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ARTS & LIFE

BREAKING NEWS AT THESTARPHOENIX.COM

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OFF THE RECORD

THE FUNNY THING

Myles Morrison's comedy album a dream come true

GERRY WALDNER/The Star-Phoenix

CAM FULLER
THE STAR-PHOENIX

Myles Morrison saw funny in his future 10 years ago.

"I heard George Carlin's Class Clown album when I was 11 years old. He gets the entire audience to pop their cheek at the same time. As soon as I heard that, I thought, 'I have to do that.'"

Today, Morrison is a regular at Bad's on 8th Wednesday comedy night and keeps busy with his own gigs as the only Yuk Yuks-signed comic in the province. It wasn't easy at first, but Morrison was undeterred by backlash, stage fright or even nausea.

"You have to go through the gauntlet and the writing a little bit (allowing you get that) thick skin. It was a rough existence at gigs off the more you do it."

Juggling his day job as a letter-carrier for Canada Post, Morrison has also found time to be a collection of 20 poems he wrote for his mom into a book. Bill I'm a Bear, self-published through Amazon, was illustrated by Morrison's wife Brodie.

And now, Morrison has realized a dream by releasing his own comedy album. It was recorded at a fundraising show to save the town hall in Bolsover, Brodie's hometown.

A large crowd turned out and it was a perfect night, Morrison says.

"We decided to film it, and it turned out great. 'It's got a really good feel to it and we thought it would be a great way to get it out there.'"

The audio album is available on iTunes; the DVD version is for sale on Morrison's website, mylesmorrison.com.

Artist: Myles Morrison
Release date: Sept. 1
Release shows: Tonight, 8 p.m., Bad's (Yuk), Thursday 9 p.m., Bad's $15 in (Yuk) (Show Sold Out)
The album's comic sensibility: "If you've never heard of me or seen my act, this will feel like we're just hanging out and making a laugh at the bar together."
Career highlight: Overhead, several times (you're 2/3D with American accent Tommy Smith) and the few times over the years (Yuk) "It was crazy because I was a fan from The Daily Show and Robin Williams had just done the same (on the Yuk) so we got treated like royalty when we were there. These guys don't make an easy entrance!"
Fun Fact: "I have a giant scar every left arm from when I was one year old. Most adult walking are chest-enough on my high chair and I knocked a pile of potatoes off the stove and I ran and got the scar to prove it."

FILM

Young Sask. actor to share silver screen with DiCaprio

CAM FULLER
THE STAR-PHOENIX

Leonardo would have been nice, but Isaiah Trotenko had a week to do — like acting with Leonardo DiCaprio.

The seven-year-old from Prince Albert spent more than a week in Los Angeles this summer after being cast in the film The Revenant.

"It's amazing. We're really honoured," his mom, Rachel Berkeel, said Tuesday.

The Revenant — about a wounded trapper in the 1820s set upon by survive — is directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu, who was chosen Oscars for Birdman including best director.

Behind look Isaiah to Calgary for the tryout and Trotenko aced it — perhaps not surprising when he's the great grandchild of the late acclaimed actor Gordon Tootoosis.

"They filmed everything about him. I guess they tested to see if he was cooperative. They shoved him and he did everything he was told to."

When the family found out he'd landed the part, it was almost over-whelming.

"At first I teared up because I was so happy. I couldn't believe it," Berkeel said.

Isaiah's aunt accompanied him to L.A. He has four sisters, all younger than him. It was hard seeing him go, his mom said.

"I almost changed my mind last minute when he was about to board the plane."

The production provided a phone so they could Skype every night. The initial plan for the trip was to include a visit to Leonardo but that didn't work out.

"We didn't expect for him to work until the sun was down. By the time the day was over he's be all tired," said Berkeel.

Even after the trip, Isaiah didn't really know who DiCaprio was, she added.

"When he got back, we got a movie on because we were asking him questions. Once he realized who he was he said 'I know that guy, he's in a movie dad.'"

As it happens, Berkeel was a huge DiCaprio fan.

"When I was younger I loved Leonardo, oh my gosh. I had a lot of friends teasing me about him, all my childhood friends know I was crazy about him."

She might still get a chance to meet him. The Revenant opens in December and the family will be invited to the red carpet.

"Definitely. I'll be there, and he didn't dad will be there too."

Leonardo DiCaprio and Isaiah Tootoosis hang out behind the scenes.

ART

Oil painting wins $5,000 prize

Saskatoon artist and University of Saskatchewan student Shelby Lechman is the regional winner of the 13th annual BMO 1st Art! Invitational Student Art Competition with her piece Exodus. The oil painting was inspired by the Hungarian Revolution. Her prize includes $5,000 and having her piece displayed along with the 12 other winners at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery at the University of Toronto from Oct. 22 to Dec. 18. The winners were chosen from more than 250 entries from post-secondary institutions across the country. The national winner, Tamara Hinamelpash from Alberta, received a $10,000 prize.