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BACKGROUNDER/MEDIA KIT:

Acknowledgements:



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
La santé mentale pour tous



NB Mental Health Consumer Network
Sackville Branch



This national event is presented in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association and a number of its local chapters across Canada, and the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention. It is also presented with support and assistance from Distress Centres in Toronto, Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council, Richard's Legacy Foundation for Survivors of Suicide Loss, London Middlesex Suicide Prevention Council, Winnipeg Suicide Prevention Network, Association québécoise de prévention du suicide, and the New Brunswick Mental Health Consumer Network, Sackville branch.

Our thanks and special acknowledgments go to more than 200 performers, and the University of Alberta for its significant contributions to the Mysterious Barricades concert project, in particular to the Office of Information and Communications Technology for hosting the live stream, and staff in the Office of the Dean of Students for their tremendous assistance. Thanks also go to countless people at the following universities for their many contributions to the Mysterious Barricades concerts.

About our name:

Les Barricades Mysterieuses (The Mysterious Barricades) was composed in 1717 for the harpsichord by François Couperin. It is the fifth piece in his "Ordre 6ème de clavecin" in B-flat major from his second book of collected harpsichord pieces. It is emblematic of the style brisé of French baroque keyboard music.



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With this concert project, we hope to raise the level of discussion and awareness surrounding the mysterious barricades between mental illness and health, between the darkness of depression and a flicker of hope, between life and death.

World Suicide Prevention Day information, including toolkit:

<http://suicideprevention.ca/wspd/#kit>

Media guidelines for responsible presentation of information about suicide:

<http://suicideprevention.ca/news-resources/media-guidelines-and-social-marketing/>

Suicide Facts:

- About 4,000 Canadians die by suicide every year.
- Suicide is the second-most common cause of death among young people, but men in their 40s and 50s have the highest rate of suicide.
- Women are three to four times more likely to attempt suicide than men, but men are three times more likely to die by suicide than women.

(Source: Canadian Mental Health Association)

A Q & A with Beth Turnbull, founder of the Mysterious Barricades Concert Society:

1. The cross-Canada concert is an incredibly beautiful idea. How did it originate? When did you know this was something you wanted to do?

The idea for this concert came to me literally in a 'flash' approximately a week after Chris died. I was still in shock, but I knew I wanted to make music in order to connect with my friends across the country (some of whom came to Edmonton, but many of whom could not be with us for Chris's memorial), to raise awareness and funds to support those at risk of suicide, for suicide survivors, and for friends and family of those struggling with mental health issues that could potentially lead to suicide. When the idea occurred, it seemed to come to me almost as if it was entirely fleshed out in my mind. I knew what I wanted to do, but not specifically how I would actually make it happen. I just knew I WANTED to make it happen.



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2. Were the logistics difficult to sort out? It must have taken a lot of work to organize the implementation of the concert (technical aspects) and those involved (finding performers/musicians/on-the-ground co-ordinators).

It has taken a great deal of time and energy on the part of the Mysterious Barricades Concert Society team, which started, as I imagine this type of thing often does, with a couple of people with a desire to make a change, to make something important and necessary happen. The team gradually grew as it became more clear what was needed to actually make the bigger concert event happen. We are now a core volunteer group of seven people. We always knew we needed performers, and because I have such an incredible, connected, loving and supportive community of musical friends across the country, who each - in their own community - is connected with their own musical friends, finding the musicians was in a way, the easiest part. And clearly we needed venues. But as many of my friends are also now associated with universities, we were fortunate to have access to venues as well. Because the live-streaming aspect of the day was also part of my original 'vision,' we knew we needed technicians in place to make that happen. These incredible people have come into place through a combination of personal, community and university connections. We are also fortunate to have volunteer support through organizations such as the CMHA and CASP, as well as university health and wellness services. Once we reached out to them, they were wonderful about adopting us and helping us to connect through their individual networks.

3. How will the day of the concert unfold? Will it require a lot of management? Who will be "directing," if anyone?

How the day unfolds is still unfolding for us, as of course, this is the first event of its kind, as far as I know! This is both exciting and a little daunting, to be honest! It is certainly the first time many of us have been involved in something like this. We do have a good plan in place, and will cross our fingers that it will all proceed as it should!

The day is being guided by a production manager, yet another personal friend who used to work for CBC, who has a great deal of experience organizing and executing large and multi-faceted events. Everything will be run from the IT command station at the University of Alberta. My dear friend and cousin, Dr. Laurier Fagnan, and I will 'host' the entire 18-hour event from a room across the hall from the IT control room. The idea is that Laurier and I will introduce the day, and then the feed from St. John's will start at 6:30 a.m. local time on the East Coast. That will of course be 3:00 a.m. here in Edmonton! Each concert will unfold with its own MC, its own performers and its own individual flavour. Once one concert ends, the feed will switch back to Edmonton, where we will thank everyone for their wonderful contributions, and we will go on to introduce the next city, venue, performers, and so on across the country, until we end our day at 8:00 p.m. local time in Victoria.

5. How have the concert programs been created? Will the artists perform pieces of their choice?

The program for each concert has been put together by the concert leader for that city. Artists will perform pieces of their choice. Our only ask was that the music be uplifting and hopeful. In addition, we asked that if possible, one piece of music, by F. Couperin, entitled 'Les Barricades Mystérieuses' should be included. This piece was a favourite of my husband Chris, and our concert society was named after this beautiful and intriguing piece of music. I wanted it to run as a theme for the entire day, a musical touchstone of the event itself.

