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## ENTERTAINMENT LOCAL

# Trottier a triple threat

By **Peter Hendra**, Kingston Whig-Standard  
Friday, January 16, 2015 4:26:24 EST PM



Acclaimed Canadian fiddler, singer and step-dancer Kelli Trottier at her Kingston home. (Julia McKay/The Whig-Standard)

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Even after performing in front of others for years, fiddler, singer and step-dancer Kelli Trottier admits she still gets nervous before a show.

"Sometimes I get so nervous it can be debilitating at times, not so much with singing and dancing, but playing the fiddle," Trottier chuckled. "Playing a skilled instrument when you're shaking can be difficult sometimes."

Trottier, who typically plays a blend of country and Celtic numbers, performs alongside the Kingston Symphony on Saturday night at the Grand Theatre.

"They told me they were calling it 'A Celtic Journey,' so I thought, 'OK, it needs to have some Celtic focus,'" joked Trottier, who will be joined onstage by her pianist and bass player.

Trottier has performed with a symphony before, in Denver, but that was while she was a member of the string collective Bowfire, of which she was a member for nine years. She left the group — which toured around the world, and once played a surprise 80th birthday party for Connery, Sean Connery, at his home in the Bahamas — in 2011.

She left because she lost her, ahem, fire to perform with the band.

"Anything I'm doing musically, if it becomes just about the paycheque, it's time to make a change," Trottier said of her musical motto.

"I play music because I love it — it's a bonus that I get to make a living at it — but when things get to that point where I'm not enjoying what I'm doing anymore, it's time."

In addition to preparing for Saturday's special performance with the symphony, Trottier has been busy as of late making a new record. It will be her first since 2011's Memories of Christmas.

She was going to make one last year around this time, but she decided to put it on hold.

"I don't want to put just anything out there," Trottier said.

She hopes to have the new record released by March, and it will feature a number of original instrumentals and vocal songs. She will bring the CDs along with her wherever she performs.

"I remember doing a radio show and they asked me where people could buy my CDs," Trottier recalled. "I told them, 'Out of the trunk of my car.'"

The coming year will see Trottier split her time between performing and teaching. She is often a guest instructor at fiddle camps across the country, and she often plans her tours around those ventures. Many of the attendees at those camps, which she feels might be a misleading descriptor, are over the age of 40.

"You see the same people over and over again, and it's really great to see them progressing and to see them still excited about it year after year," she observed.

Teaching is something that comes instinctively to Trottier, who first came to Kingston to study at Queen's University. After completing her undergraduate degree, she stayed and enrolled in teacher's college.

Still, she can remember applying for a teaching vacancy and then withdrawing her application because she didn't feel she was finished with music.

"I always knew I wanted to continue playing music, but I never, ever thought I would make it a career," she said.

Trottier, now in her 40s, grew up in the Ottawa Valley, specifically Glengarry County, where she and her musically inclined family would perform at seniors' homes, strawberry socials and fairs, where the competition would often be Canadian folk group The Leahys.

"We've always had music in the family," she said. "It was a pretty nice way to grow up."

In her house, the music leaned toward songs of the Celtic variety. In her small community, there were a number of melded styles; along with the Celtic style, there were hints of Ottawa Valley fiddling and Quebecois fiddling, each of them distinct.

In fact, when Trottier was invited to address a dozen or so senators last year on national fiddling day, she told them that Canadian fiddling was unique because it was a hybrid of so many different styles and varied from region to region, province to province.

When the fiddling contingent obliged the members of the upper house when asked to play another number, each one of the senators "got out of their seats," Trottier recalled.

"I think it's just the sharing of the music, too," Trottier suggested.

"There's just this bond that happens, not even just between fiddlers, but anyone around the music."

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ESSENTIALS

What: Local fiddler, singer and step-dancer Kelli Trottier performs "A Celtic Journey" with the Kingston Symphony.

When: Saturday, Jan. 17, at 7:30 p.m.

Where: The Grand Theatre, 218 Princess St.

Cost: Tickets range from \$20 to \$50, plus the applicable HST and handling fees. Go to [kingstongrand.ca](http://kingstongrand.ca) to buy online.

For more: [kellitrottier.com](http://kellitrottier.com)

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