



Saskatoon Music Festival

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Our Executive Director, Darren Schwartz, passed away suddenly in January. Read some favorite memories and tributes to him starting on page 15.



Contents

Advertisement

Page 3 – Long & McQuande

2018 Festival Dates, Venues, Admission, Programs

Page 3

Festival Participant Feature

Page 4 – Chelsey White – For the Love of Singing and Self-Improvement

Teacher and Committee Member Feature

Page 5 – Michelle Rivers – The Joy of Being Part of a Learner’s Journey

President and Editor Messages

Page 6 – Doug McCosh, Jane L. Smith

Advertisement

Page 7 – Music for the Gut 8

The Festival Demythed – Part 5 – Festival Helpers & Social Convenor

Page 8 – Sylvia Acton – Festival Helper Chair & Social Secretary Committee Member- Warmth and Welcome through the Personal Touch

Page 9 – Betty Brennan – Door Stewart - Decades of Smiling Welcomes

Page 10 – Martha Pankratz – Door Stewart – Decades of Music Community Support

Blast from the Past

Page 12 – Rosemary Scherman - Dedicated, Hands-On Team Leadership, especially needed when the lights went out at the main festival

Supporter Feature

Page 13 – University of Saskatchewan - 100 years of recognizing the educational and artistic importance of the Music Festival

Page 14 – Garry Gable - University of Saskatchewan liaison with the Saskatoon Music Festival

Page 15 – Our other wonderful supporters – their logos

Advertisement

Page 16 – Saskatoon Children’s Choir

Tributes to Darren Schwartz, our recently deceased Executive Director

Page 17 – Festival Committee Tribute - The Heart and Soul of the Saskatoon Music Festival

Page 20 – Evan Burr - Darren’s fostering of caring relationships influences former student’s future career

Page 21 – Darcie Gravel - Darren’s extra caring brings a child back to the festival

Page 22 – Stefanie Stefanson-Pexa – Darren’s caring of inner-city music students

Page 22 – Katherine Meginbir - A child honors Darren’s legacy by donating her own concert proceeds to his memorial scholarship

Page 23 – Martha Pankratz Story – Going above and beyond

Page 23 – Jane L. Smith - The Dog Collar Story

Page 23 – Doug McCosh - The Tie Story

Page 24 – Peter Poorman – “The music was his passion, and it’s how he will live on through us.”

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2018 Saskatoon Music Festival Dates, Venues, and Admission

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Chelsey never says no to a song – evidence of her can-do, always improve attitude. They will work on a song phrase by phrase, word by word. How long and how they work on a song depends again on the goal. Is the song for improving technique for example or to be performed? All songs are memorized which came in handy during a trip to Europe.

Chelsey learned this “cool” Italian song about a beach in Nice. During her Europe trip, Chelsey happened to be on a beach in Nice, so, she sang the song on the beach and had it videotaped. Now that would be a special memory!

Her favorite festival piece is “I walked today where Jesus walked”. She worked really hard preparing the song but was still nervous before the performance. She said a prayer telling the Lord that this song was for Him and asked for His help. It was the first song she had ever performed during which she didn’t swallow in inappropriate places in the song. The performance was made even better by her mother and grandmother’s presence.

Chelsey is very humble and shy and no one at her school knew she could sing. One year she gathered up her courage to ask her school teacher if she could sing “O Danny Boy” at the school Remembrance Day ceremony. Her teacher listened to her sing and was “wowed”. After her performance at the ceremony, Chelsey received lots of compliments. Chelsey felt proud of overcoming her nervousness and of her performance.

Chelsey’s warm personality, hard work, and talent led to something very special this past summer. Her voice teacher, Michelle Rivers, asked Chelsey and another of her students, Jaden Abrook, to sing at her wedding. As Michelle’s sisters walked up the aisle, Michelle listened to Chelsey and Jaden sing “Sous le dôme épais” from Lakmé. I am not sure whose smile was bigger, Michelle’s or Chelsey’s, as they told me this story.

Chelsey’s enthusiasm throughout our interview was contagious.

Although Chelsey doesn’t “care if I am first” at the festival, she still enjoys the competitive nature of the festival because “it pushes you more” and helps you learn more ways to improve your voice. Chelsey just wants to feel good about herself and her performance. Lessons we should all take to heart.

Voice Teacher – Michelle Rivers
The joy of being part of a learner’s
journey

Written by Jane L. Smith as told by Michelle Rivers

The smile never left Michelle’s face, as she sat with Chelsey and I during our interview. The pride and joy Michelle felt for this student was evidenced by Michelle’s description of Chelsey’s warm personality, hard work, progress, and talent. Not to mention having Chelsey and another student sing at her wedding!

Michelle has other students now studying under Garry Gable (see article later in this newsletter) at



University of Saskatchewan. Garry's first year of teaching at UofS was Michelle's first year as a student at UofS. Michelle went on to complete her Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance.