6. What has been the reaction of universities that you approached? How did you choose who you approached?

All of the universities have been incredibly supportive. When the idea initially occurred to me, I thought about larger centres across the country where I had singing friends and colleagues. I was amazed, when I stopped to think, that I knew people in virtually every major city and university across the country. It was then a question of emailing each of those people, outlining the project, and asking them to commit to the endeavour. I am not exaggerating when I say that within 24 hours, every one of them got back to me with their answer - a resounding 'YES!'

7. Music is obviously very important to you. Can you tell me in your own words why music is at the centre of the healing process for you? Why do you think music can help those who are impacted by suicide and why it will help bring awareness to the issue?

Music is at the centre of the healing process for me because it speaks beyond what we can say with mere words. And when we make music, we forge a connection between a composer, and - if we are singing - a poet/librettist, ourselves as artists, and an audience. This connection works like an infinity symbol. The music goes out from the performers, is received by the audience, who - with their attention and energy - give back to the musicians on the stage. This energy force is alive and palpable. I believe that the musical vibrations we make, like a ripple of energy across water, reverberate in our entire body. I believe we virtually resonate on a cellular level. And this energetic vibration, shared by everyone simultaneously, connects us in a way that is beautiful, mysterious and healing. We experience something together that is much greater than the sum of all of its parts. This connection is very important to me at this time, because losing my husband of 27 years made me feel that I needed even more desperately the connections with my family and friends. Music has created my community. Clearly, I am not an expert on suicide or mental illness, but it seems to me that those who are affected with mental illness feel disconnected from the world around them. They have lost that organic connection, which I hope through experiencing music, they can start to rekindle in themselves. That they can feel the deep and spiritual connection between each one of us, so they will not feel alone. That we are truly one. That they will feel the love of so many people who are committing their time and energy to demonstrate how precious each and every life is, and that each one is worth fighting for. I want people at risk for suicide to know how much their lives truly matter, and that we as a country and a community wish for the stigma of mental illness to become a thing of the past, like every other prejudice against any other unasked for human condition or illness should be a thing of the past. To become more open and accepting, a substantial conversation must take place. I want to herald in that conversation with music - loud, glorious, positive and far-reaching, deeply reverberating and connective.

8. Music was obviously very important to Chris, too. What was it about Mysterious Barricades that he liked so much?

Chris was an amazing man who possessed the logical intellect of an engineer, and the heart of an artist. He loved the intricacies of 'Les Barricades Mystérieuses.' I know there is quite a lot of information about this piece on the Internet - it seems to fascinate many people. I believe what he loved about it was the fact that it can be appreciated for its harmonic cleverness and as well as its melodic beauty. It has been called 'a kaleidoscope,' and a 'trompe l'oeil,' hinting at 'fractal mathematics,' while nonetheless entrancing us with its song-like tunefulness.



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The duality of this piece embodies the dual nature of Chris himself, beautifully artistic and intelligently creative in its genius.

9. When did Chris build a harpsichord? Was it the first time he built an instrument? Why did he build one? Where is it now?

Chris started building his harpsichord approximately two years ago. It was his first time building an instrument, but he had always dreamed of building one - ever since I first met him. The challenge appealed to his exacting, precise engineering mind, and to his love of things mechanical yet beautiful. In fact I know he felt that mechanical things ARE beautiful, and that they are works of art in their own right. Chris' harpsichord stands in all of its red and gold glory in the living room of my house. The harpsichord, in addition to numerous other beautiful pieces of functional art furniture that Chris built (and our entire home which he single-handedly renovated!) keeps me feeling close to him.

10. How will the concert help you heal, do you think? What will the experience be like for you, from dawn to dusk?

This project has already helped me with the healing process, and continues to do so. Because putting this event together has involved reaching out to many people to ask for assistance, I have discovered that many, many people have shared the experience of losing a loved one to suicide. A brother. An uncle. A friend. It has helped me feel less alone in experiencing my grief. Due to the often sudden nature of death by suicide, feeling that one has not had the opportunity to say goodbye, and having unanswered questions is something that can be difficult and haunting, and isolating. Through the experience of this project, I know that I am not alone in feeling this way. Additionally, having to explain the event to others has forced me to articulate many aspects of what it was like watching Chris deal with his illness, and ultimately succumb to it. The need to verbalize and communicate this experience has forced me to process it, in order to try to help others (and myself) better understand that which is - to those not suffering from a mental illness - incomprehensible and terrifying. At first, telling Chris's and my story was incredibly difficult and painful. It was almost impossible not to cry. But with time and repetition, while it is not easy, it has gotten easier. My new reality has become more real. This is where I think much of the healing is coming from.

The day is going to be very emotional for sure. I will see and hear so many of my friends across the country sharing their incredible artistry. There will be so much beautiful music and so many powerful performances. There will be the sharing of stories and messages of hope and resources and support for

people who are struggling, families of those who are struggling, and for survivors. Even though I am sure adrenaline will propel us forward, it will be an 18-hour marathon for all of us seeing the day through in Edmonton, from a 3:00 a.m. start to a 9:00 p.m. finish. I know it will be worth it, even if we do literally fall down once we are done!

11. What do you think Chris would think of the concert?

Chris would have enjoyed each and every beautiful note that will be played on Sept. 10! He would have



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hummed along with all the bass lines - he never sang a melody, because he was far more interested in the intricacies of the harmonic movements of music. He loved so many kinds of music, from classical to jazz to choral. He would have been thrilled with the variety of performances that will be presented. And above all else, he was never happier than when he got to experience the great talents of our friends when they shared their musical abilities with us through their performances. He would be so grateful for the overwhelming and selfless giving of their time and gifts, and of the efforts of so many volunteers and technicians. He probably would have been torn between wanting to watch the concerts and wanting to be one of the technicians in the control room!