

SFU Press Releases Collection

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World to wish Burns virtual â Happy 250thâ

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January 15, 2009

The world will come together to celebrate Robbie Burns Day on Jan. 25 - the 250th anniversary of his birth - in a way Scotland's national bard would never have conceived.

At precisely 1 p.m. (PST) - with a crowd assembled in Vancouver at the Burns statue in Stanley Park - gatherings around the world will send greetings and photos to each other via the internet, creating one massive Burns celebration in cyberspace.

The virtual party has attracted participants from cities across Canada, U.S., Britain and Australia. 'It has been interesting developing this network, as it suggests just how prevalent Burns' influence is even today,' says organizer Leith Davis, director of SFU's Centre for Scottish Studies.

There are also plans to create a memorial to Burns on SFU's Second Life website. The centre is holding a contest to find an appropriate 21st century image of the famous poet and song-writer (details are at www.sfu.ca/scottish)

The deadline is April 1 and the winner will be announced during the Robert Burns in Transatlantic Culture workshop at SFU's Harbour Centre campus April 7-9. The workshop is the first event of its kind to focus on Burns in the Americas.

'We're hoping to bring Burns into focus, not just as a nostalgic relic of the 19th century but as a poet who has much to say in our time,' says Davis. 'Burns' message was all about universal brotherhood, and sisterhood, by extension, and that is still a vital message today.'

Davis is currently in Scotland to deliver a lecture, The Performance of Burns in Popular Culture, to the Royal Society of Edinburgh's 2009 conference, Robert Burns and Global Culture.

Conference participants will share the latest research on Burns while leading Burns scholars will reflect on such issues as the global reputation of Burns, his influence on the image of Scotland abroad and the continuing celebration of Burns in global culture through statues, music and Burns Supper events.

Davis will return Jan. 24 for the Burns virtual event and the Gung Haggis Fat Choy event Jan. 25 at 6 p.m. at the Floata Chinese Restaurant (see <http://www.gunghaggisfatchoy.com/>)

Meanwhile, SFU will hold its annual Robbie Burns Day celebrations on Friday, Jan. 23. Check <http://www.sfu.ca/ceremonies/RBD09.html> for more details.

Comments

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