

Alberta Heritage Music Project

Handbook



The Alberta Heritage Music Project

The Alberta Heritage Music Project is a program developed and partially funded by the Alberta Music Education Foundation (AMEF), a Registered Charity. It aims to connect youth and seniors in the sharing of musical memories from the seniors' teenaged years (can also be from when they were younger or a little older). The re-creation of these story-memories through music, dancing, acting, sets, costumes and community involvement.

In the AHMPs that have taken place in the past (2 in Cochrane, 1 in Red Deer and 1 in Fort McMurray), teen voice students met with seniors from a local Senior's Lodge to interview them about their musical memories from when they were teens or young adults. When the senior talked about a specific song while reflecting on a special occasion or person, that song was chosen to be performed live (by the voice students and volunteer musicians) in front of the seniors, their families, and the students' families in a small informal concert.

The goal was to build relationships between the generations, and illustrate how music can bind people together, and how strong it is in our memories, and all four projects met with great success and feedback. Many volunteers donated their time and effort to put this together. In the end, the seniors enjoyed seeing their lives recreated in front of them and their families, and the students felt sincerely good about giving this gift to the seniors.

THE ALBERTA HERITAGE PROJECT 2007 Bethany Care Lodge, Cochrane, Alberta

The Alberta Heritage Project for 2007 was held in Cochrane, Alberta at the Bethany Care Lodge, May 27, 2007. It is a four-part project, this time around.

Part I was back in March 2007 when several teenaged music students interviewed 14 seniors at the Lodge about the musical memories they had from their childhood and teenaged year.

Part II was April until May 26th when these and other students chose which stories they would like to be part of - for various reasons. Sometimes they already knew that song (like Mairzy Doats or Blue Skies); other times there was something about the senior themselves (the teen and the interviewer had a bond) or the storyline caught their interest. Other times it came down to a matter of skill - can I do ballroom dancing? Or can I play in a marching band? Rehearsals were held in private homes, with teachers, with bands, in dance studios, and at Bethany Care Lodge on Saturday, May 26th, for a drop-in, by-appointment rehearsal on the stage. There were still program and performer changes happening right up to May 26th, and in one instance, in the middle of the Concert itself! We did get a reporter from the Cochrane Times to do an interview the week before, and there was a half-page article with a picture in the Cochrane Times on May 23, 2007.

Part III was the Concert itself. It started at 2 PM and ended at 4 PM. We had originally hoped to be done within 1 1/2 hours because we feared losing the audience. As it turned out, for the first time ever in the memory of the directors at Bethany Care, every single senior stayed and was totally involved in the production until the very end. Both the Recreation Assistant, Shari Jefferies, and the Bethany Administrator, Barb Fredrich, made a point of stating how amazed they were at the level of interest, involvement and sense of happiness the seniors displayed during and after this Concert, even "the difficult seniors who are normally very critical and unhappy with life in general" were vocally and visibly positive and talking about this Concert with enthusiasm for days afterward. As in the past AHMP, during the concert there were many applause, many tears, clapping, foot tapping, some hooting, and many many smiles and laughter. The performers really went the extra mile and rose to the occasion, many of them never having been on a stage before, some as young as 4 years old, and others professional CPO members who traveled from Calgary and farther to take part.

Part IV involves the production of a DVD video which will be used to promote the AHMP across Alberta and Canada. We are currently in the process of getting the recording rights to as many of the songs as possible so they may be legally included into that DVD. All performers signed a waiver which allowed their image to be used in the DVD without further recompense. The DVD will include portions of the interviews, rehearsals, concert, a short on how to do an interview and a short recap by the Director at the end. This project is a win-win for all involved, and makes a very real difference in the lives of all involved. It is one of those things which we do in life which we know is the right thing to do. Although it is rather labour intensive at times, *the end result is beyond price...and we do get to sleep eventually, and **our dreams are the dreams of those who know they made the world a better place, if just for a little while, and we will be the better person for our labours.***

For AHMP 2007,
Nathene Arthur, Director

Report

Alberta Heritage Music Project

I have been a studio voice teacher in **Fort McMurray** for 51/2 years, and launching the **Alberta Heritage Music Project** has been one of the best decisions I have made in this capacity. All of the voice students were not only receptive, but generous of their time and spirit during the interview process that took place in February of 2009. They were eager to prepare and perform the story memories from the seniors that they met and talked with. I watched all of them, without exception, be gracious and attentive with this generation that they may have thought they had nothing in common with. And yet, they most certainly did. They were transformed when they laughed and shared intimate moments with people sharing their love of music and dancing.

