

ARTS

Di Giorgio finalist for CHUM's Green Belt Prize

By Stephanie Thiessen
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

David Di Giorgio has always been the ambitious type. He just isn't one to let opportunities of any sort pass him by.

So when he heard last year that there was a contest for artists to express their views of Ontario's Greenbelt, he didn't think twice. It was yet another chance to advance his production company and just plain have fun.

Less than a month ago, the composer and E.C. Drury music teacher was notified that his entry, a dance piece, was chosen as one of 10 finalists for the Green Belt Prize, which is being sponsored by CHUM.

It's now up to the public to go online and vote for their favourite entry to determine the winner.

The prize? Ten thousand dollars to put towards future productions — and a quite literal green belt, specially designed.

"It's a pretty big thing and we're super excited about it," Di Giorgio said. "We'd love to get as much support as possible to win this

thing and hopefully be able to create more pieces to celebrate the Greenbelt."

Di Giorgio entered a dance piece entitled *Magic of the Mist*, which he wrote and choreographed with Toni Grates, his business partner in As Promised Productions, and lyricist Lee Siegel.

"It's a full-on production," he explained.

The piece is eight minutes long, and tells the legend of the Icicle Fairies, who live in the mist of Niagara Falls. It's set to music from Cirque de Soleil. It was originally created for the opening of the Festival of Lights at Niagara Falls.

With the falls being one of the Greenbelt's most cherished landmarks — and one of the seven natural wonders of the world — Di Giorgio felt a piece celebrating the falls certainly fit into the theme of the contest.

The audition day was pretty memorable, Di Giorgio said, since it involved having 42 young dancers — children and teens — plus parents and 10 make-up artists make the trek to the Bravo! studios at City TV in Toronto.

"We all showed up in a rehearsal room — I'm sure they (contest organizers) had no idea what they were getting into!" he said.

There weren't many restrictions about what could be entered, Di Giorgio explained, which makes it a pretty unique contest.

"It was for artists of every kind with pieces that celebrate some aspect of the Greenbelt," he said.

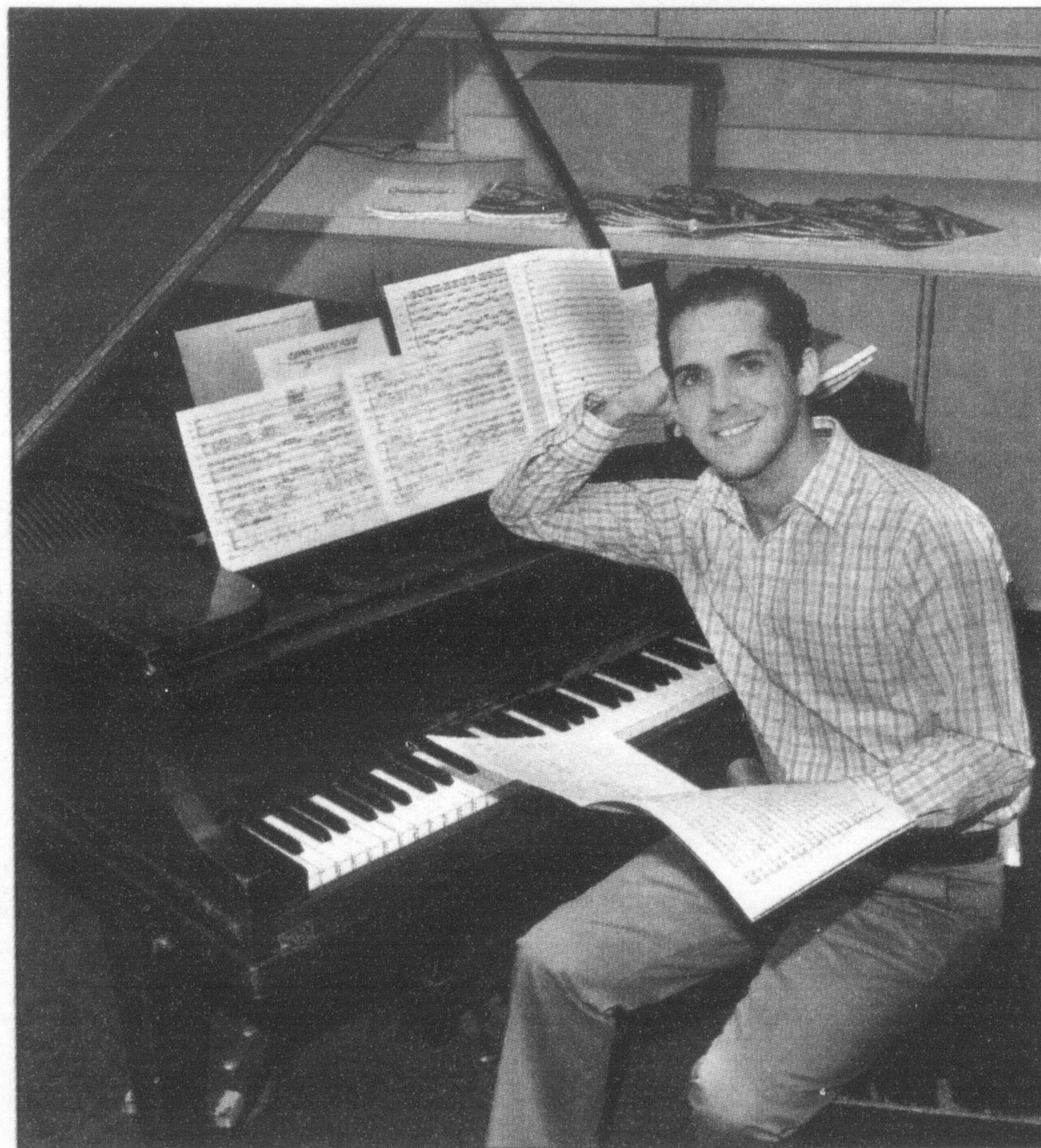
The other top 10 entries fall into the areas of fashion, music, poetry, radio, visual arts and even karate.

Di Giorgio said he hopes this will open some doors for As Promised Productions in the "entertainment" field. He sees his company creating musicals and shows about such topics as farming and agriculture and then bringing them into schools.

As a high school music teacher, he obviously has helpful experience with the education system, he said.

To vote for the winner, visit www.citytv.com/events/toronto/greenbelt07. Voting will be open for at least a couple of weeks.

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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

MUSIC MAN: Feeling right at home in front of the piano, composer David Di Giorgio is in the running for a \$10,000 grand prize for his dance piece *Magic of the Mist*.

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