

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Tap Dancin' Sam

Shades of Fred Astaire

Canada's premier tap dancer, Mississauga's William

Orlowski, presents his dazzling new show, *Tap Dancin' Sam*, Sunday at 2 p.m. in the Living Arts Centre's Royal Bank Theatre.

Orlowski was born and raised in Streetsville.

"As a child, I was overwhelmed by the skill of Fred Astaire," he said. "I begged my mother for lessons from the age of 3, and by the time I hit 10, she finally agreed."

Astaire continues to inspire Orlowski's performances.

"He was simply the greatest of all tap dancers," said Orlowski. "His dancing was intelligent, his choreography was intricately planned, and he never repeated himself. Everything he did had an edge and his footwork was impeccable."

Orlowski has won two Dora Mavor Moore (theatre performance) Awards and served as assistant choreographer for the 1991 Liza Minnelli movie, *Stepping Out*.

He also co-founded the National Tap Dance Company of Canada in 1977 that has toured to such places as China, Hong Kong and the Kennedy Centre.

Orlowski brings a slightly bent edge to his dance style.

He said that his new show, being presented as part of the LAC's Wiggle Club series for young children, is somewhat autobiographical. *Tap Dancin' Sam* is a generational story of 10-year-old Patrick, who is torn between his father's plans for him to be a football star and his grandfather Sam's encouragement to pursue tap dancing.

"My own grandfather was a musician, and something inside of me had to dance," he said. "There's a positive message of how to avoid getting swamped by peer pressure and a gentle reaffirming of the need to follow your dreams."

He believes tap is enjoying a comeback.

"The reality is that these things are cyclical, and tap is always making a comeback," said Orlowski. "The modern tap

resurgence began when Ruby Keeler was re-discovered in 1969 through her Broadway musical, *No, No, Nanette*. By the mid-1970s, more tap companies began to emerge in the U.S."

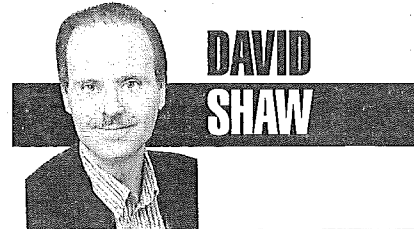
Tap Dancin' Sam is recommended for children aged 3-8.

"I've also included a bit of humour for the older folks to enjoy, as well," he said.

After the show, children are invited to a

juice and cookie reception.

Orlowski will be accompanied by Mississauga's Erik Geddes on piano. Tickets cost \$16-\$19. Call 905-306-6000.



DAVID SHAW



Streetsville's William Orlowski is Tap Dancin' Sam.

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Paul Kruse. Orlowski, William. MN April 12-13, 2003