



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legendary Oscar Brand to Receive Prestigious Winnipeg Folk Festival Artistic Achievement Award

WINNIPEG, Manitoba, Canada – The Winnipeg Folk Festival is pleased to announce that folk legend Oscar Brand will receive the festival's 2011 Artistic Achievement Award. The award recognizes outstanding artistic achievement of a festival performer who has demonstrated musical excellence and contributed at an exceptional level to the field of folk music as a whole.

Born in Winnipeg in 1920, Oscar Brand is a living legend – a composer, author, and host of the longest-running radio show in history, *Folksong Festival*, now in its 66th year. "I am exceedingly grateful for this award," said 91 year-old Brand. "I am proud of the fields where I was born and which I will always share with you. Thank you for bringing me home."

Brand has recorded 90 LPs, and written songs for the likes of Doris Day, Ella Fitzgerald, and Harry Belafonte. He is well known for writing catchy lyrics including the theme to his early-60's television show *Let's Sing Out*. The show's theme song, *This Land of Ours (Something to Sing About)*, is celebrated as one of Canada's most beloved national folk songs.

Brand was at the very first Winnipeg Folk Festival in 1974 and returned to perform again in 1980. In 2010 he graced the Winnipeg Folk Festival once again for a memorable afternoon workshop when he was also inducted into Manitoba's Order of the Buffalo Hunt, one of the province's highest honours.

Brand studied psychology at Brooklyn College, is a laureate of Fairfield University and holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Winnipeg. His prolific career as a songwriter and recording artist is perhaps matched only by his iconic, Emmy-winning role in television where he helped create "Sesame Street."

The 2011 Artistic Achievement Award will be presented to Oscar Brand on December 1, 2011 at the *Winter Wassail*, the annual fundraiser in support of the festival's education and outreach programs. Fred Penner, the festival's education and outreach ambassador, will be on hand to host the event. The 2010 Wassail raised \$40,000 for programs that supported programming for more than 10,000 participants. With the expansion of and demand for these programs, the support provided by this year's event is more important than ever.

The Winter Wassail takes place at the Winnipeg Convention Centre on Thursday, December 1, 2011. Tickets are \$150 and are on sale now through the Winnipeg Folk Festival office at 231-0096. A tax receipt will be issued for the charitable portion of the ticket price. More information is available at winnipegfolkfestival.ca.



Past Winnipeg Folk Festival Artistic Achievement Award Recipients:

2004 Loreena McKennitt
2005 Bruce Cockburn
2006 Odetta
2007 Buffy Sainte-Marie
2008 Richard Thompson
2009 Billy Bragg
2010 Leon Redbone

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 39th annual Winnipeg Folk Festival will take place July 4-8, 2012 in Birds Hill Provincial Park, Manitoba, Canada. The Winnipeg Folk Festival also operates a performance space, *The Folk Exchange* and an independent music store in Winnipeg's historic Exchange District.

For more information please contact:

Margaret Koshinsky
Manager, Marketing & Communications
204-231-0096
cell: 204-223-9328
margaret@winnipegfolkfestival.ca

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