



**WWW.ARTSMILTON.com** *Creating Community with the Arts*

# Sonja van de Hoef

## Musician, teacher, conductor and mentor

Whether it's Monday night with the Adoramus Children's Choir, Tuesday night with the Milton Choristers, Wednesday night teaching private lessons or Thursday night working with the adult and children's choirs at Knox Presbyterian Church, Sonja van de Hoef can always be found making music in Milton. Her family reports that from the tender age of three Ms. van de Hoef came down the stairs each morning singing. It was inevitable then that she would eventually find her passion and career in choral conducting.

Ms. van de Hoef was born to a Dutch immigrant family and grew up on a turkey farm with three sisters outside Elora, Ontario. Her parents valued a life of faith, hard work and a love for music which shaped who she is today. Sonja claims that her father, whom she gets her singing voice from, could have been a singer had he not followed his first love, agriculture.

"One of my earliest memories of choral singing," reports Ms. van de Hoef, "was when I was 10. My parents purchased tickets to attend Handel's Messiah at the Centre in the Square in Kitchener, Ontario around Christmas time. I literally sat on the edge of my seat for the entire performance and was so disappointed when it finished. I remember telling my Dad, "When I grow up I want to sing that on stage."

Now 28 years old, Ms. van de Hoef is living out that dream. She began her career three years ago in Milton after graduating from Wilfrid Laurier University, in Waterloo, Ontario. She received her Bachelor of Music in Honours Church Music, majoring in voice and organ with Prof. Jan Overduin and Patricia Pascoe. Prior to university, Ms. van de Hoef completed nine years of private instruction on piano and a year in voice.

In the spring of 2002, just prior to graduating, Ms. van de Hoef began searching for conducting positions. Much to her delight she came across an adult community choir that was looking for a conductor, the Milton Choristers. In June of 2002, after several weeks of interviews and auditions, she received a call from the president at that time, Cori McTaggart. Mrs. McTaggart informed Ms. van de Hoef that the Milton Choristers ([www.miltonchoristers.com](http://www.miltonchoristers.com)) would like to offer her the position of Artistic Director.

"I will never forget that day," says Sonja, "I am



grateful to the Choristers for helping me start my career. It has been, and continues to be, an honour to get to know each chorister and share our love for choral music. It was incredible to have had the opportunity to work with John Govedas, the Chorister's accompanist who passed away last spring. John was my mentor in my first years here in Milton and I am eternally grateful. I am now equally as pleased to be working with our new accompanist Becky Windhager who is the sister of Judy Hunter, founder of the Milton Choristers."

At the same time that Ms. van de Hoef was auditioning for the Milton Choristers a position for Director of Music was posted at Knox Presbyterian Church, in Milton. "It seemed too good to be true," claims van de Hoef. Starting a career in music she expected that she

would be working in several different communities. No stranger to the church music scene, Ms. van de Hoef began leading church services on the piano at the tender age of twelve. In August of 2002 she accepted the position at Knox. "Knox is a warm and welcoming church family," says van de Hoef, "they recognize the impact that music has on faith and our lives."

One of her visions for Milton was to start a community children's choir that studied both sacred and secular music. Knox recognized this vision and with their generous support Ms. van de Hoef has founded the Adoramus Children's Choir (ACC) in the fall of 2003 which has now grown to a membership of 27 choristers. "No one does anything alone," says Ms. van de Hoef, "a community, particularly a faith community, is an integral part of our lives." Along with the support of Knox, she is joined by vocal coach Mrs. Heather Fleming and accompanist Mrs. Mary Light. ACC began their third season in September 2005 and will be appearing as the Children of Bethlehem in "On the Way to Bethlehem". The live nativity will be held December 2nd to 5th, at the Country Heritage Park.

Ms. van de Hoef says that Milton is a community that has a lot of hidden talent.

"All you have to do is go to the Arts Milton website ([www.artsmilton.com](http://www.artsmilton.com)) to see the plethora of groups and individual artists immediately available to us in Milton."

Sonja feels privileged to have befriended one Miltonian in particular, Judy Hunter. "I have never met a more gracious and talented person. What Mrs. Hunter brings to this community through music is incredible! I hope that in my own way I am contributing to what she began and continues to do."

Being a fairly new resident to Milton Ms. van de Hoef encourages all new residents to check out what Milton has to offer. Whether you are looking for a new church family, becoming involved in a community organization or attending a concert, theatre production, art exhibit or sports event. "It is a great way to meet new people, learn about and contribute to your community. Then the best reward is knowing that you belong."

If you would like to contact Ms. van de Hoef call 905-878-6066 or email [sonjaconducts@bellnet.ca](mailto:sonjaconducts@bellnet.ca).

**Saturday, November 26, 8:00 pm**

**Milton Concert Presentations:**

**A CELTIC CHRISTMAS**

A magical evening of traditional Celtic music and dance, especially for the Christmas season. Rob Crabtree, a multi-award winning bagpiper, will be joined by the Scottish Dance Company of Canada with fiddle, guitar and piano, in this sight and sound spectacular. Bishop Redding Secondary School, Main St., Milton.

\$30/adults \$25/seniors-students. 905-878-4732.

**Saturday, November 26, 8:00pm**

**St. John's United Church, Georgetown.**

**Sunday, November 27, 3:00pm**

**St. James Anglican Church, Caledon East.**

**Georgetown Bach Chorale:**

**GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO**

The Chorale performs with the Baroque Chamber Orchestra. Conductor: Ronald Greidanus, Trumpet: Norman Engel. Missa "Assumpta est Maria" ~ M. A. Charpentier. Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F major ~ J. S. Bach. Gloria, RV 589 in D ~ A. Vivaldi. \$25.00. 905-877-8321

**Friday, December 2, 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm**

**Just Milton Folks:**

**GREGG LAWLESS IN CONCERT**

Gregg brings his guitar and his exceptional song-writing skills to Milton. He promises to bring some of his French flair along with his rock and country-influenced folk music to town. \$20

Hugh Foster Hall 905-876-2645

[rose.brooks@sympatico.ca](mailto:rose.brooks@sympatico.ca)

[www.justmiltonfolks.ca](http://www.justmiltonfolks.ca)

**Thursday, December 8, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

**Milton Music Teacher's Association:**

**STUDENT RECITAL**

Milton Senior's Activity Centre, 500 Child's Dr Milton, 905-878-5980.

**Saturday, December 10, 8:00 pm**

**Halton Museum Foundation:**

**SENTIMENTAL SWING ORCHESTRA**

In recognition of "2005 - Year of the Veteran" we are delighted to present the 20 piece Sentimental Swing Orchestra featuring Wendy West as guest vocalist. With songs from the "Golden Age of the Big Bands" to the present day, this talented group will have you tapping your toes and singing along to all your favourites.

Tickets: 905-877-3700. Adults \$25/Seniors \$20.

**Sunday, December 11, 2:30 pm approx**

**The Children's Hour:**

**MARITIME MARIONETTES**

String operated puppets always delight the young audience. Watch as the mystery unfolds with MOLLY & THE OAK ISLAND TREASURE. Tickets: \$10 adults, \$7.50 first child, \$5.00 for each additional child. Wheel chair accessible. Milton Bible Church, 200 Main St E., Kymm 905-878-7962 or Rick 905-875-1364.

**Friday, December 16,**

**Milton Youth Theatre Productions:**

**CHRISTMAS SHOW**

Milton Senior's Activity Centre, 500 Child's Dr. [www.miltontheatre.com](http://www.miltontheatre.com) 905-875-7674

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