

Markham entertainer

Songman enjoys intimacy

Though some people have natural musical talents, Markham musician Rick Washbrook said he had to work hard at making his music sound good.

And that hard work has paid off for him.

Sunday shows at the Duchess of Markham restaurant over the past five months have given him a chance to "touch people" who come to see his Sunday Jam Session.

Though he has played for Prince Phillip and serenaded audiences at the Royal York Hotel, he prefers playing to smaller crowds.

"It's fantastic at the Duchess," Mr. Washbrook said. "There's an intimacy with the the audience. They all get together and have a good time."

Describing his music as "middle-of-the-road contemporary country rock," Mr. Washbrook has been playing professionally for seven years. His debut album, tentatively titled Comes Back To You, is currently going through the final mastering stages before release.

"I value spontaneity and emotion and am sometimes wary of the technology that can interfere

with that," he noted. "I think I've made it both fun and exuberant."

With the recording and other business out of the way, he packs up his guitar and heads back to the Duchess every Sunday for his 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. show.

"At the Duchess people respond," he said.

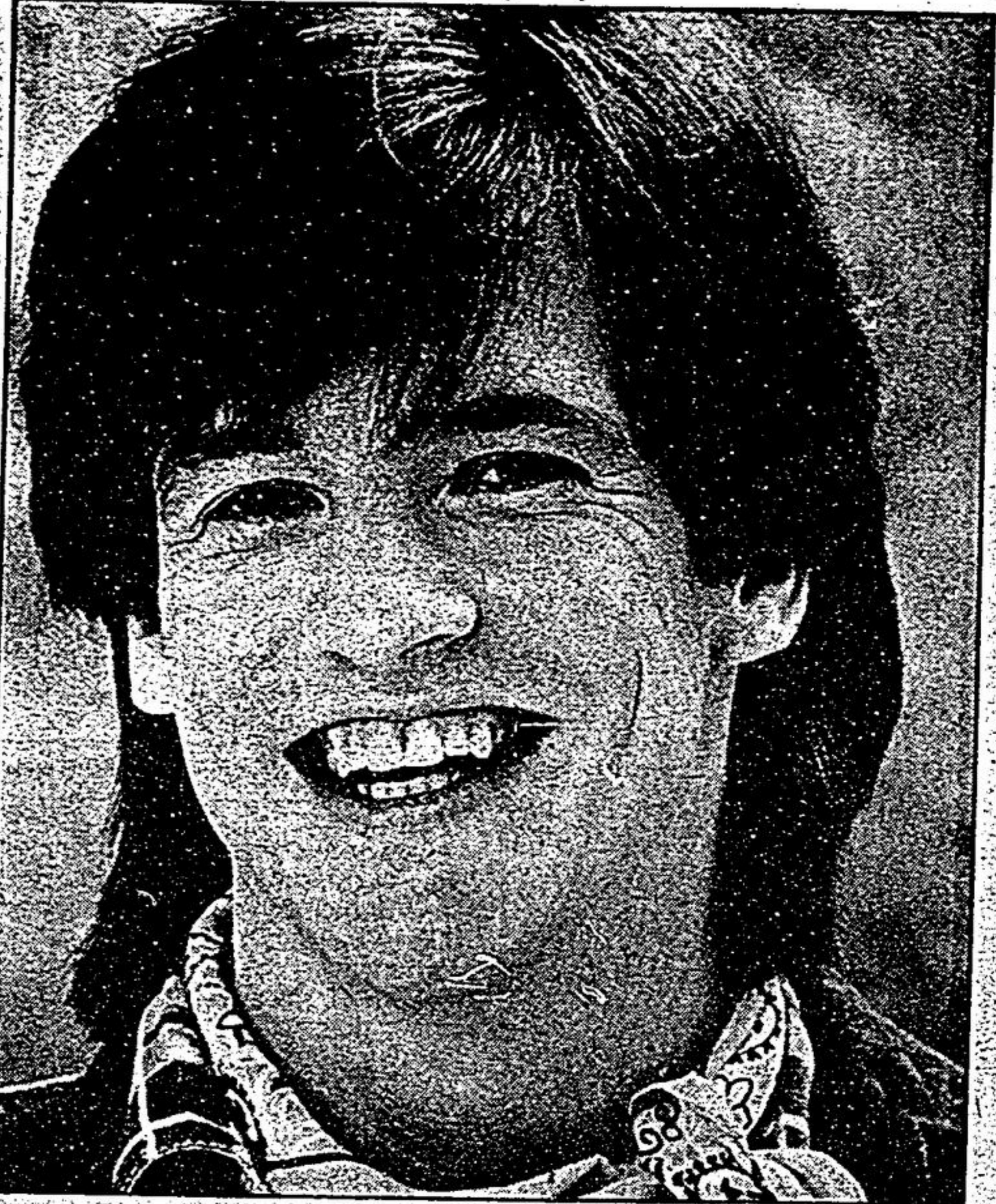
Pianists to compete

Two young Markham area pianists will be performing at Roy Thomson Hall later this month.

Natalie Fong Yee, 14, of Unionville and Sarah Chou, 12, of Markham will perform Friday, Jan. 31 in the Toronto Junior Women's Committee competitions at the prestigious Toronto concert hall.

The winner will perform Haydn's Piano Concerto in D Major with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra on May 17.

The two girls are students of The Music Stand and their teacher is Jane Musgrave.



RICK WASHBROOK
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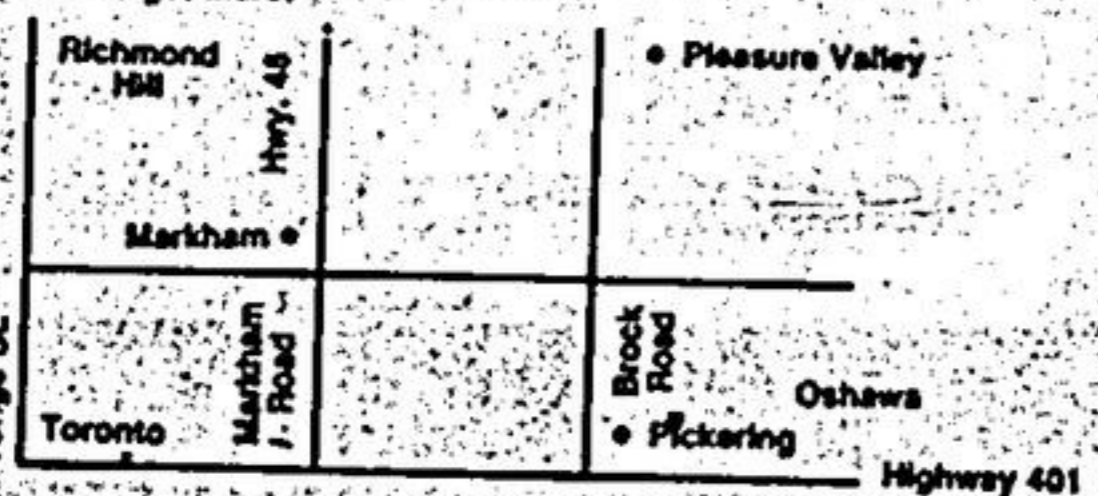
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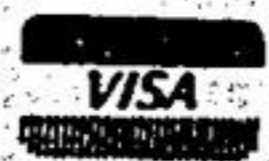
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