

Rankin’s April Verch releasing anthology of work

By Terry Fleurie
Staff Writer

Rankin -- Internationally-known musician April Verch is beginning the new year by releasing her 11th recording which will be available for fans on February 17.

The Rankin native was back visiting her parents, Ralph and Muriel Verch, over the Christmas holidays and told the *Leader* she is very excited about her latest project which has been in the works for some time.

“I had it in the back of my mind for awhile, even when I was working on the last one, *The Newpart* (released April 2015), which was my 10th release,” she explained. “I sort of thought once I had 10 out this might be the next logical step.

“So I’d have to say it’s been in the works for quite awhile,” she added.

The 18-track CD is entitled, “*The April Verch Anthology*” and includes a collection of recordings from her previous 10 releases as well as two new tracks. She noted the actual recording of the new CD didn’t take as long as most of the material is from previous releases.

“But we did go into the studio to record a couple of tracks that were just for this to add on to it,” she said.

To date all of her previous 10 releases had contained new material, but this is the first one that is a compilation of her earlier works.

“I’ve never repeated tracks or done anything like this before. Every time I go in to record, it’s all newly recorded material. So this is sort of a special, one-time thing I guess.

“It’s sort of a milestone,” she added. “That’s a lot of material to celebrate.”

While people in the Valley have known her since her first release in 1992, some of her other fans across North America and beyond may not have enjoyed those earlier releases, she said.

“The last while, we tour more far and wide and the fans now might not have been around when I first started recording. So it’s nice to be able to give those people the full picture of my career so they can look back and see the progression of the music and even my voice.”

She admitted when she listened to some of the earlier recordings, the now 38-year-old noticed the changes in her voice from when she was younger.

“So it’s just a nice way to sort of celebrate,” she said.

The new recording does not include any material from her first two releases from the early 1990s.

“It starts with the 1998 releases,” she noted.

Ms. Verch said selecting the material for the new release from her previous recordings proved to be a rather interesting experience.

“It was difficult, but it was also enjoyable and I wasn’t sure it would

be. Part of me wasn’t sure I wanted to go back and listen because I wasn’t sure if I would sort of cringe.

“You get better and you hate to go back, but I really enjoyed it,” she added. “It really does trigger memories of the people I played with and worked with and every record was a

sort of snapshot of that time in my life. So it was really fun.”

She wanted to select the pieces she felt were her strongest while also including favourites that her fans request during the live performances.

“We can’t carry 10 releases with us on the road anymore and fans will

come up and ask for their favourites, so I definitely tried to include numbers that were popular requests.”

Self-described as her own toughest critic, she said there were pieces that were stronger than others, but added she has learned as she has grown older there has to be a certain amount of forgiveness as she grew as an artist.

“Certainly, not everything was perfect, but it was really good,” she remarked. “I was proud of myself and everybody I worked with, listening back.

“It’s a lot of material and so much has gone into that,” she added.

When asked if she ever considered going back and re-recording some of her earlier works, she said she didn’t foresee that happening.

“My material is always changing and I’m growing as an artist but I’m less interested in putting a new spin on this old material than I am in writing and finding new material to go ahead with.”

She noted the 1998 and 2001 releases contained her fiddling and step-dancing, but all releases after that introduced her vocal talents. The new release showcases regional Canadian, American old time, Bluegrass, country and Americana tracks.

“The regional Canadian includes any of our Canadian fiddle styles that might be Ottawa Valley, French Canadian, Maritime,” she explained. “There’s a lot of old-time Canadian like Ward Allen and Don Messer, that kind of thing.”

While people enjoy the old classics like that, they also enjoy the country and Bluegrass elements of her repertoire, she said.

The two new tracks on the anthology she recorded with her band are “*Jump Cricket Jump*” and “*If I Can Stay Long Enough*”.

The finished project exceeds her expectations.

“I wasn’t sure when I picked the tracks we felt should be included, sequenced them and looked at how they’d fit together. It really is great.

I’ve enjoyed putting it together and I enjoy listening to it.”

She previewed the new release for her parents over the holidays and they enjoyed it and felt it was very representative of her career.

“I think that’s the best I can hope for,” she said.

There is no formal launch of the recording planned, but it will be available after February 17 through her website at www.aprilverch.com for \$20.

