

Arts & Entertainment

Singer's checkered past was the inspiration for *Human Condition*

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Correspondent

Country music fans are in for a rare treat on July 19, when Jamie Warren, Ken Munshaw and Marty Damsell take to the stage at the Stouffville Recreation Centre for a benefit concert in support of Markham Stouffville Hospital.

The event is sponsored by Sammy's Bar and Grill and organized by Stouffville resident Jody Infurnari, in collaboration with restaurant owner Sam Valenzano.

"It starts around noon and goes until 8 o'clock," said Valenzano.

The original idea was to have a big party, "but we thought if we were going to have this many people here, we may as well do something for the community, so we turned it into a fundraiser and we're asking people who come to donate at least \$2 for the hospital."

Singer/songwriter Ken Munshaw draws on his life experiences as inspiration for his Duke Street album, *The Human Con-*

dition, recorded in 1994/95.

The Toronto native took piano lessons with his father from the age of four and began composing when he was 14.

After a checkered youth, during which he "borrowed" various cars—only to return them after his nightly "cruise" with the gas tank thoughtfully refilled—he spent some time as a guest of one of Canada's correctional institutions.

Incarceration didn't suit him, so he took off on a freight train for the prairies, where he stayed with relatives until he was 16, at which time he decided to come home and face the music.

He was sent to a Mennonite Farm in Kitchener to build barns and houses and when his stint was finished, he decided to stay in the community and concentrate on music. He got his first big break with *Ode To Terry*, better known as "The Terry Fox Song," which received extensive airplay.

All 10 songs on *The Human Condition* were written by Munshaw. "It's a collection of observations and conditions that I

have encountered during the course of my life up until this point," he said. "Some of the songs, such as *Sun Comes Up* and *Cold, Cold Night*, are very personal. Others are about people and circumstances I have experienced from a distance."

Jamie Warren has also been writing and singing since he was 14. In 1983, he released the first of seven singles on his own label, all of which made the charts.

With *Take Me Home Mississippi*, Warren hit the top 10 and he and his band toured Canada from coast to coast.

"The band was ahead of its time," he said. "We were five long-haired guys with leather pants, doing all the coolest, rockiest country tunes. Crowds loved us. Unfortunately, club owners thought we were either too country for rock rooms, or too rock for country rooms. I like to say I was new country when new country wasn't cool."

After disbanding the group in 1990, he returned to his acoustic roots, performing at clubs cross the country.



REFLECTIONS: In his new work, *The Human Condition*, Ken Munshaw borrows heavily from his life experiences.

His 1995 recording *Fallen Angel* caught the ear of River North, and he found himself signed with a major label. *Ready to Run* hit the 11th spot on the Canadian charts, while *One Step Back* climbed to 7th place and was in the top 10 for six weeks. Another of his compo-

sitions, *The Secret*, a Mercury/Polydor release, deals with domestic abuse.

The song inspired him to establish The Warren Foundation with CISS-FM's Dan Williamson, to raise funds for victims of domestic violence.

Men In Black explodes with big laughs and alien ooze



Screen Scene

Stuart Green

They're hip, they're cool and they're dressed to kill... alien miscreants that is.

They are the Men in Black and their comic-book-inspired antics explode onto the big screen in a shower of big laughs and alien ooze.

Considered by many to be one of, if not the, most highly anticipated films of the summer, *Men in Black* seems destined to be the season's first bone-fide hit, and deservedly so.

Tommy Lee Jones and Will Smith star as two mysterious men known only as K and J. They are part of an elite, top secret organi-



DEADLY AIM: Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones hunt down alien miscreants.

zation known as the Men in Black, who are responsible for monitoring the comings and goings of intergalactic immigrants, while keeping their presence a secret.

They were doing a pretty good job until a giant roach-like creature (played brilliantly in human form by a spastic, jittering Vincent D'Onofrio), arrives on Earth—hell bent on destroying it.

It's up to J and K, with the assistance of Rip Torn as the MIB's leader and Linda Fiorentino as a keen forensic scientist, to stop the bug and save humanity without letting the news of aliens slip out.

Playing like a cross between last year's *Independence Day*, in

which Smith also played a prominent role in saving the earth from alien invaders, and *Ghostbusters*, MIB is an effects-filled extravaganza of a movie that keeps its tongue planted firmly in its cheek at all times.

