



DONALD STRATHDEE

1931 - 1989

A much-admired music teacher for thirty-four years, Donald Strathdee retired in 1987. His entire teaching career had been devoted to the students at Etobicoke Collegiate. In honour of his commitment to teaching and music, more than 1200 people paid tribute to Strathdee on the occasion of his retirement at a special Roy Thomson Hall concert.

Under Strathdee's direction, Etobicoke Collegiate students performed in many cities across Canada and the United States. For one particular concert, a war canoe was used to transport heavy musical equipment to a remote Cree community on Moose Factory Island in Northern Ontario. The band also performed internationally in Mexico and a number of cities in Europe including Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam and Lucerne. In 1971, they played in Moscow and Leningrad, making them the first Canadian band to perform behind the Iron Curtain. Strathdee's intermediate and senior stage bands regularly competed at the Toronto regionals for the Canadian Stage Band Festival (now MusicFest Canada), which were the largest amateur music competitions at the time. Etobicoke Collegiate Institute's bands won silver and bronze medals.

Throughout his teaching career, Strathdee fostered the growth of music appreciation and music education in the classroom and beyond. He was conductor of the Etobicoke Philharmonic Orchestra in its early years. He was also an executive of the Etobicoke Secondary School Music Teachers' Association. In 1971, Strathdee published *Crosswinds*, a senior course of study for music history that was embraced by students and staff alike. In 1981, he was named Teacher of the Year in Etobicoke.

At the time of his retirement, *Tripper Magazine* stated that "Mr. Strathdee is one of those rare musicians who excels as a teacher and a human being."

Inducted into the Etobicoke Hall of Fame in 1989