She reminds me that when singing, there is no physical instrument to manipulate. The singer is the instrument. A singer can't hide behind an instrument. The singer is vulnerable.



Michelle adds that there is "something about being able to pull things out of yourself – funny, beautiful, sad. It makes you feel so alive".

Michelle has volunteered with the festival for around twenty years. Two of her festival jobs are adjudicator chauffeur and Convocation Hall runner. These involve an honorarium. Every day of the general festival, she drives the adjudicators to and from the festival venues and other places if so requested. She also arrives early morning at Convocation Hall (the festival venue for level 1 piano) at UofS with the big box of adjudicator sheets, performer certificates and water. She then waits for the door stewards (see articles later in this newsletter) to arrive. First drop off is usually at 7:30 am and last drop off is usually around 10:30 p.m. That makes for a very long general festival week.

She has been the liaison between the festival and the SRMTA (Saskatoon Registered Music Teachers Association) for the last four years. Michelle has "really loved it". Being a self-proclaimed introvert, the liaison position has provided the impetus to be more actively involved with the SRMTA and the festival committee. Every year she brings valuable insights to the festival committee from her fellow music teachers about any festival concerns and successes and feedback about adjudicators. And she also brings our committee requests, questions, concerns, and thank yous to the SRMTA.

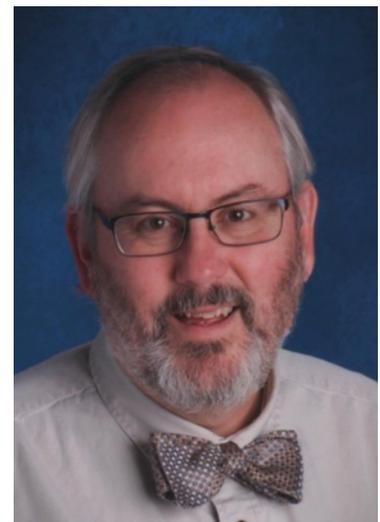
She is committed to encouraging her students to perform at the festival. It gives them a chance to "perfect a song and to learn to be a gracious winner and loser".

Many thanks Michelle for your dedicated teaching and festival work that inspires a love of music.

President's Message – Doug McCosh

My first message is a difficult one as we all mourn the passing of our Executive Director, Darren Schwartz. Darren's heart and soul went into his work for the Music Festival and it showed in the meticulous way he did his job. We are most grateful to him for leaving us all his wonderful notes on how to run the Festival.

As we met shortly after hearing of Darren's passing, I was heartened by the committee members' resolve to continue on, most especially to honour Darren but also for the thousands of music students who benefit from the performance experience in the Festival.



Committee members, current and past and volunteers from the Saskatoon music community have stepped up to help do the work of the Festival. We are most grateful for their commitment and generous giving of their time. We are confident that we will stage an excellent 2018 Festival and we ask for patience from the participants if things don't go as smoothly as they have in the past.

I have heard many times over the past few weeks, "The Show Must Go On!" and indeed it will. Darren and music wouldn't have it any other way.

Editor's Note - Jane L. Smith

I always find it an honour to read the stories submitted for publication in the newsletter. Being able to interview and write about so many wonderful people in our local music community is humbling. I hope our Saskatoon Music Festival Newsletter lets a broad audience hear about all the incredible dedication and talent we have in our Saskatoon music community.



I am privileged to have been asked to write our committee tribute to our Executive Director, Darren Schwartz, who passed away in January. I am most thankful to all those who contributed their memories to be included as well. I hope the articles on the last pages demonstrate the depth of Darren's skills and leadership and the warmth of his character and give adequate tribute to an incredible man who left us far too soon.

Thursday, August 23 — TCU Place

Music for the Gut 8

Jordie Hughton — Artistic Director

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*Festival Helpers &
Social Convening
Warmth and welcome through the personal touch*

Written by Jane L. Smith
as told by Sylvia Acton,
Committee Member, Festival Helper Chair & Social Secretary

Sylvia Acton's enthusiasm, warmth, energy, and welcome were contagious as she told her story of journeying with the festival over the last 30 some years.

Her journey began with a request by her daughter's piano teacher, Sheila Shinkewski, to help out with the festival. Apparently, there was no saying no to Sheila. In the 80s, there were no computers programs for entries or accepting payments. Everything was very labor intensive. She helped out with everything asked of her and even spent time on the executive of the festival as Vice-President and President. Today, she is the Saskatoon Music Festival's Social Secretary and Festival Helper Chair. After hearing of all the personal and loving touches she adds to our festival and the number of years most of her helpers have volunteered, I wanted to be under her care.

The caring touch, administration skills, and eye for detail she brings to the festival as a volunteer were long evident in her work over 16 ½ years as the nursing coordinator and palliative care manager and coordinator of an independent nursing practice called Nightingale Nursing Group. She even was experienced in responding to changing and expanding needs as she helped expand the RN and LPN care to include personal care aids and home helpers. All very valuable skills on our festival committee.

