

Celebrations bring together 150 voices for 150 years



By Brock Weir

The sounds of over 150 voices from all over York Region will come together in song this Saturday, one for each year of Aurora's years.

Aurora United Church will host the choral celebration Saturday evening at 6.30 p.m., coming together in a celebration of Aurora's past, present and future.

"I thought since this is Aurora's 150th anniversary, if we're going to do it, we might as well do it now," said Sylvia Gilchrist, chair of the concert event. "I am a member of the choir committee and it was put to them we should do this. The consensus was this was too much work, but I was involved with the Aurora Horse Show and Fair for many years and I said it couldn't be any worse than that!?"

The resulting organizing committee sprang out of the Evergreen Choir whose home base is the Aurora Seniors' Centre. Under the direction of Dr. Richard Heinzele, the director himself is no stranger to similar choral celebrations.

From that starting point they sent out invitations to a slew of different choirs and several have joined up, including the Evergreen Choir, the York Region French Choir, the Men of Note Male Voice Choir, the York Region Community Choir, the United Church Youthful Spirits Choir and the York Region Keynotes.

"We have the seniors choir, we have the young, the in-between, the men, and the seniors, so there is something for everyone," says Ms. Gilchrist. "In terms of the music, each choir collected their own music for the part they are doing on their own and each choir will be performing for about 10 minutes on their own. Then we all come together at the end for the massed choir. For the final two songs, there will be a massed choir of about 150 voices at least."

"Richard selected the two pieces for the massed choir. The first one we are singing is a new piece by a Canadian, Larry Nichol, and it is called All the Little Rivers. It is about all the rivers of Canada and we name them as we sing them. It is really quite effective as the images are projected onto the walls of the church. The final piece that ends the whole concert is a piece by Handel, Ye Boundless Realms of Joy which will be accompanied by an organist."

During the final number images of Aurora's past and present will also envelop the audience.

"It has really gotten to be quite an amazing event and just before the massed choir, Mayor Geoff Dawe will be saying a few words," Ms. Gilchrist elaborates on the importance of the event. "Music is always a unifying thing. It brings people together, it makes them feel good, and I think it is a wonderful way to celebrate Aurora's 150th anniversary to sing and listen to music. I think the people will leave the Aurora United Church feeling very good and uplifted."

Ms. Gilchrist says she thinks events such as these to mark Aurora's milestone anniversary are important because it develops a stronger sense of where Aurorans have come from, where they are going and, in this sense, fosters a stronger sense of community.

She added she hopes people leave the church not only feeling uplifted, but thinking, "Wow, was that ever a great way to spend a

Saturday evening!?

The concert gets underway at 6.30 p.m. at the Aurora United Church on Yonge Street. Doors open at 5 p.m. Tickets are \$15 and available from the participating choirs, CHATS (Community Home Assistance to Seniors), the Aurora Seniors' Centre, or at the door.