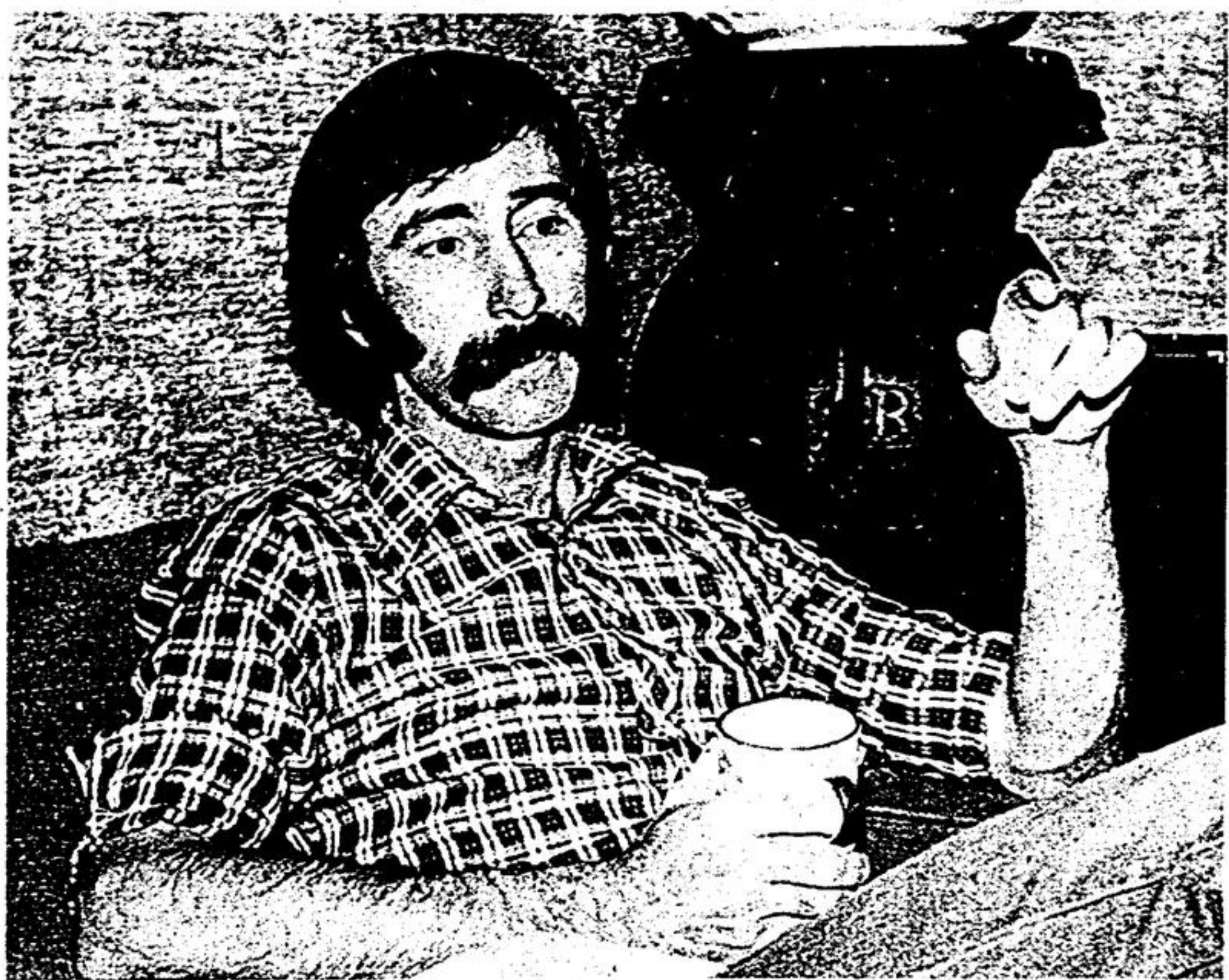


Local musician plays in China



Ed Tait, of Greenwood, recently returned from a trip to China with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Ed, sporting a fu moustache, got the opportunity to savour such delicacies as shark fin soup while there.

By KEITH BOLENDER
China, that vast and mysterious land, was recently laid open to a group of fortunate Canadian musicians.

The group was the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and they toured China, and Tokyo from January 21 to February 9. It was the reciprocation of a cultural exchange that started with the visit of the Shanghai Ballet to Toronto.

One of those few lucky enough to be a part of that historic trip was a local man.

Ed Tait, of Greenwood, has been with the symphony for seven years now, and when he first got word of the trip he said, "I couldn't believe it, it was a chance in a lifetime."

Ed, sitting comfortably in his favorite chair at his Greenwood residence, recalled the journey with enthusiasm.

