

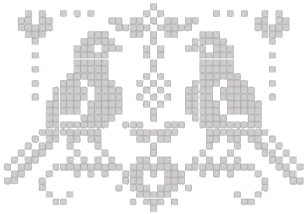


In loving Memory of
Oskar and Klara Bookbinder



Foreward from Klara's 1993 book

“Songs and Games for Preschool Children - Within the Range of Six Notes”



“Introduction to music must begin as soon as possible.”

“It is not practical to correct in higher grades”

“The impressions of 3-5 years old last for a lifetime.”

- Zoltán Kodály

This collection of songs and games for young children takes its roots from my years in the Academy of Music in Budapest. Being a student of Professor Kodály meant to be implanted with his vision of a new humanity, nurtured from the beginning by the gentle art of music.

In my case, that vision had to be transplanted in my new country.

Now, looking back over thirty years of teaching music in Canada, I have found most joy and satisfaction working with preschool children. For that reason, I dedicate this collection to them, with special thanks to Mrs. Marion Nichol and her students at Rockwood Centennial Kindergarten. They gave me, through the past seven years, valuable help and encouragement to create and develop this material.

Most of the music and lyrics presented here are adapted from folksongs from different parts of the world, some made up, some both.

As an example, the melody of “Lazy pussy cat...” came from a Hungarian folk song. The lyrics are suggested by the children and most of the games are created by them. This is their all-time favourite.

Let's sing and play!

Rockwood 1993

Klára Scheller Bookbinder



Ozskar Imre György Buchbinder

Born: January 10th, 1926
Balatonlelle, Somogy, Hungary

Died: July 7th, 2019
Guelph, Ontario Canada

Klára Scheller-Buchbinder

Born: November 20th, 1928
Nagykanizsa, Zala, Hungary

Died: February 20th, 2017
Guelph, Ontario Canada

Introduction

This booklet memorializes the lives of Oskar and Klara Bookbinder, beloved piano teachers in Rockwood, Ontario. Oskar and Klara arrived in Canada as refugees from Hungary in 1957 and built a new life in Canada. Oskar and Klara leave behind no children, nor relatives in Canada, so this booklet serves as a memento of their legacy and impact on their friends, neighbours and students.





Growing Up in Hungary

Oskar was born in 1926 to Oszkár Buchbinder and Terézia Gelencsér. Oskar's mother died when he was very young and his father later remarried and had another son. Oskar had many letters from "Papa", but did not appear to keep in touch with his relatives after his father's death.

Klara was born in 1928 to Bela and Margrit Scheller. Klara, nicknamed 'Klari', had one brother István (1934-2008). Although her parents passed away in the 1960's, Klara kept in touch and visited with her family throughout her life, and she leaves behind her sister-in-law, as well as a niece and great-niece in Hungary.

As a young man, Oskar was a student at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest but his studies were interrupted by conscription into the Hungarian Army in 1944, at the height of the Soviet invasion of Hungary. Oskar was intensely private about his life in Hungary, but we do know that he was held as a prisoner of war (POW) in the USSR. Facing international pressure, the USSR repatriated some Hungarian POWs during the years 1946-1948. We can gather that Oskar was one of those repatriated Hungarians, based on the memories of Magdolna Szabo described in this booklet. Oskar re-commenced his study at the Music Academy from 1948-1953 specializing in the organ and conducting at the Bela Bartok Conductor Training School in the Academy.

Klara also studied at the Franz Liszt Academy from 1949-1954, specializing in music education, obtaining her Master of Music degree in piano methodology. Klara and Oskar were married while still students, on November 11th, 1951.

After completing their music studies, Klara was a professor and head of the music department at the Teachers College in Zalaegerszeg. Oskar worked as a research fellow with the Hungarian Academy of Arts and Sciences - Institute for Musicology, collecting Hungarian folk songs and traditional music.

The President of that Academy at the time was Oskar and Klara's mentor from the Franz Liszt Academy, the famous Hungarian composer, ethnomusicologist and pedagogue Zoltán Kodály.

