

Music hall a long way off

Posted 15 days ago

The Canadian Music Hall of Fame isn't ready yet to discuss or consider a location for the facility, Juno Awards spokesman Chris McDowall said yesterday.

"The physical site of the Hall of Fame is on hold as they are still negotiating the fundraising strategy," he said.

A city councillor is lobbying to get the hall to set up an exhibit or museum in Peterborough, a local businessman says.

Coun. Dean Pappas is talking with the hall of fame to try to convince it to open a satellite museum at Venue Peterborough when it opens in the former Vibe night club building in September next year, Operitel Corp. president Michael Skinner said.

Pappas could not be reached for comment yesterday.

McDowall said the hall doesn't have a fundraising goal, an estimated cost for the museum or a projected start date for the search for a location.

"When we start looking at possibilities, any and all cities can submit," McDowall said.

The hall is currently on the Internet with biographies and photos of inductees, such as Tom Cochrane (2003), Leonard Cohen (1991) and Neil Young (1982). It doesn't have a physical location.

The Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences organizes the Juno Awards and established the hall in 1978. It recognizes Canadian artists that have achieved commercial success while having a positive impact on the Canadian music scene.

"The best case is that we can be a satellite office of the Canadian Music Hall of Fame," Skinner said. "At the very minimum we want to put a tribute to Peterborough music in there.

"For me, it's extremely important that Peterborough maintains its music heritage and that we're able to clearly communicate this to Peterborough as a community."

Operitel Investments purchased the former Vibe night club building on George Street just north of King Street in June last year.

A \$1-million renovation will convert the building to a concert venue with a goal of attracting 12 major acts each year, said Skinner, also the president of Kawartha Entertainment Group Inc., the company that owns the Rooster and the Historic Red Dog Pub and Tavern.

Skinner said 2,000 square feet would be used for a music museum in the 10,000-square-foot facility, or there would be a small exhibit on the local history of music.

Skinner added he's been working with Trent Valley Archives and Bruce Fitzpatrick, a local lawyer who leads historical tours in the downtown.

"Bruce has been a huge proponent of history and music together in the downtown," Skinner said.

An upcoming history of music walking tour, It's All About the Music, that starts on June 20 will begin each tour at the Venue at 286 George St., Skinner said.

"It was the original Grand Opera House," he said of the building. "It was torn down in 1939."

The Grand Opera House opened on Nov. 13, 1876 with a play called the Adventurers, Skinner said, reading from an Examiner article.

The Historic Red Dog donated 30 MP3 players for people taking the history of music walking tours to listen to music on while they're participating in the tour, he said.

Fitzpatrick and Diane Robnik, of the Trent Valley Archives, are organizing the history of music walking tour, Skinner said.

Fitzpatrick was reluctant to talk about the tour, saying they're "just developing the music tour."

"Peterborough does actually have a fabulous music history," he said. "Like a lot of things with this town, you're shocked with the talent that comes out of here."

NOTE: Bruce Fitzpatrick is leading a bike tour, called Heroes and Rails, Bridges and Trails, on May 17 starting at 1 p. m. at the Riverview Park and Zoo.

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