

OPINION

Churches double as concert halls

A church service and a church concert have little in common. However, in this day and age, this fact is subject to question.

One is worship. The other is entertainment.

Regardless, because of importance, neither can be ignored.

In chronological order, St. James Presbyterian comes first.

This Sunday, Oct. 23, the congregation celebrates its 151st anniversary. And while the occasion won't evoke the same level of enthusiasm as last year's milestone, one invited guest is sure to generate a level of admiration and appreciation seldom experienced in any religious establishment.

He's 18-year-old Matthew Eeuwes, a violinist so outstanding, he's already accrued his own class of students.

But let me keep you in suspense while I move on to a subsequent community attraction.

The location is Christ Church Anglican where, Oct. 29, ex-Stouffville Jim Rehill will host a Harvest Harmony concert featuring not one but four musical groups — the Ontario Heartland chorus of Mississauga, the Barons of Barbershop from Scarborough, Stouffville District Secondary School's Spartan Sound and Jim's own Anglican Church choir.

This event begins at 7:30 p.m.



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

Tickets are \$15 from Lindy's Floral Boutique and Christ Church.

A full house is expected.

But now, as promised, more information on Stouffville's violin virtuoso.

Matthew Eeuwes attended Whitchurch Highlands Public School. Last June, he graduated with a violin major from the York Arts program at Unionville High School.

At an early age, Matthew's father envisioned something unique about his son's musical talents. He purchased for him a violin as a seventh birthday gift.

At the time, Matthew was taking piano lessons but, by his own admission, "didn't like it all that much".

"The violin was and still is the instrument for me," he says.

Unionville High opened a whole new world for Matthew. For a period of four years, he played in the school's 50-member symphony orchestra with engagements at the Markham Theatre and other area venues.

A year ago, he uncovered and refurbished a 20th century violin once owned by his great-grandfather. The two have been "friends" ever since.

In addition to weekly teaching classes at Valley View Alliance Church in Newmarket, Matthew has used his skill to entertain seniors groups at Stouffville's Parkview Home, Buckingham Manor and Stouffville Creek Retirement Residence. He also plays in a band at Springvale Baptist Church.

When performing solo, his piano accompanist is Carol Creal of Stouffville.

"We're a team," he stresses.

What's ahead?

Matthew hopes to study conservatory violin in either Boston or New York and later serve in an orchestra. He also wants to teach part-time.

So there you have it — a violin prodigy at Stouffville's St. James Presbyterian Church Oct. 23 and a four-chorus concert Oct. 29 at Stouffville's Christ Church Anglican.

Welcomes await.

Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 60 years. He is an elder at St. James Presbyterian.

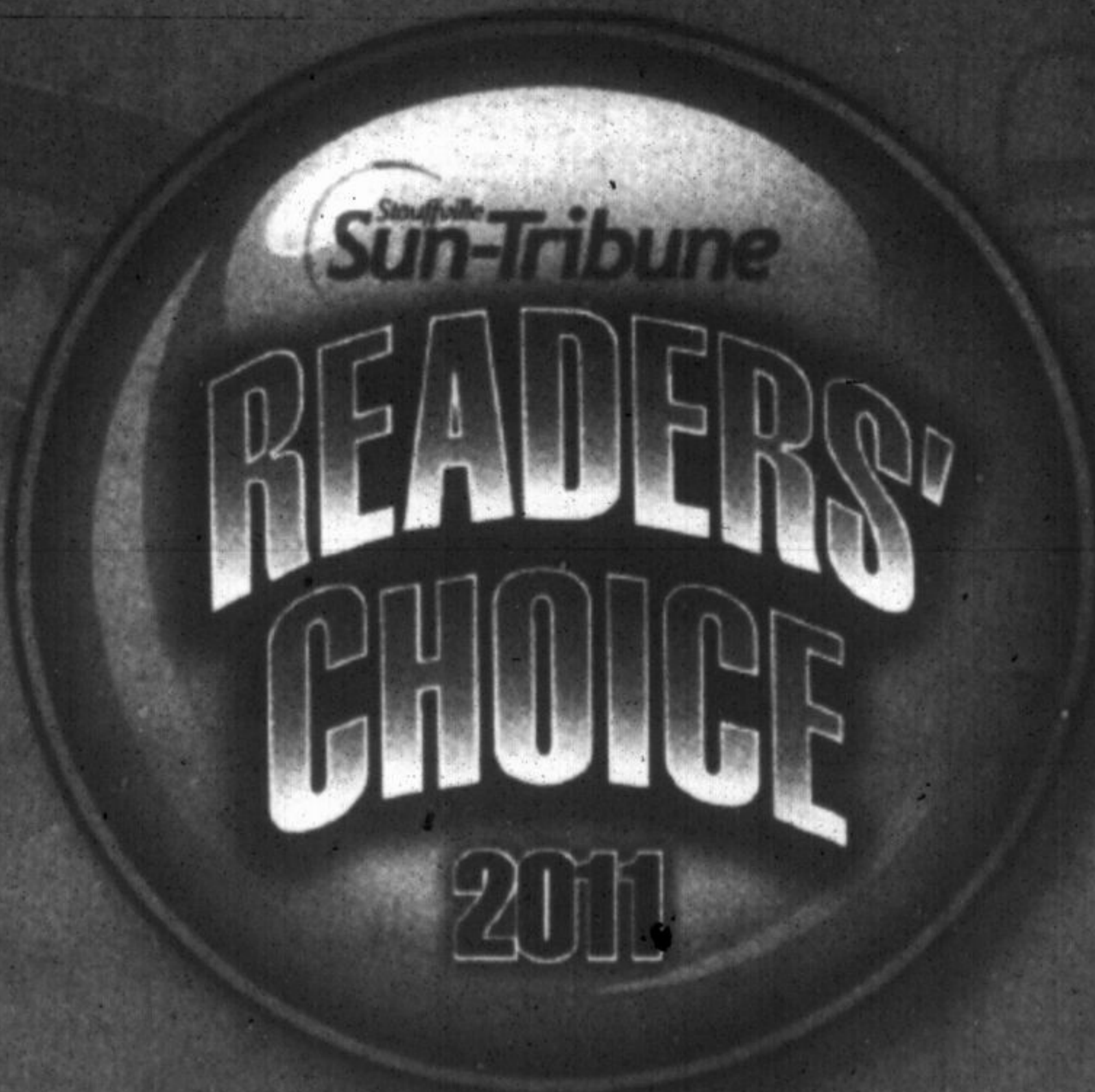


SUN-TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Matthew Eeuwes, 18, a violinist who already teaches his own students, will perform at St. James Presbyterian Church during its 151st anniversary Sunday.

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