As the Festival Helper Chair, Sylvia has witnessed many changes. It is her job to see that someone is at the doors of the festival venues to collect admission fees and sell programs. Remember if you include all parts of the festival, it runs pretty much over a whole month in about five venues and some with more than one door. At the beginning, she needed volunteers for bands, musical theater, and the main festival. Someone else was in charge of Heart of the City and school festivals. Today, we have a 5-year contract with the Cathedral of the Holy Family who provide all the volunteers for the band festival as well as host it. Kiwanis now takes care of volunteers at the musical theatre festival. The Rotary Club of Saskatoon Meewasin has also promised volunteers. Sylvia is most grateful for this help since two income families are very common today and getting volunteers during the day is challenging. It seems however that once you volunteer for Sylvia you never want to leave. She has one volunteer whose calls her within hours of her yearly return from China. Now that's dedication. Many others have been



volunteering for her for decades. You will meet two of them in the following articles. Many of her volunteers are getting on in years so the personal phone calls she makes both before and after the festival gives them the support and appreciation to continue giving their time to the festival. Sylvia says her volunteers are all “very dedicated, reliable, and keenly interested in the festival”. She adds that what they “love the most is the children and their enthusiasm”. Sylvia prides herself in her “lovely relationship with these people”.

She took on the job of Social Secretary before accepting being the Festival Helper Chair. In this capacity, she provides a welcome gift and a personal note to all our adjudicators each year. Sylvia reads the adjudicator bios and always makes some personal connection in their notes. The gift varies depending on the length of stay of the adjudicator. A one day stay means a small box of chocolates. If the stay is with family or friends, then flowers are given. If the stay is at a hotel and longer than a day the adjudicator receives either a small, medium or large sized basket. You might decide you want to be an adjudicator for the longest stay when you hear what goes into that large basket – juice boxes, cheese & cracker packages, individually wrapped chocolates, fresh fruit, mini cups of fruit, yogurt or pudding cups, various types of granola, small Kleenex packages. Sylvia shops around for the best deals and is always conscious of the limited budget of the festival.

On Kinsmen Competition night, she dresses the adjudicator room table with her own lace tablecloth and china and adorns the table with flowers, candles, and small dessert delights. Now that has to make the tough adjudicating decisions that night easier. Now I know why maybe they take so long!!!

Sylvia is also in charge of writing notes to anyone and for anything the committee thinks appropriate. If anyone that is connected to the festival is ill or bereaved or celebrating something special, it is Sylvia that picks up and delivers a rose or small flower arrangement and writes and delivers a note. She also visits with the person if invited in. Sylvia has developed a “nice relationship” with Carriage House Florist. They are a community oriented business who are always fair and generous with the festival.

Sylvia has a heart as big as the world and the ability to warm anyone else’s heart. Combine that with her administrative and writing skills and she is a very valuable member of our Saskatoon Music Festival Committee. Many thanks Sylvia.

The Festival Demythed
Festival Helpers

Door Steward Betty Brennan

Decades of smiling welcomes

Written by Jane L. Smith as told by Betty Brennan

Twenty-five years or so ago, Gladys Wright asked Betty and her sister Margaret to volunteer for the Saskatoon Music Festival. They just couldn’t say no to Gladys. It didn’t hurt either that there was another connection to the festival. Marilyn Whitehead’s (another long-time SMF amazing volunteer- see Newsletter Vol. 1 No. 2 at saskatoonmusicfestival.com) mother

was a good friend of Betty's family. Although Margaret is no longer able to volunteer due to health reasons, Betty continues to volunteer.



Betty has always greeted people at a main door of the festival and collected admission fees and sold programs or directed people to the office to pick up prepaid programs. A door steward shift is usually for three or four hours. She does as many shifts as needed. Her background in an accounting department of an insurance company made collecting admission fees easy but her greatest asset is her smile and warm personality. The nerves of many performers I am sure were eased as Betty's face lit up as she greeted them. The wonderful help of herself and her sister Margaret were recognized in 2015 with SMF volunteer of the year awards.

Her most challenging moment was when one woman didn't see why there was an admission fee. She was very upset and didn't want to pay. Betty patiently explained about the costs involved in running the festival and eventually the woman paid.

Betty noted that this was the only time in her over twenty-five years of volunteering that this happened.

Volunteering is a joy for Betty. She says her festival helper chair, Sylvia Acton, is "wonderful" to work with, "always so happy, agreeable and willing to accommodate everyone." Betty enjoys talking with Sylvia. Sylvia's personal warm touch at work.

Betty's favorite memory is seeing the happiness on the children's faces as they come out of their competition room with their certificates.

She says, "I am so glad to be able to help." We say thank you Betty from the bottom of our hearts.