I was extremely fortunate to work with a supportive and enthusiastic team. **Nathene Arthur** shared her expertise and guided me through the process. My supervisor at the Keyano College Conservatory, **Sharon Price**, was immediately responsive to this and helped in the planning and organizing of all aspects. **Tim Moen**, who agreed to be our videographer, was caring and creative in the interviews and the editing of the video, and brought a team of volunteers together to help with lighting and capturing the performance as well.

I believe the Alberta Heritage Music Project is a well thought-out and heartfelt project. It has the ability to strengthen and touch students and seniors and their families, and entire communities. I would encourage anyone that has a love of music, and believes that it adds colour and intensity to our lives, to take part in the Alberta Heritage Music Project in your community!

Respectfully submitted by:

Cara Brown

May, 2009

**Support Letters Emailed to Alberta Music Education Foundation
AHMP
Fort McMurray, 2009**

The Alberta Heritage Music Project I must emphasize, is a great community bound resource that has helped in bringing out the best potentials in seniors. I wish to note that the performance displayed by the group last year, in which senior citizens in the community was played depicting their past leisure interest; helped to maintain their self-esteem, confidence and social interest. The performance was a lasting impression created on the minds of the seniors and they are proud to be part of the program. The continuity of the program will help to maintain seniors' interest in community activities and self fulfillment.

Thanks



Vincent Obisirike, Recreation Director
Wood Buffalo Housing & Development Corporation

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this reference letter in support of the Alberta Music Education Foundation. As a vocal student I am always interested in growing and further developing my vocal skills, and also always looking to participate in new and creative projects to help showcase what we have learnt during the previous years under Cara's instruction. The Alberta Heritage Music Project (of May 2009) was a perfect example of a creative project I was looking to get involved in. Not only was it a project that gave back to us students, but it also allowed us to give the seniors in our community a night of entertainment that they would never forget. Its success helped to raise awareness for the Golden Years' Society here in Fort McMurray and also allowed for our parents to experience how our talents had grown throughout the year, proving that their investments in our lessons were a good decision. I would do it again in a heartbeat!

Thank you for your time,

Luay Eljamal

402-108 Denholm Gate
Fort McMurray, AB
T9H 0B3
bill_prouten@hotmail.com

September 20, 2010

Cara Brown

Alberta Music Education Foundation
5401-39th St.
Red Deer, AB, T4N 1A1

Dear Cara,

I am writing to commend the Alberta Music Education Foundation's Alberta Music Heritage Project. I had the pleasure of participating in the musical portion of the project that was conducted in Fort McMurray in the spring of 2009, and I observed it to be extremely successful in using music to bridge the gap between seniors and youth in our community. Besides having fun myself, I saw that the students involved had a great time performing the vignettes supplied by senior interviewees, and that they were moved by the response they received for their performance. I like to think that the experience helped the kids to realize more acutely that the elderly folk watching were, at one time, as young and nimble as themselves. At the same time, the seniors were able to hear many of their old favourite songs while reliving a small piece of their personal history. It was as if, for a few minutes, they saw themselves as young again, remembering through the youthful performers on the stage.

I can think of few better ways that an organization such as yours can use music to build community, and I hope that you are able to bring the Alberta Music Heritage Project to many more communities in our province.

