

Arts & Entertainment

Local vocalist cracks top 20 with R&B single

Khalel breaks through with 'Girl You Are My Soul'

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**

The Champion

Paul Sewitt — known to his fans as Khalel — remembers clearly the day he heard his rich voice filling the airwaves for the first time.

"I was at my house, and the phone rang about five times in a row because people were calling saying, 'I heard your song,'" recalled the Milton resident.

As an independent artist carving his niche in the R&B music industry, the 20-something Paul/Khalel is on his way to the top — his devoted fans are making sure of that.

Currently playing on FLOW 93.5 FM, his single 'Girl You Are My Soul' has cracked the station's top 20, sitting recently at number 19. It's also been number three on the 'Top seven at 7'.

Although many people would term them R&B, Mr. Sewitt said he thinks of his songs as 'acoustic folk soul,' a term he coined.

The artist — who's hoping to release his first CD in December or spring of next year — said it's his hard work and persist-

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KHALEL

ence that are paying off, as well as a dream to perform he never let die.

Living in Milton most of his life with a musical family, Mr. Sewitt said he started playing the piano when he was about five years old, but gave up lessons a year later.

"I didn't like practicing," he said.

But, he never really stopped. He continued, playing by ear instead of from music books, and developed his musical talent through his growing-up years by singing at church, performing at his high school, Bishop Reding, and getting as many 'gigs' as he could.

"It was like therapy," Mr. Sewitt said of his song-writing. "It was like writing in a

diary. I wrote music, and that's how I was helped with my problems."

About two years ago, he made a demo CD and urged radio stations to listen to it, distributing the 500 CDs anywhere he could.

After a few songs were rejected for radio play, Flow 93.5 finally said his song 'Stop It' was made of the right stuff and put it on the air. It eventually made it to number three on the station's 'Top eight at 8' program, and was also played at other non-local stations.

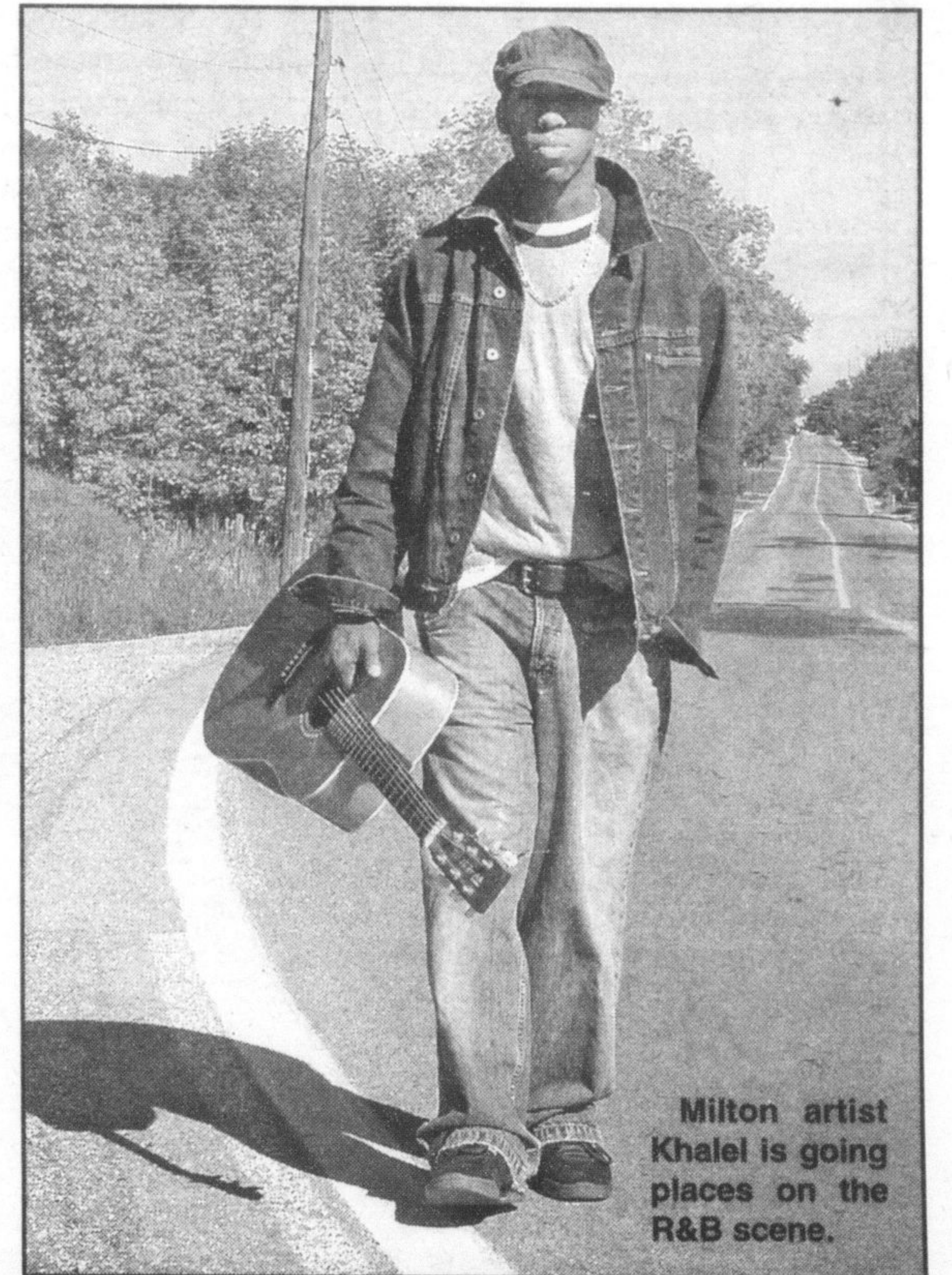
"I got a pretty good following," the singer said.

Being an independent artist — meaning he's not signed to a label — makes getting his name out difficult, since promotional expenses come from his own pocket. So Mr. Sewitt said he continues to play wherever he can, particularly at open mic nights.

He said Milton is a good place to live for an up-and-coming musician — given its close proximity to Toronto.

"Toronto is the mecca of music in terms of Canadian music," he said.

Mr. Sewitt lives in town with his wife, • see TAYLOR on page B2



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