



Keeping Music Education Strong

Mrs. Hoodless would have been proud. On Tuesday, May 9, 2006, Jim Cuddy of Blue Rodeo inspired a new generation of high school students to chart their own musical dreams by presenting Adelaide Hoodless Elementary School in Hamilton, Ontario with a \$10,000 grant for musical instruments. The gift, made on behalf of the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS), was followed by a performance by the school's music students.

MusiCan - CARAS's music education program - was formed in a bid to help stem the erosion of music education in Canadian schools. Adelaide Hoodless School was one of 37 schools across the country awarded a \$10,000 grant this year.

There is an additional delightful resonance: Mrs. Hoodless was the woman who inspired the 1897 creation of the Women's Institutes and a champion of using music to improve the education of all levels of society.

From the first penning of the Women's Institutes constitution at the Erland Lee home (now Museum) by Janet Lee, the importance of music and art in schooling was identified as one of the organization's six priorities in improving women's status through education. At the second full meeting of the Stoney Creek Women's Institute, March 11, 1897, two separate sections of the meeting were dedicated to music.

In 1937, Women's Institutes lobbied the Ontario government to make music studies a regular part of the public school curriculum, opening music studies to all levels of society.

How delightfully appropriate then that 109 years later, a school dedicated in the name of Mrs. Hoodless should be one of the recipients of grants designed to improve exposure to the children of today to music.

-Michael Gemmell
Curator, Erland Lee Museum
with files from Canadian Press

