

'Major' Music



The C Majors (left-right): Kevin Chappell, Jeneviève Clairmont, Michelle Saucier and Michel Pixel
- photo: Geneviève Houle/DFAIT

Michelle Saucier had no idea of the spark she would light that day. Flash back to December 19, 2009: many divisions, in time-honoured DFAIT tradition, were celebrating the holiday season by showcasing foods and drinks from selected countries around the world. Saucier, a communications adviser with the Foreign Policy and Communications Division, was walking into the room featuring Canadian cuisine when the first strains of "Crazy," by Seal, washed over her.

As soulfully performed by Michel Pixel and Kevin Chappell of the E-Communications, Communications Products and Services Division, the music deeply moved Saucier—along with the small crowd that had gathered—and on pure impulse, she joined the duo mid-song, providing backup vocals.

"Kevin and I couldn't help but share a smile when we heard Michelle's voice," Pixel recalls. "It's just fabulous—sweet, strong and confident."

"We were amazed to learn later that she has no formal training or professional experience," Chappell adds. "She's simply a natural."

To the crowd's delight, the trio played two more songs that day. Afterwards, they agreed that assembling a band was the obvious next step. Chappell, once a professional rock musician whose group opened for Kiss back in 1980, would play lead guitar. Pixel would focus his talents on percussion and bass, and, along with Saucier, vocals. In early 2010, another member of the communications world, Jeneviève Clairmont—an outstanding opera singer—joined the group, boosting its sound even further.

Over the next year, the "C Majors" came into their own, practising every week on their lunch breaks, wherever they could find the space. "We do it because we love it," says Clairmont. "It's our passion for music that drives us forward."



This passion soon extended to the Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign (GCWCC). Plans for the 2011 launch were under way and the theme was the hit musical TV show *Glee*—a perfect fit for the C Majors. In agreeing to perform at the event, they composed an original song, "Be a Star," incorporating key messaging from the campaign—diversity in people, diversity in giving.

Their performance in the lobby of the Pearson building on the morning of September 15th was nothing short of sensational. Many in the large audience were convinced that they were being entertained by a headline band brought in expressly for the event. Others, without a clear view of the stage, thought they were listening to a CD of the legendary band Fleetwood Mac.

Indeed, the collective response to "Be a Star" was so great, the C Majors professionally recorded the song a short time later and will be selling it on CD to raise more funds for the GCWCC.

"I like to think we exemplify the approach to life that my mom always encouraged," says Saucier. "Discover your positive talents and deploy them into the world for the good of others as well as yourself."