

Max Tell heads for Colombia

By [Melissa Smalley - Peace Arch News](#)

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After a busy summer entertaining young fans around the Peninsula, White Rock's Max Tell is taking his act to South America.

The children's singer / storyteller – known off stage as Robert Stelmach – is getting ready to head to Columbia on Oct. 14, where he will spend four weeks performing for young audiences at international schools.

It's not the first time Stelmach has taken his show to Latin America – last fall, he spent three weeks in Brazil under contract with Dream On Productions, the same group he's traveling with this year.

Upon returning from Brazil last fall, Stelmach shared with Peace Arch News some of the challenges he encountered performing for young students who weren't able to fully understand his song lyrics or stories.

This time, however, Stelmach said he's prepared for whatever language barrier difficulties might come his way.

"Usually there isn't a problem, but every once in a while one does run into a class that doesn't have strong enough English," he said. "I just have to remember that if there is difficulty in the audience, it probably is a language barrier. You have to stop and think, 'What can I do to help them? What piece can I do next that will be within their language range?'"

Stelmach also shared last year some of the memorable adventures of his time in Brazil – including overcoming an intense fear of heights to take a cable car

up a mountain. However, with a schedule that includes 60 shows in just four weeks, there may not be as much time to explore this time around.

"Because it's four shows a day, five days a week, pretty much during the week there's very little time or energy but to perform, eat or sleep," he explained.

The fast pace won't be too much of a departure from what Stelmach is used to here on the Peninsula, however.

He's wrapping up a busy few months that saw him perform at the Fort Edmonton Storytelling Festival and libraries around the province. He's also one of several new buskers in White Rock, taking his act to the streets up to three days a week.

"It's certainly not a lucrative profession, to busk, but it's great rehearsal," he said of the city's new licensed busker program.

Looking beyond his tour of Columbia, Stelmach is planning a follow-up album to 2009's *Monkey Mumbo Jumbo* – which, earlier this year, received a number of national and international songwriting accolades.

He's also hoping to collaborate with other Peninsula artists on the new record both for musical accompaniment and for artwork.

Until then, he said he has plenty on his plate preparing for his month-long adventure in Columbia.

"I have tons of things to do – it really is a huge event."

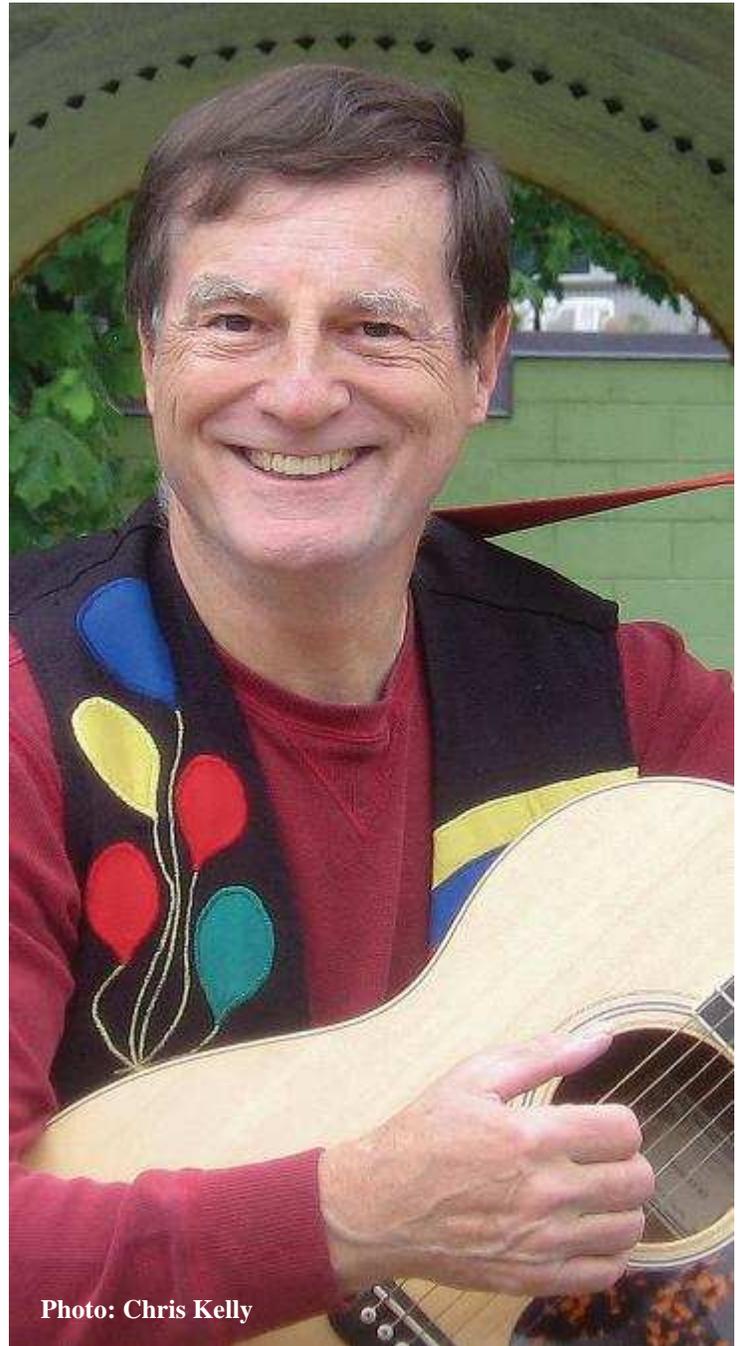


Photo: Chris Kelly

Max Tell Heads for Colombia his second South American tour in as many years.