

FORT SASKATCHEWAN MUSIC FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION HISTORY TO 1995

In 1958 the Glee Club, a community chorus, started Music Achievement Days with a bank balance of \$5.45. The first adjudicators were David Peterkins and G.K. Grien. Madeline Lamoureux, the first President; along with Gwen Montgomery and Irene Pawlikowsky were the driving force behind the formation of the Fort Saskatchewan Music Festival Association (FSMFA) in 1959. (The Association was incorporated as a society on November 14, 1973.) To commemorate and recognize their contribution, awards are presented each year at the Final Concert in their names. The initial focus of Music Achievement Days was to provide a focus for the children, an opportunity to perform what they were learning, and to show off to the public. Prior to the first Music Achievement Days students wishing to compete drove to Edmonton.

The first year, 150 participants were adjudicated by University of Alberta staff who provided their services for free. In 1995 there were 400 entries (1507 participants) in four categories (Piano; Vocal and Choral; Speech Arts; and Instrumental) evaluated by four Edmonton area (to save money) adjudicators during the week long Music Achievement Days. Sherritt was the first corporate donor and local churches provided space for the performances. Today, the festival enjoys tremendous support from numerous local businesses, and the local churches and schools continue to provide space for sessions (for a fee or honorarium, of course). In 1967 the entry fee was \$0.50; in 1995 entry fees start at \$6.00.

The first Music Achievement Days, showcasing piano and vocal, was a success so it continued. In 1960 the Association affiliated with the Alberta Music Festival Association. They almost didn't join because of the possibility of losing the Local Syllabus - but it's still around 37 years later!

When Music Achievement Days celebrated their 10th anniversary (still just piano and vocal), Dr. Walter Buck, MLA was an honoured guest. Today, his wife, Laura Marie, chairs the Vocal and Choral section of the Festival. Speech Arts were added in 1975 and Bands and Instrumental classes joined within the last ten years. JoAnne Crook, who played clarinet, performed at the Provincial level and went on to play with the Toronto Symphony. Her mother, Helen Crook, volunteered numerous hours with the Festival until her death. An award is presented in her name yearly. Gwen Montgomery worked tirelessly until 1990 in many capacities including President and Piano Chair. She still comes to listen to performers!

The Festival always showcases a selection of the talent at a Final Concert. Awards are also announced at the Final Concert - there are 25 awards, most donated by local businesses, presented in four categories. In previous years, several contestants would play at Dr. Turner Lodge and Rivercrest Nursing Home the week after the Festival.

Presently, Music Achievement Days is limited to residents of Fort Saskatchewan, students attending school in Fort Saskatchewan or those taking music lessons in the City which amounts to almost 14,000 people. Plans are in the works to expand to adjacent counties not already served by a Festival.

The FSMFA is awaiting the construction of a multi-purpose facility in the City. This means that the majority of the Festival could be held at one venue rather than throughout the City. The Association will be actively raising money for this building.

1995 Scholarships

Vocal and Choral

Solos, Provincial Syllabus (P)
Duets, Trios and Groups
Movie/T.V. and Contemporary Ballad
Musical Theatre (P)
Folk Songs, Sacred Composers
Classroom Choral, Provincial Syllabus (T)
Classroom Choral, Local Syllabus (T)

Piano

Preparatory (T)
Junior Piano (P)
Senior Piano (P)
Popular and Jazz
Provincial Syllabus (P)
Duet and Family Class

Instrumental

Woodwind Solo, Provincial Syllabus
Brass and Percussion Solo, Provincial Syllabus
Woodwind & Brass Ensemble, Provincial Syllabus (P)
~~Woodwind Ensemble, Local Syllabus~~
Mixed Woodwind & Brass Ensemble, ~~Brass Ensemble~~, Local Syllabus
Concert and Stage Bands (T)

Speech Arts

All Solos, except Biblical
Biblical Solo
Dramatic Improvisation, Group Scenes, Duologue, Storytelling
Choral Speech (T)