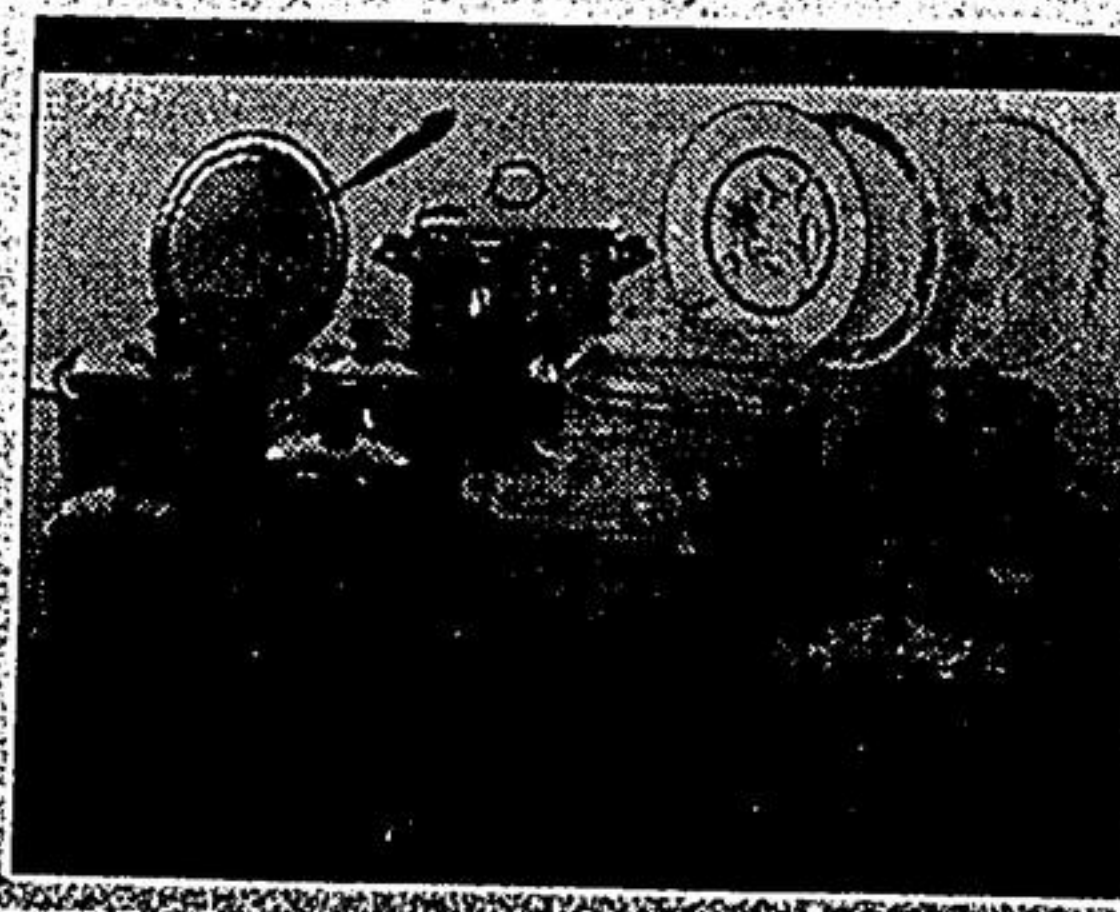
Without resorting to the kitsch and camp of Tim Burton's disappointing *Mars Attacks!*, director Sonnenfeld pays homage to the cold-war-fueled alien invader films of the '50s while giving it a decidedly '90s edge. His ability to walk that razor-thin line between dark satire, family comedy and outright lunacy, as he's done in his previous efforts, helps ensure that the film will capture as wide an audience as possible.

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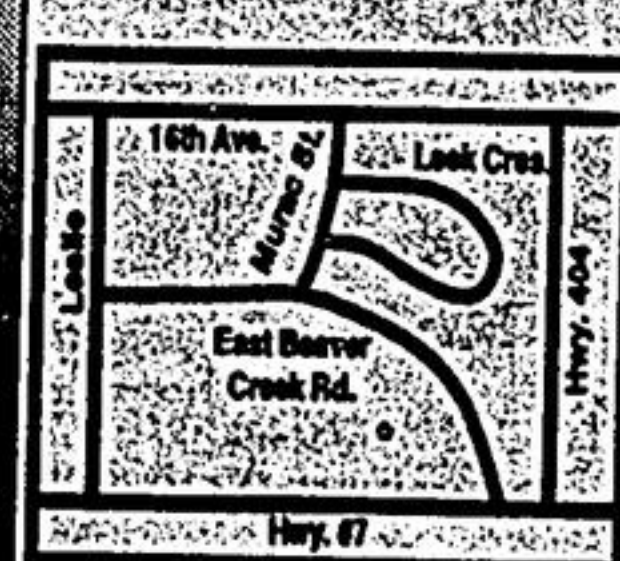
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