

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Choir spreads the word

BY JENNA WALSH
CORRESPONDENT

Markham-based Gospel choir Expression of Praise was surprised when their homegrown community project received a JUNO Award nomination. "The group thinks it's great," said Lance Flash, executive producer of *To Whom it May Concern*, the group's debut album.

The group, formed in January 1992, consisted of four members. Today, the choir has 52 members. However, because most choir members are still in school, attendance during the school year drops to 35.

The youth choir, consisting of 39 females and 13 males, meets for a three-hour rehearsal every Friday night. The majority congregate at the Applecreek Seventh-day Adventist church in Markham.

Choir co-founder Terry Henry, a Middlefield Collegiate graduate, produced the CD and wrote the lyrics to all but one song. The title track originated from a letter written by a choir member with no particular recipient in mind, after being involved in a car accident.

The letter detailed the importance of faith and encouraged others to make the most out of the short life we have been given. Henry reworked it to read as a letter addressed to the audience.

'My music should be a source of reflection.'

• Songwriter Terry Henry

"I want my music to communicate the importance of God's presence in our lives. My music should be a source of reflection of God's grace and mighty power," Henry said.

Their music features a variety of Christian contemporary, traditional Christian, praise and worship, jazz oriented ballads, and soul and blues combinations.

The choir performs locally within the Christian community. The students travel, sharing their music on long weekends and holidays with audiences in churches and concert halls across Canada and the United States.

It has most recently performed at Markville Shopping Centre and at Markham Stouffville Hospital.

The group aspires to continue spreading the message of God.



STAFF PHOTO/SIGERD WITTEVEN

Soprano Margaret Thibideau with her CD, *Scarred: Classical Inspirations*.

Trauma inspires musician

BY JENNA WALSH
CORRESPONDENT

Margaret Thibideau wants to share the gift of music with other people. The Markham resident has released *Scarred: Classical Inspirations*, a CD comprised of sacred classical music embracing old and new compositions. Selections include favorites such as Gounod's *Ave-Maria*, Bizet's *Agnus Dei*, Franck's *Panis Angelicus* and *The Holy City*.

Thibideau said that an audience immersed in a meditated state and deep reflection evoked by music brings her satisfaction as a performer.

Life took a change for the worse in 1993 when she suffered third degree burns in a house fire. For the next year she was in and out of a burn unit for treatment. Picking up an instrument was impossible due to the deep burns to her back left shoulder and arms. Thibideau said the degree of pain she experienced is indescribable.

Friends encouraged her not to abandon her love for music, persuading her to learn musical scores. "I wasn't sure if I would be here the next day," she said.

Thibideau credits her friends for helping her shift focus. She started using her voice as a guide towards a new meaning and direction in life. She began singing to herself every morning before being sent off for treatment. Music helped her focus and cope with the reality of the situation.

Music is a family tradition for Thibideau. Her grandmother was a concert pianist and violinist and she remembers her mother always singing. Classical music on the phonograph and the radio was always playing.

"Music is a gift that needs to be shared with people," she said. *Scarred: Classical Inspirations* is available at The Lion's Den on Main Street, Markham.



PHOTO/DAVID CARRINGTON

Pictured are, clockwise from bottom, Trista Bowen, Gary John, Michelle Barker, Sonia Davidson, Terry Henry, Brian Sinclair, Christine John, Derek Smith and Adrian Langdon.

CITIZEN ON ASSIGNMENT

Student orchestra makes beautiful music

BY JUDY CLARKE
CITIZEN ON ASSIGNMENT

Last Thursday evening, the lights went down in the packed hall of Markham Theatre.

The eager audience quieted as the curtains slid open. Sleek silver and brass instruments reflected shimmers of light. The radiant faces of 90 Grade 7 students focused intently upon the uplifted conductor's baton. Parents held their breath. And then, in a magical beginning, out flowed the mellow, rich tones of the *Manitoba March*.

It was a seamlessly orchestrated evening. Three hundred and twenty Grades 7 and 8 students from three community schools played 14 pieces together under the batons of their three teachers. Students, staff and parents savoured the professional environment of the theatre and its staff.

For the second year, Doug Manning, music teacher at Coledale Public School in Markham, organized the festival in partnership with Keven Merkeley, at Ashton Meadow Public School in Toronto, and Nora Mular-Richards at Sir Ernest MacMillan Senior Public School in Toronto. The teachers want their students to experience performance in a professional milieu; play with musicians from other schools and learn from different conducting styles.

Tickets sales help to defray the costs of producing the concert. The York Region District School Board and 2-4-1 Pizza contribute to offset the costs. Staff and parents help publicize, sell tickets and manage the logistics of supervising the 320 students involved. Unionville High School provides the use of its music facilities during the dress rehearsal and performance.

At Coledale, Manning combined the ticket sales drive



Coledale Grade 7 trumpet player David Gregory in rehearsal.

with voluntary donations to support the purchase of rent-to-own timpani for the school. These percussion instruments cost \$5,000, which is beyond the reach of the school and its Advisory Council budgets.

Last year, the proceeds from the concert helped to pay off the costs of a \$1,400 French horn.

Research evidence shows schools which have strong arts programs also have strong academic results. This research is easy to believe. The concert was an impressive display of intensely concentrated and self-disciplined performance. The young adolescents played with craftsmanship, pride, and a collective striving for high standards.

Kudos to their teachers for outstanding leadership, dedication and vision.

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Performing Live
St. Patrick's Party
March 17th
Live Band - **Black Velvet**
Irish Fare and Green Beer
6545 Hwy #7, E. of Wooten Way 294-4925

Father's
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Hosted by 42nd Street
Friday, March 12th THE DAWGS
Live Band
Saturday, March 13th THE WHITE HOUSE
Live Band
Wednesday, March 17th ST. PATRICK PARTY
Call for details
294-0134
Corner of Hwy. #7 and McCowan Rd.



DOUG MANNING

Music teacher dedicated to student experience