



## *Saskatoon Music Festival*

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*Deadline February 28, 2019*

*Winning entry will receive a  
2 passes & a program to the 2019 Music Festival*



Photo courtesy of Stephen Nicholson – 2018 Kinsmen Competitors - pianists Solveig Deason and Matthew Praksas (winner), vocalists Angela Gjurichanin and Brianna Penner (winner), instrumentalists Fraser Krips, Stephen Davis, Hannah Lissel-DeCorby (winner), and Amos Friesen.

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2019 Saskatoon Music Festival Dates

Heart of the City	March TBA
Schools	March 26 - 28
Bands	April 1 - 5
Musical Theatre	April 8 – 12
General	April 29 – May 5

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**SMFA**

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ASSOCIATION

## 2019 Saskatchewan Music Festival Dates

May 30 – June 2 in Moose Jaw



2019 National Music Festival and National Conference/Annual General Meeting

August 6 – 12 at University of Saskatchewan

*Gratitude  
Felt for the Inspiration and Learning Gained  
Through Participating in Festivals*

*Written by Vocalist Brianna Penner*

*Photo courtesy of Stephen Nicholson*

Music, whether singing solo; in choirs, musicals, playing flute in school band, or playing piano - has always been an integral part of my life. My first experience with a music festival was playing piano in the Rockhampton Eisteddfod in Australia. But I really wanted to sing! Being new to the city, we knew nothing of the voice teachers, there. What better way to observe teaching styles, student confidence and age-appropriate repertoire, than to join the audience at several of the vocal competition classes, at the local Eisteddfod! Here, we observed that the singers with the most compelling performances and solid technique were taught by the same teacher. Our



choice was clear and thus began my solo vocal journey. When my family moved back to Canada (Winnipeg), I joined a youth choir, where I enjoyed several solo parts, however, for three years, I did not take any formal lessons. So, with our move to Saskatoon in 2012, I was very excited to see the wealth of musical opportunities here and in particular that of the Saskatoon Music Festival. I was very keen to return to singing and performing.

Since then, I have participated in Music Festival every year (except for 2016, when I was in New Zealand). It has always been a highlight of my year, and has been a highly motivational goal, set each Summer!

Looking back on my musical journey thus far, and especially at the last few years, Music Festival hasn't been just a fantastic performance opportunity, but it has really made me a stronger singer in the process. I have truly appreciated the Saskatoon Music Festival's committee's commitment to finding qualified and quality adjudicators to give feedback to the participants. Each adjudicator brings their own unique experience and professionalism to the competitors, and I have gleaned much knowledge and advice through being adjudicated by a variety of voice professionals.

I am grateful, because in preparing for music festival each year, I have become increasingly aware of how much improvement can be gained, even in the short month leading up to festival after my University classes finished.

I am now in my final year of my music degree, quite unsure of what the future may hold. There are a few hard decisions I need to make about the next step in my journey. But what I do know is that through the encouragement I have received from the many adjudicators in the years I have been involved with Saskatoon Music Festival, I have been inspired to go further - to find out what this voice can do, to be curious and enjoy the process. I have a lot to learn but I've learned a lot as well.

I also just really love to sing. So, it is great to have a place that is competitive, but still a friendly, fun environment. I truly appreciate the spirit of the Saskatoon Music Festival, which promotes the common love of music and the joy of sharing it!

Although it's not about winning, I could not be more thankful to all of the scholarship donors who have given so generously towards this festival. While their generosity enables the

music festival itself to continue each year, their kind donations have helped me to continue to pursue my love of music. The Saskatoon Music Festival is a wonderful place to be able to foster your art and begin to find your true artist, so I am indebted to Saskatoon Music Festival for giving me these opportunities. Thank you so much!

