

on the street where you live

# Indoors and Out...

Charlene Diehl

As we move from spring to summer, the music in the middle of our city moves too.

After a lively winter of honking on new saxophones and trumpets, finding great sounds on the bass and piano, and coordinating hands and feet on the drum kits, the eager young musicians at Hugh John Macdonald School on Bannatyne are now playing tunes together—and performing them for others. In March, these young Bridge musicians, under the guidance of Neil Watson, were featured in several school tours for “feeder schools,” neighborhood schools whose kids may attend HJM next year. Toward the end of April, they performed a short concert at “Experience a Day at HJM,” an event to welcome incoming students.

Music in the inner city moves outside in June, with the kick-off to the new season of Jazz on Wheels, Steve Kirby’s mobile jazz-history-performance-outreach-party band. The first concert by this band of sharp-shooting university students takes place at Hugh John Macdonald’s Community Feast on June 6. The school is unveiling a fantastic mural created by students and Winnipeg artists—it’s a visual celebration of the vitality and diversity of their neighborhood. Jazz on Wheels, with its energy and eclectic repertoire, will be the perfect soundtrack!



The community gathers at 5:00 pm, and Jazz on Wheels will get people dancing an hour later. One of the highlights of the concert: the young Bridge musicians will have a chance to sit in with the big guys and play some of the tunes they’ve been working on.

The Jazz on Wheels band is on stage again at noon on June 20. They’re at The Cube in Old Market Square, as part of the TD Winnipeg International Jazz Festival.

Come out—there’s music in the neighborhood! ■ Charlene Diehl

Charlene Diehl is the Coordinator of the Bridge Program, and a (dancing) fan of Jazz on Wheels.

## Hear Jazz on Wheels...

June 6, Hugh John Macdonald School

June 20, The Cube at Old Market Square

Check groovin’ high for details.

dig!

# The Bridge Program thanks a few heroes...

When Steve Kirby created Jazz on Wheels back in 2005, it was Step One toward creating a more inclusive and connected community. As an inner city kid himself, he knows how important it is to be invited into full membership in the community. Jazz on Wheels takes joyful, expressive, self-realizing music into communities who are not so likely to come to concert halls or theatres. Reaching out is the essence of Jazz on Wheels—reaching out is the essence of Step One.

Step Two? Creating the conditions that allow those communities to reach back. Steve's belief is that a community is informed by all who live in it, and Winnipeg will only find its full expression when all of its citizens are able to share their voices and visions. The Marcel A Desautels Faculty of Music had faculty and students with expertise, but no immediate way to set such an outreach project in motion.

Enter, local hero number one: Michael Nesbitt. When Steve talked about putting some energy into supporting the development of young musicians in the inner city, Michael got on board right away, and offered to underwrite the costs of a pilot project.

Enter, local hero number two: Vinh Huynh. The principal of Hugh John Macdonald School on Bannatyne is one of those gifted community builders who knows people, sees opportunities, and is absolutely dedicated to the present (and future) of his mob of junior high students and the staff who cares for them. Vinh embraced the project, and The Bridge Program was born.

That was January 2011, and within a few months, a core of eager learners was blossoming into real musicians. Their joy in learning and

their speedy absorption of musical information stunned and delighted all of us. Several of them played with the Jazz on Wheels band throughout the summer; six of them attended the U of M Jazz Camp; and seven of them performed—to a standing ovation—for the Governor General of Canada in October. The pilot program was an uncontested home run. But how to continue?

Enter, local hero number three: David Asper. In September, David asked Steve to identify one dream that really inspired him. Steve told him about the Bridge, and shared his dream of creating a jazz orchestra with those kids. Within days, David made a gift that would underwrite instruments for those young musicians.

With the support of another gift from Michael Nesbitt, and grants from the Winnipeg Foundation, the Thomas Sill Foundation, and the Central Neighbourhood Development Corporation, the Bridge secured Neil Watson as the Bridge's band director, and Curtis Nowosad and Simon Christie as on-site assistants. Long & McQuade helped with instruments. Several mentors spent time working with these young musicians to develop skills on their instruments and skills working together with others.

As the word gets out, other people are stepping up to help support this incredible project. Steve thinks of it as Winnipeg's version of a peace train—we're moving through the neighbourhoods, picking up people, powered by the belief and enthusiasm of constituents and supporters alike. Every step brings us all closer to that dream of an inclusive and artistic community which celebrates the contributions of every citizen...

The Bridge is an outreach program of the Marcel A Desautels Faculty of Music, and the incarnation of a long-time dream of Steve Kirby, Director of Jazz Studies. Invaluable supporters include the Winnipeg Foundation, Thomas Sill Foundation, Central Neighborhood Development Corporation, Long & McQuade, David Asper, Michael Nesbitt, and several private donors.

Jazz on Wheels is directed by Steve Kirby, and produced by Jazz Winnipeg, with support from the Winnipeg Foundation, TD Bank Financial, the Manitoba Arts Council, and the Department of Canadian Heritage.