

# Academy wants to take region's performers to next level

## STOUFFVILLE DANCE THEATRE GROUP ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

BY SEAN PEARCE  
Staff Writer

A pair of York Region entrepreneurs hopes their new performance school is worthy of a big round of applause from local artists with an assist from Stouffville.

Ovation Performing Arts Academy is the brain child of Bonnie Craig and Chris Madsen and it is being formed to help performance artists take their skills to the next level.

Whether it's dance, musical theatre, drama or any other performance art, Ms Craig said Ovation is just the ticket.

"Our tagline says we're about taking you from 'Memorizing to Mesmerizing,'" she said. "You can just go up stage and repeat lines, but we try to get people so they're that person on stage the audience just can't take their eyes off of."

The idea for an instructional facility where artists could hone their talents is one she and Mr. Madsen have kicked around for some time, she said.

There are plenty of places for aspiring artists to learn the basics, but a spot for those who had mastered their technique and wanted to take it to the next level is sorely lacking in the area, she added.

Many people left for Toronto instead of staying

► Go to [ovationarts.ca](http://ovationarts.ca) for more on the academy.

closer to home.

As a result, Ms Craig is quick to point out Ovation might not be for everyone, especially when it comes to beginners.

The goal is to make sure everyone gets the training they need and she's more than happy to refer those who are not quite ready for Ovation to other schools more suitable to their skill level.

The school opens its doors Sept. 21 at the new Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, but it is taking applications for enrolment.

Despite the fact the school is in a Richmond Hill facility, it's by no means exclusive to the town, she added.

In fact, to give the space that regionally inclusive feel, Ms Craig and Mr. Madsen have assembled talented instructors from all across the region.

Drama is handled by Jeff Young from Unionville High School's Arts York program, while musical theatre and voice instruction are the responsibility of Marnie Kersten, formerly of SKYLARK and the Randolph Academy.

Fancy footwork duties are the domain of Alex Cilic, the head of dance from Huron Heights Secondary School, while classical music students are under the tutelage of Vincent Cheng of the Toronto Philharmonia and Vocal Horizons.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Cynthia Croker of Stouffville's Motus O dance theatre leads a movement workshop at the kickoff for Ovation Performing Arts Academy in Markham this spring. The academy is holding auditions in Stouffville for a Christmas production.

Dance students are also going to be treated to some time with artist-in-residence Motus O dance theatre based out of Stouffville.

Creative types received a taste of what Ovation

offers this spring at an evening of free workshops held at the Varley Art Gallery in Markham.

Ms Craig said the event was a great success and she's hoping for more events

leading up to the academy's opening.

The academy is inviting youth and adult performers to a free workshop/demonstration at Richmond Hill United Church Aug. 9 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Motus O will be featured. Reserve a spot by e-mailing [chris@ovationarts.ca](mailto:chris@ovationarts.ca) or calling 1-877-229-ARTS.

The academy is presenting A Christmas Carol at Markham Theatre Dec. 28. Auditions will take place at the York Dance Academy in Stouffville Oct. 4 and 5

