

# TIME TO START THINKING ABOUT ... CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS

BY SIMONE JOSEPH  
Staff Reporter

John-Michael Scapin has advice for you. The Aurora student won York Region's Celebration of the Arts talent search in 2004, which he said

helped prepare him for a national reality TV talent competition.

When giving advice about entering the York Region talent competition, the 17-year-old sounds a bit like a Nike ad.

"Do it. Don't worry. Have fun. It is a great experience. You won't regret it," he said.

Mr. Scapin won his \$1,500 bursary after singing Good Morning Baltimore, while playing the piano.

"It was fabulous. I had friends competing," he said. "It was a whole summer of meeting people. It opened doors."

It was his first time in the competition. His bursary paid for piano and singing lessons.

"It was a big stepping stone and a real learning experience," he recalled.

The Aurora High School student also won first place on the CBC reality TV program Triple Sensation.

Mr. Scapin, chosen by a panel of judges for his singing, dancing and acting talent, won a \$150,000 scholarship that allows him to study at a top theatrical training school anywhere in the world.

Triple Sensation did well with critics, but, by the time people tuned in, the show was already quite far along, Mr. Scapin said, adding it cer-

tainly did not reach Canadian Idol fame.

But Triple Sensation was more about education than fame. Did Celebration of the Arts help him prepare for Triple Sensation?

"Yes. Anything on stage helps."

York's chambers of commerce and boards of trade donated \$5,000 to Celebration of the Arts.

Entertainers from the competition, including singers, dancers and players of instrumental solos and duets performed at an event the group hosted during last fall's Canadian Chamber of Commerce convention in Markham.

"They did such an outstanding job. The per-

*Sheryl Amirault has advice for people contemplating entering the competition: pay close attention to your monologue or song choice.*

formers were incredible.

"It enhanced the success of the conference," said Mac Cosburn, chairperson of the committee hosting the event.

This year's Celebration of the Arts competition will be complete by Labour Day.

Semifinals are in July and the finals in August.

The gala is in October at Markham Theatre for Performing Arts, which is when the bursaries are given out.

Sheryl Amirault has advice for people contemplating entering the competition: pay close attention to your monologue or song choice.

Make sure what you choose is appropriate for your age, the president of Marquee Productions and producer of Celebration of the Arts said.

"It does not make sense for an eight-year-old to enter with a love song about a man. It happens all the time. They hear the song on the radio," Ms Amirault said.

Celebration of the Arts is the brainchild of York Region Media Group publisher Ian Proudfoot.

This year's event kicked off with a gala performance in Newmarket Saturday night featuring 11 winners from last year. Go to [yorkregion.com](http://yorkregion.com) to see a photographs from the event.



John-Michael Scapin said he used the experience he gained from Celebration of the Arts to win a TV reality talent contest.

## What you need

- Video footage in DVD format (clearly labeled with your name and phone number) of you performing;
- Written outline of training and experience and a 50-word summary of how you would use the bursary to further your education or career;
- You must select a minimum of three of the five semifinal dates to be available to perform;
- A 5x7-inch colour or black and white photograph and;
- A \$20 non-refundable administration fee.

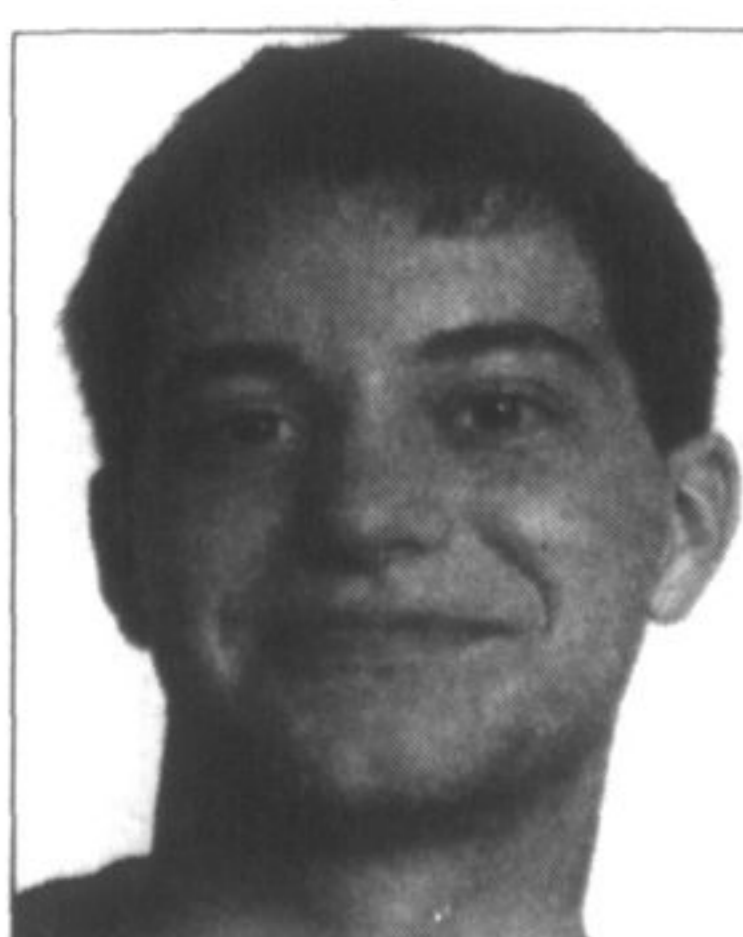
## Where to get applications

Applications are available at any York Region Media Group office:

- The Era-Banner, 580B Steven Ct. in Newmarket;
  - The Markham Economist & Sun, 9 Heritage Rd. in Markham;
  - The Stouffville Sun-Tribune, 6290 Main St. in Stouffville;
  - The Richmond Hill Liberal & Vaughan Citizen, 1550 16th Ave. in Richmond Hill;
  - The Georgina Advocate, 461 The Queensway S. in Keswick;
  - Marquee Productions, 73 Industrial Pkwy. N. in Aurora;
  - Newmarket Theatre, 505 Pickering Cr. in Newmarket and;
  - Town of Newmarket parks, recreation and cultural department, 395 Mulock Dr.
- Apply online at [www.yrmg.com/coa/](http://www.yrmg.com/coa/)  
E-mail [mschembri@yrmg.com](mailto:mschembri@yrmg.com) for information on contributing to the bursary program or to sponsor a bursary.

## Essential details

- **Prizes:** First place winner in each category receives \$300. There is also a bursary award program (prizes range from \$1,000 to \$3,000).
  - **Application Deadline:** All applications must be received at the Newmarket Theatre box office no later than 4 p.m. June 21. For more information, go to [www.yrmg.com/coa](http://www.yrmg.com/coa) or [www.newmarkettheatre.ca](http://www.newmarkettheatre.ca)
  - **The Competition:** Elimination judging begins July 11 at Newmarket Theatre. A limited number of live audition opportunities will be held at the Vaughan City Playhouse June 13 and Newmarket Theatre June 19.
- To book your audition or for more information, contact Marquee Productions at [marqueeproductions@sympatico.ca](mailto:marqueeproductions@sympatico.ca) or 905-713-1040.



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