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# The tempo never slows for Mississauga jazz man

BY MIKE BEGGS

“At the end of the day, I’m just a guy who loves to play guitar,” Rob Tardik says.

Maybe so, but through the course of the day, this long-time Mississaugan is also a music instructor, runs his own label (Guitardik), and is a successful inventor/small businessman.

As an instrumental guitar player/recording artist, 2010 has been a hell of a year for him.

First, he was named Guitarist of the Year at the 2010 Canadian Smooth Jazz Awards, held at the local Living Arts Centre. And in October, his second CD *The Right Time* spent a month at No. 1 on the U.S. Smooth Jazz charts, ranking him ahead of such international greats as George Benson, Herbie Hancock, Jeff Beck, and Sade - driven by the singles *Cruise*, and *Frame Of Mind*.

“That’s a very surreal experience [for me],” he says, over coffee.

He has done it with a fluid, soulful guitar style which spans jazz, pop, Flamenco, R&B, funk, and more.

Tardik has enjoyed earlier accolades on the domestic front. In another life, his rock band *Paradise Alley* had a deal with Duke Street/MCA Records; his 2006 instrumental cover of Sting’s *Fields Of Gold* went to No. 1 on the Canadian charts; and he claimed a 2007 MARTY (Mississauga Arts Award) in the Established Performing Arts category.

But since *The Right Time*’s July release he has been really making strides south of the border, playing those West Coast jazz venues considered “rites of passage” for any successful jazz player.

While a “very proud Canadian”, the likeable father of two says he simply has to address the massive U.S. market.

“I can count six to 10 radio shows in Canada dedicated to jazz. It’s tough,” he comments.

“But in the U.S., there’s tons of shows. You can’t really compare. That’s why I’ve been doing better in the States.”

He recently had the honour of being a presenter at the American Smooth Jazz Awards in Chicago, mingling with idols like Lee Ritenour, and Earl Klugh.

“It’s just the networking and branding. I’m trying to brand my music. Everybody is trying to brand themselves - the Toronto Maple Leafs are,” he continues. “I think it’s a necessity. You’re not selling yourself off, you’re just creating an awareness of your music.”

He recently hired an L.A.-based radio promoter, but reminds the interviewer that as an indie artist ([www.robardik.com](http://www.robardik.com)), “I literally fund everything out of my own pocket.”

Fortunately, he has found a profitable sideline with his “Music Stamps” music education system, which now sells around the world ([www.themusicstampseries.com](http://www.themusicstampseries.com)). It’s a time-saving device for music students teachers, and working musicians which was “borne out of necessity” in the early Eighties when Tardik himself was taking guitar lessons.

“[My teacher] used to give me these jazz charts - I couldn’t read them,” he relates. “I came up with the idea of these little stamps, where I put the fretboard of the guitar on it, so I could clearly read the charts and scales I

was trying to learn.”

He lined up distributorship through the Guelph company Trodat Vic, and when he took the idea online in 2003 there was no looking back.

He now has 25 different Music Stamps available, most recently covering the woodwinds.

He maintains the website himself.

“I’m the sales rep, shipper/receiver, and president,” he jokes.

“I can consider it one-third of my income at this point. Right now, I call it money while I sleep. That’s the Net, though.”

Of Hungarian descent, Tardik is also a partner in the new MDR Music Productions, which aims to license new music to TV, film, and radio. He’s a longstanding instructor at Oakville’s Merriam School Of Music, and spent four years teaching at the Guitar Workshop Plus summer music camp.

But now he’s putting his mind to his next CD, hoping to sustain and build on his States-side buzz.

It will once again feature ranking Canadian players like sax man Carson Freeman, and keyboardist/producer Davor Jordanovski, plus some new American musical friends like drummer Tony Moore.

For the first time, he will be singing on some of these tracks.

“I have to do it. It’s a growth spurt for me as an artist,” he offers.

“I call my music contemporary



Rob Tardik

instrumental, and if I start singing it will definitely cross over into adult pop categories.”

But Rob Tardik hasn’t forgotten where he came from. He still plays for seniors at the Credit Valley Hospital three or four times a month, occasionally sits in with the Chris Smith Band at the local Ten Restaurant, and speaks to high school students about music, returning to his alma mater, Glenforest Secondary later this month.

“It’s time to be applying to all of the festivals in the U.S. and Canada. I’ve got to get on the horn and start putting out packages,” he adds.

“I’ve still got a lot of work to do.”

# City rocks tradition this holiday season

BY MIKE BEGGS

Tradition is everything at Christmas. And the joint Yuletide show by Mississauga Pops Concert Band, and JUSTUS choir has become a well-entrenched tradition in these parts, presented for more than a quarter century.

Billed this year as the Eden Community Xmas Sing, it is coming up again on December 15 at Eden United Church, 3051 Battleford Rd.