The Festival Demythed
Festival Helpers
Door Steward Martha Pankratz
Decades of music community support

Written by Jane L. Smith as told by Martha Pankratz

Music has always been an integral part of Martha's life from singing to herself when all is quiet in her household to being a lifelong choir member at her church until just recently. Martha has no children of her own so when the daughter, Kerry, of a close friend, Maureen DuWors, began her festival journey, Martha jumped aboard to support the daughter and the festival. Maureen would also become a long time dedicated volunteer with the festival. Martha had known Sylvia Acton, our Festival Helper Chair, for a long time and asked how she could help. A

love of music, a friend's daughter, another long-time friend, all fit together to begin a decades long commitment to volunteering at the festival as a door steward.

Over the decades she has watched and supported Kerry through her Saskatoon Music Festival step in her journey to becoming an accomplished, awarded violinist who has performed internationally.

Martha, in fact, enjoys supporting all the children who pass by her "door". One of her favorite memories is meeting and talking with the children and often seeing them all dressed up. She has gotten to know some people who come as regularly to the festival as she does. Her many years of volunteering have meant she has had the privilege of watching many children grow up.

Working in the office at St. Andrews College before retiring, certainly makes the door steward job easy. In addition, her world travels would add depth and sparkle to any conversation.

Martha's biggest challenges as a door steward are not being able to hear the children perform and having to sit for long periods when there is no one passing by her "door".

There is another very strong connection to the festival. Martha sang in the choir at the church where Darren Schwartz (our beloved, recently passed away executive director) played the organ. She took advantage of every opportunity to tell Darren how much she appreciated his playing. Not many people take the time to express appreciation. A friendship developed. When Darren became the office administrator at another church, Martha mentioned that she would miss him. He suggested that she join the staff and volunteers on Fridays when they would meet for a coffee and a social time. This weekly event continued until his recent sudden death. Their chat over coffee and hug at the end of the chat were a highlight of Martha's week. Martha enjoyed going to Darren's 50th birthday party and was even the subject of one of his trivia birthday game questions.

Martha is not only a decades long dedicated volunteer with the Saskatoon Music Festival. She has also volunteered for thirty years with the Symphony Book and Music Sale. She is in charge of cookbooks. So, if you ever need a deal on a good cookbook, see Martha at the annual April sale and the November "reduce inventory" sale.

Getting to be a part of another community in Saskatoon and seeing the young people are reasons Martha keeps volunteering with the Saskatoon Music Festival. Most of all, she says, "I don't find it like a job. I am just doing it because I enjoy doing it." We say a huge thank you and hope you continue enjoying it for a lot longer.



Blast from the Past
Rosemary Scherman
Dedicated, Hands On Team Leadership
especially needed when the lights went out at the main festival
Written by Jane L. Smith as told by Rosemary Scherman



Rosemary started with the Saskatoon Music Festival committee in 1995 and shadowed Janet McGonigle for a year before assuming the position of Secretary. This position was like our present Executive Director position. As such, she received a small honorarium. As Secretary, Rosemary was responsible for handling all details of the festival.

Her first years as Secretary, Rosemary, was a substitute teacher. This allowed her some flexibility and the organizational, leadership, and people skills required of a teacher served her well in her role as Secretary. Her last 5 or 6 years proved much more challenging as she was teaching full-time in an inner-city school. Many days she would open the festival for morning sessions, get to school a little late, teach all day, go back to the festival, and get to bed at midnight. Now that's dedication.

Music was in fact an important part of both her personal and professional life. Her four children all took music lessons and participated in the festival.

Her belief in the life and skill lessons learned by preparing for and performing at the festival led her to have the Heart of the City program put into the inner-city school where she taught. Music teachers volunteer to teach children who would otherwise not be able to have music lessons. Rosemary spent countless hours supporting students practise at her school. These students loved going to the Heart of the City portion of the Saskatoon Music Festival and Rosemary had them perform at their school Christmas concert. She watched them grow in confidence and pride as they learned and performed their music and developed a stage presence.

Rosemary speaks very highly of the festival committee she worked for. She described the committee as “amazing” and the people on it, “phenomenal”. “Everyone did their job and did it well.” The committee members were cohesive and worked well together. They were a real team. This was never more evident than the year the lights went out one day during the main festival just before lunch.

One committee member “hit the stores.” She bought flashlights and duct tape. They found poles on which to tape the flashlights. The Quance Theatre had an ambiance like never before, yet the performers could see the keys and their music, and the adjudicators could work. Believe it or not, it was perfect timing when the lights eventually came on. Everyone in that

particular class had performed. So, all had equal light. And they had a flashlight sale at the festival that year!

Rosemary's favorite memories are her real enjoyment of the people she worked with and the friendships she developed and still maintains.

The current Saskatoon Music Festival committee members continue to speak warmly and highly of Rosemary Scherman. Many thanks Rosemary for twelve years of dedicated inspiring work.

