

**Musician of the Year****John Barnum brings wealth of experience to symphony**By **SHELLEY FISHER**

The orchestra becomes quiet as the conductor takes the podium. Then, with a wave of his baton, Mississauga's John Barnum begins translating the notes on his score into beautiful sounds, recreating the composer's work of art.

What appears effortless to the audience watching Barnum conduct the Mississauga Symphony Orchestra, in fact takes hours of rehearsal, patience, and, naturally, a sincere love of music.

In recognition of his dedication and talents, Barnum has been named 1984 Musician of the Year by the Mississauga Music Council.

Barnum says he is honored both to have served the community, and to have won the same award as jazz musician Oscar Peterson, who won it last year in its inaugural year.

Barnum's interest in music came at a very early age. His mother was a singer and pianist. His father, although not a musician himself, came from a musical background. He says he adopted his parents' character traits.

"My first love was the violin, but I

engaged in other facets of music such as voice and music education as well," he says.

It wasn't until after he graduated from the University of Toronto that he established a name for himself by winning the Heinz Unger Award. His conducting career started soon after graduation when he went to Quebec for the summer to take conducting lessons.

"There was a student orchestra, and the instructor asked me to take a rehearsal. Upon seeing how I handled myself, he was impressed and asked me to become the conductor," says Barnum.

Conductor Boris Brott also helped Barnum's career.

"I remember the night Boris was late for rehearsal, my peers called upon me to conduct. Boris was sitting in the audience and he saw me. He encouraged me, without having a strong drive to conduct, to go to Thunder Bay as an associate of his to be the resident conductor," he says.

Barnum is also well known throughout Europe. In France he worked with conductors Igor

Markevitch and Herbert Blomstedt. From there he went to Rome to work with Franco Ferrara, which led him to the position of assistant conductor of the Edmonton Symphony.

Today, Barnum leads just as busy a life. He still performs as a professional violinist with a chamber group known as Collage. He teaches at the University of Toronto and at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Mississauga. In addition, Barnum conducts the Orpheus Choir of Toronto and is director of ensembles at the Royal Conservatory of Music.

Barnum, now in his 13th year of conducting, says "With such a busy schedule, it's been hard on my family, but my wife Rochelle and two children, Julia and Alisdair, have been very supportive of my work.

Barnum, 36, originally from Guelph, Ont., has been serving the community since he moved to Mississauga six years ago, and says he receives a great deal of gratification when participating in community efforts.

An official presentation ceremony will be held at the end of April where he will receive his award.

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