Most Sincerely,

Bill Prouten
Woodwind Instructor
Keyano College

Claire Harvey
#402-108 Denholm Gate
Fort McMurray AB T9H 0B3

March 25, 2010

Cara Brown, President
Alberta Music Education Foundation
5401-39th Street
Red Deer AB T4N 1A1

Dear Ms. Brown

I am writing to express my support of the Alberta Heritage Music Project (AHMP). I believe that the funding and support of music education in the province is vitally important, and through the AHMP I have seen the positive impact of this support in Fort McMurray.

I was fortunate enough to participate as a volunteer in the AHMP in Fort McMurray last May, which was in part funded by the Alberta Music Education Foundation. It was an amazing opportunity that brought together students and a group of seniors in the area through their shared experiences and love of music. I saw how much work went into this project, how much fun the students had in putting it together, and I was deeply moved by the response of the seniors who were involved. Not only did it give the students an opportunity to learn and perform in a musical context, it gave them a chance to connect with another generation in a way they found meaningful. It also allowed many seniors to share their stories and memories, be listened to, and see their stories told through music. Their reactions made it clear this project made them feel valued.

Through my involvement in the AHMP, my own life has been enriched as I am now friends with one of the seniors who took part. Through her, I heard first hand that the other seniors who were involved were talking excitedly about the final performance for many days afterward.

I hope this project is brought to other communities within the province, and beyond, so that this amazing experience can be shared by many more!

Sincerely,

Claire Harvey

THE ALBERTA HERITAGE MUSIC PROJECT

Welcome to all who are here to take part in this unique opportunity to consider an inter-generational and community enhancing event which the Alberta Music Education Foundation (AMEF) has created and is providing funding for. In past years, funding has also been provided by Community Initiatives Program and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. AMEF will continue to request funding from these groups and others to expand this Program throughout the Province.

The basic timetable and outline of what you would need to do to put this program on in your community is listed below. It is important to remember that each and every AHMP is different, flexible, and open to your own creative ideas, availability of students, facilities available for the concert, and how many volunteers are willing to put the program on. AMEF encourages you to make it your own!

In order for AMEF to apply for government funding for a project such as this, please try to plan at least 6-8 months in advance, as there are 4 deadlines per year for CIP Grants, and the wait time for results (which could be positive or negative) can vary greatly. AMEF Project coordinators can help you with your ideas and put together a Budget and Outline.

Remember to obtain an Expense Report form from AMEF in order to record all expenses incurred throughout the project, as relating to the Budget. Original receipts must be provided with this report. The AMEF Executive Director can also advise you through the process about expenses.

TIMETABLE

1. Find a Seniors Lodge or Centre and contact the Recreation Director, or whomever is in charge of this kind of event. Schedule a meeting and bring along a write-up of what you hope to do (template included). If you have a specific time frame, bring that too. They will need to bring this to their Board for consideration and then it is up to them to contact their Seniors and see who would be interested in sharing their musical memory stories (template incl.). There should be at least 12-18 seniors, and 12-15 stories.
2. Contact music students (usually aged 12-20) who would be willing to help with the interviews. You may provide them with an interview sheet (template incl.) with suggested questions, or a small workshop with a facilitator who will go over "how to get a story."
3. Set up a schedule with the Seniors for interviews. These are best done one-on-one or two-on-one, and with no more than two being done at the same time, just due to noise levels.

