

Weekender Entertainment

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Block Parent's gala, animated

By DEB BODINE CHAMPION

The rafters of the Markham Theatre for the Performing Arts were ringing Tuesday with the exuberant, bubbly, sing-along sound of Sharon, Lois and Bram.

Well-known throughout Canada and the U.S. for their animated performances of a diverse repertoire of music for children, it was obvious that Markham children and adults alike found them irresistible.

Sharon Hampson, Lois Lilienstein and Bram Morrison first joined voices in 1978 when they released their first album "One Elephant, Deux Elephants". As Lois explained in an exclusive interview: "We never meant it to be a long term thing. We only got together to record that one first album." That album of traditional folk songs set to a contemporary beat, became the fastest selling children's album in Canada.

Sharon, Lois and Bram went on to record six more albums and host their own television series "The Elephant Show" which is entering its fourth season on CBC this year.

The trio's performance on Tuesday was charged with energy. The rapport with the audience was instantaneous as three generations of Markhamites toot-tooted and chugga-chugga-ed their way through a selection of the group's most popular songs.

Equally as popular, and just as familiar to the audience, was the mascot of the group, the most adorable elephant since all Disney's Dumbo. Paula Gullivan, hidden within the folds of grey skin, capably instilled the animal with a playful personality through body language and dexterous footwork.

The afternoon and evening concerts were presented by the Markham Block Parent Association as the first of two major fundraisers for the year.

The MBPA is a completely volunteer-staffed, non-profit organization but expenses such as organizational materials, new block parent flags for the schools and block parent signs are expensive.

Additional funds are required to cover administrative costs involved in providing local school children with educational materials, since most schools require payment for the use of their photocopying equipment.

The Markham Block Parent Association began in 1976 with a small group of residents in the village of Markham and in eleven years has grown to include 900 homes. All Block Parents are screened by the York Regional Police Department.

The program benefits the community in several ways. Its presence acts as a deterrent to potential offenders and it provides a network of safe refuges for children and adults should the need arise. Block parent volunteers also monitor attendance in the public school system to ensure the safe arrival of the school children.

In 1986, the Markham Block Parent Association was awarded the "Provincial Governor General's Crime Prevention Award" for outstanding efforts in aiding the community and for their overall visibility in the province.



The rafters were ringing last week when the music and singing of Sharon, Lois and Bram performed at Markham Theatre for Performing Arts. Here, Sharon Hampson (left), Lois Lilienstein and

Bram Morrison sing for kids and parents at the show. It was organized by Markham's Block Parents Association.

— Sjoerd Witteveen



What's a show without autographs? Performer Bram Morrison had his hands full after the show signing autographs for admiring fans.

Amanda Halladay, 4, held by father Mike, was all smiles as she received her autograph from Mr. Morrison. — Sjoerd Witteveen