

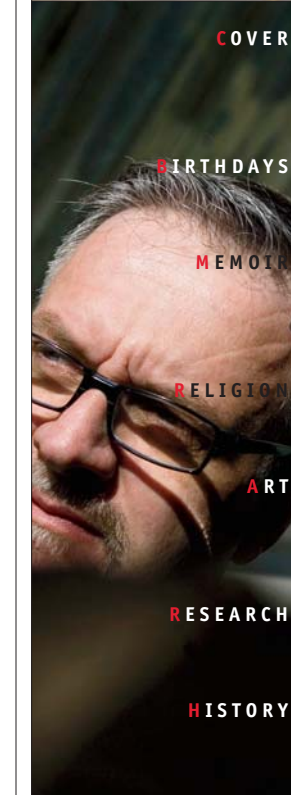
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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: KC ARMSTRONG

YORKU

THE MAGAZINE OF YORK UNIVERSITY



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OCTOBER 2008

YORK PEOPLE

Roger Pulwarty

Climate scientist

Nobel Cause

AS A MEMBER OF THE 2007 NOBEL Peace Prize-winning Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, Roger Pulwarty (BSc Spec. Hons. '86) is York's first alumnus to become a Nobel laureate. It's a recognition he shares with hundreds of others on the panel, where he was a high-ranking lead author, and with former US vice-president and environmental advocate Al Gore, who was named co-winner of the prize. Since the release of the panel's report – which finally pushed world opinion on climate change beyond the denial stage – Pulwarty, a climate scientist for the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and director of the National Integrated Drought Information System in Boulder, Colo., has given testimony before the US Congress and flown all over the world responding to the rapidly growing appetite for cold, hard facts on climate change and its impact.

His latest project is helping to establish a US National Climate Service – an information service to support decision-making in response to climate variability and change – that will publish authoritative information on global and regional trends and on adaptation measures. The data will be used by planners to understand, predict and manage the impact of global warming for groups as diverse as farmers, salmon fishers and ski resort owners, and, most critically, for countries with shared water resources, such as Canada and the US. "It's like a weather service but longer-term," Pulwarty says. "Instead of 'should I take my umbrella today', it's more like 'will there be snow to ski on in 10 years'." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL HIRSH

Mark Lalama

Musician, producer

Idol's Piano Man

AS GIGS GO, being the pianist for "Canadian Idol" is a pretty good one. Just ask Mark Lalama (BFA '87), who entered his sixth season with the top-rated CTV reality show this past summer. Performing and working with the young Idol singers keeps the singer/songwriter's creative instincts fresh and provides a break from writing, producing and recording music for other artists, as well as for film and television. "I need the balance of both," he says. "If I do too much of one, I miss the other."

During the show's intense three-month production season, Lalama leaves his home and five-suite recording studio in Fenwick, Ont., just outside his native Welland, to live in Toronto. He and vocal coach Debra Byrd spend an hour with each contestant, helping them "connect" with their chosen song, and Lalama also plays in the Idol house band. In the off-season, he plays with his own world/folk/jazz band Accordion Crimes. He says he enjoyed the "great environment" in the Music Department of York's Faculty of Fine Arts, where he won an Oscar Peterson bursary. He also remembers cutting class on occasion so he could rush downtown for a recording session. With the Idol season just concluded, Lalama will head back to the studio to get rebalanced, writing and recording with some of Canada's top talent. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK