

Saturday show to feature songs by those lost in 2017

Frank Peebles / Prince George Citizen

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Britt Meierhoffer, with Black Spruce Bog, perform during The First Waltz on Saturday at Prince George Playhouse. The First Waltz was modeled after The Last Waltz and featured Black Spruce Bog as the house band with local singers of note passing through and doing a couple of songs each. Citizen Photo by James Doyle November 21, 2015

- JAMES DOYLE, PHOTOGRAPHER

Local musicians are honouring their fallen comrades from the world of melody.

It is becoming a tradition started a couple of years ago by recording artist Britt Meierhofer (aka Britt AM) and it continues on Saturday night with a collaboration concert called Songs Carry On.

A smattering of Prince George's best known musicians will take turns performing music by those national and international performers who have passed on during the past year.

"There will be some Fats Domino, Tom Petty, Chuck Berry, and several others that were lesser known," said Danny Bell, one of the participating musicians and one of the production organizers helping out Britt AM. "It's going to be really special. The songs were chosen by each of us who are participating based on our own taste in music. The full list of artists honoured is still uncertain. I'm really excited to see what people play."

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They certainly have a rich array of artists to choose from. It was a year rife with notable losses, though not as epic compared to 2016 when the world said goodbye to an onslaught of greats like Prince, David Bowie, Glenn Frey, Merle Haggard, George Michael, Maurice White, two of three from Emerson Lake & Palmer, Ralph Stanley, Buckwheat Zydeco and (perhaps most beloved of all in Canada) Leonard Cohen.

Nonetheless, the most recent year that was had its own cadre of condolences. The global stage bid farewell to the aforementioned Berry, Petty and Domino plus other stars like Chris Cornell, David Cassidy, Glen Campbell, Malcolm Young of AC/DC, James Cotton, Gregg Allman, Jim Nabors, Don Williams, Geoff Nicholls of Black Sabbath, Lincoln Park's Chester Bennington, Della Reese, Mel Tillis, rapper Lil Peep, Jessi Zazu of Those Darlins, Troy Gentry of Montgomery Gentry, Walter Becker of Steely Dan, Al Jarreau, Tommy Page, original Faith No More frontman Chuck Mosley, Prodigy rapper Mobb Deep, electronica composer Robert Miles, rocker J. Geils, soul man Cuba Gooding Sr., Wayne Cochran of the C.C. Riders and so many more.

Closer to home, the Canadian music community is mourning the loss of Streetheart frontman Kenny Shields, Lighthouse drummer Skip Prokop, old-time fiddler Nathan Condon, Acadian folk musician Denis Richard, pianist Daisy Sweeney, singer/actor Saucy Silvia, bassist Trish Doan of the band Kittie, April Wine bassist Steve Lang, classical singer/pianist Stuart Hamilton, 'Canada's pet' Juliette Cavazzi, Quebecois singer-songwriter Tex Lecor, Goldy McJohn of Steppenwolf, Smothers Brothers music director Jimmy Dale, radio host Stuart McLean, and of course Gord Downie of The Tragically Hip.

"I think a lot of people are feeling Gord's loss the most," said Bell. "I didn't grow up around his music, but I'm looking forward to hearing what the other artists do with his songs."

The closer a musician is to a particular genre, the deeper their knowledge of those within that musical specialty. That's what gives a collective effort like this event such depth, Bell explained, including for the musicians themselves.

"Saltwater Hank is covering a bunch of bluegrass artists who passed this last year and he is really excited about that," he said. "For me it's been a chance to take a deeper look into the music these artists made and try to meld what is special about their songs with my own style."

This musical celebration of many creative lives will take place Saturday night at the Legion starting at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$10. It is a coproduction of Mad Loon Arts & Entertainment and UNBC's campus radio station CFUR.

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