

REGINA DRUMMER/TEACHER



Drumming has become a focal part of life for Regina musician Jayson Brinkworth.

Brinkworth keeps the beat on his terms in his town

By **ASHLEY MARTIN**
Leader-Post

Jayson Brinkworth has made a successful drumming career for himself, and he didn't even have to leave Regina to do it.

The Regina-born Brinkworth is an instructor, a writer for *The Black Page* drum magazine, and a drummer who has most recently worked with rising country music star Aaron Pritchett on his tour with superstar Toby Keith.

But when he started taking drum lessons 27 years ago, Brinkworth didn't think of drumming as a career — the 13-year-old just really wanted to play.

"I wanted to play since I was five, and I was deterred by my parents strictly on the noise," Brinkworth says. "When I was 13 they finally decided, 'Well, we'll give it a shot and let him try it, he hasn't stopped asking for eight years.'

"It was just fun ... You have the rock and roll kind of dream going, 'Oh man, that would be great,' but I never really thought that I would do this."

His path to a career in music began with drum lessons at The Music Box, which he started the first Saturday after Grade 9. With help from Bob Nicholls, his music teacher at Martin Collegiate and a percussionist with the Regina Symphony Orchestra, Brinkworth expanded his knowledge of music theory and by Grade 12 was teaching drum lessons at The Music Box.

After high school, Brinkworth obtained an electronics certificate from SIAST. Throughout his years in the electronics industry, he put himself through university for music and kept playing the drums.

When he was 30 years old, he had an epiphany. "I thought, 'I'm almost making as

much money playing as I am at my day job. If I don't try this now, when I'm 50 I'll be living in the what-ifs.'"

So in 2002, he leased a house at 2345 Smith St. with Ray Bell and Shamma Sabir. Six years later, the business has grown. Now 20 teachers instruct 375 students at Music in the House in music of all sorts — drums, guitar, piano, vocals, bass, violin and more.

"It kept growing and growing. It ended up being a little more than we ventured for, but we're not going to complain about it," he says.

Brinkworth loves the balance of teaching and playing music.

"I couldn't see just doing one," he says. "The students keep me honest all the time, they keep me on my toes and make me focus on things that I need to focus on, and then the live playing really makes me realize how important it is to pass on what I know ... And I

really like that I get to teach here with (students) growing up in the same city that I grew up in, there's a connection to that."

While working with big names in Canadian country music like Gil Grand, Aaron Lines, Duane Steele, Lisa Brokop and Shane Yellowbird, and acquiring Western Canadian Music Awards and nominations for Canadian Country Music Awards, Brinkworth has never felt the need to leave Regina.

"I've never really had to move to a bigger centre to do it, which is good because I'm from here and I've grown up here and lived here all my life ... Obviously there's opportunities in a city like Toronto or Vancouver, or even in the States, like Nashville and L.A., but I really didn't have the need to because what I wanted to have in my playing was all going on up here anyways."

ALL THAT'S JAZZ

Gift is better late than never

Regina jazz fans will receive a belated Christmas gift. On Dec. 27, pianist **Jeff McLeod** will lead an impressive quintet when the Regina Jazz Society presents its annual Homecoming Concert.

The ensemble will also include **Donny Kennedy** (alto sax), **Greg Duncan** (guitar), **Graham Purse** (bass) and **Jon McCaslin** (drums). Show time is 8:30 p.m., at the Regina Inn's Wascana Ballroom.

"I feel so lucky to be playing with the musicians playing with me," McLeod says. "It is really amazing that so many people originally from Regina are playing jazz at such a world-class level."

"Donny Kennedy performs and teaches in Montreal. Jon McCaslin is making his mark in Toronto while he does his PhD. Greg Duncan is a regular performer on the Boston scene, and Graham Purse has travelled the world — 75 countries at last count — as a musician on the cruise ships.

"Whatever ends up happening on the 27th, the music is going to be great, and it will be so much fun for me to have the privilege to be involved with (this group)."

McLeod auditioned for and was accepted into the prestigious Eastman School of Music, based in Rochester, N.Y., in 2007. He is working on a master's degree in jazz studies, to be completed in the spring, and may pursue a doctorate after that.

"I've always loved playing the piano, whether its classical, jazz, rock or soul," McLeod says. "Jazz piano particularly attracts me because of the rhythmic aspect of it, as well as the improvisation."

McLeod started playing professionally after graduating from Thom Collegiate in 1998. He then entered the University of Regina's music program, studying jazz under **Ed Lewis** and classical piano under the late **Bill Moore**.

After graduating from the U of R in 2002 with a bachelor's degree in music education, McLeod did two stints as a pianist with a jazz trio on Carnival Cruise Lines. He also studied jazz for eight months at Humber College in Toronto.

McLeod returned to Regina in 2005 and spent the following 2½ years performing and teaching. During that time, he recorded the piano parts for **Andrea Menard's** film, *The Velvet Devil*, and performed with **Bo Diddley** and the Drifters at the Casino Regina Show Lounge. Additionally, the versatile McLeod joined a group including former Waltons front man **Jason Plumb** and recorded on his CD, *Beauty In This World*.

