



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**June 15, 2017**

## **WHITEHORSE (YUKON) COMMUNITY CHOIR SINGS IN PEMBROKE**

The Yukon. Just hearing the name of this northern Canadian territory conjures up vivid and romantic images of mythic proportion--the Klondike Gold Rush, the Land of the Midnight Sun, the Cremation of Sam McGee, the Northern Lights, and icebergs, glaciers and grizzlies.

Although the famous gold rush has long been over, there is something about the Yukon that still draws thousands of people there every year and entices some to stay forever. Is it the landscape . . . or the mythology that brings people there? Or, could it be the history of the mining towns, or the mystery of the aurora borealis?

We'll have an opportunity to discover the lure of the north when the Yukon's Whitehorse Community Choir (WCC) comes to Pembroke for a special concert called 'The Spell of the Yukon'. They will be performing at 3 p.m. on Sunday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> at Calvin United Church and have invited members of the Pembroke Community Choir (PCC) to be their special guests to perform a few pieces from their spring Canadiana concert.

The Whitehorse choir is in Ontario to perform at the Shaw Centre and the National Arts Centre in Ottawa on Canada Day. In a musical celebration called 'Unisong', there will also be 15 other choirs from across the country which will form a massed choir of approximately 600 voices. Some of the songs the Yukon choir has chosen to perform for the Canada Day concert will be sung for the Pembroke audience as well.

WCC choir director Barbara Chamberlin described how some of the pieces were originally developed. "A few years ago, I wanted to do something special to celebrate some of our local poets and songwriters. We received a grant and commissioned 12 new works combining Yukon poets and songwriters with arrangers and arranger/composers from the Yukon and across Canada. For this event, we have added two more songs that were written by a talented musician of the Southern Tutchone, a First Nations people from the Yukon."

It's not the WCC's first time to perform at the National Arts Centre. They were invited for a millennium celebration in 2000, and enjoyed it so much they always hoped they could do it again one day. When Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary was on the horizon, Chamberlin thought this celebration "seemed like the perfect opportunity to return", so the choir began filling out applications, choosing songs, rehearsing, making travel itineraries, and fundraising.

Travel is quite costly, especially for a northern flight across Canada plus several nights' accommodation in Ottawa. All members are responsible for their own expenses so to defray the costs, everyone participated in a variety of fundraising events from lotteries, BBQs, and silent auctions, to house concerts, Christmas caroling, and busking.

At the July 2<sup>nd</sup> concert, the Pembroke audience will actually be hearing three Yukon choirs perform. The Whitehorse Community Choir has an average of 80 members who sing a varied repertoire from modern to classical, but within that large choir, some members have also branched out to form smaller choirs of about a dozen singers in each. The *Persephone Singers* and the *Chamber Choir* are two of the auditioned groups who will present some of their repertoire in Pembroke.

The Pembroke Community Choir is pleased to have been invited to perform a few pieces from their spring concert, and to participate in a combined choir with the WCC for two songs as well.

PCC director Gerald LaRonde says: "It is always a wonderful experience to hear other choirs sing, especially when they bring their own unique Canadian perspective to the music. We feel honoured to have been invited to sing at the Whitehorse Community Choir concert and we are really looking forward to seeing this special performance ourselves."

Yukon director Chamberlin sums up the experience so far. "It's been a lot of work for all of us, but I think it will be well worth it. Coming to Pembroke is icing on the cake and we are thrilled to sing our songs for the people of the Ottawa Valley and to work with the Pembroke Community Choir".

**The concert will be held at Calvin United Church, 276 Church Street in Pembroke, at 3 p.m. on Sunday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Tickets are \$20, available at the door and children 13 years and under are free. For more information, contact Linda Clark at 613-735-6604 or visit [www.pembrokecommunitychoir.org](http://www.pembrokecommunitychoir.org).**

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**ABOUT THE CHOIR** - *The Pembroke Community Choir has celebrated almost 60 years in the community and, in September and January, welcomes new members from all over the Ottawa Valley. They practice every Monday night at 7 p.m. at Wesley Community Church on Renfrew Street in Pembroke and perform a*

*Christmas and spring concert each year. Visit [www.pembrokecommunitychoir.org](http://www.pembrokecommunitychoir.org)*