



News Release
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Rockwood Couple's Estate Pledges \$250K to the Kiwanis Music Festival of Guelph



Dave Davidson (Festival Committee) and Heather Fleming (Festival Coordinator) are presented with the Bookbinder estate donation by Peter Hannam, estate executor. Photo by Riann Willoughby Photography.

GUELPH – The Kiwanis Music Festival of Guelph announced that a special gift from the estate of Rockwood's Klara and Oscar Bookbinder will ensure the long-term sustainability of the Festival and will have a positive impact on the lives of thousands of aspiring musicians.

The Bookbinder's estate has donated \$250,000 to the Festival to ensure it can continue to provide the area's talented and dedicated musicians with performance opportunities second to none and to implement several exciting new initiatives in honour of Oscar and Klara. The

Kiwanis Music Festival is the area's largest youth services program in the arts with nearly 3,500 performers each year.

Oscar Bookbinder was a musicologist and piano teacher who dedicated much of his life to the study of the folk music of his native Hungary. In his honour, the Festival will be implementing a brand new Composition Competition for emerging composers age 25 and under. The winner of this adjudicated competition will receive a \$1,000 prize, the Oscar Bookbinder Composition Trophy, as well as a performance of the work and its publication.

Klara Bookbinder was a dedicated piano teacher who sent her prize-winning students to the Festival every year for decades. She also self-published several books of piano compositions for young children, as well as two books of her own students' compositions. To honour Klara, the Festival will implement a new Scholarship Competition for Advanced Level Performers. Following the Festival each year, 2 senior level performers from each discipline as selected by the adjudicators will have the opportunity to compete for the coveted Klara Bookbinder Memorial Cup and the \$1,000 first prize. All winners will have the chance to perform at a future concert organized by the Festival.

In keeping with the Bookbinders' deep affection for teaching music to young students, especially in the rural community that welcomed them, the Festival is happy to announce several initiatives for music education and community support. A new annual workshop for elementary music teachers will be instituted, bursaries will be made available for busing subsidies to encourage more band and choir participation in the Festival, limited bursaries will also be available to assist with student needs such as entry fees, accompanist fees, private lessons, or instrument rentals, and new scholarships will be designated specifically for rural students.

Peter Hannam, executor of the Bookbinder estate, stated, "The Bookbinders were devoted music teachers and the Kiwanis Music Festival of Guelph was a very important part of their piano studio. The Festival gave their piano students from the Rockwood area a unique performance venue and the opportunity to receive professional adjudication. The estate is very pleased to contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Festival as well as the launch of new initiatives to support music education in Guelph and Wellington County."

Kiwanis Music Festival officials say they are delighted to receive such a generous gift from the Bookbinders' estate and are so grateful for the positive impact it will have on the lives of countless talented and dedicated musicians, their families, and their teachers. Festival Coordinator Heather Fleming says, "This funding will ensure the sustainability of the Festival for decades to come and will allow the Festival to implement exciting new initiatives that would not have been possible otherwise."

Klara and Oscar immigrated to Canada from their native Hungary. After living in Toronto, they settled in Rockwood, bringing with them a devotion to and a long history of teaching music to children, both in Toronto and Rockwood. Their nurturing of young musicians led to both richer lives and, for some, new career paths.