

"I hope to do a run of this in Vancouver," Charly Chiarelli says during a discussion of *Cu'Fu?*, a two-hour show that begins this year's VANCOUVER STORYTELLING FESTIVAL.

"I'd like to do a legitimate theatre venue," the Kingston, Ont., resident adds, noting that he has been speaking with members of the Italian Cultural Centre about a run for his one-person storytelling/theatre/blues-harmonica depiction of growing up in a Sicilian section of Hamilton, Ont. Pronounced koo-foo, it is an expression that translates into "Who did it?", which Chiarelli describes as "a Sicilian's touching and hilarious response to life's perplexing moments, to everything from a bad salami to the origin of the universe."

Chiarelli, whose family moved to Canada from Sicily in 1949, holds a master's degree in social work as well as degrees in psychology and linguistics. He was performing as a musician when he was introduced as a storyteller at a Toronto Storytelling Festival cabaret. He began with "small stories" about the culture clashes of his childhood, but the stories eventually "got put together into a patchwork for a fringe-like" performance. Out of that emerged the current *Cu'Fu?*, a two-act performance with 14 songs, including the blues sung in Sicilian.

Cu'Fu? is performed tonight only as part of Winter Tales, the titular theme of this year's festival, but Chiarelli is also part of the fest's Y2Kabaret Friday night, which also features Suzanne Ward, Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Joseph Naytowhow and Marie Anne McLean, and participates in the Sunday forum The Idea of Storytelling with Roy Forbes, Santa Aloï, L'Hirondelle and Allison Cox. Saturday night, the festival melds story and song in Musically Speaking, which includes such pairings as Ginger Mulien and fiddler Victor Smith for Celtic tales of love and betrayal, David Odhiambo and balafonist Fana Soro for stories from the heart of Africa, Tony Montague and Andre Thibault on the oud for a medieval tale in the spirit of Chaucer and Randy Raine-Reusch and Mei Han for Asian journeys with musicians. See listing under arts festivals, page 30.

SPECIAL EVENTS

THIS WEEK

Winter Tales: Urban Mirths, A Y2Kabaret Vancouver Storytelling Festival with narrative delights, workshops and forums with storytellers from across Canada featuring: Charly Chiarelli's Sicilian shenanigans, the visionary Chief Leonard George, Marie Anne McLean Prairie perspectives and a panorama of other personalities. *Thurs. to Sun., venues include: WISE Hall, 1882 Adanac; ANZA Club, 3 West*