He was told of the trip a year in advance and Ed commented on the immensity of pre-planning.

"We had to submit arrangements that would be acceptable to the Chinese - we submitted four, they chose two. Also everyone's special diet and medical needs had to be arranged - just an incredible amount of planning."

But the trip did get underway with the symphony's first stop was at Tokyo, where they spent a week and staged one concert.

"Tokyo was just an incredible, great city. It's as crowded as everyone says. I remember it took me over an hour to cover about three blocks in a cab. It cost me \$22 bucks for that too."

After Tokyo, the entourage of musicians and dignitaries, numbering about 100, landed in Peking.

Ed chuckled as he remembered the first thing the group did after landing. "We had the first of many cocktail parties and banquets in Peking."

"The people there are extremely friendly, and we were very well treated. Also in Peking there was no restrictions as to where we could go. There were no guided tours, we just went on our own and saw what we wanted."

At Peking the symphony got their first taste of a Chinese audience.

Ed commented that the thing that struck him most was that the Chinese talked throughout the performance.

"They didn't stop once. We were in a hall that sat 18,000 and at first the talking was a little disturbing, but we got used to it."

However, the talking was in no way a sign of disrespect, because after their performance the audience gave the Canadians a standing ovation, a show of emotion and appreciation that is considered very rare in China.

Besides the music, the group did get in some sightseeing. "We saw the great wall and the Ming tombs," Ed noted, "all in one day though, it was kind of rushed."

They also received the privilege of viewing the body of China's communist father, Mao Tse-Sung. They were among the first Westerners granted this honour.

After Peking the symphony moved on to Shanghai, where Ed recalled he got his first taste of "exotic" Chinese food.

"We were at a banquet - it was just phenomenal the amount of food they served us. Anyway, the main course consisted of shark fin - it tasted very fishy."

Ed also described a serving he received from the Mongolian fire pot. It consisted of a copper cauldron filled with boiling water, which supported a tray full of meats and vegetables.

Ed, who plays bass strings, had the chance to meet some of his Chinese counterparts.

"They're all good players, very knowledgeable. The problem is they are so restricted, they have a repertoire of only four pieces which they have been playing over and over for the past 11 years."

Ed described his meeting with the Chinese musicians as "one of the most exciting parts of the trip. Any musician likes rapping with another, and the Chinese were just overjoyed at the chance to talk to us."

The group, after Shanghai, made their final stop in Kantong. Again the symphony was greeted with warm-hearted applause after each performance. And it works both ways in China, according to Ed.

"When the audience applauds for us, we in turn, as is customary, must applaud the audience. It was a very warm feeling all around."

Overall, Ed remembers the people as

very "gregarious, they really enjoy music."

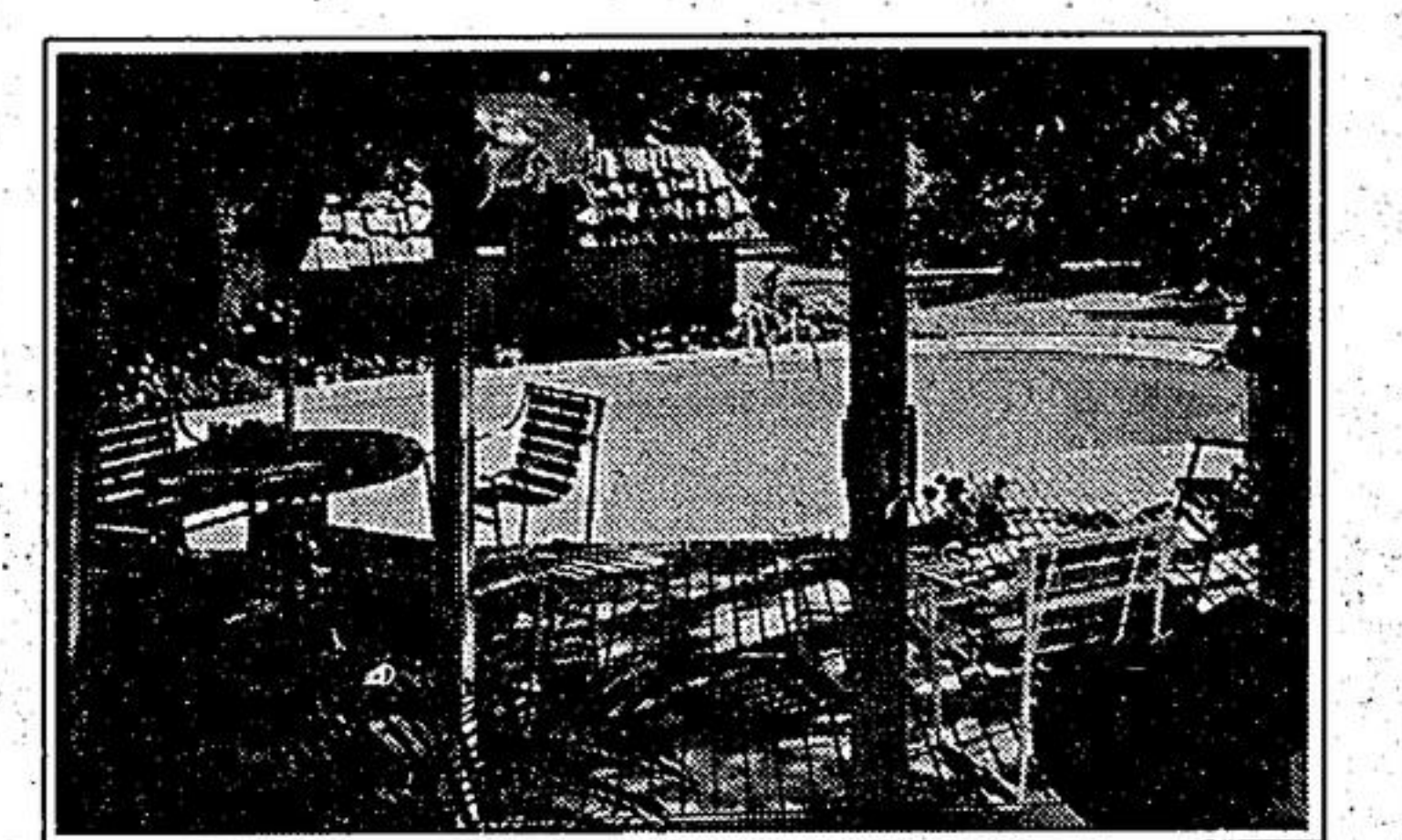
"The lack of individuality took some getting used to though. Everyone was wearing the same drab khaki clothing. But deep down, they are individuals. We all had different stories to tell, had a laugh, like anywhere else in Canada or the world."