Another highlight for McLeod was performing as part of **Dean McNeill's** group while opening for **Dave Brubeck** at the 2007 SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival. McLeod has also accompanied vocalist **Carol Welsman** and toured with Juno Award winner **Serena Ryder**.

Down the road, McLeod would like to be part of the jazz scene wherever he resides. He also aspires to teach, to be busy as a studio musician, and to be a touring musician while playing music of any genre. The experience of playing jazz is especially joyful.

"If the music is really happening, you can get so caught up in what feels like an alternate state of being," McLeod says.

"It's great in a small group, seeing where the music will go. If everyone is listening to each other, things can end up in any number of directions. You can take risks, try things, and see where it lands you. If you are with a great band, the results will almost always be satisfying."

BLUE NOTES: The Bushwacker (2206 Dewdney Ave.) has live jazz every Monday, from 8 until 10:30 p.m. Admission is free. Next on the agenda is 'round midnight, which plays jazz standards and includes the vocal stylings of **Bev Zizzy**. The following Monday (Dec. 29), Uptown Jazz — featuring guitarist **Barry Whitmore** — is on stage ... **Diana Krall's** 12th CD, *Quiet Nights*, is to be released March 31 by Universal Music Canada, in conjunction with Verve ... Jazz legend **Sonny Rollins** is to appear July 2 at TCU Place in Saskatoon as part of the 2009 Saskatchewan Jazz Festival. For more information, visit www.saskjazz.com.

All That's Jazz appears every second Thursday. If you have a comment or information about a performance, contact Rob Vanstone by telephone (781-5216) or e-mail (ivanstone@leaderpost.canwest.com).



ROB VANSTONE

POP MUSIC

Ingenuities are making their marks

By **ANN POWERS**
Los Angeles Times

Young women are often treated like the empty calories of American culture — they're as hard to resist as a forbidden sweet, as guiltily denied and as easily forgotten.

This truism applies to this suddenly very serious year as much as it did in the teeny-bopper-dominated 1950s and the flapper-fueled 1920s. As the more significant stories of a historic election and disastrous economic collapse unfolded, the buzz in the background was often generated by undone ingenuities and excitable tweens, from Lindsay Lohan and the Spears sisters to the fans behind the Jonas Brothers and *Twilight*. (And then there's pregnant Bristol Palin, now out of sight but not forgotten.)

The pop history now being recorded in year-in-review essays and lists are mostly focused on other forces: rock's commercial saviour, Coldplay; hip-hop's new jack king, Lil Wayne; indie's sensitive souls, Bon Iver and Fleet Foxes. But in a moribund year for pop, young women provided much of the spark.

Katy Perry released the most talked-about single, the bi-lascivious "I Kissed a Girl." Jordin Sparks had the sleeper with her Chris Brown duet, "No Air." Miley Cyrus transcended her Hannah Montana character with her summer debut, "Breakaway." Taylor Swift crossed genres with *Fearless*, the album of the winter. In R&B, 20-year-old Rihanna was unstoppable, and 21-year-old Jazmine Sullivan emerged as the genre's hottest new voice.

Among critical favourites, retro-soul singers Adele and Duffy both got major Grammy nods, while teen singer-songwriter Laura Marling won blogger hearts. Bassist Esperanza Spalding, 23, made waves in the jazz world, and hard country warmed to Ashton Shepherd, who's 22 and already a married mom.

Pop culture has never wanted for "it" girls, but the authority these fledgling artists claim is a great sign of feminism's ripple effects. Swift might



Getty Images
Taylor Swift

play a princess in many of her songs — in fact, the best parts of *Fearless* meditate on the princess myth and how reality subverts it — but in the studio she's her own boss, writing and producing those fairy tales.

Swift is exceptionally precocious, but co-writing credits are the rule in this bunch, and Svengalis are rare. Whether they've actually spent time listening to the Ronettes, the Runaways or Lauryn Hill, these women have benefited from their elders' hard-won lessons.

Yet if empowerment is a given for this new generation, it's also a hotly debated concept. Women born after 1984 are not only young enough to be the granddaughters of second-wave feminists, their mothers are the ones who took sides in the "culture wars" of the 1980s and, as Sarah Palin and Hillary Rodham Clinton so aptly demonstrated, are still fighting about what it means for a woman to be truly

on top. The controversies that cling to this year's ingenuities, whether fictional or real, represent a collision of old mores and new freedoms. At first glance, it seems that they've simply flipped the script on what "choice" means. Some, like Britney Spears or Ashlee Simpson, have married and become mothers at an age when their grandmas were burning their bras and their crazy aunts were getting women's studies degrees.

Others are ferociously embracing the beauty myth through breast enhancements and nose jobs or at the very least corsets and *Playboy* bunny clothes.

To women who've spent time in the feminist trenches, this mix of values can seem delusional or just plain wrong. It's hard to take in the tabloids and even tougher to stomach as a mode of artistic expression.

If young women suspect that feminism itself might be a trap, they're feeling no safer on the other side of it. Courage in the face of risk, and an overwhelming vulnerability, vie with hopefulness and sass in the music of these teens and ingenuities.

A Comic!! by Dakota McFadzean

