

## **Musical Instrument Bank Overview**

"The *1706 David Tecchler cello* has made an enormous difference in my life... Having a voice which responds to every ounce of effort, which knows no limitations but my own, leaves open a wider door for future personal development and growth. It is an indescribable experience to produce a sound on this instrument."

Denis Brott, cellist, former member of the *Orford Quartet*, and recipient of the *1706 Brott-Turner-Tecchler cello*

"The chief amazement of playing on the *1702 Stradivari* is the sound. The thought that this violin continues to sing and speak, when all else that was living in that era is now only a memory, is a continual wonder to me in every note I play on it. It is a great honour to be keeping alive this link from the past."

Lara St. John, recipient of the *1702 Lyall Stradivari violin*

The true value of a fine stringed instrument is in its sound. However sublime the colour, whatever the pedigree, only when a master musician creates a perfectly beautiful phrase is the full worth of an instrument realized.

In the 18th century, the great Italian luthiers, Stradivari and Guarneri, produced instruments of such beguiling sweetness and power, with such a rich palette of nuance that their work stands today as the epitome of craftsmanship and art. Yet in Canada, ironically, these instruments rarely reach the hands for which they were intended. Most musicians simply cannot afford them. Even instruments of more modest pedigree, but still possessing an excellent sound, are priced beyond the means of Canada's outstanding young musicians.

In many countries, either governments or first-rate music schools have collections of exceptional instruments that are loaned to their most deserving and illustrious musicians. Still other extraordinary instruments are kept in vaults, purely as investments. It is akin to keeping great paintings in the dark. This seems a cruel injustice. The instruments are being deprived of the loving use that keeps them supple and resilient, and audiences are being deprived of hearing some of the most magical sounds in the world.

## **A Fine Musician Deserves a Fine Instrument**

*The Canada Council for the Arts Musical Instrument Bank* was created in 1985 to acquire quality stringed instruments to be loaned to established or gifted young musicians who are about to embark on an international solo or chamber music career. The musicians who receive these instruments on loan play them publicly in concerts the world over and in recordings.

A generous legacy of \$100,000 from the Barwick family of Ottawa established the operating fund. The first instrument was acquired in September 1987 through the fundraising efforts of businessman W.I.M. Turner and cellist Denis Brott, both of Montreal. The *1706 Brott-Turner-Tecchler Cello* is on loan to Denis Brott for the duration of his career.

The Bank acquired a second instrument in 1988 through the generous transfer of the *1717 Windsor-Weinstein Stradivari* to the Council by the *Ontario Heritage Foundation*. Leon Weinstein had donated the violin to the Foundation in 1980. The *Windsor-Weinstein Stradivari* was awarded in 1987 to Scott St. John of London, Ontario, and in 1994 to James Ehnes of Brandon, Manitoba, following national juried competitions.

In July 1997, the Council received a generous two-year loan of three magnificent violins from an anonymous US businessperson: the *1689 Baumgartner Stradivari*, the *1702 Lyall Stradivari* and the *1729 ex-Heath Guarneri Del Gesù*. The *Stradivari* were awarded to Judy Kang of Edmonton and Lara St. John of London, Ontario, in September 1997. After extensive restoration by *Geo. Heintl & Co. Limited* of Toronto, the *Guarneri* was loaned to Martin Beaver of Winnipeg in October 1998. All were awarded following national juried competitions.

In December 1998, the *J.W. McConnell Family Foundation* of Montreal donated two fine cellos to the Bank. The *1824 McConnell Nicolaus Gagliano* was awarded in June 1999 to Denise Djokic of Halifax for two years. The other cello is on loan to Sophie Rolland of London, England, until the end of her career.

In September 2000, the largest Instrument Bank competition to date, Halifax cellist Denise Djokic won the loan of a *1696 Stradivari cello* and Calgary-born violinist Annalee Patipatanakoon won the loan of the *1717 Windsor-Weinstein Stradivari violin*.

In the same competition, the loan of the *1824 McConnell-Gagliano cello* was awarded to Roman Borys of Etobicoke, Ont., the *1820 Pressenda violin* to Jasper Wood, Halifax, N.S., the *1902 Rocca violin* to Julie-Anne Derome of Montreal and the *Shaw-Adam cello bow* to Kaori Yamagami of Maple, Ontario.

"I have a student right now who has the potential for an international career, but she can't afford a good violin. Where is she going to get one?"

Lorand Fenyves, Canada's pre-eminent violin teacher and former concertmaster of the Israel Philharmonic