

# GCS' Fantasia recipe left no one hungering

By CHRIS AAGAARD  
Herald Staff Writer

The following Christmas recipe is bound to succeed: take the Georgetown Choral Society (GCS), add a smartly professional group of young orchestral musicians, heat under the warm applause of an appreciative audience and watch it rise with the dramatic chords of G.F. Handel's Hallelujah Chorus from The Messiah.

There were moments during this weekend's GCS special "Fantasia For Christmas" when the performance reached such excellence as to become almost transcendental; time seemed to stop and the John Elliott Theatre audience hung on every note as the music oscillated from head-spinning

highs to thunderously dramatic lows.

Fantasia was an unrivalled entertainment treat and the audiences who saw it Friday or Saturday night couldn't have been happier. It was an immensely enjoyable "Christmas cracker" with twists of Handel's Messiah at both ends, filled with delightful surprises in the middle and set off with a joyful explosion of music.

Thanks to a grant from the Ontario Arts Council, GCS and its director, Dale Wood, were able to perform with a chamber orchestra, including a local member, violinist David Harding. Many of the orchestra's members are past performers with the Toronto Youth Symphony and the National

Youth Orchestra.

Under the deft strokes of Mr. Wood's baton, the orchestra and the choir launched the program with selections from The Messiah, including "And the Glory of the Lord", "For Unto Us a Child is Born" and "His Yoke is Easy". They skillfully moved to selections by Vaughn Williams from "Hodie", "The Blessed Son of God" and "No Sad Thought His Soul Affright".

**STIRRING VOICE**

Baritone soloist David Shrubsole moved to the front of the stage with a majestic performance of Williams' "Fantasia on Christmas Carols". His voice is stirring and his phrasing was skillfully warm and eloquent.

Halton Hills flautist Susan McNally opened the second half of the GCS special with J.S. Bach's Suite in B Minor for flute and orchestra. Her performance was fresh and breezy, using her flute as

musical brush to paint a charmingly pastoral interlude in the show. Her orchestral accompanists readily picked up the light spirit of her playing and the efforts were sincerely appreciated by the

audience which applauded at length afterward.

Choral society members Anna Burke and Mary Jane McGinn performed thrilling solo and duet efforts on the Kyrie and Gloria portions of Marc

Antoine Charpentier's "Messe de Minuit pour Noel". They were again joined by the choir for an exciting conclusion to this section of the program, giving full-bodied efforts to Sanctus and Agnus Dei.

**SENSED START**

There was an electrifying pause after the Charpentier selections. For audience members who have never seen the Choral Society perform Handel's Christmas masterpiece, they must have sensed that things were about to reach a breath-taking climax.

As conductor Wood's baton poised in mid-air, everyone's concentration centred on the stage and bodies tensed for lift-off: when the hand dropped, the first chord of the Messiah's Amen Chorus rang out in a spine-tingling crescendo of harmony. It began a roller-coaster ride along the high and lows of the scale and pitched the audience

forward from their seats into a standing ovation when it ended.

As an encore, the choir and the orchestra performed the famous Hallelujah chorus, one of the most familiar pieces of Christmas season music (and occasionally played at Easter) known. Each "Hallelujah!" was as crystal clear as the chorus strived to fill every vacant nook and cranny in the theatre with the richness of its performance.

Time seemed to stand still.

**HALTON HILLS ELKS LODGE BINGO EVERY MONDAY**

## Acton Glass Studio hosts special treat

When it comes to the fine art of making glass, ornate and eye-catching paperweights hold a special place of honor.

The Olde Hide House's new Halton Glass Studio pays tribute to the artisans and techniques behind a revival of paperweight making this Sunday through Dec. 29 with an unprecedented exhibition entitled "Canadian Heavyweights".

More than 25 glass makers from four provinces will demonstrate their skills this Sunday inside the Glass Studio, part of the sprawling Artisan

Village inside Acton's Hide House.

Paperweights have been highly prized and widely collected throughout the history of glass-making, according to Robin Fineberg, one of three resident artisans at the Glass Studio. He and Peter Keogh, who teaches sculpture at Sheridan College, and Kathy Wood have taken over the special studio completed recently in a span of just four weeks.

Among its equipment are a 160-pound day tank, a glory hole, an electric annealer, a 30-inch grinding wheel, a diamond saw, a belt sander and a

sandblaster.

You can see it all in operation this Sunday when the three artisans are joined by two dozen others for opening day of "Canadian Heavyweights".

The show continues seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. For more information, call Janis Fread or Robin Fineberg at 853-1031.



**BIG THANKS FOR GERARD**

Surrounded by friends and colleagues, Gerard Wilcox of the Georgetown Volunteer Ambulance Service (GVAS) was the undisputed man of the hour at the Service's silver anniversary dance recently. Mr. Wilcox has donated his time to the GVAS for 25 years himself and was presented with a gold watch from his fellow ambulance attendants, a certificate from the town of Halton Hills acknowledging his contribution to the Service and a letter of appreciation from the provincial ministry of health. With Mr. Wilcox are (middle, left to right) regional manager of ambulance services Fred Busk, Ward 3 regional councillor John McDonald (back row) Daryl Giberson, president of the GVAS, Jerry Bahr, manager of technical services for the ministry and John Lightowler, Mr. Wilcox's partner for eight years.

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**LEGION BINGO TONIGHT**  
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Tuesdays-Wednesdays-Thursdays: 2 pm - 8 pm  
Fridays-Saturdays-Sundays: 2 pm - 6 pm

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FOR ONE WEEK ONLY  
Henry Fonda & Katherine Hepburn  
Evenings at 7, 9:15, Sat., Sun. mat at 2 p.m.

2 **JEKYLL & HYDE**  
STARTING FRIDAY  
...together again  
Evenings at 7:10 & 9, Sat., Sun. mat at 2:05 p.m.

3 **THE MAMMALS**  
STARTING FRIDAY  
Evenings only at 7:05, 9:15 p.m.

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2 **HELD OVER 3RD WEEK STALLONE**  
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Mon. to Thurs. 7:30 p.m. only

3 **STARTS FRIDAY The Missionary**  
MICHAEL PALIN  
MAGGIE SMITH  
Fri. Sat. Sun. 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.  
Mon. to Thurs. 7:30 p.m. only  
Wed. Thurs. "HOMEWORK" 7:30 p.m. only

(Herald photo by Harald Bransch)

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