

# Strawberry Festival

## Toronto Philharmonic to appear at festival

Playing regularly before crowds of thousands, the Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra will offer an hour and a half of pure classical magic in Stouffville Memorial Park on July 1 as part of the Strawberry Festival.

It's another contribution of local cultural patron Joe Lebovic, whose Stouffville Cultural Foundation is covering the better part of the \$6,000 needed to have the prestigious TPO professionals help close the Festival with a large help-

ing of class. The Orchestra, under the direction of Paul Robinson, will offer a selection of classics, with some 19th Century Canadian Music being included to help give the performance a July 1 fla-

vor. There will be music by Strauss and Dvorak, along with a Vivaldi concerto for two trumpets.

The Fusiliers March, the first piece of classical music ever written in Canada in 1791, will also be offered.

Maestro Robinson outlined program during a press conference held at Lebovic Enterprises on McCowan Road in Stouffville last Wednesday.

"We will be doing light concert music, some dance music and some marching music," said Mr. Robinson.

He also said he is eagerly

anticipating the date.

"We're looking forward to playing at the Strawberry Festival," he noted. "It's a well planned festival, and we are glad to be a part of it."

The TPO, which performs regularly at Massey Hall in Toronto during the fall and winter season, will also be giving concerts this summer at the Eaton's Centre and the CNE band shell.

Strawberry Festival Chairman Pat Ratcliff is delighted with the inclusion of the TPO in the overall program.

"The Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra and the fireworks are both at the end of the Festival, so you might say we're saving the best until last," she said.

Mr. Lebovic is also excited about having such a highly respected professional orchestra performing in Stouffville, especially when he considers that

people usually have to pay up to \$30 a ticket to hear the TPO in concert.

"We're anticipating a very large turnout. And if enough people do come out, then maybe we can do something like this again," he said.

Mrs. Ratcliff said that while the Festival had brought the Scarborough Symphony Orchestra in 1988, this will be the first time ever that a professional orchestra will perform here.

"I'm so pleased at how Joe

Lebovic is exemplifying that sense of corporate responsibility, just as McNeil Pharmaceutical has done for so long.

It makes us so much stronger as a community when our local corporate interests show that interest."

Mr. Robinson announced he would be conducting a rehearsal the afternoon of the performance, sometime between 4 and 7 p.m. The public is welcome to attend.

The concert is slated to begin at 8 p.m.

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## Blue Monk jazzes up festival

There's going to be a hot time in the old town tonight when the Blue Monk Jazz Ensemble gets the Strawberry Festival celebrations off to a swinging start.

The group has been playing together for about seven years, explains Tony Holme. "The core is a quintet, but sometimes there are six or seven of us, depending on what we're playing." Six musicians will be entertaining at the Festival, which is just one in a long list of engagements at which they will be performing during the summer.

"We've appeared at Unionville Festival, Markham Festival, in Ajax and at a store opening in Pickering." The ensemble has also appeared at the CNE, and was the opening act in Markham-Stouffville Hospital's auditorium last week. They're also a popular fixture at yacht clubs, and will be appearing at the Royal Canadian Yacht Club on August 11th.

While they'll be offering a dixieland selection to open the Festival, "we mostly play mainstream jazz standards and that type of thing," says Mr. Holme, adding that interest in jazz has grown significantly in recent years. His own enthusiasm goes back to his early childhood, when his aunt introduced him to the music which was her passion.

The beginnings of his own group came about when he responded to an ad placed by a jazz enthusiast in the Markham Economist and Sun, asking people who were interested in old jazz records to get in touch with him. As a result, a whole group got together at various different homes and began playing their favorite music.

Later they gathered at the old Markham arena, at Highway 7 and 48. From there they moved to the basement of Fernando's Restaurant on Markham's Main Street, and then two or three little bands formed out of the bigger group. From there they began to play at different clubs and events and that's where most of their bookings are generated.

The inspiration for their name came from a Thelonius Monk number entitled "Blue Monk." They will be appearing in the Town park at 6 p.m. during the opening ceremonies. For more information on the band, call 294-1638.

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