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COURTESY, GERRY M. BATES

CPO bassoonist Michael Hope, left, is the Native Calgarian Society's latest Distinguished Calgarian. With Hope are President June Peddie, centre, and vice president Lynne Rach.

CPO musician draws honour

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Bassoonist Michael Hope of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra is now a "Distinguished Calgarian" thanks to the Native Calgarian Society.

The award honours individuals who, though not born here, have joined enthusiastically into the life of the community. CTV News Anchor Darrel Janz received the award in 2008.

According to president June Peddie, the NCS board selected Hope for touching the hearts of Calgarians through music. "Michael is a Calgarian in spirit," says Peddie. "All his volunteer involvement in the community--especially at Agape Hospice--reflects a love of the city and its people. He is Calgarian to the core."

Although Hope is Toronto-born, he has been with the CPO for 28 years. Not only is he an accomplished musician but he is equally comfortable as a singer--using his baritone voice to belt out Cole Porter originals or "bringing home" the touching music and lyrics of Andrew Lloyd Webber. He has served on the CPO board and is credited with putting a more human face on the Philharmonic by co-ordinating pre-and post-concert chats with Calgary audiences.

Hope's latest CD, "Amazing Grace," received the 2009 Covenant award nomination for Classical/ Traditional Album of the Year.

The society was formed in 1975 during Calgary's Centennial--the brainchild of Nonie Zelman Foster. The city's population was just over 450,000 and, even then, it was rare to run into a native-born Calgarian. Today, anyone born in the city and over the age of 18 is welcome to join.

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