

Jane Bunnett and Maqueque to perform at Village Playhouse Gala on April 15



By Nate Smelle

The last time Jane Bunnett and Maqueque performed in North Hastings, COVID-19 had yet to emerge into the daily news, let alone change the world we live in. While the local live music scene has been gradually making a comeback since the rate of infection began slowing down significantly last summer, the absence of Jane Bunnett and Maqueque from performance stages throughout North Hastings has not gone unnoticed. Well, that void in the ears and souls of local live music enthusiasts will soon be filled. On Saturday, April 15 the four-time JUNO Award winning, two-time Grammy nominated, Officer of the Order of Canada, and soprano saxophonist/flautist Jane Bunnett and Maqueque will return to the stage at the Bancroft Village Playhouse for the New Beginnings Gala fundraiser. Maqueque features: Mary Paz on congas and vocals; Tailin Marrero on acoustic and electric bass; Joanna Tendai Majoko's vocals; Yissy Garcia on drums; and Dánae Olano on piano. In addition, trumpeter Larry Cramer, Bunnett's husband and musical collaborator, often joins the band on stage and in the studio. Bancroft This Week recently caught up with Bunnett while she and the band were in the middle of a five week tour of the U.S. and Europe promoting the new CD *Playing With Fire*. Explaining how special their connection to North Hastings truly is, she highlighted how although they hadn't performed in North Hastings since 2018, prior to that they had played in the Bancroft area every year for 21 years. "Just finished a week in Bern Switzerland before heading into Germany, and ending up in beautiful Vienna Austria on April 4," noted Bunnett. "I hope the winter will finally be over in Bancroft by then. It's really exciting to take this fresh music to new fans from Charlottesville, Virginia to Frankfurt, Germany. Music brings people together from everywhere in the world. We will prove this on April 15 at the Bancroft Playhouse. Thank you to Tim Porter and his remarkable Tweed and Company arts organization that are doing an excellent job revitalizing arts and entertainment in Hasting County. You can take the boy out of Tweed, but you can't take the Tweed out of the boy." Providing further insight into what their fans can expect at their Gala performance on April 15, Bunnett said they are looking forward to sharing some of their new music with the audience in Bancroft. Acknowledging how they have now been making music together for more than a decade, she explained how her music with Maqueque evolved since their last local performance in 2018. "The new CD *Playing With Fire* goes deeper, partially because of the pandemic; but also because of this being the 10th anniversary of the band," said Bunnett. "Being up here in Lake St. Peter during the long composing process ? one and a half years ? was a godsend. The peace and beauty of our Hastings County brought out the best of my creative spirit." Expressing how excited they are for the "informal, fun party" at the Bancroft Village Playhouse on Saturday, April 15, she said they hope everyone can come out to listen to some music and meet the band. With half of the tickets already sold, anyone interested in supporting Bancroft's historical landmark theatre, and experiencing this incredible night of live music is advised to act fast. Festivities will get underway at 7 p.m., and there will be hors d'oeuvres provided by the Granite, art activations, wine sampling and a cash bar. To ensure the gala is as accessible as possible, tickets are just \$25+HST, but Tweed and Company are hoping that people will also bring along a donation to become a friend of the Playhouse. To

purchase tickets for the Gala visit: www.tweedandcompany.com; or call the box office at 613-478-6060.