

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

# Markham's in the swing

BY JULIE CASPERSEN  
NEWS EDITOR

Markham is set to swing. Artists from all forms of jazz have been lined up to fill the town with tunes on Aug. 21 and 22.

A love of jazz, and a desire to promote Canadian jazz talent, was the impetus behind the idea for the festival, said organizer Hal Hill.

Markham is invited to share great music with visitors, and music lovers from outside of town are urged to drop by, kick back and enjoy a weekend of jazz.

Hill pulled off a coup in securing the legendary Oliver Jones to headline Friday night's gala.

It's been decades since Jones made his first public performance, and now, 59 years later, he'll be taking the stage at Markham Theatre.

Jones, a career musician, made his foray into the world of jazz in about 1980. He's now one of the most sought-after pianists in the world.

Although Jones has gone into semi-retirement from touring, he agreed to perform at the first ever Markham Jazz Festival, even suggesting Rancee Lee join the gala line-up.

Lee is considered one of Canada's finest jazz vocalists, and she'll be bringing along her husband, guitarist Richard Ring, to share the stage.

Tickets are selling well for the Friday event. To reserve a seat, \$38.75, and \$50 for box seats, call the theatre at 305-7469.

The entertainment moves outdoors on Saturday, Aug. 22. Toogood Park, at Carlton Road and Main Street, is the setting for a day of live music.

Starting at 11:30 a.m., the Sensation Dixieland Band will lead the way up Main Street, Unionville in a parade to Toogood Pond.

Once in the park, it'll be non-stop jazz, all afternoon. Dixieland, soul, blues, swing and fusion, there will be something to suit the varying tastes of all jazz lovers.

Thirsts and hungers can be quenched at a beer tent and food booths, and it's rain or shine. A tent will be set up for the free performances, which continue until about 7 p.m.

The Sensation Jazz Band is first to play at the natural amphitheatre site at the park, starting at noon.

The Sean Bray Trio is next, playing at 1:15 p.m. Guitarist Bray and



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

A line up of talent arrived in Markham Tuesday to launch the Markham Jazz Festival with artistic director Hal Hill (centre). Pictured from left are jazz musicians Brian Scriver of Primal Therapy, Archie Alleyne, Dianne Brooks, Jim Galloway, and Sean Bray, as well as Roger Chong of the festival committee.

his new band will add a contemporary contribution to the line-up.

Following Sean Bray is the Jim Galloway Wee Big Band, at 2:30 p.m. Galloway, with his personal tone on saxophone, is a regular on the international tour circuit.

Next on the bill, at 3:45 p.m., is Jane Bennett and the Spirits of Havana, adding some Latin-tinged jazz to the day.

At 5 p.m., the Dave Young Quintet (familiar to Markhamites who frequent Hill's jazz nights at St. Andrew's United Church) will take the stage with guest vocalist Dianne Brooks. She's toured with Count Basie and Jerry Van Dyke, and recorded with Gino Vanelli, Bette Midler, and Anne Murray.

Rounding out the afternoon will be Primal Therapy at 6:15. This ten-person unit mixes things up with its jazz/rock/fusion sound. The inspiration for the band is the group Chase which topped the charts in the early '70s with the hit *Get It On*.

Leader Brian Scriver resurrected the music of Chase with a '90s flavour — four trumpets, four rhythm and two voices will get the audience pumped for more music, and fortunately, the entertainment continues all evening long.

The action will be spread out between many of the local bars, clubs and restaurants in Unionville and Markham which are offering to host jazz artists and groups.

The music will be heard on both Main Street, Markham and Unionville as well as along Hwy. 7.

So far, quite a few bands have been confirmed. The Blackboard Blues Band will play at Father's Steak House at McCowan Road at Hwy. 7; the Paul Neufeld Trio can be found at Pine Apple Inn at 149 Main St., Unionville; Jim Galloway will travel south to play The School Restaurant on 14th Avenue. The Dixie Cats will play The Duchess of Markham at 53 Main St., Markham. The Kirk MacDonald Quintet will be found at Jakes on

Main, 202 Main St., Unionville.

These are just a few of the varied acts scheduled, and an updated list can be found at the festival web site: [www.jazzfest.markham.on.ca](http://www.jazzfest.markham.on.ca) or call the festival hotline at 415-7516.



Oliver Jones is set to headline the gala evening that launches Markham's first annual jazz festival, Aug. 21 and 22.



Rancee Lee adds her vocals to the gala line-up on Aug. 21.

## Theatre company seeks space for set construction

Markham Youth Theatre is long on talent, but short on space. The local troupe seeks a large area for building sets, preferably a warehouse or any large building that's not in use.

MYT producer Tim Hawco said the crew hopes to build sets for the upcoming production of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*.

The musical comedy is set to be staged Oct. 15, 16 and 17 at Markham Theatre. It has a cast of 22, and a 30-piece orchestra already lined up.

Hawco said the company hopes to start building sets around Aug. 24, and construction will last about five weeks, until Oct. 5.

Any person or business willing to donate the use of an empty building or large room can contact Hawco at 294-7270.

MYT is a non-profit group of young people and is in its seventh season, Hawco said.

In addition to finding a place to build sets, MYT is also seeking corporate sponsors to help finance the show. Businesses wanting to help out the troupe can get in touch with Hawco at the above number.

## Concert benefits cancer society

A community group of volunteers is holding a benefit concert featuring Dr. Poon Yeuk-foo, OBE, accompanied by Melody McShane at Markham Theatre on Friday, Aug. 14.

Poon, a medical doctor by profession, is a leading soprano on the Hong Kong music scene.

Equally at home with oratorios, operas and art songs, the two-hour concert will feature a varied repertoire, including Lillian Ray's *Sunshine of Your Smile* and works by Schumann, Liszt and Brahms. She studied Italian bel canto style under Maestro Elasio Gualdi, with operatic roles that included Amina of *La Sonnambula* and Cho-Cho-San of *Madame Butterfly*.

With visiting masters Desire Ligeti and Peter Woss she studied French and German art songs.



Dr. Poon Yeuk-foo

Poon was educated and trained both medically and musically in Hong Kong.

She is a renowned radiation

oncologist, and a long-serving executive committee member of the Hong Kong Anti-Cancer Society.

McShane is a veteran of many musical and theatrical productions, ranging from opera and musical theatre to jazz, operetta and chamber music.

As a pianist, she has shared the stage with many of Canada's top performers, including Richard Margison.

Tickets for the 8 p.m. concert range from \$15 to \$30. Proceeds will be donated to the Canadian Cancer Society.

Tickets are available at the theatre box office at 305-7469 and at the Royal Trust branch at 4961 Hwy. 7.

For further information, contact the Chinese Hotline (416) 494-6829.