



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 10, 2011

Winnipeg Folk Festival Glass Banjo Presentation *Province of Manitoba and Bill Merritt Honoured for Outstanding Contributions*

WINNIPEG, Manitoba, Canada – The Winnipeg Folk Festival presented the Glass Banjo award to two recipients on July 9, 2011. The Glass Banjo is the festival's highest honour, recognizing volunteers, supporters, partners and those who have made a significant contribution to the festival. Since its inception in 1974, the festival has given 33 of these awards.

Premier Greg Selinger received the award on behalf of the Province of Manitoba – a long time supporter of the festival in many ways. Annual funding through the Department of Culture provides a stable stream of revenue for festival operations and the Department of Conservation plays a critical role in ensuring the success of the festival. The Winnipeg Folk Festival is grateful for its partnership with the Province and is looking forward to working together for future festivals.

The Glass Banjo was also presented to Bill Merritt who served as the festival's business manager for 18 years, from 1977 to 1994. Driven by a conviction to music, Bill's kind, caring and firm control of the festival's finances allowed the festival to carry on almost against the odds. The Winnipeg Folk Festival was fortunate to have his guidance during these formative years. Under his leadership, business practices were developed that continue to benefit the organization.

In addition to playing a pivotal role with the Winnipeg Folk Festival, Bill was also a founder of the Winnipeg International Children's Festival and greatly contributed to the formation of Winnipeg's music scene.

Bill stepped down from his position with the Winnipeg Folk Festival when he was diagnosed with a brain tumour 18 years ago. The Winnipeg Folk Festival's community of volunteers, patrons and artists were happy to see Bill receive this award on the Main Stage last night.



PAST GLASS BANJO RECIPIENTS

- 2010 Terry Sargeant**, Past President
Big Rock Brewery, Sponsor
- 2009 Manitoba Hydro**, Sponsor
The Potter Family, Site Crew
- 2008 Inland Audio Visual**
Sponsor
- 2007 Ron Oswald**, Board Member
Jack Cram and Francene Adelman, Daytime Stage Coordinators
CanWest Global Foundation, Sponsor
- 2006 Andy Szukiewicz**, Birds Hill Provincial Park Maintenance Manager
Assiniboine Credit Union, Sponsor
- 2005 Danielle Carignan and Alexander Svenne**, La Cuisine Coordinators
- 2003 Mayor Glen Murray**, City of Winnipeg
Suzi and Rich McClear, KAXE Public Radio
- 2002 Randy Woods**, Main Stage Host
Peter Paul Van Camo, Winnipeg Free Press
- 2001 Winnipeg Foundation**
Darlene "Toots" Toews, Graphic Designer
- 2000 Brenda Douglas**, Past President, CBC
- 1999 Birds Hill Provincial Park, Michael Handler**, Past President
- 1998 Mitch Podolak**, Founder
Harry Paine, La Cuisine Coordinator
Rosalie Goldstein, Past Artistic Director



- 1997** **Burkhard Weiss**, Festival Tents
Jon Singleton, Treasurer and Board Member
Beth Shore, Board Member and Travel Agent
- 1996** **Karen Lawlor**, Past Staff and Main Stage Coordinator
Jane Graham, Past President
Bob Smith, Site Manager
- 1995** **Kim St. Hilaré**
David Landy, Photographer
- 1994** **Karen Dana**, La Cuisine Coordinator
Leslie Hambleton, La Cuisine Coordinato

About the Winnipeg Folk Festival

www.winnipegfolkfestival.ca

With one of North America's premier outdoor music festivals as its signature event, the Winnipeg Folk Festival is a year-round, not-for-profit arts organization that presents live music, arts events, and education and outreach programs designed to benefit the community. The 38th annual Winnipeg Folk Festival will take place July 6-10, 2011 in Birds Hill Provincial Park, Manitoba, Canada. The Winnipeg Folk Festival also operates a performance space and music store in Winnipeg's historic Exchange District.

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