

Economist & Sun/Sun-Tribune

DIVERSIONS

Come CELEBRATE the Arts

BY ROY GREEN
Staff Writer

Next weekend is your chance to see which of 31 talented performers from across York Region will qualify for 10 \$1,500 Celebration of the Arts bursaries offered by the York Region Newspaper Group.

All summer, performers have been competing in 10 categories, including vocalists, instrumentalists, dancers and actors, to compete in this final show, which starts at 8 p.m. at the Newmarket Theatre. Among the prizes up for grabs are four hours of recording time at Cedar Valley Studios and a karaoke machine.

But the big prizes are the bursaries and the chance to perform at a gala at the Markham Theatre in October.

It's the third year the newspaper group has hosted the Celebration of the Arts gala, concert and appreciation night for its clients, but it's the first time bursary recipients have been selected in front of a live audience.

It's also the first time performers have competed in the dramatic monologue category.

"I'm not much of a singer, dancer or instrumentalist, but the judges liked what I did when I read a scene from 'The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe,'" Newmarket High student Sheena Clowater said.

The 17-year-old has acting credits with area theatre companies, Spotlight Theatre, Elite Productions and Marquee Productions and hopes to have a career in theatre, "preferably on stage," she said.

For Richmond Hill's Amber Minchella, who is in the dance competition, Saturday's finals provide a chance to perform in front of an audience.

"Winning's not everything. I just want to perform," said the 13-year-old, a student at Beverly Acres Public School. "It was also great to meet the other dancers in my group. They were all extremely good."

Asked to describe her performance piece, she said, "It's a kind of jazz piece by Prince. It's easy-flowing, classy with

attitude."

Speaking of attitude, Aurora's David Pilkey confesses he auditioned for the Celebration of the Arts for an unusual reason.

"I was attending a show at Newmarket Theatre and noticed the beautiful grand piano there and I thought it really would be fun to be sitting on that stool," said Mr. Pilkey, a teacher with the region's public school board.

He'll be singing and accompanying himself on the piano in the pop vocal category.

He has been singing, usually as a duo with his wife, at weddings and clubs, but is looking forward to his solo of Bring Him Home from Les Miserables.

The chance to perform solo is also the main thing for Matthew Golem, a viola player from Newmarket, who has just completed a summer tour with the National Youth Orchestra.

"I love playing in public," said the music student at the University of Western Ontario. "Winning a \$1,500 bursary would really help with my tuition, but I'm really looking forward to playing for a public that doesn't get to hear viola a lot. That's a little more special."

Unionville's Ashley Wong decided to audition for the program at the urging of a friend.

"She's a singer and asked me to audition with her," said Ms Wong, 13, who attends Unionville High School. "She made it to the semi-finals."

She will perform a lyrical dance to a Natalie Merchant song, My Skin. "The idea is to express the music, showing the emotions," Ms Wong said.

She also hopes to dance professionally, perhaps in music videos.

"I shot a movie the other day. It's called All I Want To Do Is Dance and it will be on TV in October."

The theatre is on Mulock Drive between Leslie Street and Bayview Avenue in Newmarket. Tickets are \$8 and available at the box office Monday to Friday from 1 to 5:30 p.m.; Saturday from noon to 4 p.m., or from the 24-hour ticket hotline at 905-953-5122. All major credit cards are accepted.



Ashley Wong of Unionville is one of the finalists in the Celebration of the Arts.

THE FINALISTS

- Hilda AhChong, Unionville, vocal
- Ryan Baker, Newmarket, vocal
- Taylor Borneman, Newmarket, dance
- Laura Bowes, Queensville, violin
- Holly Charboneau, Mount Albert, vocal
- Sheena Clowater, Newmarket, monologue
- Matthew Golem, Newmarket, viola
- Jamie Howard, Richmond Hill, dance
- Irene Illic, Newmarket, vocal
- Megan Kingsbury and Amanda Bell, Newmarket, vocal duet
- Nastassia Lehentuk, Holland Landing, violin
- Devon Miller, Aurora, vocal
- Amber Minchella, Richmond Hill, dance
- Katie Murphy, Newmarket, vocal
- Anita Nittoli, Richmond Hill, dance
- Sarah Parkin, Newmarket, vocal
- Geoff Perry, Schomberg, vocal
- David Pilkey, Aurora, vocal
- Steve Poloni, Woodbridge, guitar
- Amy Sanders, Gormley, harp
- Samantha Taylor, Holland Landing, vocal
- Matthew Tishler, Thornhill, vocal
- Nicole Tishler, Thornhill, vocal
- Samara Tong, Newmarket, dance
- Gena VanOosten, Newmarket, vocal
- Karine White, Newmarket, vocal
- Stephanie Wilson, Newmarket, vocal
- Ashley Wong, Unionville, dance
- James Zhang, Markham, flute

Join Mayor Don Cousens for an exciting evening of delicious food, with wines complimenting each course, and music, with Roger Abbott of Royal Canadian Air Farce as our Master of Ceremonies.

\$95.00 per person

Supporting the arts and culture in our community today will enrich the lives of our youth tomorrow.

Mayor's Dinner for the Arts



Evening of October 17, 2003
Angus Glen Golf Course — 10080 Kennedy Road

Call 905-305-SHOW (7469) to reserve your seats today!

Corporate tables are also available. For information contact Lesley Dominico at 905-946-8072.