The Bookbinders' music training in Budapest influenced their entire lives, as Klara practiced and experimented with early childhood education and the Kodály Method throughout her whole life. Oskar continued his interest in folk music, and his extensive music collection contained many books of folk songs from the around the world, including Canada.

Careers in Canada

Like many others, Oskar and Klara escaped from Hungary in the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution. In Oskar's own words "For my part in the 1956 popular uprising, I had to choose a term in jail or a hurried exit from the country. Being a sensible fellow, I took Claire and a couple of books and landed in Canada in 1957."

They left Hungary on January 26th, 1957 from the border town of Lendvadedes in Zala County. After six months of living in several refugee camps throughout the former Yugoslavia, they arrived in Quebec on July 21st, 1957 and settled in Toronto. Upon entry to Canada, their names were anglicized to "Oscar and Claire", but they eventually resumed more traditional spellings (Oskar and Klara). Klara taught private piano lessons to students at their home, while Oskar studied engineering and began working for Wilson Plastic Signs in August 1959.

Oskar started as a factory worker but became very successful as the lead plant engineer and he was the co-inventor on at least one patent: United States Patent 3,748,461 "Strip Lighting Structure", inventors Arthur K. Wilson and Oscar Bookbinder, filed Sept 29th 1972 and assigned July 24th, 1973. He formed a consulting company (IndusTech Ltd.) and continued to work as a freelance engineer designing machines and parts into his 70's. Oskar also taught piano and music theory to students both privately and as a classroom partner in Klara's teaching.





Klara taught piano privately and led group classes at various schools in Toronto and Rockwood, including Montessori schools, the University of Guelph Laboratory School, Rockwood Nursery School, and Rockwood Centennial School's kindergarten class, as recounted by teacher Marion Nichol in this booklet. In addition to her busy teaching studio, Klara composed many songs for children and self-published 10 books of compositions, including: *Songs and Games for Preschool Children within the range of six notes; From Beginning to Grade One – children's songs from many countries; Piano Miniatures for the Early Grade Pianist; 12 Dances for Piano; Six Easy Dances From the Past for Piano; 16 Miniatures for Piano; 7 Intermediate Piano Solos; 10 Intermediate Piano Solos; 24 Intermediate Piano Solos; Eight Piano Solos; as well as arrangements of children's songs from many countries (Thirty Pieces for Piano). Klara also encouraged her students to explore composition and she had their compositions published in two volumes: The Cat's Lullaby and more... by Young Composers age 10 to 20 and The March Down the Street and Many More by Very Contemporary Canadian Composers Age 6-17.*

Life in Rockwood

The Bookbinders lived in a few places in Toronto, before purchasing their house at 74 Winona Street, Toronto in 1964. In 1972, Oskar and Klara bought a forested property outside of Rockwood, Ontario, from the Rockwood Lime Company, and began building their dream house. They started by clearing space for a pond, which became a great recreation spot for them both, and they spent happy times entertaining friends, swimming and in their paddle boat, always intrigued and delighted by the wildlife they could spot.

The clearing of the land and building the house took several years, and they moved to Rockwood full-time around 1977. Oskar's technical skill at the keyboard was matched by his skills in building and designing with both metal and wood. Oskar designed and assembled many machines to complete much of the home's construction and furniture himself. Musically, Oskar took great interest in electronics, synthesizers and the emergence of music software throughout the 80's and 90's– he recorded arrangements of many compositions on synthesizers, particularly the Scarlatti sonatas.

Oskar also completed the graphic design for Klara's music books. His love of animals was legendary and the Bookbinders always had a selection of cats and dogs for company and protection. Even in his 90's, Oskar's neighbour Pam Ferguson would bring her dog each day to befriend Oskar and accompany him on his walks.

On top of her busy teaching studio and pedagogy efforts, Klara spent a lot of her free time doing needlework, including spinning their dogs' hair into yarn, dyeing it, and making dozens of linens, wall-hangings, sweaters, coats, and hand-bags. She enjoyed stitching traditional Hungarian designs as well as current fashions, and she gave many handcrafted items to friends, neighbours, students and their families. Hungarian cooking for friends and students was also a favourite pastime. Consumed by her passion for music education, Klara continued to teach piano to Rockwood students into her late 80's.

