

International music program helps local arts centre make Music Soup: A special event at Arts Court for kids aged two to six

By Barbara Brunzell

Every week more than 24,000 students explore sound, rhythm and movement at Music for Young Children (MYC) studios around the world. The program is designed for teachers who want to provide high quality piano instruction to small groups of very young children, using a multi-sensory approach to learning, but they agree nothing ignites the senses better than watching a professional perform live on stage.

The power of performance to motivate young musicians is just one of the reasons MYC has joined forces with Arts Court, Ottawa's Centre for the Performing, Visual, Literary and Media Arts, to present *A Holiday Helping of Music Soup* starring Jen Gould.

"Jen Gould's Music Soup is a wonderful example of quality music entertainment that showcases the excitement each child can experience in a live show," says David Riddell, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Music for Young Children.

The Juno Award-winning artist takes to the Arts Court Theatre stage, located at 2 Daly Avenue, for two shows, 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., on Sunday, December 13th. Children, aged two to six, will delight in some of the performer's best-loved tunes such as: *Monster in my Closet*, *Yummy in my Tummy* and her Tango-inspired version of the *Three Little Pigs*, as well as a host of other *Music Soup* songs and holiday favourites.

After the show, children are welcome to test out their own musical skills on a variety of instruments in the Winter Wonderland located in the Arts Court Studio. Teachers from Music for Young Children's Eastern Ontario nest will be on hand to interact with participants. A variety of festive games, cupcakes and cocoa and a child-friendly Arts Market will also be on site for families to enjoy. Tickets to the event cost \$15 and a donation of a can of soup for the Ottawa Food Bank. Each ticket purchased comes with a food voucher for Novotel Trio Restaurant located directly across the street from Arts Court.

Jen Gould's inaugural album, *Music Soup*, won Children's Album of the Year at the 2008 Juno Awards and has sold upwards of 25,000 copies. The classically-

trained actress is no stranger to success. She's performed on some of the finest stages in Canada and the United States, including: five seasons at the Stratford Festival, The National Arts Centre and the New York City Center on Broadway. But it's the throngs of little fans she has around the world that are motivating Gould to take her success as a children's performer to the next level.

"I can't afford to be everywhere, so I thought I could reach out to my audiences through video," Gould expressed in last month's edition of *Capital Parent*.

The magic happening on stage at the *Music Soup* performances is being captured for an upcoming live concert DVD, scheduled for release in Spring 2010, and it will be marked by a DVD release party this coming March. The concert recording will certainly be the focus of the DVD, but children and parents will also be treated to special features such as: comic vignettes, music videos, and an interactive musical game based on MYC teaching principles.

"In Music for Young Children's pursuit of a high-quality curriculum, we find the Arts Court's vision for this project is synonymous with ours in expanding students' horizons," says Riddell. "By entertaining in a fun and engaging way, performers are able to introduce young children to the exciting world of music that can have a lasting impression on them."

A percentage of the proceeds from the sale of the DVD, *Music Soup Live at Arts Court*, will be donated to the Ottawa Arts Court Foundation, a charitable organization that supports Ottawa's professional arts community through the provision of leading facilities, programs and services. The money raised will help the organization to continue to support local artists and OACF capital improvement projects.

"The response from members of the business community such as MYC and patrons regarding the concert event and the DVD project has been tremendous thus far," says Linda Balduzzi, Executive Director of the Ottawa Arts Court Foundation. "I am excited about planning Arts Court's next annual Holiday event for children."

For more information about the show please visit www.artscourt.ca or to purchase tickets call the Arts Court Box Office at 613-564-7240. You can listen to Jen Gould's Music Soup at the performer's website www.jengouldmusic.com.

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