This year I had the wonderful surprise of winning the Kinsmen Competition Vocal Scholarship. My gratitude goes to Monica Huisman, who, as one of the fine vocal adjudicators selected by the Festival's committee, nominated me to sing in the Kinsmen vocal class, the outcome of which saw me continuing to the finals competition. It was such an honor and privilege to win this scholarship. It was both an honor and privilege to stand beside all the other gifted finalists and to share our youthful passion for music with fellow Saskatchewan music lovers! In the end, it didn't feel like I was competing. It was a celebration of what we had all worked so hard for. I cannot thank the festival committee enough, for the tireless work they put into organizing such an amazing annual event. It is a time enjoyed by many, including the musicians, and their family and friends who come and enjoy the wonderful music that Saskatoon's younger generation have to offer. I thank all of the many volunteers who helped to keep the festival running smoothly. I am also so very grateful for all the personal support from I have received from family, friends, and especially from my teachers Garry Gable and Kathleen Lohrenz Gable. I could not have come this far without your persistence, patience, enthusiasm and encouragement. Thank you.

### *A Place to Explore and Gain Confidence as a Performer*

*Written by Angela Gjurichanin*

*Photo courtesy of Stephen Nicholson*

I moved here in Saskatoon 3 years ago, and it was a big change for me as an individual and a musician. I grew up in a very small town in Macedonia and having my family and friends close to me, I was able to perform for them very often. It was always personal and entertaining to perform for people who knew me. Moving here in Saskatoon, I lost that connection with people and the confidence to perform. Having performed as a vocalist in the Saskatoon Music Festival for 2 years, I have gained many experiences that will stay with me. It is a place to explore! Yes, you are getting adjudicated, but you are not getting judged. The amazing adjudicators that the Saskatoon Music Festival brings are people that have not heard you before. They are giving their first, honest impression of you that will help you grow as a performer and musician. My favourite part of the Festival is seeing and hearing other people perform. There is no better way for a young musician to make progress than by



seeing someone else trying to do the same thing as you are. You feel inspired by them, you learn from their mistakes and their successes. I am very grateful to be a part of this festival where I get to meet such wonderful people who share the same passion as me and am given the opportunity to share the stage with them. I have grown as a performer, and I hope that one day I will inspire young singers through this Festival as I have been inspired every year.

*Musical Critical Thinking Developed,  
Performance Skills Honed,  
and Friendships Gained  
by Participating in Festivals*

*Written by Pianist Solveig Deason  
Photo courtesy of Stephen Nicholson*

My name is Solveig Deason and I'm an 18-year-old musician from Saskatoon. I'm currently a first semester student studying piano at Berklee College of Music in Boston on full scholarship. A big factor of what got me to this point is the Saskatoon Music Festival. I started entering classes on violin when I was about 5 or so, and shortly after began to compete in piano and voice as well. Being able to have these opportunities so young helped "normalize" performance, allowing future competitions to solely be about the music instead of the nerves.



Competing often also influenced my musical growth through the feedback from adjudicators. Being able to be critiqued by people from many different places and with many different musical mindsets allows young people to think critically about their performance, considering more than just nailing the right notes. Hearing ideas from these experienced musicians helped me in RCM exams, as I would often use the festival as a performance opportunity before doing an exam. Their new ideas helped keep practicing the same pieces exciting, even after I had thought I was performance-ready.

For me, the best thing about the Saskatoon Music Festival was that it gave me a goal for the year. When picking out repertoire for the year, I thought about what festival classes I wanted to enter and what pieces were attainable for me to learn by then. As May kept getting closer, it made me work harder, knowing that I had a specific goal for a specific date. Without a timeline like this, it makes it much easier to think you'll be fine with skipping a day of practicing. Another great benefit of the festival is that you make new friends and get to hear them perform every year. Hearing someone else's performance get critiqued is equally as important as your own in my opinion. Listening to so many people each festival season helped me develop a stronger musical brain, allowing me to think critically about others' performances and form my own musical opinions. All in all, the

Saskatoon Music Festival has given me wonderful performance opportunities preparing me for a career in the industry

### *President's Report*

The Saskatoon Music Festival Board members have begun working on the 2019 Festival. This year we welcome to the Board, Mariel Unger as our new Festival coordinator, Nicole Wilson as the representative for the Saskatoon Registered Music Teachers and, most recently, Rebecca Ward as treasurer. One of our long-serving Board members, Gary Loy, is stepping away from his work with the School choirs and ensembles. If you have an interest in school music and would like to do your part for music education and performance in Saskatoon, please let us know via our email address on our website – [saskatoonmusicfestival.com](http://saskatoonmusicfestival.com).