he does have one large regret. "The Peking beer, hated leaving it. It's much better than any Canadian brew. So much more mellow."

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Maple syrup days coming

BOGARTTOWN—Get your taste buds ready - the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum's pancake and maple syrup days are almost here again.

The annual "From Tree to Treat Festival" takes place March 24, 25, 26 and April 1 and 2. Sausages will be served alongside your pancakes during Easter weekend.

The Museum Volunteers 'tap' the maple trees on the property and boil the sap in the old time way, over an open fire in a large iron cauldron. Everyone from children to adults can participate in the fun by helping to collect the sap and to make sure the fire is kept burning.

If you wish to tour the museum and watch the quilting and spinning, you may, at no extra charge of \$1.50.

The Museum is located in the old Bogarttown schoolhouse. To reach us, just drive north on the Don Mills Rd., (Woodbine) approximately 3 miles north of the Aurora Side Rd., to the Vivian Rd. (Watch for a Gulf service station as this is where you turn west.) Follow the signs announcing us!

Interested school groups may be accommodated throughout the week at a reduced rate. Please call the curator ahead of time for appointment or details. 895-4454 or 473-5866 or 640-4591.

Controversy rages over batching plant

UXBRIDGE—Asphalt batching plants are still a very touchy subject in Goodwood.

That was made quite apparent at last week's Uxbridge council meeting when Goodwood councillor John Paxton took exception to council's plan to look over a plant proposal in the hamlet. The plant proposal has first to go before the Ontario Municipal Board and then be subject to township traffic control before council will again consider the proposal.

Repac Construction Company, the group that helped clear Goodwood snow this winter, is the organization hoping to locate the plant in the hamlet.

Mr. Paxton, however, took a hard line on the traffic control clause. "Council says a road suitability plan has to go in before we do anything, well that doesn't suit me. What does that mean anyway, just putting up some signs? What we should be talking about is a complete bypass in Goodwood."

Regional Councillor Gary Herrema tried to placate Mr. Paxton, commenting that the traffic agreement would have to be accepted by the township. "This won't be just some minor upgrading, we're thinking about the reconstruction of regional road 30 for the plant."

Mr. Paxton also worried about some sort of plan that would regulate batching plants in the township and wanted a clarification on just what council proposed to do with the plant.

Again Mr. Herrema came up with the answer, saying that the town won't do anything about the proposal until the OMB hearing is over, and that "we have given them no agreement in any form as of yet, we're just waiting for the hearing to end before we even consider this."

Want financial relief

The Township of Ottonabee has asked that the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville endorse a resolution requesting that the provincial and federal governments provide financial relief for those on fixed incomes in the area of home heating fuel.

Council supported the resolution.

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