

# ARTS



## Singing group brings taste of Ireland to town

*Women of Note to launch new CD on Mother's Day*

By Stephanie Hounsell  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

It doesn't take much to imagine yourself traipsing through the rolling hills of Ireland — not when you're listening to the sweet voices of the Women of Note vocal ensemble.

It's a Tuesday morning and members of the eight-voice group are running through a collection of toe-tapping, head-nodding, feel-good Irish tunes in preparation of their upcoming concert and CD launch.

Accompaniment by pennywhistles and a fiddle create an authentic sound, and some of the singers can't help but do a cheery little jig.

Founder and director Laura Jeffrey is conducting with ease, and what's emerging is an effortless sound that's anything but.

With the majority of the women singing together for 11 years, it's no wonder their voices blend like they were made for each other.

The stunning acoustics of Knox Presbyterian Church don't hurt, either.

On Sunday, May 11 — Mother's Day — The Women of Note will perform at 2 p.m. at St. Paul's United Church, 123 Main St. E.

"I'm excited — like a kid before Christmas," Jeffrey said of the upcoming concert.

In the first half of the show, the women will perform selections from their recently-released self-titled CD. The CD features 16 pieces that have become favourites of the women and their audiences over the past decade.

Concert-goers will have an opportunity to purchase the CD for \$20 at intermission when light refreshments will be served.

In the second half of the concert, the group will perform a choral suite entitled 'Letters from Ireland,' arranged by Mark Brymer, featuring traditional Irish songs such as 'Molly Malone' and 'The Wild Rover' to create a charming picture of the Emerald Isle of days gone by.

In between these songs, readers will recite actual letters about life in 18th and 19th-century Ireland over traditional Irish folk melodies performed by featured musicians.

Jeffrey explained this portion of the night will be particularly special, since the readers will include a former member of Women of Note who once called Ireland home.

Musical accompanists will include Dawn Brodie on piano, Rosanne Warren on pennywhistles and Sue Anderson on fiddle, plus several others. There'll also be an Irish dancer.

Concert tickets cost \$15 each, with a portion of the proceeds going to St. Paul's.

With the concert being on Mother's Day, Jeffrey is encour-



**SET FOR LAUNCH:** Women of Note members (from left) Karen Magee, Milree Latimer and Barbara Fullum rehearse in preparation for their Mother's Day CD launch concert at St. Paul's United Church.

GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

aging families to make it part of their celebration.

"Mothers bring your children, children bring your mothers," she said.

It was 11 years ago that Jeffrey formed The Women of Note from among mature vocal students of hers. After the first rehearsal, she knew they had something special — something they needed to share with the rest of Milton.

Each member is a trained choral singer who knows how to follow, how to listen and how to read music.

And, said Jeffrey, they all have a sense of humour, which is important.

Dawn Brodie has faithfully been at the keys of the piano since day one.

"She's extraordinarily good," Jeffrey said.

Of course, the common thread that motivates each member is her love of music.

"It's a passion and a gift for all of us," said Milree Latimer said. "It brought us together 12 years ago and here we are."

Edel Klickermann echoed the sentiments of the other

members that one of the biggest keys to the chorus's success is Jeffrey.

"Laura is able to put different voices together (with) such unity," she said, adding, "The longer we are together, the more polished we become."

Making a CD was quite the experience for the group, to say the least.

"In your ordinary life you don't think you're going to be standing in a real recording studio and that you're going to make a real CD," said Latimer. "It was almost like a dream standing in front of those microphones."

Diane Young said there are likely many people who don't know about The Women of Note, given Milton's growth.

She's hoping to see some new faces in the crowd at the concert.

"It's music for everyone. It's light, beautiful music and the 'Letters from Ireland' is unique," she said.

Other members of the group are Barbara Fullum, Nicolette Parant, Karen Magee and Shirley Chester.

Concert tickets are available at the door or in advance by calling (905) 878-8895, ext. 38, or Jack White at (905) 878-6807.

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