

Jack and the Beanstalk this year's pantomime

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

The fastest-growing beanstalk this month won't be in some farmer's field in Whitchurch-Stouffville — it will be at Latcham Hall.

The magically-growing vine is part of the tomfoolery in this year's English pantomime production of Jack and the Beanstalk, suitably subtitled See What Happens When You Genetically Modify Foods.

The production features more than 20 members of the Christ Church youth group and one lone adult, Wayne Feasby, who plays the essential role of the dame.

He reassures residents the vine "will grow before our eyes".

Mr. Feasby plays Jack's mother, Mrs. Durden, complete with a black dress design he predicts won't be seen on the red carpet at the Oscars anytime soon.

He describes working with the young people in the pantomime as "a riot — you see their imaginations come out".

Jack and the Beanstalk is the 12th traditional English pantomime written by long-time Stouffville resident Charlie Parker, who portrayed the dame for 10 years before passing on the role.

He brings a good dose of satire to the script, prompted by the more ridiculous goings-on of personalities and events on a local,

national and international scale. That's added to the traditional comedy, singing and dancing of the pantomime.

The young people in the cast are from age six to about 14. The lead role of Jack is played by 14-year-old Amber Daniels, who is in Grade 9 at Markham District High School. This is her third year with the pantomime.

"I like to go on stage and perform in front of people," she said.

Rebecca Parry portrays the princess while Ben Reilly, 14, stalks the stage in the guise of the giant. The Squire, the much-boomed villain who is trying to foreclose on Mrs. Durden's mortgage, is played by Ryan Sweeney.

The action will be regularly interrupted by a couple of bumbler: Rock, played by Christopher Daniels and Shane Greenwood, and Roll, portrayed by Alex Gillespie and Christopher Ormrod in shared roles.

And you never can tell what the stagehands will do, Mr. Feasby said.

They'll often burst into the action to sing or dance until they have to be forcibly removed from the stage.

Audience participation is the key to an English pantomime as people cheer on the hero, loudly boo the villain and sing along to this year's musical offering by Vince Parry. Mr. Parry is sharing the director role with Denise



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Alex Gillespie, 13 (centre front, as Roll) Rebecca Parry, 14, (left, as Princess) Brian Hadaway, 14, (rear, as Simon) and Amber Daniels, 14 (right, as Jack) are part of the cast of Jack and the Beanstalk, being per-

formed by the Youth Group of Christ Church in Stouffville. The event is part of church's 12th annual traditional English pantomime production at Latcham Hall Feb. 25 and 26.

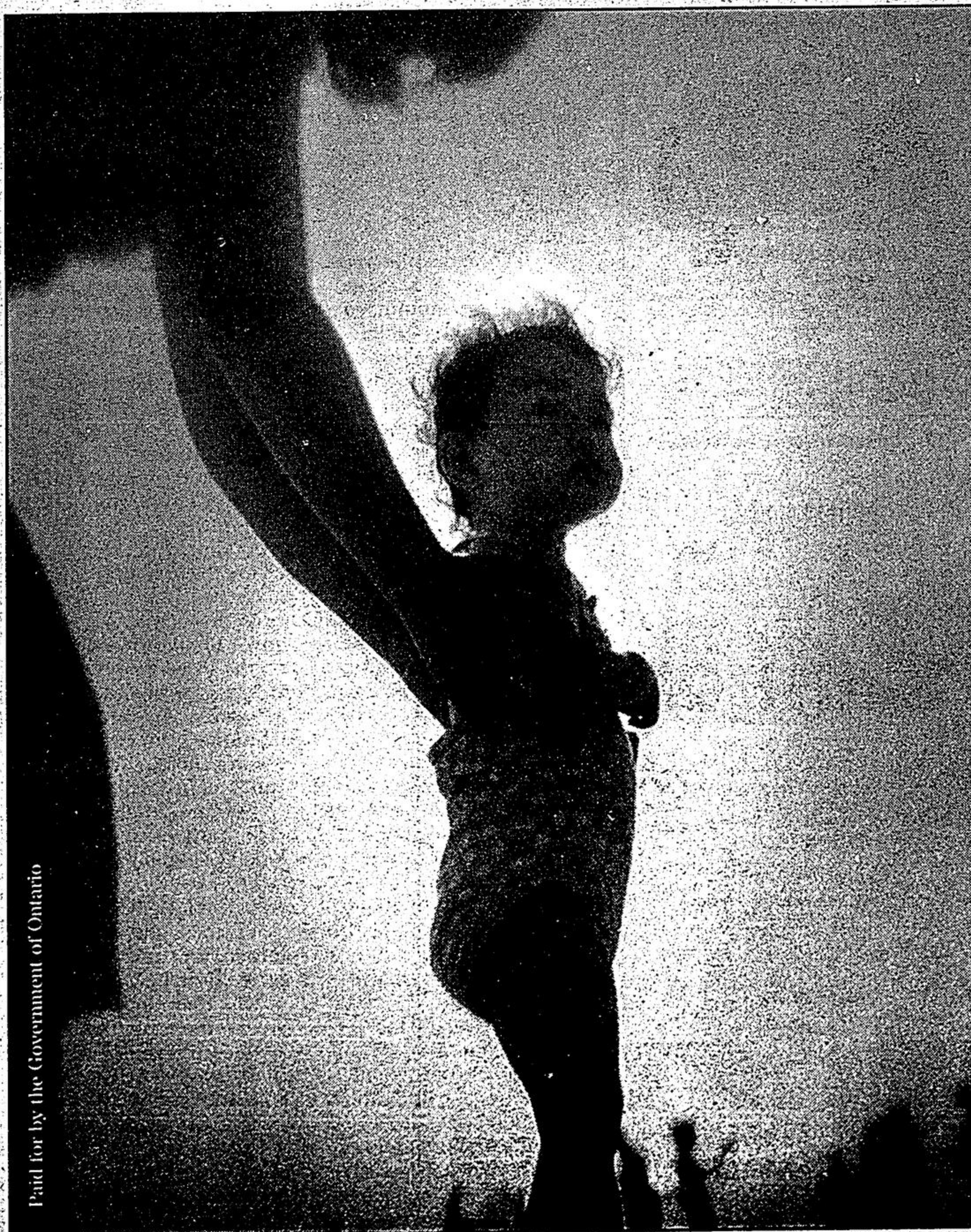
Pettit and Charlie Parker. Light and sound are being handled by Al Strawbridge of Shooting Stars Productions, while long-time stage manager Joe Sweeney brings special effects and myste-

rious gadgets to life.

Jack and the Beanstalk is at Latcham Hall, 8 Park Dr. S. in Stouffville on Feb. 25 at 7:30 p.m. and Feb. 26 at 2 and 7:30 p.m. A performance for seniors is at

Parkview Village March 4 at 7 p.m.

For tickets and information, call the Christ Church office at 905-640-1461. Tickets are also available from Stouffville Florist on Main Street.



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