

Arts & Entertainment

Well-known Serbian artist creating stunning masterpiece on walls of rural Milton church

By **CLAUDIA D'SOUZA**
Special to *The Champion*

The legacy of Dragan Marunich lives on forever in Milton's Serbian Orthodox Church.

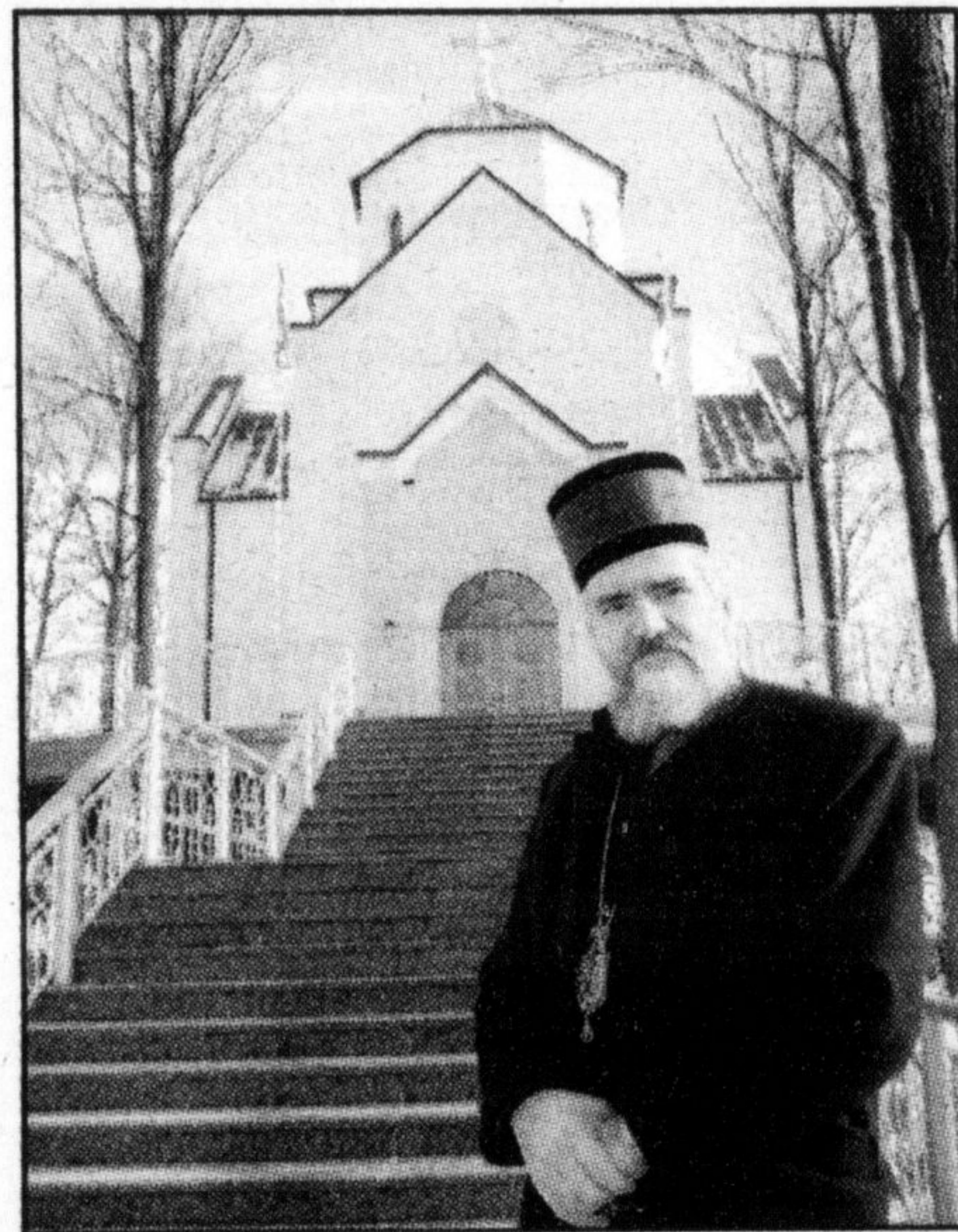


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Rt. Rev. Bishop Georgije of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Canada stands near the steps leading up to the Holy Transfiguration Serbian Orthodox Monastery in rural Milton.