We continue to miss our former executive director, Darren Schwartz who passed away last January. Darren did so much for the Festival in Saskatoon and in the province. He was honoured as an outstanding volunteer for the festival movement by both the provincial and national festival associations. Darren touched festival supporters across Canada and the United States as we received over \$9700 in donations from all over for the Memorial Scholarships established in his name.



This year we will implement new registration software. To insure everything runs smoothly, we plan to open registrations on Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup> so be ready. Registration deadline is Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. With our new Festival Coordinator, we expect no entries will be accepted after the 26<sup>th</sup>. Please respect this date when you are entering this year. Also new this year is the 2019 – 2021 Provincial Festival Syllabus. Check it out at our website. Note that all the class numbers have been changed, one more thing to be aware of when you register.

Dates for this year's Festival are tentative at this date; however, we plan for the following:

- Heart of the City piano – mid March
- Schools – March 26 – 28
- Bands – April 1 – 5
- Musical Theatre – April 8 – 12
- General – April 29 – May 5

This year we have the honour of hosting the National Festival. As you might imagine, this will require a number of volunteers – another opportunity for you to become involved with the Festival, just send us a note via our website.

Lastly, I would again like to express my deepest appreciation and admiration to the Board members who took it upon themselves to prepare the 2018 Music Festival for the talented youth of Saskatoon.

Respectfully and gratefully,  
Doug McCosh, President

### *Festival Coordinator Report*

*Marief Unger*

I can't believe our 2018 festival is already 6 months behind us - it feels like not long ago we were listening to our talented performers! Festival 2019 is coming up fast as well, and our preparations are ramping up as we head into December.

I personally am excited to serve my first full year as Coordinator. I came into this role in February of 2018 and learned a lot on the fly - I'm grateful to serve with amazing committee members who supported me so well! That was a challenging experience, but I'm certainly glad to have time this year to understand a little bit more about this role.



One thing that I absolutely love seeing at festival is the great attitude displayed by participants. You practice and practice your pieces for months - and your hard work always pays off! It may not pay off in the form of a first place certificate or a scholarship, but the privilege of performing in front of an audience and hearing remarks from a qualified adjudicator is such a valuable thing. I've yet to see a participant complain over a mark and the general atmosphere throughout the competition is supportive and uplifting. It's wonderful to see young people learning how to receive constructive criticism, and how to be genuinely glad for those they are competing against. That's a skill that is unfortunately lacking in many adults - and here you are learning it so early!

As we head into the 2019 festival year, I'm wishing every participant a superb experience. The endless scales you're playing now might not be fun, but they'll pay off in the spring! Your hard work does not go unnoticed and I, along with the rest of our committee, can't wait to hear you perform this year.

Here's to another great festival!

### *Editor's Message*

*Jane L. Smith*

It continues to be a privilege to be a part of the festival. I am always humbled and touched by the amazing stories, performances, and hard work of everyone involved and the far-reaching effects of festival involvement. I even got inspired to go back to piano lessons after about 45 years!!! This is your newsletter. Please feel free to submit stories, suggest ideas and provide feedback to [newsletter@saskatoonmusicfestival.com](mailto:newsletter@saskatoonmusicfestival.com)



*Gary Loy*

*Festival Schools Coordinator from 2005 - 2018  
Dedicated focus on the needs and development of the  
school choirs*

*Written by and Photo Courtesy of Jane Smith*

Coordinating choirs from Grades K-12 all over Saskatoon to participate in many locations in the Saskatoon Music Festival is no small feat. Think of the many teaching schedules, the bus issues, other school activities, musical or other. Yet for 13 years, Gary Loy has done this job always with a smile on his face and always trying to meet the needs of the school choir directors.

It begins at the end of January when Gary takes the school choir registrations and prepares an e-mail contact list. Sometimes this is challenging since our computer program doesn't distinguish between choirs and bands.

February is the time to contact the schools and arrange host schools. Several elementary schools will perform at one host school. The high schools perform at their own school. The schedule is prepared, considering the requests of the school choir directors. The high schools often present the greatest challenge to schedule. They often want times in the early morning, around lunchtime or at the end of the day. Gary does his very best to accommodate. The Saskatoon Schools Music Festival usually runs over three days, a Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in March.

