canadian stories and settings.

"This is not just a bunch of old guys who used to play folk music," she said.

The other four concerts will be held November 6 and next year on February 12, April 16 and June 11.

For tickets, call Rose at (905) 876-2645 or visit www.justmilton-folks.ca. Season tickets are available for \$90.

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Voting Closes Sunday, September 20th

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