Mr. Marunich, a Serbian artist, worked 12 hours a day, six days a week on three separate occasions since 1994 to embellish the interior of the Holy Transfiguration Serbian Orthodox Monastery.

His glowing frescos depicting stories from the Bible in the Byzantine tradition are not only a tribute to an ancient art that dates back to the Middle Ages, but to his own faith.

"He's a famous artist but he's also studied theology," noted diocese secretary Davor Milicevic. "He has a lot of religious knowledge. It was a great honour to have him here."

Will return this winter

Mr. Marunich, one of the world's best-known fresco artists, has since returned to Serbia to work on his 34th church, but plans on returning to Milton this winter to finish one wall.

He was originally attempting to complete the job prior to this past summer's celebration of 2000 years of Christianity held at the church, but he was unable to do so without his assistant who was unable to make the trip.

More than 10,000 Ukrainians, Greeks, Russians, Armenians and Serbians attended the June 24th pan-Orthodox event on the picturesque 44-acre Niagara Escarpment property.

Mr. Milicevic pronounced the celebration "magnificent."

The term 'fresco' meaning 'fresh' in Italian, is used to describe the ancient medium of painting with powdered pigments on fresh wet plaster. It's one of three artistic genres cultivated by the Serbs. As the plaster dries, incorporating images

• see **ARTIST** on page E2



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

The ceiling of the Serbian Orthodox Monastery boasts a breath-taking fresco, painstakingly painted by Serbian artist Dragan Marunich.

Elvis tribute artist teams up with St. Paul's choir

By **IRENE GENTLE**
The Champion

Merry Christmas, baby. For those who find themselves all shook up over the holidays, a good dose of Elvis ought to blow the Christmas blues away.

Especially when the King's classic holiday tunes are accompanied by Milton's respected St. Paul's United Church choir.

It will all happen December 18 and 19, when well-known Elvis tribute artist Stephen Kabakos returns to the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts (OCPA) for his first-ever, all-out Christmas show.

The full-sized St. Paul's choir will join Mr. Kabakos for three songs during the two-hour concert.

"They're a very prestigious choir," he said. "It adds a certain something to our show."

For those who follow these things, Mr. Kabakos has been delivering his full-throttle tribute performance for more than five years now.

He typically does it along with a 13-piece band, including the TVB Players, the TVB Brass and the Memphis Sound singers.

Include a series of costume changes aimed at taking listeners on a musical journey through the '50s to the '70s and you've got yourself a heck of a show, Priscilla.

But this time it'll be different. After an hour of what can accurately be called Elvis' greatest hits — think Don't Be Cruel and Suspicious Minds — the Christmas spirit will begin to shimmer like rhinestones on a 1970s Elvis jumpsuit.

The holiday hour will feature a dash of gospel, some bluesy seasonal tunes and three songs

energized by the breath-taking vocals of the St. Paul's choir.

During those, Mr. Kabakos — who hovers around age 30, looks as fresh as an Ivory soap ad and has been known to get those between the age 6 to 96 all in a lather — said he'll have a hard time keeping his cool.

"I'm going to have to concentrate hard on

what I'm doing because I'm going to be listening to how beautiful it sounds," he said.

Though keeping the choir's songs as tightly wrapped as the King's alleged grip on a fried peanut butter and banana sandwich, Mr. Kabakos did reveal it'll add a soaring six part harmony to the already pretty First Noel.

And that the other chosen songs just happen to be his favourite Christmas tunes.

"I can't stress that enough," said Mr. Kabakos. "It's going to be something else."

