



VAN ISLE WATER
The Water System Experts
Since 1972

Want Better Tasting Water?
Come in and find out how simple and inexpensive
it is to improve the quality of your tap water.

260B Tsolum Road
250-338-8737
www.vanislewater.com

Young Comox entertainer making music

Eight-year-old Stella Swanson has an early start on her recording career

Erin Haluschak
Record Staff

She's graced the stage as Cosette in Les Misérables, written a variety of songs, and now has created her own CD just in time for Christmas — and Comox's Stella Swanson is just eight years old.

With the help of Juno Award-winning songstress Helen Austin, Swanson recently released *I'm not a bunny*, which is available at Planet Kids in Comox and Courtenay, Seeds Food Market in Cumberland and iTunes.

"I wanted to get my music out there. I love making music ... and I have so many songs in my head," explained Swanson, who created her first CD when she was just two years old, for her family.

Over the course of four sessions, Swanson — who takes violin and dance lessons — recorded

with Austin, and wrote four songs herself.

"My mom, me and (sister) Sophie collaborated for the others. We recorded them on GarageBand and sent them to Helen," said Swanson. "That was an amazing moment for me. It's so hard to describe."

With 300 CDs produced, Swanson has sold 100 already, and credits a recent Christmas concert for getting the word out.

"After the performance, quite a few people were clearing out of the room and did a lot of shopping," she added.

"I wanted to get my music out there. I love making music ... and I have so many songs in my head."

Stella Swanson

The CD features nine songs with tracks including *Rain on My Umbrella*, *Orca Lullaby* and *Dazzling Day*, but Swanson said the title track is her favourite.

"It's such a catchy tune," she added, and said it was inspired by her pet rabbit Romeo.

Now that she's focused on selling the newly-produced disc, Swanson noted she is planning on taking a bit of a break from the creative process, but explained although she's not sure when the next album may drop, she does sing and write music all the time — especially when she's playing with her sister.

Mom Karen Pantuso Swanson added the CD was a family effort and credited younger sister Sophie, six, with helping on the album.

"She really enjoyed the ride with Stella; she stepped back and let her sister shine but was so supportive."

Pantuso Swanson also said Austin provided an incredible mentorship role for her daughter. "She's our hero. She's so lovely and so successful and still so generous."

I'm not a bunny is available for purchase for \$10, with partial proceeds being donated to Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society.

"I wanted to donate to M.A.R.S because it saves birds," explained Swanson. "And in some ways, it's always been my dream to fly."

For more information or signed copies of the CD, visit www.stellaswanson.com.

photos@comoxvalleyrecord.com



Stella Swanson (right) and her sister Sophie open boxes filled with Stella's recently-produced disc, *I'm not a bunny*. PHOTO SUBMITTED



'Twas the Night Before celebrations in downtown Courtenay this weekend

Get into the spirit of the season in the heart of Courtenay Dec. 19-20 with *'Twas the Night Before* celebrations throughout the downtown core.

Whether you're looking for last minute gifts, stocking stuffers, tasty treats or time with family and friends, downtown Courtenay

is the perfect destination this weekend. Shoppers can take in Christmas carols and choirs, live music events, street performers and opportunities to connect with local charities, in addition to seeking out the perfect gifts.

On Friday and Saturday from noon to 5 p.m. Duncan Avenue is

host to Elevate Hearts - Giving Bazaar featuring a dozen local social justice and environmental charities selling crafts and gifts at 505 Duncan Ave. The Comox Valley Art Gallery has incredible original gifts from local artists and artisans.

The Zocalo Cafe and Billy D's

offer live entertainment both evenings.

Saturday the streets will be alive with music and merriment all afternoon. Stop by Mudsharks Plaza where Motif Music plays from 11-2 and Joey Clarkson from 2-4. Gather round the campfire and join in for some tunes.

Explore the streets for more music including Celebration Singers at noon at the Sid Plaza, and pop up performances from a rich variety of choirs, musicians and artists.

To find out more about Downtown Courtenay visit www.downtowncourtenay.com.



Great Gift Ideas

JUST ARRIVED
New Marvel series
of Air Hole Face Masks
(Star Trek, Spider Man, the Incredible Hulk)



Toques, Athletic Gloves,
Merino Base & Mid Layers,
Ladies Leggings,
Saxx & Socks,
etc



est. 1989
Island style sports and fashions

333 Fifth Street, Courtenay • 250-338-8844

skiandsurf.ca • Mon. to Sat. 9:30-5:30 • Sun. 12-4pm