Ms. Verch continues to maintain a very busy schedule, travelling over 250 dates a year. When not performing, she still mentors at numerous fiddling camps across the U.S. The featured performer at last year’s Canada Day celebration in Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards Township, she said at this point her 2017 schedule does not include any performances in Ottawa or the Valley.

Ms. Verch sees no end in sight to her career, adding she plans to continue as long as she is still enjoying what she does and is healthy enough to carry on.

While some successful people say they look back and feel it’s almost surreal as to what they have achieved, Ms. Verch said she feels extremely fortunate being able to do what she always wanted to do.

“I wouldn’t say it feels surreal because it’s really been a lot of hard work,” she explained. “I don’t take it for granted. I realize how fortunate I am to have the health that I have had and the opportunities that I have had.”

She has obviously never lost track of her roots as she can often be found alongside her parents volunteering at the Rankin Culture and Recreation Centre events when she’s back in the Valley.

“People comment on that from time to time, but that’s just who I am,” she said. “That’s how I was raised so it would be more strange for me not to be doing that.

“It just goes without saying, that’s what we do,” she added.



Rankin’s April Verch is releasing her 11th recording this Friday entitled, *The April Verch Anthology*. The 18-track CD is a compilation of her previous works and includes two new tracks.

Be wary of new phone scam

Renfrew -- Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are warning of another new phone scam to be wary of. When the phone rings and the caller asks, “*Can you hear me?*” don’t even answer. Just hang up.

In this one, the scammer (a robo-caller) will record the victim’s voice saying “yes” and then follow up with an aggressive pitch telling the unsuspecting victim they’ve agreed to

buy something. Then they will play a recording of the victim’s voice where it sounds as if they have agreed to buy something and then threaten to take legal action if they try to deny the charges.


It has been rampant in the U.S. and the OPP are starting to receive calls regarding this. For more information contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at www.antifraudcentre.ca



Important fire safety tips during power outages!

To reduce fire risk during a power outage, the Office of the Fire Marshal offers the following safety tips:

- Electrically-connected smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms will not work when the power is out unless they have battery back-ups. Make sure your home has battery-operated smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Everyone should know how to get out immediately if there is a fire. Plan and practice your escape plan before emergencies happen.
- Use flashlights or battery-operated lanterns instead of candles or hurricane lamps. If using candles, place them in a secure holder and cover them with a glass chimney, away from children and pets.
- Propane and charcoal barbecues are for outdoor use only. Do not bring them inside.
- Purchase generators with recognized approval labels. Make sure the unit has proper connection receptacles and circuit breakers.
- Portable generators should only be used outdoors and carefully located to ensure that exhaust fumes do not enter the home. Allow the generator to cool before refuelling. Refuel the generator outside, following the manufacturer’s instructions. Store fuel for the generator in approved containers, outside the home.
- Use only portable space heaters that have been designed for indoor use and follow the manufacturer’s instructions. Provide adequate ventilation by opening a window slightly while the heater is in use. Before refuelling, turn off the heater; wait for it to cool and take the heater outside to refuel.
- Make sure electric stove elements and small appliances are OFF or unplugged to prevent fires from occurring when the electricity is restored.
- Cordless phones will not work when the power is out, so it is recommended to have at least one phone that does not require electricity to operate.
- Use extreme caution during flood emergencies and power outages. Electrical equipment impacted by flood water can be extremely dangerous. For more important information about electrical safety during floods, please visit the Electrical Safety Authority’s website: <http://www.esa.ca/>



Property owners are encouraged to keep entry roads cleared and ensure they are wide enough so fire trucks can access your property in an emergency.

If there is a tree on a hydro line or a hydro line is down, unless fire is obvious, please call Hydro and NOT the Fire Department.

This message brought to you by the fire chiefs listed here

Douglas Fire Department
Kevin VanWoezik, Acting Fire Chief

Bonnechere Valley Fire Department
Dave Murphy, Fire Chief

North Algona Wilberforce Fire Department
Rick Marshall, Fire Chief

Madawaska Valley Fire Department
Corwin Quade, Fire Chief

Killaloe, Hagarty & Richards Fire Department
Bob Gareau, Fire Chief

Whitewater Region Fire Department
Wayne Heubner, Fire Chief

Brudenell, Lyndoch & Raglan Fire Department
Jordan Genrick, Fire Chief