*University of Saskatchewan
100 years of recognizing
the educational and artistic importance
of the Music Festival*

Written by Jane L. Smith
as told by Dr. Garry Gable,

Associate Professor, Department of Music, UofS and

UofS liaison with the SMF



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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In 1908, the Saskatchewan Music Festival Association (SMFA) was formed. The first festival was held in 1909. Dr. Walter Murray, the first President of the University of

Saskatchewan, was a keen supporter. He was an early President of the SMFA and the university provided office space and a car to the SMFA secretary as well as administering the first government grant to the SMFA. University of Saskatchewan support for festivals has now spanned 100 years. Presently, a teacher from the Registered Music Teachers Association sits on the Senate of the University and the Music Department hosts the main part of the Saskatoon Music festival.

The Department of Music has in fact been host to our main part of the Saskatoon Music Festival since 1983. This was made possible through the "incredible, tireless support" of Dr. David Kaplan, the Department's founder and head, and his successor, Dr. Dwayne Nelson. We have access to several rooms, the Quance Theater, Convocation Hall and pianos for a week. "Through this partnership we are able to facilitate a broad range of competitive disciplines, from piano through to percussion, with ample space and support. Many other Saskatchewan Festivals cannot offer a similar array of genres". (Source – A Tribute to the University of Saskatchewan. 2016 Saskatoon Music Festival program)

Throughout the years, many University representatives have served as executive officers and members of the SMFA. Dr. Gable has been the UofS liaison for approximately a decade. He says the biggest challenge is scheduling. The festival must not interfere with Music Department exams, intersession, or other events and the rooms are booked centrally. Fortunately, the SMFA can be flexible with their dates.

Performing at the festival is often a student's first exposure to the University and its Department of Music. This wonderful performance space and instruments enrich the learning and experience of our performers. Many have gone on to study music, often at UofS, and some even develop music careers. Supporting the festival for the Department of Music is a means to reflect support for the community and to recruit students.

We are profoundly grateful to the support of University of Saskatchewan and its Department of Music. It is also vital to the success of our Saskatoon Music Festival.

Dr. Garry Gable
University of Saskatchewan liaison with the Saskatoon Music Festival

Written by Jane L. Smith

As told by Dr. Garry Gable, Associate Professor,
Department of Music, University of Saskatchewan

Garry has achieved international success in professional vocal circles yet his first festival experience was not encouraging. It was at a time when adjudicators were usually only supportive of the best performers. They sure didn't get it right with Garry. He was told he should never sing!!! Thank goodness he continued to pursue his dream. Also thank goodness our adjudicators



of today are all about encouragement and ideas to improve performance. Every time Garry performs he sends a "salute" to his first adjudicator!

He was in Grade 5 or 6 for that first festival appearance. He persevered to be the lead in school musicals. Garry went on to study music. He received his Bachelor, then his Masters and then his Doctorate. His first professional performance was at the Charlottetown Festival held in Prince Edward Island. He has since performed in China, USA, and Europe and of course here in Canada. He is an Associate Professor of voice in the Department of Music of University of Saskatchewan.

"Garry possesses a rich bass-baritone singing voice capable of a wide range of styles and in as many as 15 languages, from opera to Broadway and including a bit of jazz. He is also known for his versatile speaking instrument – and has ventured even into character voices and cartoon voices. On the stage, Garry is recognized for the strength of his characterizations from comic to dramatic roles." (Source -UofS, College of Arts & Science, Our People)

Garry's students have won local and national competitions and have gained success as performers.

He considers the festival an opportunity to unite and bond as a family. His favorite festival moment is when his daughter used him as a prop in her musical theatre performance. She sang "Gee I'm glad I'm no one else but me" from the musical Anne of Green Gables to Matthew, played by her father, Garry.

Garry considers music especially important to our culture at this moment in time. Music “soothes” us and provides both an “aggressive and passive means of self-expression.”

He considers the festival “not a means for developing stars” but rather about “developing the individual to witness themselves and develop”. Everyone “wins by just putting themselves out there”.

Many thanks Garry for your continued support of our Saskatoon Music Festival.

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So many thanks*



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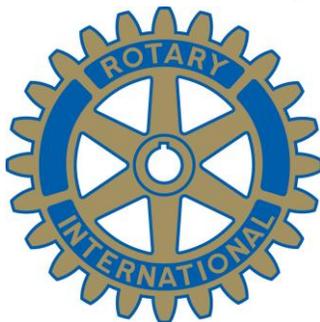
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Tributes to Darren Schwartz
Our recently deceased Executive Director



December 21, 1967 – January 21, 2018

The Heart and Soul of the Saskatoon Music Festival

Written and put together by Jane L. Smith

as told by

Darren himself, various committee members, members of the community, and his family

“The festival committee is reeling with the magnitude of our loss in terms of Darren as our friend, mentor, and colleague. When our committee met shortly after his death we began to determine what we needed to do and the phrase “Well Darren did that” was frequently spoken throughout the evening.” (Sylvia Acton). He had brought tremendous musical and organizational skills to the job. Add in his caring and people skills and he truly was the heart and soul of the Saskatoon Music Festival.

