

# Island's Music Festival Continues To Grow Yearly

Malcolm MacKenzie, Deputy Minister of Education, and Honorary President of the Prince Edward Island Music Festival Association, has released the following message in connection with the forthcoming music festival:

The 21st Festival of Music in this province will commence on May 2nd and will continue until May 7. Once again it is my privilege to assist, through the medium of the press, in bringing to the attention of the people of the province the great work that is being done by the Prince Edward Island Music Festival Association.

The festival movement originated in the spring of 1945 and was the brain child of Mrs. Preston Beck and Mrs. Nadine Archibald, members of the Central Royalty Women's Institute. The suggestion of a provincial music festival was placed before the annual convention of women's institutes in June and was unanimously endorsed. These ladies then called together the presidents and secretaries of the institutes in the area group to which the Central Royalty Institute belonged to work out the details of a plan whereby this group of districts might sponsor a music festival.

The districts represented at this meeting in addition to Central Royalty were: West Royalty, East Royalty, South Milton, Harrington, Maple Hills, Brackley Beach, Spring Park and Parkdale. At the close of an evening of enthusiastic discussion the group decided to organize and the following officers were appointed: president, Mrs. Preston Beck; vice-president, Mrs. Edwin Cook; secretary, treasurer, Mrs. Nadine Archibald. Other charter members were Mrs. Robert MacKinnon, Mrs. Stillman Frizzell, Mrs. James Coles, Mrs. Preston Ross, Mrs. J.C. MacMillan and Mrs. Frank Ross.

Following the election of officers it was decided to proceed with plans for a festival to be held on May 10 and 11, 1946 at Prince of Wales College. This was really an adventurous step to take as the sponsoring group had no money with which to finance the project and little or no experience in working out the details of planning a festival. But, what was most important, this group of women had a firm belief in the ultimate benefits of such a movement to the people of this province, particularly the youth.

Although there were only 126 entries from the nine districts concerned in 24 of the 55 competitions outlined in the syllabus, the 1946 festival was a decided success. As a consequence, the festival was opened to the whole province and the Prince Edward Island Music Festival Association was formed. In 1954 our association became affiliated with the Federation of Canadian Music Festivals and Island delegates have been attending the annual conventions of this federation each year.

The movement grew so that in 1954 classes were adjudicated in Summerside for the first time for the convenience of residents in the western section of the province. In 1957 adjudication of classes was begun in Montague. This year there are approximately 2,000 entries and it is estimated that over 9,000 persons will be participating. There are 353 school choral groups, 32 church choirs, 46 rhythm bands, 776 vocal and 540 piano entries as well as entries in organ, violin, wind instruments and other bands.

The Department of Education has an understandable interest in music festivals because it is believed that music has an important place in the education of our children and festivals provide suitable objectives and outlets for much that is best in school music. If someone should ask me "What does the study of music do for a child?" my reply would be as follows: "It increases the power of concentration and

develops mental alertness. In fact many children first learn through music what concentration means, that is to say, through learning to listen with 'all their ears'. For many years past we have been training the eye, and more recently the hand (vocational), but the training of the ear has been very largely neglected.

Music is a valuable aid in memory training; for the study of music is wholly dependent upon memory, whether in listening or performing. It is obvious that, if the listener cannot remember the main themes of a composition, when heard for the first time, it will seem a mere succession of meaningless sounds devoid of logical connections.

It provides a means of self-expression, not only by the outlet it gives for the creative side of composition, but also in the recreation or interpretation of music whether by voice or instrument. A printed page of music is not really music at all—it is a copy of music, hence the commonly accepted use of the word 'copy'. What we see on the printed copy is a series of signposts and directions, called staff notation by which the composer hopes to make his musical meanings clear. It is for the vocalist or the instrumentalist to recreate it, or translate it into sound.

Again, music awakens and develops the imagination and provides a vehicle for the emotional nature of the young by opening out the rich treasures of music, by giving him some idea of its growth and development. He thus begins to know the works of the great musician and something of the romance and the lives of so many of them. He learns something, too, of the nature of other peoples of the world, through traditional songs. Music is, indeed, a wonderful medium for international understanding.

Goodness and truth are the two ideals which loom most largely in the teaching of the young, but they are too often pursued at the expense of beauty, which is discovered by different people in different ways. Some find it through color and form, some through literature and some through nature; but for many the simplest and most direct approach to it is through music.

A little child can thus discover it, for at his stage of life it requires neither deep understanding, nor the environment of a cultured home. Music, indeed, is the only art which a little child can achieve to perfection—in the little nursery rhyme or hymn beautifully sung.

### FULFILLS FUNCTION

Finally, there is one very im-

portant function music fulfills for the child—the dull and retarded more especially, when joining with his more intelligent school-fellows in singing. Here he need have no sense of inferiority, for vocally he is on equal footing with them all. Music is probably the only subject on the school time-table which admits of such a desirable state of affairs, and it provides a clear example of equality of opportunity.

At the present time approximately half of the students (Grades I-XII) in our public schools receive regular instruction in music by specialists. In many instances the regular classroom teacher provides instruction limited, of course, by time-table requirements as approximately eight to five per cent of our schools still consist of one and two-teacher classrooms.

The Prince Edward Island Music Festival Association has provided the incentive for a greater emphasis on music in the education of our children, and it deserves the support of

the general public. Anyone can help by enrolling as a member for the small fee of \$1.00 a year or by becoming a life member for \$25.00. Group memberships are available to any club, choral group, church choir or women's institute, on the payment of a fee of \$5.00.

This movement which has done so much for the advancement of music education in this province deserves all the encouragement and support the public can give it. Admission prices to each of the day sessions of adjudication are 25 cents for adults and 15 cents for children. For night sessions the prices are 50 cents and 25 cents. The Stars of the Festival Concert will be presented at the Confederation Centre on May 10 at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$1.00 per person.

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Tender documents may be obtained on deposit of \$500.00 in the form of a CERTIFIED bank cheque to the order of the RECEIVER GENERAL OF CANADA, through:

The office of Ashworth, Robie, Vaughan & Williams, Schoeler & Barkham/Z. Matthew Stankiewicz at 157 Gilmour Street, Ottawa 4, Ontario until 3:00 P.M. (E.S.T.) 2 May 1966. The deposit will be refunded on return of the documents in good condition within one month from the date of tender opening.

To be considered each tender must be submitted on the forms supplied with the tender documents. The tender must be accompanied by the security specified in the tender documents.

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