

Isabel (Scott) Whittaker accompanies singer Olive (Harrington) Reesor during a garden concert at Cedar Grove School in 1932. The photograph is on the cover of the newly launched book *Musical Memories of Markham*. The book is on sale for \$20.

Memories of music in new book

BY ROGER VARLEY
Staff Writer

When it comes to music, Markham doesn't play second fiddle to anyone.

With a history of music dating back to the arrival of William Berczy and his German settlers in the late 1700s, it's little surprise that Markham has produced or been home to some of Canada's leading musicians over the years.

John Allan Cameron, Canada's "Godfather of Celtic Music," jazz clarinetist Phil Nimmons, international musical comedy star Anna Russell and Rob McConnell, leader of the Boss Brass, are just a few of those who made it big who have Markham connections.

Adam Brazier, a product of the arts program at Unionville High School, is currently a featured performer in the smash musical *Mama Mia!*, playing in Toronto. Jackalyn Short, one of Canada's most sought-after

sopranos, has performed around the world since learning the basics in Markham District High School musical productions.

Their stories are just a few of those laid out in *Musical Memories of Markham*, a recently released book on the town's musical history, produced by the Markham 2000 Committee to mark the new millennium.

Assembled and edited by Andy Shaw, the book takes the reader on a musical journey from the time the first settlers arrived in the Markham area, through church choirs, community concert bands, high school marching bands, dance bands and jazz bands, to the modern day and its heavy metal bands such as Chrome, a quartet of rockers from Markville Secondary School.

Along the way, it pays tribute to the schools, community groups and the churches for their contributions to the musical mosaic and drops a lot of

names — such as Ellis McIntock, the rock group Moxo Fruvous, the Huggett Family, and Nina Scott-Stoddart.

But this is no serious, dry tome. It is told with humour and affection. Contributor Chuck Houghton recalls a dance band formed by W. Winston Bates in the early 1940s — W.W.B. and his Melodic Syncopators. Houghton said early reviews of the band were less than flattering and someone suggested W.W.B. stood for "World's Worst Band."

A review in the *Economist* and *Sun* on the band's performance at a high school prom read: "Their repertoire wasn't extensive but they gave it their best, even if it meant playing the same three tunes all night."

The book, which was officially launched a couple of weeks ago at the Frederick Horsman Varley Art Gallery in Unionville, costs \$20 and is available at Markham town offices.

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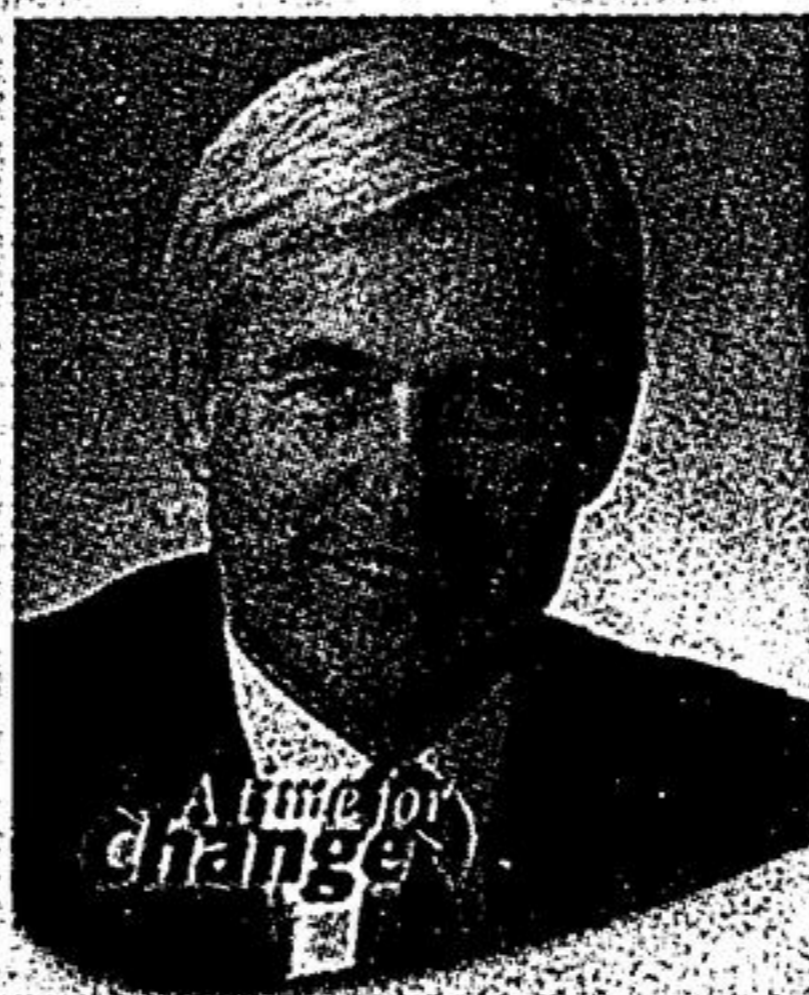


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