

Markham Theatre to open with gala show

This weekend, the Markham Theatre for Performing Arts opened its doors for the first time with a gala show featuring Moe Kauffman and Friends which include Guido Basso, Rob McConnell and Cecile Frenette.

Although last night's gala opening show was by invitation only, tonight's repeat show is open to the public. The master of ceremonies is well-known television comedian Dave Broadfoot.

The theatre itself, located on Town Centre Blvd (it's on the east side of Warden Ave north of Hwy 7), has 528 seats and is fully equipped with state-of-the-art sound and lighting equipment.

It contains six dressing rooms, each suitable for between two to 13 people and individually equipped with washrooms and showers.

A green room with kitchens, as well as a fully equipped wardrobe facility with its own washer and dryer and large rehearsal hall with finished dance floor, mirrors and ballet bars are also provided.

The theatre, built and outfitted at a cost of more than \$5 million, is debt free. Owned and operated by the Town of Markham, it was built using lot levy revenues and a \$750,000 grant from the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture.

Theatre manager is Cecil O'Neal who, with a background at the Stratford Festival and Equity Showcase as well as a term as associate director to Bill Glassco at Tarragon Theatre, brings to his position a broad and varied knowledge of the Canadian theatre scene.

The theatre's board of management is composed of local business people, performing arts

organizations and Markham Council members and school board officials.

Plans for the theatre call for a variety of professional presentation — several sponsored by local service clubs and extensive use by local community groups such as the Markham Little Theatre

and the Markham Concert Band. Currently linked by a walkway to the new Unionville High School, the theatre is situated directly north of the intended location for a new Markham municipal centre.

For information on upcoming events call 479-0201.

Premiere is planned at theatre

A major coup for the Markham Theatre for Performing Arts came when the fledgling theatre landed the Toronto area premiere of John Gray's latest play, Don Messer's Jubilee.

The play, a tribute to the well-known, long-running Canadian television program, will open in Markham on Tuesday, Oct. 22 and will continue until Saturday Nov. 2 (excluding Oct. 25 and 26).


Mr. Gray also wrote Billy Bishop Goes to War, Eighteen Wheels and Rock and Roll. The television show Don Messer's Jubilee first aired locally in the Maritimes in 1956 and was picked up as a summer replacement series nationally in 1959.

In its heyday, the show outdrew Ed Sullivan and Hockey Night in Canada. It was cancelled in 1969 when CBC officials decided a more youth-oriented approach was needed.

The cast of the musical includes singer-actor Frank McKay, who starred as Parker in the national tour of Rock and Roll; Jodie Friesen who appeared in Singing and Dancing Tonight at the Charlotte-town Festival; Vince Metcalfe who recently played in Lies and Legends in Toronto; and McGinty, a popular maritimes band.

Others in the cast include Paul Simons on piano and Linda Elliot, Karthryn MacClellan, Cliff LeJeune and Thierry Richard as the Jubilee Dancers.

Tickets priced from \$11.50 to \$17.50 are available by calling 479-0201.



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