

Star-studded St. Patrick's Day performance in King

By Mark Pavilons

There's a little bit of Irish in all of us, especially on St. Patrick's Day.

Guests will become fully immersed in all things Irish during the first 'Lilt, Laughter and Song,' at the King Museum on March 17. Featuring a star-studded cast of performers, under the direction of King's own Diva in the Rough Catherine Hughes, this St. Patrick's Day celebration will thoroughly entertain visitors with a unique blend of drama, history, humour, music and song.

The show is written and produced by Hughes, known far and wide for her fresh renditions of age-old classics from the 1920s, '30s and '40s. Her music stands the test of time, and Hughes comes alive on stage, entertaining audiences with her crafty sense of humour. Joined by 'straight man' and long-time friend Don Guinn on piano, the duo are as sharp and contemporary as Will and Grace.

Hughes said she thoroughly enjoyed the process of creating this event from scratch, backed by some community stalwarts. Joining the show are some seasoned performers such as:

David Mackett, a Toronto actor whose most recent credits include Titus Andronicus (Hart House Theatre), Dublin Carol (Fly on the Wall Theatre), and Tragedie of Lear (Ad Hoc Collective).

Catherine Vaneri, who began her career in London, England. Her many credits include Ceres in 'The Tempest,' Mrs. Patrick Campbell in 'Dear Liar,' Ellen Terry in 'Our Elle,n' Mrs. McGee in 'Corpse,' Rita in Willy Russell's 'Educating Rita,' Addy in 'Stepdance.' She performed in 'A Flea in her Ear,' Chekov's 'Cherry Orchard' and 'The Importance of being Earnest.'

Deirdre Kirby trained in New York under Philip Burton and Sandy Meisner. She is a founding member of The Roundabout Theatre in New York City.

To promote the show, and simply to have a bit of fun, Hughes launched her video series, 'The Irish Word of the Day,' seen across social media networks. She presents a unique Irish word, in a humorous way. The show has drawn a huge following and even caught the attention of some big players in entertainment.

Hughes was accepted at The Julliard School of Music in New York, but was unable to attend and forged her own performance style. Catherine has appeared as Molly Bloom in the Bloomsday Festival in Toronto for several years.

Hughes, as 'The Diva in the Rough,' has performed at 120 Diner, Buddies and Bad Times Theatre, Borden military base, The Brigantine Room, The Diesel Playhouse Toronto, Lula Lounge, The Drake, The Gladstone Hotel ballroom, The Rivoli. She will be appearing at The Performance Arts Lodge at the end of April in 'The concert Molly Bloom never gave.'

For Lilt, Laughter and Song, the audience will be enlisted to write and sing a rebel song. The interactive show will expose everyone to Irish heritage, literature and song, all in good fun. The room will be adorned with some of Catherine's own personal mementoes. To top things off, food will be provided by Pops' Kitchen, a local fine catering service run by chef Aladin Jarrah. This very personal, tailor-made service grew out of Jarrah's passion and consideration for residents' life balance.

Tickets are \$25 at the door. It is recommended that you reserve in advance by calling the Museum at 905-833-2331 or email kingmuseum@king.ca.