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# Songwriters LIGHT up the stage



Nyanna Parcher will be performing at the Songwriters Music Festival on January 29 as a representative of the York Region RWG. [www.nyannasongs.com](http://www.nyannasongs.com)

STORY BY Cathy Minz

**K**nown around the world for producing prolific musicians, Canada is home to legendary songwriters like Bryan Adams, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen and RUSH who have shaped the cultural landscape in Canada for generations. But who are the next generation of vibrant songwriters hot on the trail to success? That is just the question that Ron Beer, singer, songwriter, musician, and member of the Songwriters Association of Canada (SAC) is helping to answer. He is taking the lead in organizing the Songwriters Music Festival and Awards Show on January 29, 2011 at Whitby Courthouse Theatre.

This eclectic showcase of talented performers from Regional Writers Groups (RWG) across the country will also feature some of Durham's most talented songwriters. Auditioning for a spot in the showcase, local musicians will surprise, delight and entertain the audience. Those selected to perform in the show will also have one of their songs included on a compilation CD that will be promoted worldwide. Beer suggests that when an artist sends out their own CD, they can include the compilation CD so that other artists gain a greater exposure. He calls it "cross pollination" and says

it's a great way to develop a cultural unity across the country.

"The Regional Writers Group is a part of the Songwriters Association of Canada that is underdeveloped," explains Beer. "When I decided to volunteer as a regional coordinator, I discovered there were seven or eight RWGs across the country that had no game plan, no inter-communication and no formal programs or curriculums." He proposed the idea of a Songwriter's Festival to Don Quarles, Executive Director of the SAC and when he was told that there was no money or resources available, he decided to do it anyway!

Beer wants "to give back (to the music community) with my skills to people in Durham Region." He has been travelling to meet representatives from the other RWGs to help build rapport and focus. And, he has met some very talented songwriters along the way, some of whom will play at the showcase on January 29.

BJ Laub is a versatile musician specializing in percussion, acoustic guitar and vocals. BJ's love for musical involvement has rapidly grown over the course of the past three years while playing alongside local band Last Minute in establishments

in and around Windsor, Ontario. BJ has joined the band ReGael as their percussionist playing rarely seen instruments including cajon, bongos, djembe, conga and various others. Performing with ReGael at events like Dragon Boat Race Gala, the Detroit River Steamboat Race and headlining monthly at Mick's Irish Pub, the group has also secured gigs at Caesar's Casino Windsor and The Kildare House. BJ has captivated audiences with his acoustic guitar and vocals. has recently focused his attention on creating his own trademark sounds and lyrics.

Nyanna Parcher is a singer, songwriter and artist who writes and performs lively, animated songs for preschoolers as well as music in a variety of genres for adults. Nyanna will be performing at the Songwriters Music Festival on January 29th as a representative of the York Region RWG. [www.nyannasongs.com](http://www.nyannasongs.com)

Also performing in the showcase, Joanna Butler is from Halifax, Nova Scotia. She has performed for U.S. President Obama on his first trip to Canada as president. Joanna's music celebrates her love for peace and the planet. Hear some of her tracks at [www.myspace.com/joannabutlermusic](http://www.myspace.com/joannabutlermusic).

The Songwriters Music Festival and Awards Show will provide a unique opportunity for both

the audience and the songwriters. Durham residents have a chance to see talented musicians from across the country in an intimate venue. Songwriters benefit from showcasing their talents to a wider audience. They gain exposure to new markets and feedback from new fans.

"This annual event will be held this year and next in Whitby, then we will take it on the road," says Mr. Beer. "We are laying the foundation of a national circuit. This will bring our regional songwriters national recognition through our concerts and compilations CD's."

"So far we have interest from Victoria (BC), Edmonton (AB), Regina (SK), Guelph, York Region and Windsor in Ontario and Halifax (NS)," says Mr. Beer. "This educational and cultural event is an opportunity for our community (Whitby) to host all of these cities."

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students and seniors. With the purchase of ten tickets, you receive two VIP backstage passes that allows you entrance to meet the artists backstage after the show.

Contact Ron Beer at (905) 668-2646 or email [ronbeer@rogers.com](mailto:ronbeer@rogers.com) to purchase tickets.