

Show Tune Showdown returns this weekend

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Show tune enthusiasts, take heed.

The third annual Show Tune Showdown is set to take over the Bronson Centre this weekend.

Three teams of singers, representatives of arts organizations across the city, will hit the stage in a competition of ability to perform, and knowledge of, Broadway show tunes. This year's celebrity judge panel includes James Caswell, director and conductor for the Canadian Centennial Choir, Alex Munter of Ottawa's Youth Services Bureau and CBC radio host Kathleen Petty.

The event, an annual fundraiser for the choir Tone Cluster, has become a popular event since the beginning, said producer Rob Bowman. The idea came to him one night, and after working through the details, Mr. Bowman said he presented the idea to the choir's board, which happily accepted the idea.

"We sent out invitations and the first year we didn't know what to expect because it was a brand new concept, it hadn't been done before," he explained. "And we were really surprised at the feedback and how well it went."

At the end of the first show, Mr. Bowman said guests were asking about the next year's performance, prompting the group to continue the event each year since.

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Rob Bowman
Producer,
Show Tune Showdown

This year, the teams will represent Carleton University's Sock n' Buskin Theatre Company, Suzart Productions, which runs out of St. Paul High School, and, the returning champions, Zucchini Grotto Theatre Company.

Nicole Milne, a member of Zucchini, said she feels the event is a great showcase for professional performers in the city to come together and get involved in helping out the community. And there's some great music involved, she said. Without giving too much away,

she said she and her group would be introducing some more modern Broadway tunes to the competition.

The showdown rounds, Ms. Milne said, are a real test of each team's Broadway trivia. The questions start broad, and become more specific each time the question goes unanswered.

"If you're smart," she said, "you'll choose people on your team that are avid fans and longtime fans."

The showdown rounds are also great for audience participation, Mr. Bowman said. When teams are unable to solve the question, it's handed over to the audience, who can donate the points from that question to the team of their choice.

"So in some cases, some of the teams will bring some of their friends and other singers to go in the audience, and it's perfectly legal," he said. "You can stack the audience with as many singers as you need to get your team's score up. So it's exciting from that standpoint as well."

As a fundraiser, Mr. Bowman said the event's been a great success for Tone Cluster. Between great numbers in the audience, and sponsors to cover some of the costs, the choir has really benefited from the showdown. Mr. Bowman was



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West end based Suzart Productions is one of the groups performing in this year's Show Tune Showdown, taking place at eh Bronson Centre this weekend.

a little hesitant to name a specific monetary goal the group is trying to earn with the event, because, he said, "Whenever we set one, we usually go beyond it."

But, he added, he'd be happy to raise about \$4,000.

Tickets are available in advance for \$15, or on the day of for \$20. To purchase tickets, Mr. Bowman sug-

gests people use www.ticketweb.ca.

For more information about Tone Cluster, see the group's Web site at www.gaycanada.com/tonecluster.