Born to fly Eleven-year-old Jonathan Volpe flies off one of the ramps at the new skateboard park beside Milton Memorial Arena. The facility offers challenges for skateboarders, in-line skaters and BMX riders. Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Choristers focus on celebrating with a season aimed at renewal

By KAREN SMITH

The Champion

Everything old is new again, say excited members of the Milton Choristers as the singing group enters its 30th season.

The local chorus will begin its third decade with a new director, fresh approach to making music and a revamped method of recruiting members, said president Hazel Carlin.

"The choir members and members of the executive committee have worked very hard over the last few years to rebuild the choir membership and ticket sales," she said.

"I'm looking forward to building on our momentum with the excitement of this special milestone. It's going to be an outstanding season."

New director

Peel Board of Education music teacher Glenda Crawford, the Choristers' new director, brings a unique combination to the choir — youth and experience, Ms Carlin said.

"Ms Crawford has a reputation for excellence in developing and motivating singers in the choral arts."

Ms Crawford said she's inspired by "great" choral music sung by people from diverse walks of life — all for the love of singing.

"What excites me about the new season with the Milton Choristers is to be part of a community that has a 30-year tradition of choral singing," she said.

"It is my hope that this will be a milestone year for the Milton Choristers with the dedication and talents of the singers complimented by a fresh, enthusiastic approach to making music."

The Choristers have sung a broad range of styles over the past 30 years. This year's concert themes will reflect the diversity of tastes found within the choir and will appeal to Milton audiences, Ms Crawford said.

"I'm confident that this is a something-for-everyone

season," she said.

Elaine Rusk, a former member of the Choristers, will be the group's new accompanist. The gifted pianist works for the Royal Conservatory of Music as manager of materials development.

The Choristers also have a new method of recruiting members, Ms Carlin said. The group began by writing personal letters to all former Choristers — their alumni — to invite them to join the choir for the season, especially for the anniversary celebration in February.

"In total, over 100 letters have been sent out and positive responses are already starting to come in."

The auditions process is also new this year, she said. "Although auditions helped to emphasize excellence and fine quality singing at our concerts, we knew that formal auditions were scaring away potential new members."

Now, all interested adults are simply invited to come out and sing, Ms Carlin said.

"By the third or fourth of our weekly rehearsals, our director will conduct group voice placement interviews to blend together all the various parts — soprano, alto, tenor and bass," she explained.

Rehearsals will begin Tuesday, Sept. 8 at Grace Anglican Church at 7:45 p.m.

First concert in November

The Choristers' first concert of the season will be held on Sunday, Nov. 29 at Milton Alliance Church at 3 p.m. The main work will be 'Brother Heinrich's Christmas' by John Rutter.

The next performance February 20 will celebrate the choir's 30th anniversary. It will feature a dessert party and the theme will be love.

The third and final concert will feature the British Isles Pub Night at the Farm Museum's Gambrel Barn on May 15.

Order forms for the subscription series as well as concert tickets can be obtained at Peggy's, Delacourt's or by calling 875-4588.

