

SUN-TRIBUNE PEOPLE

Pork for music sounds good to songwriter

Bryan Moyer Suderman is a full-time singer/songwriter living in Stouffville. He'll release his third CD, My Money Talks, songs for worship, with a performance Nov. 3 at 7:30 p.m. at Parkview Village. Admission is free.

BY BRYAN MOYER SUDERMAN

"So, if you ever want to exchange pork for music, just let us know..."

That's what a woman said, as I was leaving a performance last year, and I found myself mulling it over for a week. Finally, I e-mailed her back and said "I don't know if you were serious when you made that offer of pork for music, but if you were, I'd love to do it."

Yet another step along the winding road of trying to develop an "alternative economic model" for this music ministry...

It's a model that:

- can be sustainable and viable over the long term;
- is compatible with healthy family and community life;
- is built around a different set of assumptions and expectations about what constitutes success;
- is compatible with — and grows out of and gives expression to — my faith.

ALTERNATE TO TOURING LIFESTYLE

It's an alternative to the "Tour! Tour! Sell! Sell! Sell!" that is the standard (and spectacularly unhealthy and unsustainable) model in the mainstream music business (including the Christian music business).

That's the idea, anyway. And last year I took what was, for me, the biggest step so far in that direction.

Essentially, what I've done is to work with the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) model and adapt it to music.

On a CSA farm, you pay an up-front annual fee (or membership or subscription or shares), and receive regular deliveries (usually weekly) of fresh, locally grown produce throughout the growing season. This is good for consumers because

they receive high quality produce that is local, usually organic, picked at the peak of freshness and nutritional value.

It's good for the farmer, because it guarantees a fair price for the produce, enables a small-scale operation to be viable and shares the risks of farming. It's also good for the environment, as the land is farmed more sustainably, on a smaller scale and with fewer, if any, chemical inputs, and the produce is not shipped over long distances to reach the consumer.

Another result of all this is the formation and strengthening of relationships, local community and local economies.

It helps to bridge the gap between producers and consumers and to create a partnership in the production/consumption of food and in the knowledge and care of the land where it's grown.

We were part of a CSA called Earthshare in Winnipeg, and loved it. A friend runs a CSA in Iowa.

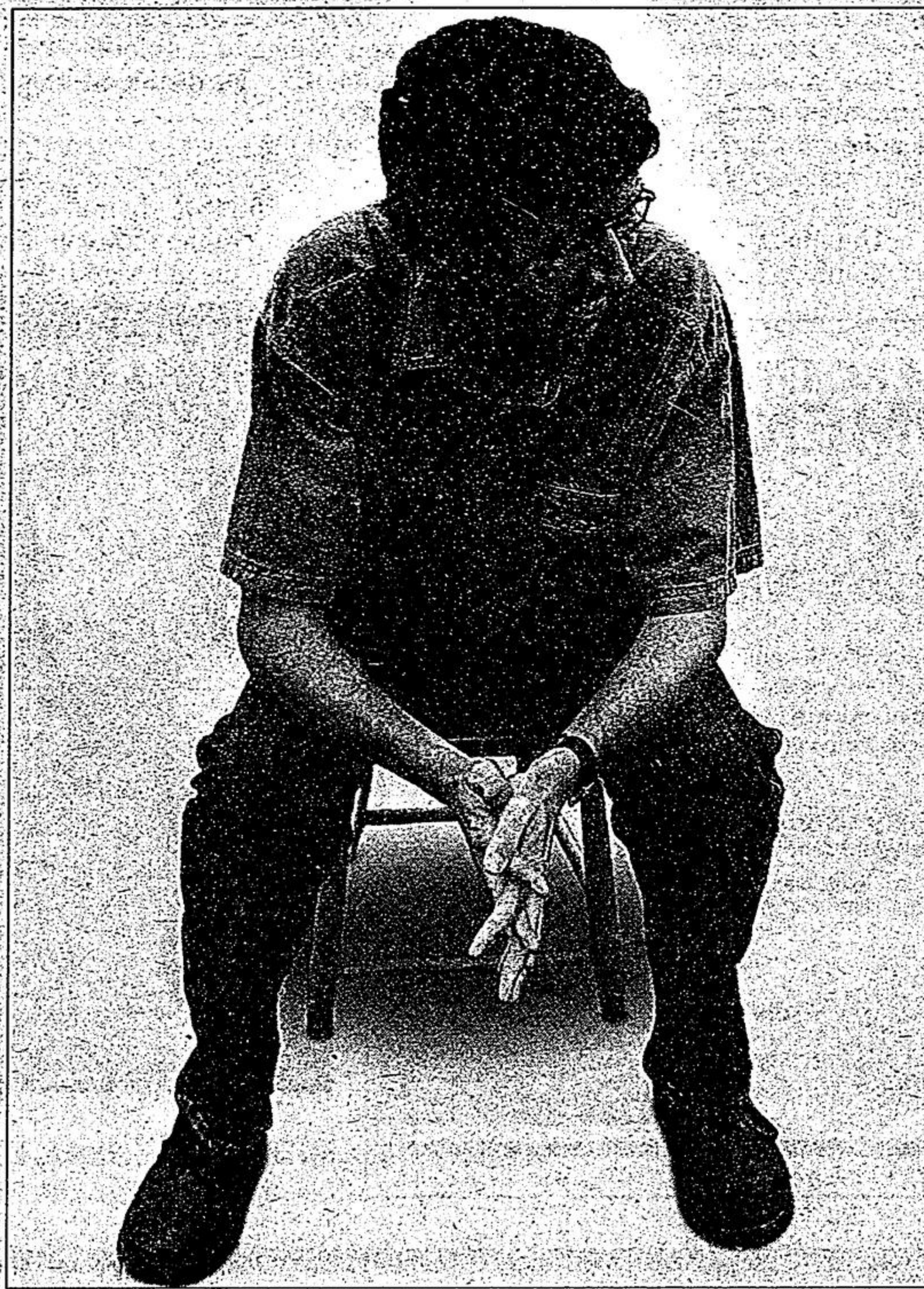
We haven't yet found a CSA in our neck of the woods here in Stouffville, but we do frequent some local businesses that function in similar ways in the community.