TIMETABLE

4. During the interviews have the students write down the stories, the song titles, the setting, the season, the types of clothing, who else was there, the instrumentation of the music (if any) and any other details we may be able to try to reproduce. They should try for 1 to 3 stories per senior.
5. Once the stories are assembled, you or someone you trust needs to collect them and then go over them carefully. You need to look for song-stories which have the potential to be reproducible, but also will be a good variety of music. For example, it is likely that a large percentage of the seniors will remember some kind of square dance, barn dance, or ballroom dance. Choose the one or two which have the most interesting circumstances, and then from the other seniors choose other topics. This decision is often easier than you think it will be. One story from many of the seniors will stick out as the most appropriate, and the most meaningful to the senior.
6. Once you have chosen your final 15-18 song-stories, it is easiest to write them out in a booklet form. Under each story, include information such as:
 - a) Title of Song
 - b) Name of Senior
 - c) Performers (i.e., 3 dancers, singer, waiter, pianist and saxophone player)
 - d) Possible Set (i.e., table & chairs with tablecloth, vase with flowers, place setting)
 - e) Possible clothing (i.e., clothes from 1940s, soldier's uniform, waiter's coat)
 - f) Other information
7. Next, contact a large group of young people from music studios and friends you know whose students or children are musically inclined - include dance studios, drama students and music students.
8. Give the students an opportunity to hunt down their won props, sets and clothing. They may need help finding and purchasing or borrowing the music.
9. Once the pieces have been assigned, return to the Seniors Lodge and establish a dress rehearsal and a concert date. These should be 4-6 weeks into the future, long enough ahead but not so far ahead that students/teachers/volunteers are distracted.
10. Book and plan a dress rehearsal. A complete run-through in the correct order can work, and so can planned drop-in times. The rehearsals can be a fun and energetic time with the students, especially when they exchange stories and realize who they are performing for and how rewarding this will be for them.
11. If students need help with rehearsals, try to set up possible dates/evenings/weekends when you could be there to help. Students can and will rehearse on their own.
12. Approximately one week before the concert, contact all performers and the Recreation Director. Be prepared for small changes. Print out the final program. Be sure to include the logos for Alberta Music Education Foundation, Community Initiatives

TIMETABLE cont.

Program (shown as Alberta Lottery Fund, which is the organization that funds the CIP) and Alberta Foundation for the Arts on all programs and promotional material. These can be downloaded from the AMEF Website. (<http://amef.ca>)

13. Arrange to have stage helpers who will move sets around between songs.
14. A Sound system may be required - have a volunteer in charge of this.
15. Arrange to have someone backstage lining up the performers so that as the Announcer is introducing the songs, that same person isn't responsible for keeping the order and performers in line.
16. On Concert Day, you will need to bring the programs, the props and the sets (if not already there), the Expense forms (in case someone hasn't filled one in that needs it) and your SMILE!
17. On the Concert day, you will be entitled to see with your own eyes an amazing thing ... the re-creation of stories with a musical theme which actually happened to the people they are being performed for. (A suggestion is to have all of the Special Guests that are having their stories "told" sit in the front row - for a real connection with each other and with the performance). It is impossible to explain how wonderful this is. There will be tears, laughter, camaraderie, and more stories. The teens will find they can love this music, and the seniors will see themselves as young again.
18. After the concert, it is nice to arrange snacks and beverages for the students and the seniors, and they can visit and share even more.
19. Be sure to Thank the Recreation Director! (He or she will have done more than you know). Take a few pictures and send them to us at AMEF! Do write up your own experiences and share them with us for our write-up to CIP and AFA to assist with future funding, and for our newsletter. See if you can get a letter from the Lodge Administrator with positive feedback as well, from the seniors, and from audience members. (The audience is largely compiled of Seniors, their families, performers and their parents. There is usually not enough room to advertise this as open to the public, as they have been held in Seniors' Lodges where access is easy. You could certainly try a different venue, provided the Seniors felt they could easily get there and back - could be more work for the Lodge).
20. AMEF will be there throughout the journey with help, advice and suggestions if you need them. Our 2005 and 2007 Director, Nathene Arthur, is available at nmarthur@telus.net or 403-851-9912 and 2009 Director, Cara McLeod is available at cara@caramcleod.ca or 780-838-2981 for any questions.

Thank you for your interest in this Project! It truly is part of our heritage, and bridges the generations in a marvelous and wonderful way.

