

Dance schools add to town's cultural heritage

The big ballet boom

The time was ripe for Yvonne

By ASTRA PAPE
Herald Staff Writer
If Yvonne Oldaker has her way, Georgetown will soon have its own professional ballet dancers performing on the new cultural centre stage.

Mrs. Oldaker will be opening the Halton Hills School of Dancing in St. George's Church hall next month and has marked Sept. 11 as the date for registration.

Mrs. Oldaker, who moved to Georgetown last winter, has been teaching in Oakville and Guelph the past year. She said she wanted to wait first and "get the feel" of the community before establishing a school here.

"I wanted to see first, if Georgetown is ready for a ballet school." The time was ripe, she felt, with the imminent opening of the library-cultural centre in Georgetown.

"It's the beginning of a new era for Georgetown," Mrs. Oldaker said, adding that it should be exciting for the community to experience new cultural growth with the opening of the centre. The one thing they're lacking, she feels, are professional local dancers. She hopes her school will be the springboard for new talent in the area.

Although the making of a professional dancer takes ten years, Mrs. Oldaker is confident that through her school, the seed for the growth of a professional dance company in Georgetown will be planted.

The school will be held for one hour at St. George's Friday evenings. Mrs. Oldaker will be accepting boys and girls of all ages as well as any adults. She realizes that the adult class is more for fitness and appreciation of ballet since by then it's too late to develop a professional dancer.

She said that she will hold classes Friday evenings only as a start, but will wait and "see how it snowballs"

before scheduling any more classes. Besides ballet, she plans to have some jazz classes for those interested.

Mrs. Oldaker's life has centred around ballet from the moment she first put on her slippers at the age of eight. A native of England, she moved to Canada in 1959 and worked in Montreal as a teacher. A few years later, she moved to Winnipeg where she toured with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet as a teacher. She has also danced professionally in musicals herself.

She has choreographed musicals and has been an adjudicator for music festivals. In addition, she is a children's examiner for the London-based Royal Academy of Dancing, a world-wide organization with prospective ballet dancers taking the same examinations all over the globe. Mrs. Oldaker has travelled to South Africa, England and all across Canada in her duties as an examiner, explaining that her students here will be able to take the exams if they wish.

Mrs. Oldaker will adopt a wait-and-see attitude before renting a studio of her own. In the meantime, St. George's hall is ideally suited for her classes since it has a wooden floor, which is a must for ballet dancers. Mrs. Oldaker also wants to hire a local accompanist since she wishes to keep it a local operation.

If she's successful, Mrs. Oldaker's dream of seeing local professional dancers performing on Georgetown's cultural centre stage will be realized.



Yvonne Oldaker and her son Alexander display some of the form they hope to instill in Georgetown's newest crop of ballet dancers. Mrs. Oldaker is opening the Halton Hills School of Dancing in St. George's church hall this September and said Alexander will help out with the beginner's classes. He's registered at a fairly advanced level in a ballet school in Oakville. Registration for the Halton Hills School of Dancing will be held Sept. 11 at St. George's church hall in Georgetown. (Herald photo)

Acton studio fulfills dreams

When Lix Chalmers offered to teach a class at the Acton School of Dance last fall she was just looking for a way to stay involved with the dancing she loves. When the school opens this fall it will be Lix's school and she'll be realizing a long-standing dream.

Mrs. Chalmers began taking dancing lessons at the age of four in Blackpool, England. She continued her lessons and performed for three years with the Ballet Rambert in London before she traded in her ballet slippers for a husband, two children and a grocery store in Blackpool.

"That didn't end her interest in dancing, of course, and she taught for a dance school in Blackpool.

"Our store wasn't in a very nice area and we always knew we'd have to move eventually," she said. "We have relatives in Canada and they urged us to come and take a look."

Cable TV listings

Wed. Aug. 25
5:30 Baha's Present
6:00 Foster Parents
6:30 Storytime with Erica "Schools"
7:00 Rud Whiting Golf Tournament
7:30 Real Estate - "Buying a Home"
8:30 Sign Off
Thurs. Aug. 27
8:00 Halton Region Council
- Aug. 19

They came, they decided they liked what they saw and 10 months ago the Chalmers family emigrated. They have been in Acton just over a year.

