

Oliver makes theatre's debut tonight

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

Dozens of young people from Whitchurch-Stouffville are wearing rags as they prepare to bring *Oliver* to the stage starting tonight.

It's the first musical theatre production by the York Durham Academy for the Performing Arts (YDAPA).

"The kids are having a blast," stated Susan Dekker, a member of YDAPA's steering committee. "This has been the hectic crunch time. The kids have been working very hard to learn their songs and dances."

Performances of *Oliver* are at the Vaughan Playhouse from Thursday, April 3 to Saturday, April 5 at 7:30 p.m., with a 2 p.m. matinee Saturday.

Rehearsals for *Oliver* began in September at Orchard Park Public School for the more than 40 youngsters aged six to 15 who make up the cast.

Several former students of retired music teacher and *Oliver* director Wayne Hill are in charge of choreography, stage management, technical direction and other key positions. The Stouffville resident taught musical theatre and vocal music at Markville Secondary School for 17 years.

Last year when Mr. Hill decided to start the musical theatre group for children in Stouffville, he was overwhelmed with the response.

About 150 families came to the summer auditions and organizers decided to produce a second play to accommodate more of the youngsters.

Rehearsals are currently in full swing for *The Wizard of Oz* which will open in Uxbridge in May.

Oliver stars 12-year-old Ballantrae resident Greg Outram Kuzma as *Oliver* and A.J. Benson from Markham as the Artful Dodger.

Tickets for the musical are \$14 for children and seniors and \$16 for adults. Call the *Oliver* Ticket Hotline at 1-888-896-4445 for more information.



Ballantrae's Greg Outram Kuzma, 12, centre, plays the lead character in the York Durham Academy for the Performing Arts production of *Oliver*. The musical opens tonight at the Vaughan Playhouse. It's the first production for the Stouffville-based academy.

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Exco Technologies Limited, with its Corporate Office on Spy Court in Markham, is a Platinum Sponsor of the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation's fundraising Gala, "Come Sail Away," slated for April 12.

"Obviously the hospital is a good cause and it's something we all need. We have a lot of employees that work in the Markham area and it's good for our employees to recognize we support this health care," said CEO Brian Robbins.

"If you have better health care, you have better employees," he added.

Robbins said Markham Stouffville Hospital is a "great institution" and pointed out that with plants in Markham, Scarborough and Newmarket, 600 employees live locally.

On being a Platinum sponsor, Robbins noted, "the more we can do for them, the better. It's a very good cause and we're happy to participate and support it."

Exco Technologies Limited recently celebrated its 50th anniversary, growing from a small basement operation, to one that produces revenues of well over \$200 million a year.

Their evolution is a great story. It all began in 1952 when Harry Robbins, a Canadian-born toolmaker started "moonlighting" after hours in his basement. Robbins was able to quit his regular job within a year and a half and dedicated himself full-time to the new venture.

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With the passing of Harry in 1975, his son Brian took up the reigns of what had become a struggling extrusion tooling business with a small customer base and limited cash resources. Brian Robbins redefined the business, divesting it of those operations located outside Canada and in the process freeing up valuable resources to enter the die casting arena, according to a Special Supplement in *Commerce & Industry* magazine.

Quite the success story and the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation is proud to have them as a Platinum Sponsor!

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Scotiabank has been a supporter of the Markham Stouffville Hospital since its inception in 1983, and has contributed more than \$125,000 towards various projects, including start up costs for the Fast Track Clinic.

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'COME SAIL AWAY'

The Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation Gala, with the impressive theme 'Come Sail Away', will be held Saturday, April 12, at the Hilton Suites Toronto/Markham Convention Centre and Spa.

It all starts at 6 p.m. with a reception and Silent Auction. There will be a Live Auction following a sumptuous dinner. Black tie is optional. The Hilton Suites will be appropriately decorated with the sailing theme and there will be wonderful entertainment.

Tickets are \$250 a person for this very worthy cause.

For questions about sponsorship or tickets to the Gala, please call Andrea Guarino at 905-472-7395.