

Do you love to sing? If so, you have a number of options in or near our town. If you cherish sacred music, many of the local churches would love to have you join them in the choir loft on Sunday mornings.

If you enjoy more of a theatrical spotlight, you should watch for audition notices in December for Music Mania, the annual spring revue which is always a lot of fun as well as being an introduction to wonderful music. Or you could join one of the established musical theatre groups in Uxbridge, Port Perry or points south.

But if a variety of good choral music is your taste, there are a couple of recently-established, but well-respected community choirs which are saving a chair just for you.

One of them, however, has an important restriction: you have to be male. Men of Note was founded in 1999 by many of the tenors and basses from the old Cachet Choral Group, and has continually expanded ever since. It now has 40 members, and as you read this, many of them are on a concert tour of Germany. The choir is very busy.

"We do a wide variety of four-part material," says conductor Jeff McAloon, a resident of Richmond Hill with two music degrees who took over the group two years ago after singing in the tenor section.

"The guys' skill level has increased a lot during the choir's brief history," Jeff says. "More dissonances, tougher harmonies and rhythms. But we always keep it fun, that's the main thing. And we perform a lot, participate in a lot of events."

One of the highlights of this season will be the visit of an English male choir in late October. They'll perform jointly here in Stouffville on Oct. 26.

On return from Germany, the Men of Note will hold their first rehearsal Mon., Sept. 13 at 7:30 at Stouffville United Church, on Church St. just north of Main. They'd love to see you there.

But if a mixed choir is what you're looking for, look no further than Bach to Blues, co-founded in 1998 by present conductor Ann Gage, a trained vocalist and musical theatre veteran who lives at nearby Coppins Corners.

As its name suggests, the point of Bach to Blues is to expose its singers

Choirs tune up for season



THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE BATON - Ann Gage, the director of the Bach to Blues mixed choir, and Jeff McAloon, seen here conducting the Men of Note, are two of Stouffville's musical leaders.

(currently about 30 in number) to a wide variety of musical styles, including the latest arrangements available from choral publishers. As with Men of Note, the choir has grown stronger quickly.

"Most of the original members couldn't read music," recalls Ann. "Now they do it very well, and they're really the backbone of the group."

One of the unique aspects to Bach to Blues is

its dedication to charitable causes. After minimal expenses, the proceeds from concerts go entirely to charity, and many local groups have benefitted from the group's generosity over

the last few years.

If you'd like to join Bach to Blues, come out to the first rehearsal Tues., Sept. 7 at 7:30 at Christ Church Anglican, on Sunset south of Main.

And since the groups

rehearse on different nights, you could really demonstrate your love of singing by becoming both a Man of Note and a Bach to Blueser.

A warning, though. You're going to be busy.

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