



Left to right, Annie Drysdale, Chris Hazinah and Rio Sousa get into character for the Innovative Theatre's production of *Fame The Musical*, which takes the stage tonight and tomorrow (Nov. 27-28) at the Milton Centre for the Arts. | submitted photo

Poet sharing her wonder of life in new collection

by Dennis Smith
Special to the Beaver



Josie Brain

Josie Brain has lived and travelled around the world, but there has been one constant in her life.

"I've been journaling a lot. Ever since I can remember, I've always been scribbling," she said. "I've been fascinated with nature more than anything."

The longtime Oakville resident has assembled her first poetry book, entitled *In Awesome Wonder*. Brain will launch it Friday (Nov. 29).

It features nearly 100 of her poems covering everything from religion and nature, to love and war.

"I was reading by the time I was three years old," said Brain, recalling her early childhood in Jamaica, but admitting she didn't enjoy learning about the renowned English poet, William Wordsworth. "I stood up reciting it and I hated it."

Then 11 years ago, she was inspired by the world around her and has written 1,200 poems since.

Brain commutes from

her Glen Abbey home to her full-time job near Toronto's Pearson International Airport. She often gets ideas and writes at night after working as senior technical account manager for Yardi Systems Inc., a software firm.

She doesn't do public readings except on special occasions.

Brain does volunteer with Kerr Street Ministries (KSM) where her book launch will be held, located at 485 Kerr St., from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Books will be available for purchase.

In Awesome Wonder is also available by contacting the publisher, My Legacy on Record, at start@mylegacyonrecord.com. For more information, visit www.mylegacyonrecord.com.

Oakville students are triple-threat in *Fame*

by Dennis Smith
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Audiences can look forward to 'triple threat' entertainment in the upcoming musical, *Fame*. Oakville's Innovative Theatre will stage several performances of the show on Nov. 27-28. It will be held at the Milton Centre for the Arts in the 500-seat Mattamy Theatre.

"It's energetic, it's fun and it's really skill strengthening. It's not an easy thing to do for the kids," said director Nathan McLeod. "The stage musical is completely different from all the renditions in the movie and the television show."

Fame The Musical was created after the popular 1980 film and even refers to it in the script.

"The line was, 'Ever since that *Fame* movie came out, all the kids come here thinking they're going to be stars,'" said McLeod.

The story about youths at a New York high school for the performing arts is appealing to the Innovative Theatre students, he said.

"The kids will be living the dream of going to a high school in downtown New York, where all they get to do is sing and dance and explore all of that," said McLeod.

He noted the show covers all three aspects of musical theatre (the triple threat), including singing, dancing and acting.

"It has been a challenge working with the kids, but I've seen them really come alive," said McLeod.

Different casts, including juniors (aged 10-14), intermediates (12-17) and seniors (16-19) will each perform one show per day. Ages overlap depending on the actors' suitability for shows.

"You'd be surprised. The youngest cast, a lot of the time, is louder than the intermediates," said McLeod. "Age doesn't always limit performance."

The show will also include 15-16 competitive dancers, said the assistant director.

"They'll come on and fill the stage," said McLeod's sister Tricia. "It's an opportunity for them to perform."

The actor brother and sister, along with other instructors, keep all the students busy at rehearsals.

"No one is sitting around and watching, while the lead gets better," said Tricia.

She manages Innovative Theatre, which is owned by McLeod. He's on the YTV show, *Life With Boys*, and performed at the Stratford Festival in *Oliver!*, as well as in community theatre.

Fame is the first production for the Oakville acting and film studio. It provides acting classes, private coaching, directing programs, film production and musical theatre training.

Visit www.InnovativeActing.com for more information.

The Milton Centre for the Arts is located at 1010 Main St. E., in Milton. For ticket information, call 905-878-6000 or visit www.miltoncentreforthearts.ca.

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