

# Mixing theatre, music and art for charity

## Autism Society of Edmonton Fundraiser

Thursday, 5 October at 6pm  
The Sidetrack Café

EDMON ROTEA  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Many people consider a charity gala dinner to be the ideal fundraising event for old folks, and would rather skip the food and enjoy an evening of live entertainment elsewhere.

However, for self-proclaimed dramaturge Trent Wilkie, from the Autism Society of Edmonton Area (ASEA), hopes that his organization's upcoming fundraising event will appeal to a younger crowd—a demographic that wouldn't normally consider an expensive charity dinner to be the ideal night out. Wilkie also hopes that the event will create more awareness and education for the neurodevelopment disorder that affects approximately one in 165 children in Canada.

"In a big gala, everyone sits around tables and they watch someone's kid do some dancing," says Wilkie, who's also a part of Mostly Water Theatre, a company providing a portion of the live entertainment. "I don't find that stuff terribly interesting—I don't like sitting around a table waiting for dinner to be served.

"There's not a lot of areas where someone with autism can go out and comfortably be themselves," Wilkie continues. "Sometimes, they have situations where they yell, they some-



times rock [back and fourth], a lot of stuff that you and me would consider to be odd. They spend a lot of time practicing their 'oddness.' In my [drama] class of 14, they're allowed to do whatever they want."

Wilkie believes that these drama classes he teaches not only provide therapeutic value for his autistic pupils, but also perhaps provide a forum where they can learn to express themselves. And like his workshops,

Wilkie also hopes that the experience of performing live in front of an audience will help his students further develop important lifelong skills.

"The two biggest fears in the world are [said to be] death and public speaking—and these guys are doing a lot of public speaking, which also gives them a little bit of strength," Wilkie says. "A lot of people out there who don't have autism can't get up in front of people and speak—and these

guys are up onstage performing even though [public speaking] is a big fear for them and for a lot of neuro-typical people."

The event will also feature live entertainment from friends and supporters of the ASEA. Other performances include live music by The Wheat Pool and visual art by autistic painters.

"I just want people with autism to be around people without autism,"

Wilkie says. "It's not whether people with autism will benefit—it's really a benefit for the people without autism."

"This is a unique, eclectic, intelligent and creative group of people. I want everybody to be there—I want everybody to think that they can be there—not just somebody with or who knows somebody who has autism."

## There's nothing sexier than a hard, plastic mixtape



MEGAN CLEAVELEY

A carefully crafted mixtape isn't an easy accomplishment. The tracks need to have an order that makes sense, be at a similar volume level and follow a somewhat logical order. All of this is far more complicated than it sounds; anyone who's received a bad mixtape at one point in his or her life knows this. Whether it was sloppily done, used an overly eclectic mix of unrelated songs, or was just a playlist on a computer masquerading as a mixtape, there are many ways for it to go wrong.

A good mixtape, on the other hand, is truly a work of art, and one which I fear will soon be lost forever. When was the last time you made or received a mixtape? Personally, I can't

remember the last time I worked on my mixtape skills.

I've also been careless with my tapes over the years. The only one I can find is one my dad made about ten years ago. I stole that one from the record cabinet when I got my first car, since it had only a tape player. This tape, *Rob's Tunes Sept. 1/96*, has accompanied me on many long car trips and always makes me think of my dad.

I believe that music sounds better on tape (or vinyl, but that's a whole different story). It gives it a certain *je ne sais quoi* to songs that makes it somehow sound more authentic. Tapes also seem more permanent

somehow, maybe because you don't have to worry about it getting scratched and not working anymore if you toss it in your backpack—or, you know, drawing blood if someone throws it out of a moving car because they're sick of listening to it. And having been hit by a CD once in such a situation, I can speak with some authority on the subject.

As for the "last-minute gift idea" stigma, that's bullshit. An exquisitely crafted mixtape is probably the best gift anyone could ever receive, considering that the effort required to make one properly is a true testament to how much someone cares about you. Never mind roses or candy, if

you want to woo me, bring me a great mixtape. There's nothing more special than receiving a tape from someone that expresses their feelings using someone else's words—unless the person in question happens to be John Mayer or Leonard Cohen.

As we advance more and more technologically, I fear that the art of mixtapes will be doomed to suffer the same fate as macramé plant holders and Velcro suits. Because, like Rob says at the end of *High Fidelity*, "The making of a great compilation tape, like breaking up, is hard to do and takes ages longer than it might seem"—which is exactly why they're so cool in the first place.



This boy thinks he's Harry Potter, and his mother is condoning it. Obviously, she's a witch disguised in a sensible sweater, and she's training her little tyke to dabble in witchcraft. Can you see the gleam in his eyes? His first word is going to be "diablo."

If you want to save this poor mother and her child from being tied to a rock and thrown into the ocean, come write for *Gateway A&E* (meetings Thursdays at 5pm in 3-04 SUB). Of course, you won't actually be able to preserve their lives, but perhaps your creative efforts will somehow bring justice to those who are wrongly accused of having sexual relations with Lucifer.

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