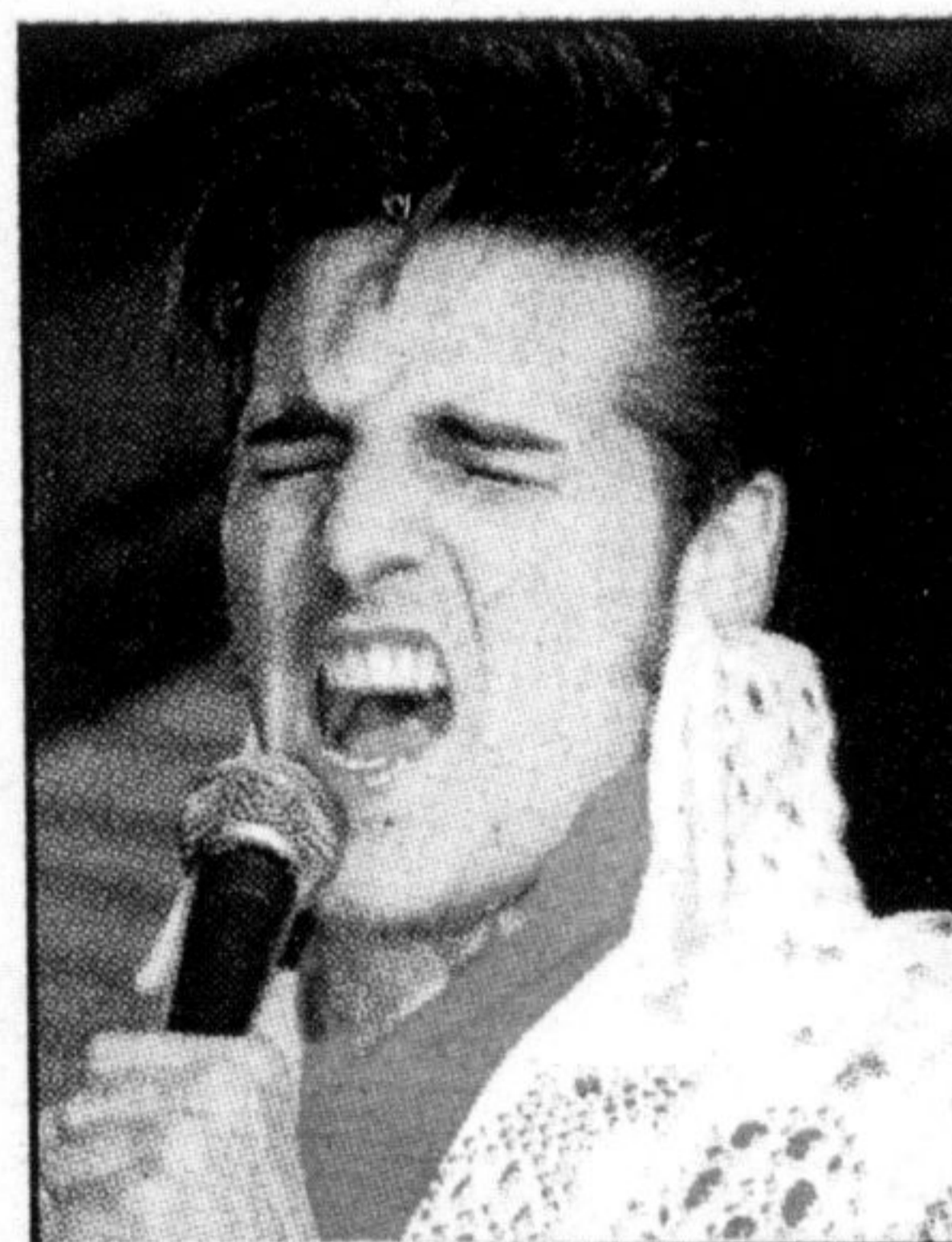
The choir arrangements were penned by TVB Player Don Featherstone.

And the result has Mr. Kabakos as excited as an Elvis fan in Graceland.

"I can't wait. It'll just be phenomenal," he said.

"It'll be rich, a layer of sound."

Tickets cost \$30, and are available at the OCPA box office, 815-2021.



Steve Kabakos

QUESTIONS ABOUT PICKING YOUR ELECTRICITY RETAILER?

Now you have the power to choose your electricity from a number of companies.

CALL 1-888-668-4636
and receive a free, 12-page brochure.

For more information on electricity competition in Ontario, please visit our website at www.est.gov.on.ca or Email: fyi@est.gov.on.ca

