

Children's choir joins symphony

BY AMY SMART, TIMES COLONIST DECEMBER 6, 2012

IN CONCERT

Victoria Symphony Pops, A Sentimental Christmas

When: Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 2p.m.

Where: Royal Theatre

Tickets: \$18 to \$75 +s/c at rmts.bc.ca or 250-386-6121

The Victoria Symphony has invited the Victoria Children's Choir and soprano Eleanor McCain as special guests for its annual holiday concert, A Sentimental Christmas.

"I think the main thing that's quite unique about this concert is it's really eclectic and diverse," said music director and conductor Tania Miller. "It's going to be a wonderful sense of variety, between our soloist and lovely choir - and the orchestra playing lots of rousing pieces on its own."

She's particularly excited to welcome back to the stage the Victoria Children's Choir, which has not performed with the Victoria Symphony for several years. The choir will sing four pieces.

"I've enjoyed working with them in the past," she said. "Working with them and working with an adult choir is not really that different, because they come very professional and well-prepared for the concert."

The main challenge for the choir, made of about 60 youth aged eight to 18, is adjusting to a new conductor on stage. The choir is typically led by artistic director Madeleine Humer, she said.

"I think it's lovely for them to have the opportunity to be on stage with such a large audience and to be working with an orchestra conductor," she said.

Along with many of the children, McCain will be making her Victoria Symphony debut. The soprano was raised in Florenceville, N.B., and is now based in Toronto. She began singing at church and school events and studied music at Mount Allison University.

McCain has released three studio albums since her debut classical crossover *Intimate* in 2001, including children's recording *Bundle of Joy*, traditional Celtic and Maritime album *Green Hills of Home* and 2011's *Holiday*, a two-disc CD of festive tunes.

"We're always looking for a real diversity of guest artists - some who are new, some whom audiences already have a rapport with," said Miller. "Eleanor McCain came to our attention as a guest artist who is really creating some beautiful symphony shows."

Finally, the Victoria Symphony orchestra will perform several holiday pieces on their own - many of them for the first time.

They include some songs from holiday movies, including Home Alone, The Polar Express and Miracle on 34th Street. The orchestra will also perform Canadian Brass Christmas, a collection of the Canadian Brass's most popular Christmas song arrangements, such as Leroy Anderson's Sleigh Ride.

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