The following collection of memories about Oskar and Klara Bookbinder demonstrates the impact they had on those who knew them, particularly their piano students. The Bookbinders' deep appreciation for fine art, music and culture was passed down to countless young people over the years, with several going on to post-secondary music study and careers in the arts. The Bookbinders' devotion to music and their sixty-six-year love story serves as an inspiration to all who knew them.





Coming to Canada

Memories of Magdolna Szabo

My mother Margit, my brother Andrew and I (Magdolna) met Oscar and Klara in 1957. That year, my family was able to escape after the Hungarian Revolution and we had connection at the Yugoslav border (present day Slovenia). We were placed in a refugee camp located in a few hundred years-old beautiful castle and the three of us were assigned a round tower room with three beds.

A few days later somebody knocked on the door and there we were surprised when we saw two young people who were very shy and apologised but they were sent here and we were to share the round room. They moved in and we welcomed them; we knew that they were "somebodies". They were Klara and Oscar Bookbinder, his real name was Buchbinder. Originally Oscar's family came from Germany but moved to Hungary and they were honest hardworking people who became wealthy. Klara's family was Hungarian. Both Klara and Oscar enrolled in the Franz Liszt Music Academy in Budapest and their teacher was the famous Hungarian Zoltan Kodaly.



We spent a few months together in Yugoslavia, waiting for permission from the Canadian embassy to get to Canada. Klara and Oscar were also heading to settle down in Canada. We waited for six months there and eventually Canada accepted us and we came here. A few months later we ran into Oscar and Clara in Toronto! We were so happy and we started to invite each other back and forth and slowly we learned about each other.

Klara and Oscar were brilliant people. Klara bought an inexpensive piano and started to teach young children. Over the years they bought a house near Guelph. Klara engaged with the Kiwanis Festival and every year she selected the most talented young pupils and once a year she sent the young children to compete and perform some of Klara's composed piano pieces. She loved children! Eventually she published a book with easy pieces and she was acknowledged as a very good and patient teacher. The pupils and parents loved her. All this time while she was teaching Klara was knitting pullovers with incredible speed.





Oscar got a job in a plastic extrusion company. He devised manufacturing shortcuts and the company benefited by his inventions! Fortunately, the plant owner recognised Oscar's abilities and the company prospered. Eventually Oscar started to get invitations to other companies, mainly in the US. He did well! Here was a man who was a born musician and he could not become a performer. The reason was that when he was 18 years old he had to join the Hungarian army. This was the Soviet era; all the young Hungarian men were sent to the Soviet Union as prisoners. The Soviets didn't trust them and sent them back home. The young men returned to Hungary by forced march, had no warm clothes, and suffered from the incredible cold. Many died on the way home. Oscar's hands got frost-bitten, and they were shaking, so playing keyboard music was impossible. Oscar never talked about this part of his life; I learned it from Klara.



When they bought a house near Guelph, Oscar built rosewood shelves all around the living room and laid rosewood floors. The whole house was covered with sawdust. Here they bought a more expensive piano; the children had their lessons in a cleaner room. We went to visit them there. In the meantime Oscar kept going to the US for income-earning purposes.

Oscar always kept big Hungarian guard dogs. They tolerated Klara, and loved Oscar. They used to walk every day with the dogs; Oscar always talked to them quietly. The dogs lived close to the house. Oscar built a large area with a tall fence with a lock on the gate, and God save anybody who tried to come in uninvited.





The Toronto Years

Settling in Canada –

Memories by Michael Csaba

My first memories of Oskar & Klara are visiting them in their Winona Street house in Toronto. It was majestic old house, impeccably kept, with a piano room.

This was in the mid-sixties & I recall going for a ride in the back seat of Oskar's 1961 Ford Zephyr. This was an English car and my father was so enamoured with that he bought a 1960 model Mustang like it in 1963 except Oskar's had "overdrive" transmission, which today would be equivalent to 4th gear.

