

Rockwood festival features artists from around globe

As many as 2,000 people will experience an invasion of artistic spirit in Rockwood on Saturday, Sept. 7.

The first Spirit Valley Experience, a gathering of local artists, is slated for Rockwood Conservation Area as a complimentary event to the Eden Mills Writers Festival, which takes place the next day.

People from Rockwood, Eramosa, Nassagaweya, Guelph and Milton are involved as volunteers in organizing the festival.

The featured performer is Rockwood resident, and internationally known jazz musician Peter Appleyard, who will perform on the Spirit Stage accompanied by a small combo.

However the festival is much larger and sports more than 200 performers in a one-day swirl of artistic activity with actors, musicians, potters, weavers, mime artists, and singers, some internationally known, some locally known and others waiting to be discovered.

First year

"This is the first year for the festival," said John Crompton, the festival's artistic director. "If it catches on we will likely expand the format."

Mr. Crompton said the slate of artists is top-notch, with several international acts coming from as far as Brazil, Russia and Africa. The festival will take place on 40 acres, with several stages running throughout the day to give people a chance to see a wide variety of acts.

He said the cost is quite reasonable given the professionalism and quality of both the international acts and those from neighbouring communities. There was an effort made to balance the types of acts that the festival will showcase.

In the evening the festival will focus on the main stage, which will feature a gala finale of 27 drummers from around the world.

"It's going to be quite a grand finale," said Mr. Crompton. "The site can accommodate more than 2,000 and we hope to get at least 1,000. Tickets just went on sale and so far we have sold several hundred."

Fergus resident actress Kim Renders is performing her one-woman show Motherhood, Madness and the State of the Universe at the Coyote Stage. The play has been performed in Toronto and in Montreal. The Coyote Stage is in a cave and given the theme of motherhood, the cave produces a wonderful womb-like ambience, according to festival spokesperson Linda Sword.

Guest musicians

The Hummingbird Stage is alive with local musical talent. The Spirit Valley Band is the "house band" and features Lois Cherry, a well-known Rockwood pianist, Warren Campbell, Blaine Barry and Steve Clark.

Guest musicians for the day include Guelph's Zamboni Jiver and the Murphy Family, Rockwood's Tea for Three and Waterloo's Isorhythm.

Internationally known Tamarack featuring the songs of Rockwood's James Gordon will be on the Cedar Stage. In addition performances of alphorn, bagpipes, classical guitar and celtic harp will be given.

Stephen La Frenie, the artistic director of Guelph's Graphic Mime Company and a world travelled clown, leads a troupe through a series of workshops.

The Renaissance Singers of Kitchener-Waterloo add the classical choral music finishing touch to the festival.

The Spirit Valley Experience takes place from 9:30 a.m. through midnight. Advance

tickets are \$30 each, \$75 for a family of three and \$20 for each additional family member. For tickets and information call 1-519-856-9999. In Milton, tickets are available at the Dorland-Haight Galleries, 200 Main Street, phone 875-1751.

Chudleigh says rent hearings coming

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Mr. Chudleigh said there will be government hearings into the proposed legislation, which calls for:

• A 2.8 per cent cap on annual rent increases plus four per cent for capital improvements;

• A provincial anti-harassment squad to protect tenants with fines for landlords ranging from \$10,000 for individuals to \$50,000 for corporations;

• Removing restrictions on property owners' right to convert their buildings.

"I don't support gouging," said Mayor Krantz.

"What is a reasonable increase? Five or 10 per cent? I don't know. Milton's position regarding servicing could put us in a different position than other communities."

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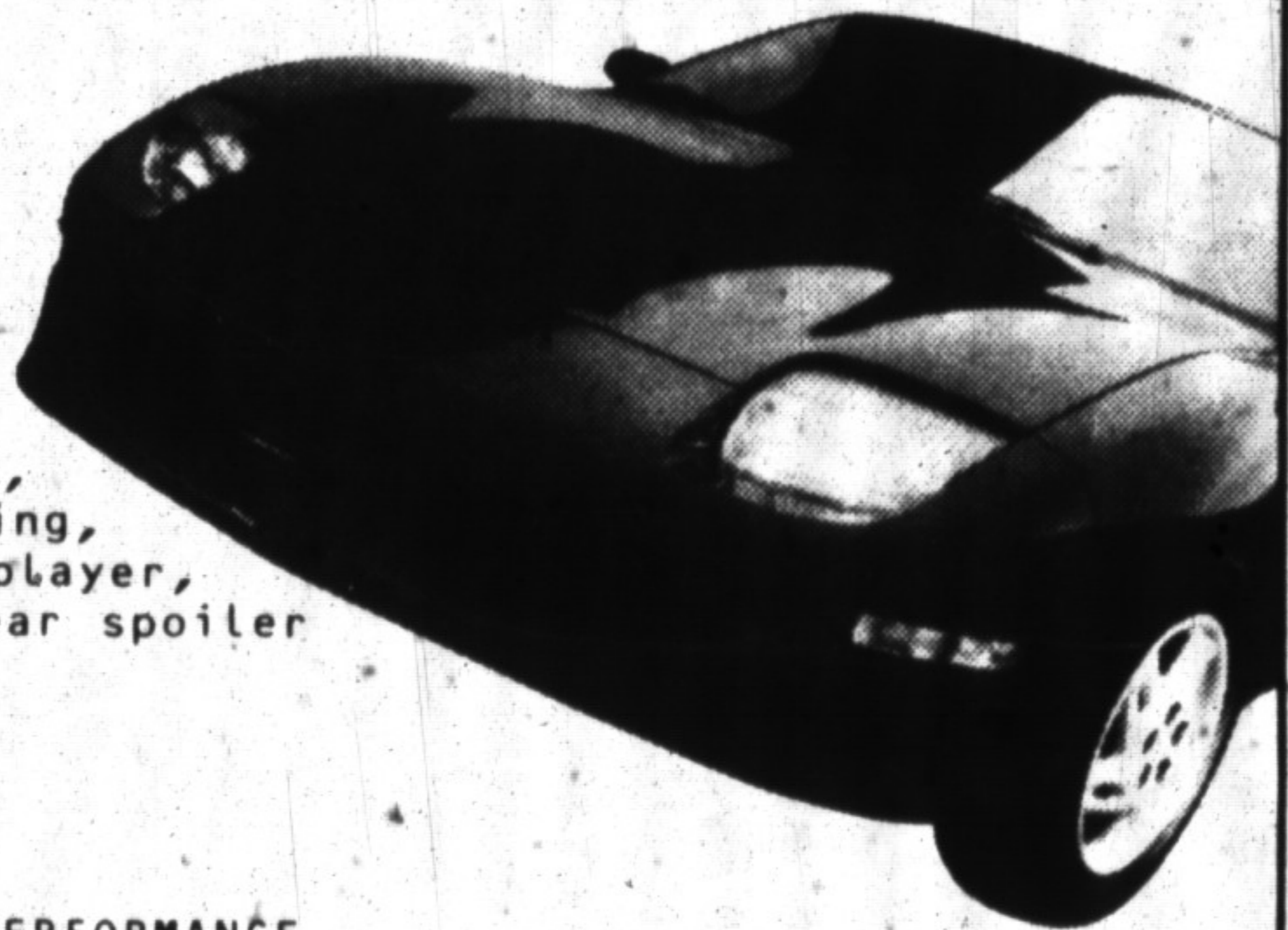
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