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A&E Editor: Kristi Patton • Phone: 492-3636 ext. 228  
E-mail: kpatton@pentictonwesternnews.com

# Big Broadcast dips into history

Western News Staff

Rehearsals are now underway for a production at the Shatford Centre that follows in the footsteps of a show on the very same stage 78 years ago.

"In March of 1936, the *Penticton Herald* reported that 110 local singers, actors, and dancers put on an event that was just like the radio shows of the era. It was sponsored by the Gyro Club and raised funds for Gyro Park," said Craig Henderson, the writer and producer of the Big Broadcast of 2014.

Thirty-seven Penticton actors, broadcasters and musical artists are involved in the production, which takes to the stage at the Shatford Centre from Feb. 28 to Mar. 2.

Henderson, also a member of the Peach City Community Radio Society, added that the idea is to pay tribute to the live radio shows of the past, while helping raise money to support the society's goal of creating a community radio station in Penticton.

The society expects to submit its application to the CRTC next month to establish a non-profit community FM station in Penticton and recently started broadcasting full-time online.

You can listen to the online stream through their website at [peachcityradio.org](http://peachcityradio.org)

"The 1936 event pretended to be a radio broadcast, just like the cavalcades of talent often heard on the airwaves in generations past. Yet, it was 12 years before CKOK signed on as Penticton's first radio station. Our 2014 show will be broadcast in the near future and will be available as a podcast shortly after it is staged."

The show traces its heritage back to the movies as well — The Big Broadcast of 1936, starring George Burns, Gracie Allen, Bing Crosby, Ethel Merman and many more had just finished a run at Penticton's Empress Theatre not long before the local group staged their show. Paramount's Big Broadcast series began in 1932 and continued until 1938.

The 2014 Big Broadcast includes vignettes of local history and a comedic melodrama play during which the audience is encouraged to boo the villain and cheer on the hero.

Sound effects will be performed live using everyday gadgets and gizmos to add to the audio realism.

"We're fortunate to have a fine talent pool to pull off this year's event. Actor and improv performer Christa Phillips is direct-



PENTICTON FOLK AND ROOTS singer-songwriter Maiya Robbie headlines the Big Broadcast of 2014, Feb. 28 to March 2 at the Shatford Centre.

Submitted photo

ing the show. Her father Bill, who is also in the cast, has been in broadcasting for almost 60 years," said Henderson.

Penticton folk and roots artist Maiya Robbie will perform. Other local musical artists include Katie and Ted Shumaker, Jack Godwin, Larry Saidman and Yanti Rowland.

The acting and announcing cast includes Dennis Walker, Gerry O'Day, Paul Varga, Cal Meiklejohn, Carol Munro, Katie Bowling, Jacinta Ferrari, Bryan Laver and Bob Nicholson, among others.

"There are so many historic links between our show and the 1936 Broad-

cast. Two of our performers — Randy Manuel and Katie Shumaker — are cousins, and their grandmother, Florence Manuel, played piano in the 1936 event.

Grant King was the hero in the 1936 melodrama. Besides starting a clothing store, he was a part of the early ownership group of CKOK. Our melodrama hero is played by Cameron Baughen, founder of the Peach City Community Radio Society," said Henderson.

Tickets for The Big Broadcast of 2014 are available at the Shatford Centre, 760 Main Street, or Dragon's Den, 12 Front Street.

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