Also circa 1970, my parents, sister & brother-in-law, me, and Oskar and Klara went to a concert in War Memorial Hall at the University of Guelph to listen to one of Oskar's premier students, Peter Simon, play the piano. He was already an upcoming concert pianist by then. Peter Simon went on to become the President of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in 1991, a position he still holds today in 2019.

Also in 1969/1970, my parents built their "dream house" and of course overspent their credit limit. Oskar & Klara lent them \$2,500 to finish it move in condition with two student rental rooms in the basement,



In the late 1970's Oskar needed a hand clearing trees off of his property, so he hired my brother-in-law Mike, who was on summer vacation from teaching. I also helped out on weekends along with a friend from gradeschool. After the trees were cleared, Oskar had a pond dug and when it was done, my parents, sister and I went for a swim & dingy ride in it.

Soon a house appeared on the property that Oskar designed and built. The open concept, cathedral ceiling and drywall were innovations then, and they had plenty of room for piano, baby grand, and organ. He also had a "pet room" with a cat door that he also designed.

Oskar and Klara met my father before 1956, probably because he was a trained cantor and organist, a profession that nearly became extinct in Hungary with the change in government after the war. After my father passed in 1986, Oskar and Klara would visit my mother and me between Christmas and New Years and after or before grocery shopping at Zehr's.



My mother always had to have a decorated tree for Christmas & the Bookbinders always delighted in looking at that in addition to listening to some carols. These visits were short but interesting. Klara would mention working on a book and publishing; Oskar would mention writing jingles for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Fast forward to June 1994, my mother, her friend & her husband and I were invited to their students' summer concert in Rockwood - some of the performances were absolutely amazing.

Once in the late nineties Oskar & Klara visited us in the summer for a barbecue along with her brother and his wife from Hungary. Klara's brother looked at my 2-cylinder Dodge and had to have a ride in it.

In closing, I'd like to mention that both Oskar & Klara were pupils of the musician and composer Zoltan Kodaly, who passed away in Hungary in 1967 and left a music teaching methodology, along with memorable compositions such as the Hari Janos Suite, a battle march.





Teaching during the Toronto years –

Memories of Marilyn Goldberg

I was one of the “sixties” kids who studied with the Bookbinders in Toronto. I’d walk into the woody/leathery first floor on Winona Drive and play for Clara. She was warm, spirited and encouraged me to write music when I showed an aptitude. Every week she’d ask, “Marilyn, did you practise?” I’d often have written a small piece instead, and she’d excitedly write it out for me.

As a teenager, I was sent to the third floor musical lair of “Mr. Bookbinder”. In my frightened state he asked me to play. I plunked out a piece and he responded (with pipe in hand), “So you think you can play the piano?” Deflated and devastated I began weekly lessons with him and practised until I mastered Bach Inventions with skill and understanding. Memories of his dry wit and sarcasm remain with me.

There were concerts at the Music Library featuring Bartok and other Hungarian composers. I feel privileged to have studied with such cultured, knowledgeable teachers.

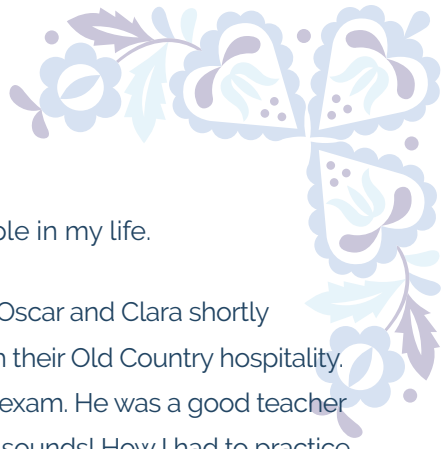
I visited them a few times in Rockwood. Clara always made an extravagant, sumptuous Hungarian lunch while Mr. B proudly laughed at how his dog had terrorized the vet. Oscar told me not to wait too long to visit or else I should bring flowers.

They left a deep musical impression on me as I went on to study Music at York. They were true "originals" and imparted their love of music to everyone.



Teaching and friendship –

Memories of Anna Tang



Oscar and Clara are important people in my life.

