


NSO to present a holiday show that's naughty and nice



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Singer Eleanor McCain is headlining

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The Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra is being a little bit naughty and a little bit nice this holiday season.

The NSO is presenting its first Holiday Pops concert at Cochrane Street United Church Nov. 30, featuring East Coast Music Award-nominated songstress Eleanor McCain from New Brunswick.

The symphony will back McCain on fully-orchestrated arrangements of her Christmas CD set, "Holiday." Like the CD set, the show will be divided into two parts: naughty and nice.

"The nice side is traditional songs that do stay in a softer, traditional production, whereas the naughty side are either jazz standards or secular tunes or things like "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" or "What Child is This?" that are more up-tempo, with a less traditional feel to them," McCain told The Telegram

"When I was recording the vocal last year, the engineer I work with sort of interjected and said, 'You have too much music for one CD.' I said, 'I know,' and I didn't want to give up any songs, so he said, 'Maybe do two: one naughty and one nice.'"

All the songs on "Holiday" are cover songs of traditional Christmas music.

McCain chose to do a Christmas CD because of her own family's love of Christmas, and the fact she felt it fit well with her classical crossover style. She said her song choices draw from Celtic, folk, pop, jazz and classical genres.

"Christmas was such a big deal in our house," she said.

"The love of the holiday, plus Christmas music was such a huge part of our celebrations that I've always loved it. I have a huge collection of Christmas CDs myself, and I always knew in the back of my head that I wanted to do this, but the ideas weren't fully formed. It's been percolating for years."

The NSO is the first symphony orchestra with which McCain will perform the program, but she'll perform it with orchestras in B.C. and her home province, as well.

"It's awesome to be able to sing with a symphony and to be able to perform music with a symphony. It's such a thrill and I'm very excited," she said.

McCain and the orchestra, under the conduction of Marc David, will perform with special guests Quintessential Vocal Ensemble, and soprano Caroline Schiller. There has also been talk that Neil Edwards, CEO of the symphony orchestra, might take to the stage for a duet or two, but McCain wouldn't confirm.

"All I can say is it's ready," she said.

Tickets for the Holiday Pops show are \$30 (\$25 for seniors) and are available at the St. John's Arts and Culture Centre box office, by calling 729-3900, and online at www.artsandculturecentre.com.

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