After being actively involved in the store for so long, Mrs. Chalmers found she couldn't just be a housewife. Her children, Cathryn, 16, and Liam, 14, are grown enough to leave her free time and she did janitorial work two hours a day at St. Joseph's separate school last year.

This fall she'll be taking dancing classes two nights a week at the Acton YMCA. At the present she plans to start classes by late September.

Mrs. Chalmers will teach ballet, tap and jazz classes. Mrs. Chalmers would also like to teach classical dance but she won't tackle that until she finds out something more about her students and their interests.

"I'll probably introduce it in ballet classes," she said, "and find out from there how many kids would be interested in it."

"I'll be teaching ballet from babies at three and four years old to grandmothers at 80 if they want it," she laughed. "I've always wanted a school and it's happening a lot sooner than I expected."

Courtesy Guelph Mercury.



Lix Chalmers gives just a sample of the art of ballet she's looking forward to teaching at the Acton School of Dance at the YMCA this fall. A former dancer with Ballet Rambert in London, Mrs. Chalmers has recently moved to Canada from Blackpool, England, where she had taught ballet also. (Herald photo)

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STARTING FRIDAY

CHUCK NORRIS in
"AN EYE FOR AN EYE"
Weekdays: 7:10, 9:15
Sat., Sun. cont. from 2:10 p.m.

STARTING FRIDAY

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"CONDORMAN"
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Last 2 days, Wed.-thru "Heavy Metal" 7:10, 9:15 AA
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GVAS golf tourney attracts 32 duffers

Georgetown Volunteer Ambulance Service members and spouses had another great golf tournament Saturday thanks to 32 fun-loving but devoted duffers and plenty of generous business sponsors.

Prizes donated by about 50 area businesses made the evening presentation at the Guelph Street ambulance hall a major highlight of the day. Some 18 trophies were lined up for the awarding.

Top scorers were: GROSS - Joe Scott and (stand-in) Vince Marinko (first), Mr. and Mrs. Frank Espolio (second), Mr. and Mrs. Gary George (third); NET - Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Hickey, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Longbottom, Mr. and Mrs. Daryl Giberson. Winning the ladies' longest drive competition was Edith Stiles, while Joe Scott took the men's trophy. Mr. and Mrs. Bill Moore were declared the Most Honest Golfers.

The GVAS extends warm thanks to the following businesses which donated trophies:

Brad's Tack and Togs, Billy's Paint and Wallpaper, Home Hardware, Christiane Hair Stylists, Plaza Automotive, M and R Automotive, the Guelphview Open Kitchen, Quik Fix Variety, Radio Shack, King Submarine, M and M Pro Sports,

Mountainview Mac's Milk, Neptune Restaurant, G and S Television, Canadian Tire, Zellers, Galyn Shoes and Luggage, Golden Flash and Chips, Supreme Hair Styling, Delrex Restaurant and Tavern, Paint and Wallpaper Decorating Fun, JV Clothing, Vanderburg Flowers, Delrex Smoke Shop, Superior Shoe Repair, Wimpey's, Kelly's, Games People Play, Cinemas Three, The Cooking

Emporium, Co-Op, Silver's, Flash Taxi, Georgetown Decorating Centre, Henry's Clothing, Stedman's, North Halton Sports, John Boughton Jewellers, Village Shop, Robert Gougeon Furniture, Yong's Restaurant, Hi Neighbour Mini-mart, Fletcher's Shoes, Young's Pharmacy, Towels and Things, Akers and Clark Realty, Teller's Cage, Goodlet's Hardware and McDonald's

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HALTON HILLS ARTS CENTRE

Renaissance in town?

We've received some feedback from last week's column. Nice to know there is someone out there willing to comment.

One person recognized herself as one of those who do not attend local theatrical or musical productions but defended her decision to seek such entertainment elsewhere. She cited the lack of an adequate facility to showcase local productions as her main reason.

That's terrific, because if others have been staying away for the same reason, there is about to be a renaissance of the performing arts in Halton Hills. The eagerly awaited opening of the Library Complex and Arts Centre (tentatively Oct. 18) will give our performing artists and musicians a home.

The many groups planning to use this new facility have a golden opportunity. Besides their regular supporters, they'll be drawing many who will be seeing their work for the first time. The Arts Centre itself will bring them out the first time; it will depend on the quality of the productions offered whether they return.

All in all, it looks like an exciting time to be involved in the performing arts in Halton Hills!

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