I came to Canada in 1969 and met Oscar and Clara shortly afterwards. They have welcomed me with their Old Country hospitality. I studied piano under Oscar for my ARCT exam. He was a good teacher and was a perfectionist when it comes to sounds! How I had to practice for weeks to get that perfect phrase!

Often after my lesson Clara would invite me to dine with them. I learned about authentic Hungarian goulash, the spatzle, chicken paprikash, Wiener schnitzel, and palatschinke. Oscar loved her cooking and she was an excellent cook. They had lots of good friends who would gather and reminisce about the good old days in Hungary. I learned a lot about Budapest and Hungarian musicians, such as Bela Bartok and Zoltan Kodaly.

We drifted away after they moved to Rockwood and my family moved out east, where I taught piano for a short time. We only exchanged phone calls and Christmas cards. I feel blessed to have connected back with Oscar after Clara's departure, and was able to visit him and spend time listening to music together.

I will always remember our visit in June 2019 - we had lunch together, went out for a walk with the dog Lily, and listened to music for a couple of hours. It was a beautiful day!

I am sure Oscar is now happy to be with Clara again and may they both Rest In Peace.



Viva La Musica –

Memories of Vajay Emőke Cserhádi

In June 1970 I went to a piano recital of Klára's and Oszkár's students who ranged in age from 6 to 19. One of Klára's young students was my friend's son. One of Oszkár's older students was Peter Simon, who is now the President and CEO of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

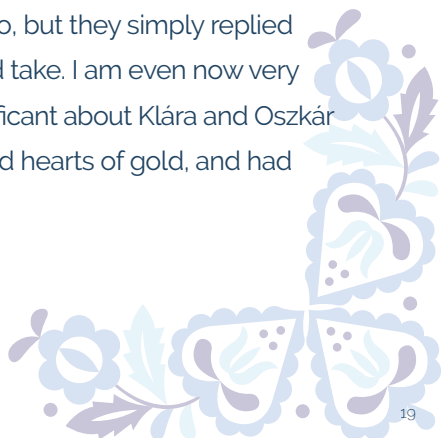
In September 1977, I came to know Klára when I took my seven-year-old daughter to her for lessons in their Winona Drive home. She was a very good, very enthusiastic teacher and a kindred spirit. I learned she had been a student of the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, just as I had been. I felt at home at once.

The following year, our daughter played in the student recitals in Toronto and Rockwood; one piece was for four hands, which we played together. After the second concert, our family was invited to their home

in Rockwood amongst many friends. Though I saw Oszkár in their Winona Drive home, I had never spoken to him. In Rockwood, however, although many people were there talking, I eventually noticed Oszkár was sitting quietly, and then that he was looking at me, drawing slowly on his pipe. Then he asked, "Aren't you a Vajay?" "Yes," I replied. And he said, "You look like my grandmother." I started to laugh because my family always wondered "Where did she come from?" and "Who does that little girl take after?" My response to Oszkár was, "Finally, I know!"

After that, we talked about our backgrounds. I learned he was a student of Kodály and that he had studied composition under him. So I asked him, what he had been composing since then. He replied, "I haven't." "Why not?" "Because everything would fit into a C Major chord," he said. "Milyen fekvésben – in what position?" I asked. He answered slowly, "Egy jó fekvésben – in a good position." When my composer friends from Budapest came to Toronto to present their works for the celebration of the 35th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, I told them this story. They laughed so hard that one of them literally fell off his chair onto the floor.

Although I had rented an upright piano early on for my daughter in Toronto, once Klára and Oszkár realised I was a musician who had never owned a piano, and had been without a piano since coming to Canada seven years ago, they determined that I should have one, one of theirs. I tried to explain we couldn't afford a piano, but they simply replied I could repay them however long it would take. I am even now very touched by it. What is perhaps most significant about Klára and Oszkár is that they were equally encouragers, had hearts of gold, and had dedicated their whole life to music.





