

MUSIC MAN

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Jeff Goldenberg of Thornhill admitted he still gets a little choked up when he hears a recording of his son Brian's musical compositions.

"It's hard to believe his creativity at times," he said.

His wife, Barbara, is less surprised, however,

"Music is a part of our lives," said Mrs. Goldenberg, a music teacher.

It has been a part of 24-year-old Brian Goldenberg's life since he started taking piano lessons at age six. In the intervening years, he has become an accomplished musician, composer, conductor and teacher and still found time to graduate magna cum laude from York University with a BFA in music.

The latest evidence of his talent takes the stage at Markham Theatre July 15 to 17 when the Markham Youth Theatre presents his original musical, *Seven of Us*.

The production, for which Mr. Goldenberg wrote the book, music and lyrics, is about seven friends emerging from college and the relationships that evolve and devolve against a backdrop of the uncertainty of the paths they will follow.

The show was presented as a workshop, with actors reading and singing from the scripts, last year at Vaughan's City Playhouse. In that presentation, the show's characters were high school students preparing for graduation.

In discussing the workshop later, a friend persuaded Mr. Goldenberg to move the setting ahead a few years, arguing the end of university was a more crucial time of life than the end of high school.

The musical has its roots in Mr. Goldenberg's time at Unionville High School, known throughout York Region for its arts programs. He wrote a plot synopsis and eight songs to be performed as an 18-minute medley, orchestrated for 21 instruments, for his OAC independent studies program.

"I dropped calculus for a semester so that I could work on it," he said, noting his calculus teacher wasn't happy with his decision. "But five years later I took a CD of the finished, expanded show to her to show her what had resulted."

It was while he was in OAC studies at Unionville -- he graduated with an average of more than 90 per cent -- that Mr. Goldenberg applied for and received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Herbert H. Carnegie Future Aces Foundation. It's non-profit charitable organization helping young people go to college or university.

Receiving the scholarship had a profound effect on his life.

The foundation was started by Herbert H. Carnegie, a star player with the Quebec Aces in the Quebec Senior Hockey League in the 1940s. He played with Jean Beliveau, was coached by the late Punch Imlach and later played semi-professional with the Sherbrooke Saints. But he never realized his ambition to make it to the National Hockey League.



In later years, Mr. Carnegie wrote the Future Aces Creed as a means to encourage young people to develop a positive approach to life and its challenges.

It's a creed Mr. Goldenberg said he took to heart.

"Since I received the scholarship, I've become very involved with the foundation," he said, adding he has also become friends with Mr. Carnegie and his family.

Mr. Goldenberg produced a show with Markham Youth Theatre last year, with some of the proceeds going to the foundation. The same will hold true for Seven of Us.

But Mr. Goldenberg didn't stop there. He took the Future Aces creed to a day camp in the Jane/Finch area where he has led the Jane Street Singers for the last five years.

"The kids are excited about the choir," he said. "It gives them focus and discipline."

As for the camp, "I drove the other counsellors nuts," he said. "While they were trying to discipline unruly kids and giving time outs, I was putting stars on copies of the creed and giving them to kids. I had a camp full of kids trying to be good because they wanted the stars."

But Mr. Goldenberg's association with Mr. Carnegie goes beyond that. He took the words of the creed, penned some additional lyrics and set them to music to create a theme song for the Herbert H. Carnegie Foundation.

And when Mr. Carnegie was awarded the Order of Canada, I See The Dream, a song from Mr. Goldenberg's musical Seven Of Us, was played in his honour at a gala after the award.

Mr. Goldenberg hopes his next move will be to New York, where he has applied for a post-graduate position at NYU in musical theatre.

"But the producer in me says I need some business training, so I might go for my MBA," he added.

Right now, however, Mr. Goldenberg's focus remains on this month's show, to which he is still making changes.

Not that he's worried. He has already produced five musicals and directed five others, so he knows the pressure and hectic pace of theatre.

"As a parent, I'm supposed to be a role model," said his father, Jeff. "Sometimes, it seems like the roles are reversed."