Darren had his Grade 8 in pipe organ and considered performing at the festival an important part of his training. “It does teach you to properly prepare for something... You just learn to take it to the next level.” (Darren). Darren performed throughout his adult life with the band Studio 54 and at events like the gala evening of the Festival of Trees. “He was also dedicated to music ministry throughout Saskatoon. He played the organ in the worship band for many years at Grosvenor Park United Church. He subbed in churches in Saskatoon as an organist.” (obituary)

One performance highlight for Darren was playing the organ for the first Canada Russia hockey game held at SaskTel Centre (then called Saskatchewan Place) in February 1988.

He not only performed. He taught as well in his own store and teaching studio, Darren's Music Place. He opened the store at 19 years of age! In Darren's words, "It was a teaching studio and it was what I loved." This love of teaching inspired his students. One of his former students says, "I attribute many of my instincts working with young people in my career as a classroom teacher to the fine example that Darren set for me. ... Darren was so warm and kind." The store sold pianos, digital pianos, organs, sheet music and giftware. Darren continued his relationship with the festival by having his store sponsor the second prize in the Kinsmen Competition. He also joined the festival committee in 1998 as a member at large. Twenty-five years later, people were downloading their music from the internet and the landlord tripled the rent. So, Darren decided to close the store.

The skills earned performing and running his store would serve him well in his new career paths. He worked as an office administrator at Grosvenor Park and then McClure United Church. He also worked with the Saskatoon Suzuki Strings. Wanting to further maintain his contacts in the music community, Darren became even more active in the Saskatoon Music Festival. He committed to the eight-year cycle of Second Vice-President, first Vice-President, President, and Past President. He didn't stop then. He was Publicity and Patrons chair for many years. Darren increased the number of scholarships he offered. During my interview with him a year ago, it was his wish that "past participants in our festival will recognize the valuable life and music skills gained through performing with us and decide to once again participate as either a volunteer or financially through sponsorship, donation or advertising". So, it is particularly fitting that his family decided to suggest donating to a Darren Schwartz memorial scholarship for the festival for which he dedicated so many hours of love and toil. Darren's life was enriched and supported by the love of his life, Peter Poorman, who very sadly passed away shortly after Darren's passing. It is also the wish of Peter's family to suggest donating to the Darren Schwartz memorial scholarship. Donations can be made by sending a cheque, made out to the Saskatoon Music Festival with a note that it is intended for the Darren Schwartz scholarship, or drop money off to our President, Doug McCosh, at 75 Leddy Crescent, Saskatoon, S7H 3Y9.



In 2012, a decision was made by the executive of the festival to ensure the longevity and consistency of the festival. Darren was contracted as our Executive Director. He passed away in his twentieth year on the Saskatoon Festival Committee.

As the committee struggles with his death and continuing the festival to his high level of efficiency and quality, we were not surprised but so relieved to find his detailed notes. He had lists for just about everything, thank goodness! And his binder of notes is so well organized. Thank you, Darren!

It is not his exceptional organizational and leadership skills that will be the most missed however. It is his caring and dedication to helping all who asked and many he reached out to. Don't just take my word for it. A parent writes, "That certificate in the mail from Darren, along with that letter, was exactly what Nicolas needed to get back into participating in the festival. ... Nicolas was in awe, and shocked and had the look of pure joy. ... Upon seeing his certificate, he very quickly asked for me to put it up on his wall." A teacher writes, "My favorite memory of Darren Schwartz is the warmth and generosity he always demonstrated when he hosted the Heart of the City Piano portion of the Saskatoon Music Festival at McClure United Church." An elderly woman who frequently praised Darren's playing at church became a friend. Their weekly coffee and hug were the highlight of her week. Darren went above and beyond.

As his partner put it – "The music was his passion, and it's how he will live on through us." His obituary quoted Irving Berlin "The song is ended, but the melody lingers on..."

We, the Saskatoon Music Festival committee, are so thankful to have known Darren and to have had the opportunity to work with him to enrich the lives of young people of our community through music. Darren's endless dedication, skill, and caring have made our city a much better place.

The Celebration of the Life of Darren Schwartz bulletin quoted a poem by Michael Josephson. It is so relevant to Darren's life, I reprint it here to close. May we all live its lessons. At his funeral, an overflow room was needed to accommodate all those wishing to pay respects which certainly attests to Darren having lived these words. His was a life that mattered.

A Life that Matters

Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end.
There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours or days.
All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else.
Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.
It will not matter what you owned, or what you were owed.
Your grudges, resentments and frustrations will disappear.
So too, your hopes, ambitions, plans and to-do lists will expire.
The wins and losses, once so important, will fade away.
It won't matter where you came from or what side of the tracks you live on at the end.
It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant.
Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.
So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured?
What will matter is not what you bought but what you build,
Not what you got, but what you gave.
What will matter is not your success but your significance.
What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage, or sacrifice
That enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate your example.

What will matter is not your competence, but your character.
What will matter is not how many people you knew,
But how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.
What will matter is not your memories but the memories that live in those who loved
you.
What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what.
Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.
It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.
Choose to live a life that matters.

