

City man sings, dances on stage at Wonderland

By **CONNIE ROBILLARD**
Special to The News

Canada's Wonderland, just north of Toronto, is the country's national theme park. Here, live shows, food, rides and shops are thoughtfully blended into five magnificently landscaped areas. A lot of hard work goes into creating that special Canada's Wonderland magic, and the people responsible for that magic are the 2,600 young people from across the country who spend their summer working at the park.

One of these special people is Jim Foley of Mississauga. Jim, 20, is one of the outstanding dancers in the park's live show production, "Those Magnificent Movies."

The Westwood Secondary School graduate trained at Jeanette Foley Dance Studio, owned and operated by his older sister. A recent graduate of the Canadian College of Dance at Ryerson Theatre School, Jim was curious about working at Canada's Wonderland when he first heard about the auditions in 1981.

Jim tried out at the auditions, was hired for the park's premier season and is now back for a second year in "Those Magnificent Movies." The show celebrates the great music of the movies with 45 minutes of glitter and glamor. It features a cast of 20 singers and dancers, eight different scenes and 200 costumes.

"It's a great job," says Jim. "I'm doing what I want to do, making money and it's helping me in my career."

Height restrictions kept Jim from pursuing an interest in hockey. But

at nearly 5-foot-7, Jim proves through his dancing that good things come in small packages.

"There has to be a real style, a technique in dancing to please an audience. You have to dance your best for every show. There may be only one person in the audience who really knows a good dancer when he sees one, but I want to make sure that I'm doing my best when he sees the show."

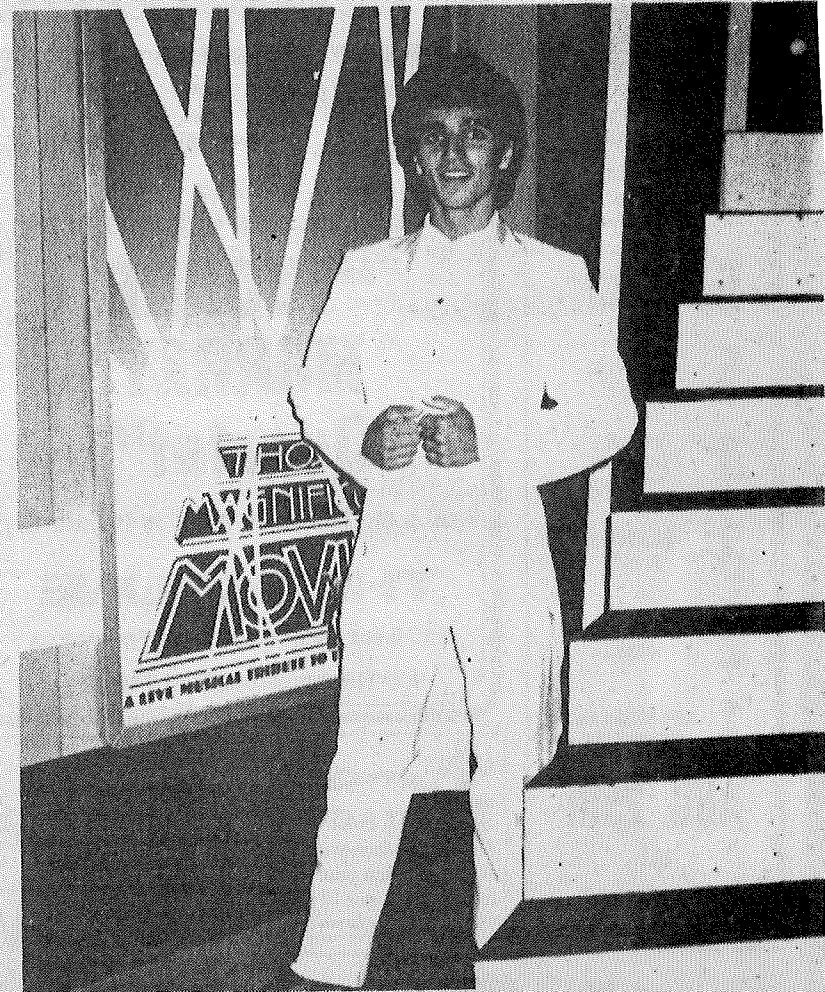
One aspect of performing in over 500 shows per season is the friends one makes over the summer.

"Last year after our 100th show the cast had a 'get-together' in the Maple Room (the park's VIP lounge). We must have sat around the piano singing for hours. Things like that really bring the cast members closer together."

Jim comes from a family of talented dancers. Of his three sisters, two own their own dance studios, and the third, Cassandra, also dances in "Those Magnificent Movies."

Philosophical about his future, Jim wants to take his career step by step. "I can't worry about getting to the top of the ladder yet, just the next step." Some of these "steps" involve getting into more television or joining a dance company such as the Alvin Ailey Dance Company. For later, teaching dance and choreography are possibilities.

But for now, Jim is thinking of the several hundred more performances he'll give to the guests at Canada's Wonderland this summer.



Mississauga's Jim Foley, 20, intends to make a career on the stage, and he's finding his experience as a singer and dancer at Canada's Wonderland is invaluable. He says he likes the show's Fame number, although he's not so keen on the Science-Fiction number.

Paul Biog. Blr

August 18, 1983 mJ

Foley, Jim