

Idle Pursuits



Chamber Choir lines up spring concerts

By DEBORAH QUAILÉ

The Georgetown Bach Chorale was established in 1999 to offer a cappella repertoires as well as genres involving instrumental accompaniment and soloists, with special emphasis on the works of Johann Sebastian Bach. The cantatas and sacred works of the old master have a key role in their repertoire.

On April 6 there will be a chamber quartet (violin, viola, cello and piano) at 8 p.m. at the Halton Hills Cultural Centre. Featured selections are the *Piano Quartet no. 1 in a minor* by Gustav Mahler and the sublime *Piano Quartet in c minor* by Gabriel Fauré.

April 18, Good Friday, has become a yearly event for the Bach Chorale, and the choir will be singing with solo violin and organ for accompaniment. Selections will include *Ciaccona* for violin and choir, and *Zwei Chorale Preludes* for organ by J.S. Bach, as well as *Partita in d minor* for solo violin. There will be Lenten meditations by Rachmaninoff, Lotti and Poulenc. The concert is at St. George's Anglican Church at 8 p.m.

Unfortunately the third concert, *Four Hands, Two Grands*, is sold out. However, eager concert goers can still get tickets to the Gala Concert where the chorale performs with a chamber orchestra and soloists, with works such as *Cantata No. 29* by Bach, *Coronation Anthem No. 4* by Handel, and *Piano Concerto no. 1* and *Divertimento for Strings in D major* by Mozart. The Gala Concert takes place at St. John's United Church on Saturday, May 3 at 8 p.m.

Tickets for all concerts are \$20 and are available at Foodstuffs, 89 Main Street South, or Youngs Pharmacy, 47 Main Street South in Georgetown, or from choir members.

My Darling Judith

By DEBORAH QUAILÉ

What do you do when you want to marry a beautiful real estate agent with political ambitions, but your wife objects?

In April, the Georgetown Little Theatre presents *My Darling Judith*, a comedy by Canadian playwright Norm Foster that's directed by Janet Raats. David Stafford, played by Mark Tiller, is the middle-aged owner of a company called Stafford Accessories. He's fallen madly in love with the exquisite Anna Miles (Julia Guthrie) and would like to marry her. However, the slight hitch in his plans is David's somewhat eccentric wife, Judith (Elizabeth Barfoot).

In order to gain his freedom from marital shackles and preserve Anna's political reputation, David hatches a plan for Judith to be seduced by one of his employees. Carl Newhouse (Paul d'Entremont), the chosen man, is anxious to impress his boss and

thereby climb up the corporate rungs, but he's not exactly what you'd call a ladies' man. In a hilarious shambles of events, David's plan doesn't work out quite the way he wishes.

My Darling Judith runs April 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12 at 8 p.m. at the John Elliott Theatre, 9 Church Street, Georgetown. Tickets are \$15 to \$18, available at the box office or by phone 905-877-3700.



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Family Secrets

By DEBORAH QUAILÉ

Quaile Reviews

It's an intriguing thought: What if you suddenly discovered that your great-grandfather was black? Or, to broaden the question: What if he were any other colour than you, and you'd never known?

That's exactly what Catherine Slaney discovered during a search for family roots. The question of racial heritage was the key to opening a secret door to a world full of treasures - admittedly, though, findings that some family members wanted to keep hidden. And so *Family Secrets: Crossing The Colour Line* was born. To make the story even more interesting, her family could boast distinguished members that thankfully had left a paper trail to follow. In so many cases today, ferreting out the facts of a family history can be a futile exercise if the ancestors lived a small life.

Ms. Slaney carries her audience along a journey that details her family tree, beginning back in the times of slavery and travelling to the black Elgin, Ontario settlement.

In 1857, Anderson R. Abbott enrolled at University College in Toronto to study chemistry, and the following year he entered King's College Medical School. The dedicated student launched himself into studies of anatomy, obstetrics, medicines and more, and in 1861, at 23 years of age, he graduated as the first black Canadian-born licentiate of the Medical Board of Upper Canada.

The book is well illustrated with photographs, including a couple showing the black and white houndstooth shawl given to

Dr. Abbott by Mrs. Lincoln after her husband, the President, had been assassinated. "Obviously," says Ms. Slaney, "Dr. Abbott had made a lasting impression on the First Family."

The tale ends with the chapter, *My Reconciliation*, an attempt to pigeonhole every possible thought on the quest to validate her history - and rightful inheritance. More than just a book has come from Ms. Slaney's work. She's written a family history with seven generations of genealogical work, reunited family separated for nearly a century, and rekindled and regenerated dozens of new friendships. During the research of her family, Ms. Slaney encountered other creative sidelines, such as her collaboration on *Doc Ruffin*, a musical produced by the Smile Theatre with words and music by Dinah Christie, the musical supervision of Donald Horsburgh, and the choreography of William Orlowski. She redirected her academic studies "to new and exciting fields of discovery, completed a thesis and started yet another." The scope of her quest grows as her investigations of her personal universe expand.

Catherine Slaney, born in Toronto to white parents, lives in Georgetown, and is pursuing a Doctorate in Sociology and Equity Studies in Education.

CATHERINE SLANEY
FAMILY SECRETS: CROSSING THE COLOUR LINE
TORONTO: NATURAL HERITAGE BOOKS, 2003
SOFTCOVER, 249 PGS., \$24.95



The Milton Choristers presents *The Hope of Spring*, an afternoon concert with J.S. Bach's *Jesu, Mein Freude*, delightful Renaissance Madrigals, and songs of spring and love. Special guest is the E.C. Drury Choir. The concert is Sunday, April 13 at 3 p.m., at Knox Presbyterian Church on Main Street, Milton. Adults are \$15, Seniors/Students are \$12, and Children 12 and under are \$8. Call 905-876-2401.


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