Michael Josephson

*Darren's fostering of caring relationships influences former student's
future career*

Evan Burr

I'd like to submit a memory to hopefully be included in your project but I'm struggling. It's difficult to choose one as it was the relationship (more so than a single event) that Darren fostered with me, and one I believe with all of his students, that made his time with us so impactful. Although my relationship with music has come and go in the years since I took organ lessons at Darren's Music Place, I attribute many of my instincts working with young people in my career as a classroom teacher to the fine example that Darren set for me. I don't know if he called many of his students "Sir" in lieu of their name with the bemused tone he used around me, but I find myself addressing my more energetic students in much the same spirit. I was such a weird kid and Darren always made space at the table for my awkward enthusiasm during my formative years. He consistently found ways to connect my music learning to my outside interests, whatever they might have been. He knew when I was getting lazy and called me on it, but forever in a way that communicated support and kindness; Darren was so warm and kind and we are all the poorer in his passing.

Many years after I took lessons I found myself in Darren's studio and store during a kind of clearance sale of some older music themed artifacts and decorations. When my eyes caught sight of a familiar picture: a close-up photo of trumpet valves and a French horn bell backlit by a neon pink staff. I remembered it hanging in his teaching space next to a signed poster of Brian Austin Green in the very early 1990's when I last took lessons. In an instant he handed me the pop art, knowing my sense of humor and sentimentality. It hung on my walls for many years since but I've moved houses many times and I wish to God I knew what I did with it. Today I miss that photo terribly.

Darren's extra caring brings a child back to the festival

Darcie Gravel

mom to Émilie and Nicolas Gravel, piano players in Saskatoon

Although I never met Darren, I feel compelled to share my story about him.

My 7-year-old son participated in the 2017 SMF in the non-competitive piano solo category. He was so excited, so nervous and so proud to participate. He was proud of his performance but was suddenly a puddle of tears afterwards and said he would never participate again. He thought that he was going to receive a certificate of participation for his performance. I didn't know this beforehand, and was shocked at his reaction afterwards, especially after such a positive experience performing and hearing the adjudicator's amazing and encouraging comments.

In the Fall of 2017, when the idea of participating in the music festival came up, Nicolas said that he wouldn't participate. All because of the lack of certificate. I still couldn't believe how much weight he put on that certificate. During a conversation with his former piano teacher, Irène Lacoursière, she had suggested that I email Darren about it. I thought about it, but it still seemed so petty of a comment to email someone about. I also was really hoping my son would decide to perform a piano piece again at the festival, even non-competitive! So, I sat down to compose an email to Darren, late November.

After explaining how wonderful both my children had enjoyed the SMF in previous years, and how amazingly wonderful the adjudicators had been each time, I asked if it might be possible, in the future, for non-competitive kids to receive a certificate of participation. I still felt silly sending the email, but went for it at the recommendation of Irène. What was the worst that could happen? I figured I had nothing to lose.

The response I very quickly received from Darren completely blew my mind. He apologized and said that it was an oversight and that he would make the rest of the SMF committee aware. He asked me if I thought it was okay if he were to issue a certificate and mail it out to Nicolas. I could not believe it. I never expected an apology, never mind a certificate being issued. Darren's response was way more than I could have ever hoped for. Although I knew that a certificate would be in the mail for Nicolas, I kept it a secret from him. Until the day that it arrived in the mail!

Darren went ALL OUT. He went above and beyond for Nicolas. Darren sent a 9x 12 envelope with stiff cardboard and a note that said, "Do Not Bend." Darren wrote the most kindest letter to Nicolas, on letterhead. Darren apologized for the mistake and wrote that he had "included the certificate that you so rightfully deserved last May. Please accept this certificate with our apologies and this will not be overlooked for the 2018 festival. We hope you are considering participating again in this year's festival and look forward to seeing you there."

I so wish that Darren could have seen Nicolas' reaction to that letter. He was in awe, and shocked and had the look of pure joy. He couldn't believe it. And neither could I. He immediately said that he wanted to participate in the 2018 SMF. Upon seeing his certificate, he very quickly asked for me to put it up on his wall, while I slid Darren's letter into his piano binder. I just knew that Nicolas had received something very special that day. I don't know, but perhaps that was the last certificate that Darren issued...

That certificate in the mail from Darren, along with that letter, was exactly what Nicolas needed to get back into participating in the festival. I love that the festival provides a very

concrete goal for my children, provides another avenue that they can share and perform their music, and a chance to listen to other music by the other participants. The festival is a wonderful opportunity for my children to hear feedback from someone in addition to their regular teacher, and to hear positive and constructive feedback from an adjudicator. I love how my children polish their performance pieces and take such pride in their work. For all of these reasons, I was really hoping that Nicolas would want to participate again in the SMF. And, with much thanks to Darren - he will. That certificate from Darren carries a deep significance.

