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Jazz singer holds choir auditions



By **Wes Smiderle**

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A local jazz singer and instrumentalist is holding auditions to form what could become the capital's first jazz choir.

Elise Letourneau, who just moved to Ottawa from Pittsburgh, Penn. last summer, is holding auditions every Wednesday for three weeks starting Feb. 21.

Since arriving in the capital, she and her guitarist husband Tim have secured a weekly gig at the Café Paradiso on Bank Street and also play regularly at Vineyards in the ByWard Market and the Roses in Westboro.

Born and raised in Windsor, Ont., Letourneau completed the four-year music program at Berklee College of Music and then attended Lesley College. She met her husband in Boston and spent nine years there before moving to Pennsylvania where she lived for 14 years before returning to Canada last summer.

She's had the idea of assembling a jazz choir for some time, but kept "backburning" the idea. Now, she says, the time seems right with a big move.

She hopes to assemble a group of about 12 singers. Accompanied by piano, guitar, bass and drums, the Capital Vox choir will perform standards like Duke Ellington and more modern jazz fare such as Pat Metheny.

Letourneau is hoping for dynamic, enthusiastic singers with good vibrato control and intonation. Any improvisational experience would be a bonus.

"I'm looking for people who aren't afraid to take musical risks," she says.

Letourneau is currently a music teacher at Alcorn Music Studios on Carling Avenue (where auditions for the choir will be held). She was also recently appointed music director for Big Soul Choir.

Auditions begin at 7:30 p.m. Subsequent rehearsals take place Wednesday, Feb. 28 and Wednesday, March 7.

Letourneau hopes first rehearsals can begin in late March. Interested singers can contact her at elsie@alcornmusicstudios.com.



Elise Letourneau is looking for a few good jazz singers. She's holding auditions to assemble a jazz choir and hopes to be performing by this summer. Photo by Darren Brown

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