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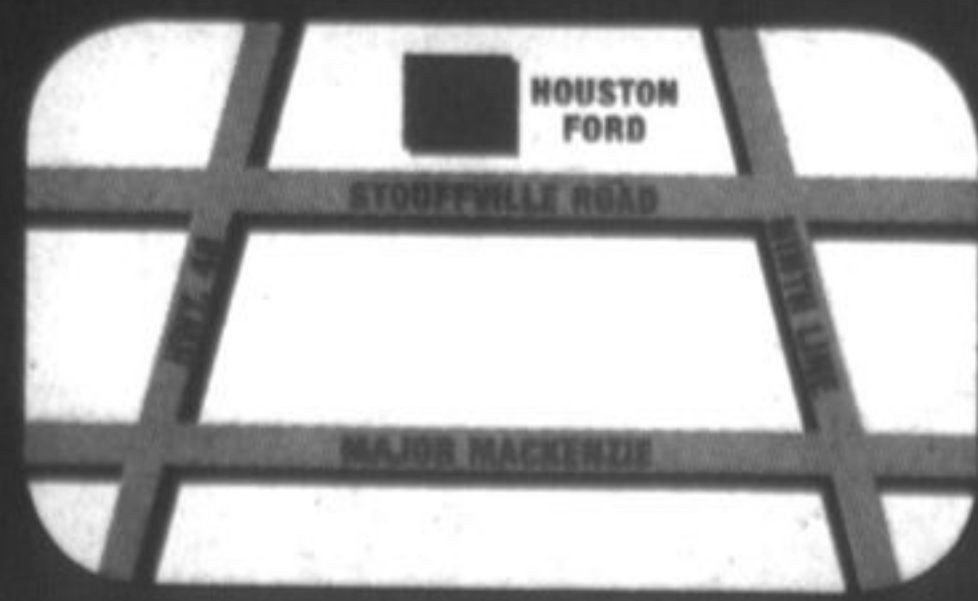
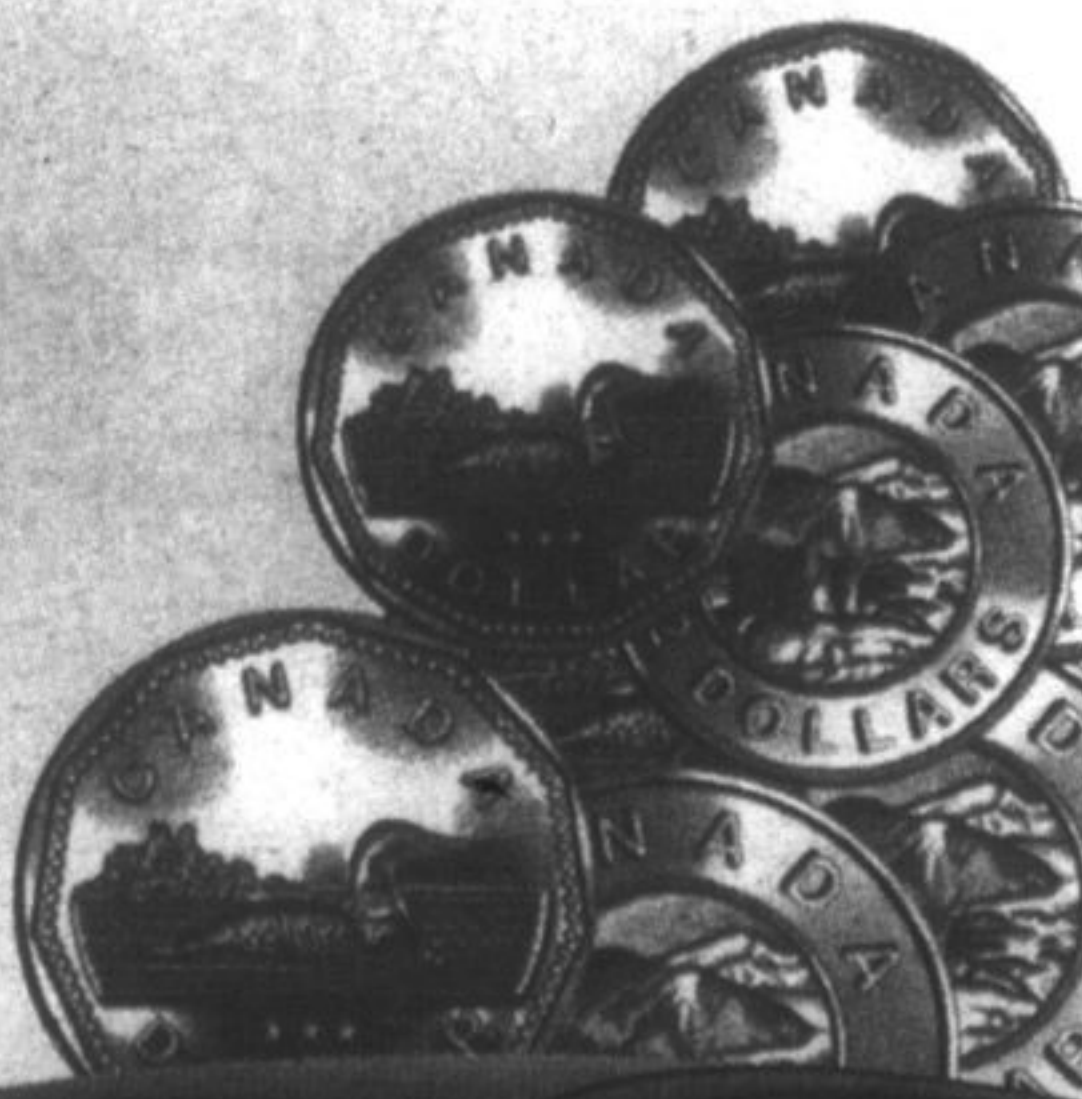


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Many children and adults with ADD and Dyslexia have seen significant improvement without medication. Dr. Turner is an international speaker and lecturer who has been featured on the *Dini Petty Show*, *National News*, *Canada AM*, *CFTO News*, *Marilyn Denis CITYLINE* and *Riley Live*. He will present a free symposium on Thurs. Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm at the Stouffville Health Centre, 6219 Main Street.

Call 905-640-4440 to reserve your seats today!