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# Arts & Entertainment

## Youth theatre group set for big debut

Will kick off with *Dracula Spectacula*

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

*The Champion*

**S**tarting up a theatre group can be a rather scary endeavour — for performers and organizers alike.

So perhaps it's fitting that the newly-established Milton Youth Theatre

Production kick things off with a light-hearted twist on an age-old frightening figure.

Boasting 80 youths split into two casts, the diverse ensemble is set to debut next week at nearby Meadowvale Theatre with four performances of *Dracula Spectacula* — a musical comedy loosely based on the sinister count from Transylvania.

Portraying the play's ghoulish centerpiece for all four shows, 18-year-old Elliot Shermet says he's been quite impressed with just how much talent the group already has.

"There's a wide age range, from 10 up to 18, and some of these younger kids have amazing potential," remarked Mr. Shermet, who's performed in a few plays at Milton District High School and is hoping to pursue a career in acting. "It's going to be fun. Things have been coming along nicely."

Agreed long-time drama enthusiast and producer Christine Houle, "We've really been blown away, not just by their ability but also their dedication and willingness to work hard."

A roughly two-hour production ideal for audiences young and old, *Dracula Spectacula* focuses on the journey of a young naive teacher and her students to Transylvania. Along the way she encounters the irrepressible count and his gruesome crew.

From there an entertaining conflict ensues — that'll either see a dashing Dr. Nick save the day, or a helpless Miss Nadia give in to the dark side.

"Being a comedy and having a rather large cast, it's a great play to start with. I've heard the music so many times now, but I'm still not tired of it," said Ms Houle, who launched the group last fall with seasoned dance instructor and *Dracula Spectacula* director Kim Belvedere.

At the time the group's visionaries were expecting about 40 recruits, but wound up

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Milton Youth Theatre Group's production of *Dracula Spectacula* hits the stage next week, with Katherine Ervasti as Miss Nadia and Elliot Shermet playing Dracula.

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April 1-3, 2004 @ 8:00p.m.  
April 3, 2004 Matinee @ 2:00p.m.  
Admission: Adults \$15, Children \$10.

Meadowvale Theatre, 6315 Montevideo Rd.  
Box Office Hours: Monday - Saturday 12 - 4p.m.  
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