

Leisure

Max Tell offers up 'musical monkey business' for the whole family during busking sessions

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Staff Writer

This summer, children's singer Max Tell has been performing hits from his new CD, *Monkey Mumbo Jumbo*, throughout the White Rock area.

But he won't be here for long, so you might want to make a point of getting to one of his three performance locations from now through the end of October to see his show.

"I call it musical monkey business for the whole family," said Tell. "It's wit, wonder and wordplay."

Tell's new CD includes "curriculum connected" songs relating to self-esteem, animals and future jobs. Geared toward kids aged five to seven, Tell said he uses music to help teach children.

The title song, "Monkey Mumbo Jumbo," according to Tell, is "a song to let children kind of break loose and then settle down at the end."

Since July, Tell has shared his music with the people on the Peninsula and has enjoyed every minute of it.

"What I'm doing is busking," he said, "to



polish my songs and make them better and better and better."

You can catch his act at the foot of the White Rock pier, at the bear on East Beach, or on Sundays at the Whale Wall during the Farmer's Market.

"I will be performing until late October and then going to Colombia," said Tell. There, he has 60 shows scheduled in four weeks.

Tell said his career began long before his professional singing started. A performer

through childhood, he went on to receive a Bachelor's of Arts and started in children's theatre in Toronto in 1974.

In 1986, Tell moved to Vancouver to pursue his passion even further.

"I presented my own poems and stories at the Matsqui school in Abbotsford," he said. "I just loved it so much so I kept on doing it."

A father of two, Tell said the children's reactions to his songs are what make it worth the effort.

"I really enjoy watching their eyes light up. When I'm telling my stories, just to see them in awe," he said.

"It just touches me very deeply when that connection is made."

Next for Tell, in addition to his Colombian tour, is a collaboration story with local artist, Jennifer Vespaziani. After meeting at the Spirit of the Sea Festival in White Rock several weeks ago, Tell said Vespaziani's work inspired him to write a story he'd had in mind for a while.

"I wanted to write a Romeo and Juliet story about two kids who wanted to play but they weren't allowed," he explained. Titled *The Heart-shaped Tree*, Vespaziani's

artwork will accompany the story, aimed for children seven and up.

"We're just in the beginning stages," said Tell.

"I really enjoy watching their eyes light up. When I'm telling my stories, just to see them in awe."

Max Tell

The multifaceted writer and performer received numerous honourable mentions at various songwriting and story writing competitions this year. In the past six months, four of his songs and two of his stories were nominated for awards.

For more information on Tell's music, visit www.maxtell.ca.

Other performers who can be found busking around the city streets of White Rock until the end of October include Kierah Raymond, Joe Given and a number of other performance artists of different kinds.

4 people on the Peninsula to know

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3 Max Tell is the person to see to learn all about monkey business and having some family-oriented fun. He's busking around White Rock until Halloween. See page 22.

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