

Entertainment



PHOTO/ALAN SHACKLETON

Little Shop of Horrors at Markville Secondary

Simeon Tse, left, as Seymour, Tim Watkinson, centre, as Mr. Mush-nike, and Kelly Hamilton, as Audrey, examine a quaint little plant while rehearsing for Markville Secondary School's production of

Little Shop of Horrors. The musical runs Jan. 12-15 at the school. Tickets are \$9 for adults and \$5 for seniors and children. To order call the school at 940-8840 and ask for the music department.

Broken Up on stage at Champagne Dinner Theatre

The Champagne Dinner Theatre's latest production, Broken Up, is now on stage.

The Nick Hall comedy tells the story of Meg and Tom Owens, who are in the process of ending their marriage.

Meg's in the middle of moving out, but Tom isn't quite sure he wants to sign the final papers.

Further adding to the confusion are the advances of an amorous landlord and a fast-talking divorce lawyer.

Regular dinner/theatre packages at Champagne are \$32.95, while tickets for the show only are \$12.50.

For more information on tickets and reservations, please call 475-8895.

The Champagne Dinner Theatre is located in the HoJo Inn at 555 Cochrane Dr. in Markham.

Markham Theatre

New manager wants to raise theatre's profile

ALAN SHACKLETON
Weekender Staff

Bonnie Craig is looking forward to the many challenges of her new job as manager of Markham Theatre.

"It's very exciting, I'm chomping at the bit to get at it," she said during an interview recently at the theatre.

Craig, 31, will ultimately be responsible for the acts the theatre books for its professional season in 1994/95. And since '95 is Markham Theatre's 10th anniversary season, Craig said it's the perfect opportunity to make the theatre more well known.

"This is one of the most beautiful, busy and successful municipal arts centres in Canada, and this is a great chance to blow our own horn," she explained.

The theatre's publicity co-ordinator for the last 15 months, Craig became manager after the departure of Marc Quinn who has gone on to manage the Ottawa Ballet. Quinn had been with Markham Theatre for eight years.

Owned by the Town of Markham, the 528-seat theatre is run by the town's department of culture and recreation and its mandate is to split stage time equally between professional, community and school productions.

"Part of our role is to nurture the arts in the community," said Craig

"And that doesn't just mean for the actors on the stage, but for our audiences as well. That's the role of the arts, to stimulate people's imaginations."

Craig has a wealth of experience in the theatre, participating in high school productions while growing up in Etobicoke, then going on to study arts administration at York University.

From university, she went right to a two-year stint with the Stratford Festival.

"Stratford was a lucky break and I learned so much in my two years there. It was an unbelievable place."

After Stratford, Craig was with Waterwood Productions and then the Canadian Stage Company, which operates out of Toronto's St. Lawrence Centre.

She admitted that when she applied for the job of publicity co-ordinator, she didn't know a lot about Markham Theatre.

"The buzz around Toronto was

that it was a beautiful facility with great audience support, but that was all I knew. I would really like to raise the theatre's profile downtown."

Craig said ticket sales indicate people are coming from as far away as Oakville

and Oshawa to attend Markham Theatre shows, and the reputation is growing.

"However, the bulk of the audience is still from Markham and immediately surrounding communities such as Scarborough, Richmond Hill and Stouffville.

In order to ensure a 10th anniversary professional season that pleas-

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BONNIE CRAIG

es the community, the theatre has been conducting surveys of audience members this year.

"We're asking people what they've seen and what they want to see here," said Craig. "After 10 years, we want to make sure we're doing the right things."

She added that as the community changes, so must the theatre. "We'd like to connect the professional artists to the community more."

Craig added that the support of Markham Theatre chair of the board of management, Karen Mufford, has been invaluable recently as has the help of program committee members David Scott, Dorothy Moore, Dorothy Gravel, and Bonnie Armstrong.