

Wake Forest

M A G A Z I N E

Song without end

Fund honors memory of late aspiring musician



CHRISTIAN Cappelluti's voice may have been silenced, but his love of music will live on through a new scholarship in his memory.

Cappelluti ('97) returned to his native Italy after graduation with dreams of becoming a pop musician and songwriter, but he died suddenly last summer from what doctors suspect was a simple case of food poisoning that quickly worsened.

"Christian was a remarkable young man," said President Thomas K. Hearn Jr., who met Cappelluti just before his graduation. "He came by to tell me how wonderful his experience at Wake Forest had been, and how committed he was to give back so that future students could have a similar experience.

"[My wife] Laura and I met his parents in Rome last fall, and now understand better the special personality of this beloved son. This



scholarship fulfills a part of Christian's dream."

By the time he arrived at Wake Forest in the fall of 1994—following the suggestion of a cousin who lived in North Carolina—Cappelluti had already enjoyed some success as a songwriter, guitarist, and back-up vocalist for an Italian band. He had also written a song for one of Italy's most popular female singers that became a hit, and that led radio stations to play another one of his songs which he had recorded himself.

"He was a really special person, terribly thoughtful, and very dedicated to music," said Associate Professor of Music Peter Kairoff. "I've never seen anyone at his age with that much focus."

Although Cappelluti majored in business, he spent countless hours developing his compositional skills on the piano in Kairoff's office and practicing in the basement practice rooms in the Scales



Fine Arts Center. Their mutual love of music and Kairoff's Italian connections—he's director of the University's Venice program—made for a quick friendship. Cappelluti graduated in three years and returned to Italy, but he planned to move to Los Angeles to pursue some promising leads in the music industry, Kairoff said.

"There's no question he would have made a significant mark," said Kairoff, who still keeps up with the Cappellutis through frequent phone calls. "His music was well-crafted and more creative than many pop singers, and he had an especially keen ear for harmony. He had the talent, drive, and resources to make it happen." **W**