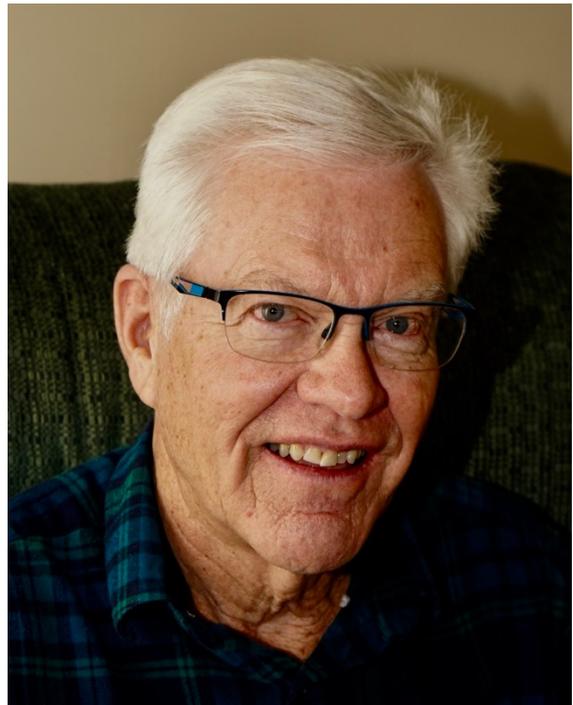
Next, adjudicator assistants need to be found as well as door stewards. Sometimes, the school will provide them and sometimes Gary works with other festival committee members. Elementary host schools have provided the door stewards, and adjudicator assistants have not been difficult to find. There are also 12 school choir trophies that must be collected back from the winning choirs from last year.

During the Saskatoon Schools Music Festival, Gary drives the adjudicator and helps tend to his/her needs. Gary is present at every session to ensure everything runs smoothly. This March I got to accompany him to almost every session. Everything ran like clockwork and it was obvious he had the respect of the choir directors. The choir directors believe strongly in the value of the festival as it requires a lot of preparation and organization to prepare and transport and have perform a choir of students.

Once the performances and adjudication are over there are trophies to get engraved and delivered. Gary seeks out feedback from the choir directors to ensure adjudication and organization remains top notch. He shares the feedback with the Saskatoon Music Festival Committee. The teachers are very appreciative of the time Gary devotes to the school part of the Festival.

The biggest challenge for Gary is scheduling to meet the needs of all the choir directors and his biggest reward is the appreciation of the teachers for all his hard work.

Gary has done this coordination for thirteen years. Thirteen years ago, when he was deciding to retire from teaching, he was approached by a Saskatoon Music Festival Committee Member, Janet McGonigle, to join the committee. He started coordinating the schools from the



very beginning. He is practically appreciative of getting to work with our Darren Schwartz who was an “amazing person to work with.”

Gary would love if the high school choirs could hear each other and have an adjudicator led workshop. While student and director learning would be greatly enriched, it would also probably mean some choirs would not be to participate since they would have to perform in a different school than their own.

Volunteering is nothing new to Gary. He has been a ringette referee for over 27 years. Not to be bored in retirement, he is also a hail adjutor for farms which keeps him connected to his farming roots.

As Gary reflected on his teaching career during our interview, he mentioned a highlight that touched both a bit of his farming roots and the area of Canada where I spent most of my life. Gary finished his Masters in Educational Administration at Dalhousie University in Halifax, NS but he lived during that time at an university law professor’s house on St. Margaret’s Bay, NS. There was only one condition to him taking over the house, his family had to look after the professor’s dog and horse much to the delight of his 4, 6 and 8 year old children at the time.

Gary has decided it is time for another person to take over the Saskatoon Music Festival School Coordinator job. We are most grateful he is willing to coach and mentor a new coordinator. If you are interested please email [www.saskatoonmusicfestival.com](http://www.saskatoonmusicfestival.com).

We will very much miss the dedication and organizational and interpersonal skills of Gary. Thank you Gary for all you have contributed to our festival. It is greatly appreciated.

*Some of the 2018 Saskatoon Music Festival in pictures  
(Photos – Jane Smith unless indicated)*









Photo courtesy of Mike Kurpjuweit





Photo courtesy of Mike Kurpjuweit