So how have I adapted this alternative economic model to the world of music?

Well, I've set up a system where "becoming a member of SmallTall Music" is like joining a CSA farm. You pay an annual fee and receive regular deliveries of fresh, home-grown, organic music — new "songs of faith for small and tall" — straight from the producer, yours truly.

The songs come as mp3 audio files along with a packet of resources, including lyrics, chords and music notation, thoughts and reflections, activity ideas of how you might try using the songs in worship, in the classroom, at home, all available via download from a Members page of the SmallTall Music website.

As in the CSA model, the idea is that membership is much more than making a consumer choice to receive a certain kind of product.



Stouffville's Bryan Moyer Suderman will release his third CD with a performance at the Parkview Village auditorium Nov. 3.

Becoming a member of SmallTall Music is an opportunity to be an active participant and partner in the process of creating, testing and sharing new music for the church and for families of the church.

Members are invited to participate in a whole variety of ways, including:

- using and enjoying the songs;
- sharing feedback and ideas;
- giving ideas/suggestions for new songs;
- writing and sharing your own songs.

Sound like fun? I'm having a blast.

And the most recent innovation in this process is the addition of bartering/exchanging goods or services as another form of "payment." There are households exchanging pork, pies, photography services, website assistance, house painting, fresh cookies and oil changes as their means of "payment" for their membership in SmallTall Music.

For other households and con-

gregations, of course, paying "the old fashioned way" with cash or cheque still makes the most sense.

BARTER OR PAYMENT

Some people familiar with the CSA model have already taken to talking about this as my CSM (Community Supported Music). And, of course, plenty of others tend to listen politely, with a glazed, far-away look in their eyes, and walk away baffled by all this craziness.

From Bryan's blog, which can be found at www.smalltallmusings.blogspot.com. The new CD is available at the Care and Share Thrift Store and For the Love of Jo on Main Street, Stouffville. A songbook with music notation and piano arrangements will be available early in 2008. Half of profits from sales of the CD and songbook will go to the Mennonite Foundation of Canada for its stewardship education, and to the Global Church Sharing Fund of the Mennonite World Conference. For more information, go to smalltallmusic.com.

Whitchurch-Stouffville News Digest

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Main Street, Safety Village host Halloween events

You can get your Halloween spirit on early in Stouffville next weekend. Two events next Saturday are open to everyone.

Trick or Treat on Main Street is presented by the Stouffville Business Improvement Area from 1 to 3 p.m.

Costumed characters meet at the Stouffville Train Station at 1 p.m. and head along Main Street to receive treats from participating merchants.

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

For information, call the BIA at 905-640-0749.

Halloween in the Village is presented at the Community Safety Village at the Bruce's Mill Conservation Area, 3291 Stouffville Rd. from 4 to 7 p.m.

There will be trick or treating, haunted house, games and safety tips.

Children under 12 are encouraged to attend in costume, with a parent and bring a non-perishable food item for the York Region Food Bank Network.

For more, e-mail to 5475@yrp.ca

Learn about hospital

You can learn more about Markham-Stouffville Hospital at an event hosted by Mayor Wayne Emmerson, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce and the hospital's foundation at Latcham Hall Oct. 29 from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

Expansion of the hospital, which opened in 1990, will be discussed.

For reservations, call the mayor's office at 905-640-1910, ext. 227.

SOUND OFF

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