

King woman names ?musical quilt?



By Mark Pavilons

A King woman's love for her country is quite evident. What's more, LCol (ret'd) Susan Beharriell gets involved in all things Canadian.

Beharriell helped put a name on an iconic creation that is the epitome of Canada. A contest was held to name this Six String Nation Guitar, and Beharriell's entry was chosen.

?Voyageur??seemed fitting for this unique piece of Canadiana.

She went out to Winnipeg and ?unveiled? it during Festival des Voyageurs.

?It was a very special moment,? she said.

Beharriell said she's fortunate to have a personal connection to the guitar. This wondrous ?musical quilt? is the product of the imagination and sheer determination of former broadcaster Jowi Taylor from Toronto. In 1995, the night before the Quebec referendum, he conceived the idea of a guitar in which each part would be derived from some aspect of Canadian history, geography or culture.

Voyageur, the Six String Nation guitar, is constructed from 64 pieces of Canadian history. For example, the back and sides are from the Grey Nuns' convent in Winnipeg, once a classroom to Louis Riel. The tone bar is from Pierre Trudeau's canoe paddle, and the top face is the sacred Golden Spruce of Haida Gwaii. A detail on the pick guard is from Paul Henderson's hockey stick from the 1972 Canada/Russia Summit Series, and the ninth fret is decorated with gold from Maurice Richard's 1955-56 Stanley Cup ring. Nancy Green's ski, Wayne Gretzky's stick, First Nations and Inuit artifacts, mammoth ivory and even a wooden nickel from the Maid of the Mist, all contribute to this remarkable instrument.

The strap includes insignias from the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry, and even pieces from the original costumes of the three Trailer Park Boys. The case is cushioned with a piece of Don Cherry's pants, Pierre Burton's bow tie, a doily from Stephen Leacock's living room, Chris Hadfield's International Space Station patch, material from the set of Stuart McLean's ?The Vinyl Café? and a piece of Karen Kain's ballet costume.

Jowi has taken the guitar to festivals, conferences, schools and community events, from sea to sea to sea across the country.

Thousands of Canadians have celebrated what it means to be Canadian, either through music or the very act of engaging with this object that is at once artifact and living instrument.

The Six String Nation guitar allows them to hold history in their hands and add a little harmony of their own.

For more information go to: <http://www.sixstringnation.com/>