ALBERTA HERITAGE MUSIC PROJECT

Interview Tips

Student Name: _____ Phone: _____

- Introduce yourself
- Try to develop a rapport with the interviewee ... such as talking about common interests (such as the fact that you are talking about their musical memories - maybe share a story about your music lessons or experience - keep your own experience brief)
- Express your interest in hearing a few of their musical memories from when they were younger.
- Ask open-ended questions to stimulate talking and probe for details ... instead of yes or no questions. (Example could be "Can you describe that in more detail?" or "Tell me more about _____")
- Ask one short question at a time.
- Use body language and facial expressions to communicate active interest.
- Don't immediately fill every silence with another question. Wait to see if your interviewee has more to say.
- Interviews should take 15 minutes or less
- Remember to say THANK YOU for their time and for sharing their stories

Specific Questions:

In the story, can you remember what kind of clothes you wore, as well as what other people wore? _____

Did the story happen inside or outside? _____

What instruments, if any, were used when this song was played? _____

Were there any famous singers/musicians involved in the music? _____

Did you perform the song yourself, hear it on the radio, or see it in person? _____

What place did this story occur in? Was it in a house, barn, community hall, concert stage, outside? Was it in Alberta or somewhere else? What year? _____

If dancing was involved, what style of dancing? _____



Introducing the
Alberta Heritage Music Project

Looking for 12-16 Seniors with Musical Memories!!!

The Alberta Heritage Music Project is a CIP (Community Initiative Program). It aims to connect youth and seniors in the sharing of musical memories from the seniors' teenaged years (or when they were a little younger, or a little older!) and the re-creation of these stories through music, acting, dancing, sets, costumes, and community involvement.

What? Students will interview you about your memories. Music students, their instructors and community members will then prepare a full-scale concert based on these stories, and perform them for you and your peers, and family and friends on _____.

This project has taken place in Cochrane, Red Deer and Fort McMurray, with amazing success and gratification for the students and the seniors.

When are the Interviews?

Day, Date, Time

Day, Date, Time

Where:

When and Where is the Concert?

Day, Date Time

Place

AHMP SONG-STORY SHEET

Senior: _____

Song Title/Info: _____

What we need:

1. Instruments:

2. Voices:

3. Props:

4. Set:

5. Actors:

6. Other:

NOTES TO STUDENTS/THOSE DOING RESEARCH:

The Alberta Heritage Music Project

Suggested Introduction Letter/Proposal to Senior's Lodge

The Alberta Heritage Music Project is a program developed by the Alberta Music Education Foundation (AMEF), a Registered Charity funded by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the CIP (Community Initiative Program). It aims to connect youth and seniors in the sharing of musical memories from the seniors' teenaged years (can also be from when they were younger or a little older), and the re-creation of these story-memories through music, acting, sets, costumes and community involvement.

There are 3 parts to this project:

Interviews The young students will interview the seniors about their musical memories. They will be given a list of suggested questions, but often the students build their own rapport with the seniors, and the conversations become very natural. These will occur between (date) and (date) , depending on schedules.

Preparation The students and volunteers, including music teachers and parents, will prepare the concert, obtaining sets and costumes, obtaining music, calling on the talent of other students and volunteers to dance, sing, act and play music, and of course, the students will learn the music.

Final Concert We would love this to be in (date) , and will invite the seniors and their families and the students' families to witness this incredible occasion.

This project has taken place at the Bethany Care Lodge in Cochrane, in Red Deer, and at the Rotary House Lodge in Fort McMurray. The results were amazing. In the 2007 Cochrane project, they had originally hoped to be done the concert in 1 1/2 hours, but it ended up being 2 hours. Although they were afraid of losing the audience, it was the first time ever in the memory of the directors at Bethany Care that every single senior stayed and was totally involved in the production until the very end. They stated how amazed they were at the level of interest, involvement and sense of happiness the seniors displayed during and after the concert, even "the difficult seniors who are normally very critical and unhappy with life in general." In 2009 in Fort McMurray, there were numerous tears of joy and sadness and remembrance throughout the concert. The students stayed and chatted with the seniors, and bonds were forged through their stories and the music.

To close, I will give you a quote from the Director and innovator of this program, Nathene Arthur:

"...the end result is beyond price. .. and our dreams are the dreams of those who know they made the world a better place, if just for a little while, and we will be the better persons(s) for our labours."