While the concert starts at 7:30 p.m., the 53-piece Mississauga Pops - celebrating its 30th anniversary -- will begin performing at 7 p.m. as people file into the church. They are led by musical director Colin Clarke.

From there they will alternate spots with JUSTUS (led by Gary Clipperton) in a festive night of classic and modern Christmas songs, and carolling with song sheets handed out to the audience.

“We want to share in the season and it’s going to a good cause, the Eden United Church,” says Mississauga Arts Council Executive Director Linda Thomas, who plays French horn and sings with the Pops

While admission is free, a plate is passed around for donations.

“Family, kids are encouraged, the more the better,” she adds. “It’s not a stuffy event. Kids are dancing in the aisles, and people are singing.”

“We tend to get 500 to 600 people out, annually. We’ve had some concerts where the weather has been horrendous, and people still come out. It’s just a tradition, and a fun time.”

On Dec. 10 and 11, at The Great Hall, 84 South Service Rd., Windmill Theatre presents *Christmas In Canada*, its annual

Christmas concert featuring the music of Canadian composers, Stephen Chatman, Eleanor Daley, and Mark Sirett.

The show will feature carols from across Canada, plus traditional carols and fireside favourites. There is an 8:00 p.m. start, with tickets \$30 per person. Call (905) 338-5702.

Meanwhile on Dec. 13, Mississauga native Breanne Arrigo hosts a release party for her debut holiday record, *The Living Miracles of Christmas* at the Lionheart British Pub & Restaurant, 3221 Derry Rd. at Tenth Line.

This family event runs from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. with the JUNO-nominated Arrigo performing Christmas classics with her bluesy flair. All proceeds of CD sales will go to Sick Kids Hospital.

Her disc is available for purchase at the show for \$10, or at participating Long & McQuade locations. Drop in, or make a reservation by phone at (905) 824-6669.

The Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., has its usual smorgasbord of dazzling Christmas shows coming up in December. For tickets, call the box office at (905) 306-6000, or go online to [www.livingartscentre.ca](http://www.livingartscentre.ca).



The Nutcracker at Mississauga's LAC.

livingartscentre.ca.

Things kick off on Dec. 4 (2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.) at the RBC Theatre with the Mississauga Festival Choir performing *An English Christmas*.

The concert will feature the music of prominent British composers like Jonathan Willcocks and John Rutter, plus special guest performers the Mississauga

Festival Youth Choir. Tickets are \$20 and \$25.

On Dec. 10 at 8:00 p.m., the always amusing *Arrogant Worms* will be bringing their musical comedy, *Christmas Turkey* to the RBC Theatre. Tickets are \$28 and \$45.

Handel’s *Messiah Rocks* puts a fresh spin on a Christmas classic on Dec. 16 and 17 at 8:00 p.m. at Hammerson Hall, with stunning visual effects, and a whole crew of musicians including an orchestra, rock band, adult and children’s choirs, and reknowned soloists. Tickets are \$95 and \$60 for adults, and \$35 and up for kids.

Orchestras Mississauga take over the Hammerson Hall stage on Dec. 18 at 4:00 p.m. (\$15 and \$51). This Home For Christmas concert includes selections like A

Christmas Fanfare, by James Beckel, Christmas Carol Medley by Tony Royse, La Boutique Fantastique by Rossini/Respighi, and *Vocalise* by Rachmaninov.

Hammerson Hall will also be the site of two Nov. 28 performances (4:30 and 7:00 p.m.) with the Salvation Army Mississauga Temple Community Church presenting *The Gift Of Christmas*

An annual event since 1998, it is a celebration of the real meaning of Christmas through music, drama, and carolling. Tickets are complimentary through the LAC box office.

Dec. 3 (8:00 p.m.) is the date of Christmas with Gino Monopoli as Elvis at the RBC Theatre. World Elvis champion Monopoli performs his Christmas concert in support of the Children’s Wish Foundation of Canada.

This year, the LAC’s annual presentation of *The Nutcracker* will be performed by the acclaimed State Ballet Theatre of Russia, on Dec. 4 (7:00 p.m.) and Dec. 5 (2:00 p.m.) at Hammerson Hall. Beautiful dances are set to Tchaikovsky’s famous score. Tickets are \$50 and \$80.

The Mississauga Children’s Choir performs *Voices Of Light* on Dec. 5 (3:00 p.m.) at the RBC Theatre (\$20); JUSTUS presents its annual *Our Kind Of Christmas* show on Dec. 10 (7:30 p.m.) at Hammerson Hall (\$17 and \$15); Dufflebag Theatre does *A Christmas Carol* for the kids on Dec. 19 (1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.) at RBC Theatre (adults \$20, kids \$15).

The All Slovenian Cultural Committee presents *Slovenian Starlight’s Christmas Concert* on Dec. 19 at 5:00 p.m. at Hammerson Hall (\$60 and \$49) which also celebrates Slovenia’s 20th anniversary of independence.