

Community

# Close-Up

## Stouffville's Ogden takes to the stage

KATE GILDERDALE  
Correspondent

While acting has been an extra-curricular interest since he was nine years old, Stouffville's Jamie Ogden didn't consider it as a potential career until he entered Queen's University, where he's now in his fourth year.

"I took a drama course just as a hobby in my first year, it's taken me a while to determine that was what I wanted to do." It all started at a summer camp he attended near Bancroft, Jamie says.

"There was always a lot of emphasis on skits and theatre there, I first when I was about nine," he says.

The fact that he suffered from chronic asthma was another factor which helped to encourage his inclination towards acting, he notes.

"I was a patient for three months in the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre and got involved in theatre there, that was when I was in Grade 6," he says.

As a result of his health problems, he "never got involved in the sports side of things, it just wasn't possible for me."

But theatre wasn't a preoccupation in his family, he notes. "Every once in a while we'd go to Toronto to see The Nutcracker but other than that, there wasn't a big emphasis on theatre at home."

When he got to university, he found the environment "very

conservative. There's a lot of commerce, medicine and politics at Queen's."

Despite his early misgivings about becoming a drama student in such an environment, he eventually followed his inclination towards theatre, and is now a third-year drama major.

He recently completed his first leading role in a Queen's University production of Fuente Ovejuna by Lopez de Vegas, a Spanish playwright who was a contemporary of Shakespeare.

"It's based on historical fact," explains Jamie. "It was written to espouse some ideas about collective action and collective will."

The play was revolutionary for the times in which it was written, he adds, and contains surprisingly liberal attitudes towards the monarchy and women.

In it, Jamie played the evil overlord of a 15th Century Spanish village who cruelly oppresses the peasants during the reign of King Ferdinand.

According to Queen's Professor Tim Fort, who directed the production, "Jamie is the key villain of the piece. He's the commander and the overlord who delights in his villainy. Besides oppressing peasants with armed forces, he chases all the women."

Jamie describes his own character as "sexist, misogynist, opportunist and fascist." It gives me the opportunity to explore a



Stouffville resident Jamie Ogden (left), seen here in a scene from Fuente Ovejuna, showed an interest in theatre when he was a local youngster. He's now a drama major at Queen's University in Kingston and plans further study. In Fuente Ovejuna, he played an evil overlord in 15th Century Spain.

psyche that, in the '80s, would be frowned upon."

In the end, the commander gets his just desserts and is killed by the peasants who rebel against his cruelty.

It's a complete departure for the actor, who until now has tended towards comedy. "I think I have a disposition towards comedy, naturally," he observes. "While people may laugh at the things (the commander) does, he's not a funny person, and so he's not like the parts I've played."

Jamie was born and raised in Stouffville, attending Whitchurch-Highlands Public School and St. Andrew's College in Aurora. He'll be returning home for the Christmas break on Monday.

"I'll be seeing some friends, and my parents have a Christmas tree-cutting party, so I'll be there for that," he says.

As for the future, Jamie hopes to pursue acting as a career and plans to move on to a Canadian theatre school once he's completed his degree at Queen's.

"I'd like to try for the National Theatre School and maybe Ryerson, and there are also some good schools out west," he points out.

In the meantime, he's enjoying the opportunity to get some practical experience in his chosen profession, but cautions people against identifying him with his character in Fuente Ovejuna.

"That's totally unlike me. I'm just an unassuming guy who likes to go to the fridge to look for a pop," he concludes.

## Drama unfolds as predator takes sparrow

The flock of feeding sparrows stiffened, then bolted for the cover of some nearby shrubbery. One bird, a little fardier than the rest, paid the price of hesitating and was immediately pinned against the snow crust by the swift-moving sparrow hawk.

I watched this drama unfold from the start with mixed feelings and now, as the little falcon ended its victim's struggles, I could not help but feel a tinge of sorrow for the unfortunate creature.

He had rested and reviewed the situation from the top of a hydro pole 100 yards away. It was here I first spotted him and, with the aid of binoculars, was able to pick up the black and white facial markings.

His rusty tail hung straight down as he remained motionless, save for the occasional turning of his patterned head.

Glancing back towards the feeding platform, I noticed the house sparrows beginning to return in ever-increasing numbers. Three, five, nine, a dozen.

The hungry accipiter also watched the build-up and now even the slightly moving head and neck remained still. When the tray was well covered with about three dozen seed-eaters, the hawk tensed, then launched himself silently towards the feeding birds.

Gradually decreasing his wingspan and increasing his speed, he plummeted down on an arrow-like course. Forward and

downward he dived, with the small birds feeding on, unaware of the impending peril.

I found myself estimating the distance remaining. At 40 yards, the hawk was tucked in tight, a hurtling, feathered missile rapidly nearing the target. Twenty yards. By now the hunter had probably singled out his intended victim.

It was about this time that the sparrows sensed some danger. A cautious look skyward cost them more precious time and, as they lifted to evade the clutching talons, the sparrow hawk was already amongst them.

With warning shrieks, they wheeled away but the plummeting predator was even then closing his claws on the less alert one.

Both birds hit the snow-covered ground with a dull thud, the hawk driving hard and unable to fully brake himself beforehand. The sparrow died in a matter of seconds and was lofted almost immediately to the tip of a nearby tree to be devoured.

Such acts of predation are commonplace in nature's world around us. To the casual observer witnessing such happenings may come a natural resentment towards the so-called villains.

A formed opinion reasons that the extermination of these predators will somehow make for a better selected bird population. Realistically, however, we must look further afield than our own backyard. We must

somehow realize that while the hawk I was watching destroyed a smaller bird, many others of its kind were probably out preying on mice.

In short, man is forever upsetting the wildlife balance and misunderstanding the measures by which nature tries to correct its stupidity.

The introduction of such alien

and competitive birds, as the English house sparrow and the European starling, for example, contributed in no small degree to the threatened existence of our beautiful native bluebird.

If the heavy concentrations of house sparrows are kept just a few less by the appearance of a hawk or two, I'm for it.

The only fly in the ointment is

that our more colorful backyard birds may suffer the same fate. Some, undoubtedly, will.

One answer: When flying predators such as these kestrels and sharp-skinned hawks persist about your feeder, try providing some overhead protection with evergreen branches, or feed your feathered friends under the safety of nearby shrubs or bushes.



### Downtown duties

Photo/RICK MADONIK

The wintry weather didn't slow down work on this Stouffville Main Street renovation last week. Cameron Todd (left) and Ray Anthony were bundled up to fight the chill while working on a window frame some 15 feet above the street. The two work for a Claremont area masonry company and were putting the finishing touches on the Main Street store.