Darren's caring of the inner-city music students

Stefanie Stefanson-Pexa

My favorite memory of Darren Schwartz is the warmth and generosity he always demonstrated when he hosted the Heart of the City Piano portion of the Saskatoon Music Festival at McClure United Church. Every year, leading up to the event, I would exchange many late night emails with him and he was always so patient with the endless changes and revisions to the program. Being a long-time supporter of the Heart of the City program, he made it his mission to ensure that the students would have a rewarding experience at the Festival - finding the perfect adjudicators, preparing participation certificates and multiple first and second place certificates for the performers, and even arranging to have snack bags for them to enjoy during the break. Darren's hard work and dedication will long be remembered, and he will be greatly missed at future Heart of the City Festival sessions.

*A child honors Darren's legacy
by donating her own concert proceeds
to his memorial scholarship*

Katherine Meginbir

Dear Saskatoon Music Festival committee,

Please accept the enclosed donation for the Darren Schwartz Memorial Scholarship. This money was raised by Hannah Meginbir. Each year, Hannah performs a recital of the pieces she has worked on for the year and receives donations that are then given to a Saskatoon charity or bursary fund that will benefit other children wishing to participate in music education or performance.

This year her recital happened to be on the same day as Darren's funeral, so this seemed like a great way to honor Darren for all that he has contributed to the music community. Hannah has a first-hand appreciation for his work, as she has enjoyed participating in the Saskatoon Music Festival since she was 5 years old and will continue to do so for many years to come.

Thank you so much to all who are continuing the work of making the Saskatoon Music Festival such a wonderful event each year.

Sincerely,
Katherine Meginbir

Going above and beyond

Written by Jane L. Smith

As told by Martha Pankratz

Martha supported Darren by praising his musical contributions to Grosvenor Park United Church. Not many people take the time to comment on such contributions. They became friends.

Martha heard tell of a new man coming to be the administrator at McClure United Church. She mentioned it to Darren and found out it was him. She worried she wouldn't see him anymore. Darren suggested coffee once a week at the new church. If he saw Martha at his store or workplace, Darren would always say "See you Friday."

Sometimes she went to his home for lunch, or just a visit, and enjoyed his two dogs, Sasha, the laid back one, and Lady, the one always on the go. At his 50th birthday party, she was most surprised to note that she was the subject of one his trivial pursuit questions about his life.

Martha talks of his technical expertise and how he seemed to be able to fix any such problem that arose. I can certainly attest to that too with publishing this newsletter.

Martha speaks of one time that Darren spent 1 ½ hours on the phone to fix her cell phone problem. Her cell phone had died, and she had written several letters to cancel the account. The account was not cancelled, and she kept receiving bills. Darren had to speak to four people before all those bills were cancelled. With each person he spoke firmly but politely. As the first three claimed they couldn't help and that Martha just had to pay the bills, Darren would insist on speaking to another person who could help. Knowing he was right, Darren would not back down. Finally, he reached a person who he did convince to cancel all the bills.

Martha calls Darren "a very special person".

The Dog Collar Story

Jane L. Smith

I moved to Saskatoon 3 ½ years ago and joined the committee when asked by the first friend I made here. Not long afterwards, I became the newsletter editor. There was absolutely nothing that Darren wouldn't help me with. He always was very supportive and caring and solved any problem I had. We also shared a love of dogs. When I interviewed him at his home a year ago (see Festival Newsletter Vol. 1 No. 3 available on our website www.saskatoonmusicfestival.com), I met his two dogs, Lady and Sasha, and enjoyed their snuggles and interruptions. When I was leaving, he offered me a piano key design dog collar of one of his past dogs. Darren knew I played the piano and that my dog, Murphy, was a St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog. That became the collar Murphy wears when he is visiting as a therapy dog. The piano key collar is played by many children in the RUH emergency department. The collar is a conversation starter and a link between my two volunteer lives. Now it is a treasured memory of Darren and his caring and generosity.

The Tie Story

Doug McCosh

I always wore ties when I taught band. Most had 'musical' themes. Darren rarely wore ties and when he closed his store, he had some which he said he would never use. Naturally,

they were also musical ties. He knew I wore ties, so he asked if I wanted some. I said I would wear them proudly. One day he dropped them off - 2 shopping bags full!! Over 30 ties! I had a great time wearing them and explaining to the children from where they came and how many I had.

One Grade 2 teacher was intrigued by the quantity of ties I had, so I brought them all to her (I had others as well, of course) and she did math, language arts and visual art units with them.

The ties were a wonderful gift from Darren which enhanced my teaching in many ways. When I retired, I passed most of them on to another band teacher to carry on the tradition of wearing ties and now honouring the memory of Darren. I kept a few that I liked the best and now they are more special having come from Darren.

The music was his passion, and it's how he will live on through us.

Peter Poorman

Darren was so dedicated to the festival. I can't count all of the nights he worked until the wee hours of the morning and came to bed exhausted...but in the end I know that he would be so concerned festival continued without him. The music was his passion, and it's how he will live on through us.