A Life of Meaning –

Memories of Péter Cserháti

We had known Oszkár and Klára since 1977. They were both warm and good-hearted, always ready with a smile. There is a side to Oszkár, however, that I wish to bring more clearly to light. Oszkár was not only a musician, composer, engineer, and animal-lover, but a unique mind with a great wit and sense of humour. He engaged in life fully and in things only of the highest quality, enjoying books, music and the visual arts of the highest standards. I recall seeing a drawing he made of Don Quixote and the Windmills, which was more a statement of his own unique humour-philosophy about humans, rather than about the story itself.

Many times, we had good discussions about the meaning of life itself, and what could possibly be happening in humans' minds. He certainly had his own philosophy about that. We laughed a lot too. It was always a great pleasure to have a discussion with Oszkár about anything. On my last visit to see Oszkár in 2018, I showed him a number of my oil paintings. He looked at the canvases silently, piping along, pausing,

then finally he talked about the meaningfulness of the visions in each painting. He seemed truly humbled in the viewing, and several times as we carried and packed the paintings back into my car, we embraced. "Before you leave, promise to come and visit me again." I promised. Sadly, I was not able to do it. I owe him one.





The Rockwood Years

The Kindergarten Class -

Memories of Marion Nichol

When my own son was in Rockwood nursery school a local couple would occasionally visit to sing interactive simple songs with the children. I, as a helping mom, would sometimes be there the same days as "Mr and Mrs Bookbinder" We introduced ourselves to each other, realized we were neighbours and all had a love of music -a friendship was born.

I taught kindergarten at Rockwood Centennial and Klara wished to implement the Kodaly method of teaching to young children, so a short weekly visit was planned, approved and launched during the late 1980's.

What a wonderful experience for all! Klara and Oscar were a team with a synthesizer and simple tunes and actions, and the children were exposed to a fun music class led by a couple with very thick accents!

Our "job" during the week was to practise the simple songs - we had a variety of interpretations of the words and pronunciations of our songs each week, depending on what the children "heard". Of course each child thought his/her rendition was the correct one!



In later years, after my retirement, I worked part time at the Rockwood branch library. Mrs. Bookbinder hosted many of her recitals in the meeting room where her students performed on the beautiful baby grand piano that Mr. and Mrs. Bookbinder and friends donated to the township. How fortunate I was to enjoy first-hand the talent of many of Mrs. B's beloved students. She was a wonderful teacher and so proud of each of her students from all levels.

Klara and Oscar were a great "team" and special people. I have many fond memories.





A Neighbour and a Friend –

Memories of Pam Ferguson

I met Oscar and Clara in 1978 when I was 18. We shared a love of nature, music and our pets. I spent most Saturday and Sunday mornings (before Church) walking, visiting and sharing coffee and goodies with them.

My fondest memories are of brushing their big white dog Poitage and washing his hair with Ivory baby detergent. Clara and I would dye the hair with Kool-Aid, wild berries, and anything else we could find. Clara would lay it upstairs in the loft, in the sun, to dry before she would begin to weave it into her sweaters, hats, scarves and mittens. I also remember Clara and Oscar bringing in a pail of raw milk every weekend from a local farmer. Clara taught me how to make yogurt, cottage cheese, butter and junket.

In the early days, Oscar was a man of very few words. He did have three or four phrases that he commonly used. When our work was done Clara would tell Oscar to go to his room. He would say "Come again?" Clara would speak sternly to him in Hungarian and he would roll his eyes, fold his arms, take his pipe, nod at me and get up and go to his room. I asked Clara what she had said. She said, I told him to go to his room because I want to have girl talk. She was a dear sweet woman and it was an honour for me to have been a part of her life.

When Clara passed, I had the privilege of being Oscar's care companion seven days a week, twice a day, sometimes three times. I would go at lunch with his papers (The National Post and the Toronto Sun) and my dog, Lilly. Oscar begged me to get him a dog. I said to him, "Oscar, you are 90 years old! I wouldn't be able to bring Lilly out anymore, because 2 cats, 2 dogs plus you - I just can't do it. I'll make

you a deal: You can have joint custody of Lilly. I'll bring her out at lunch time and she is yours until I go home in the evening." We shook on it and he thought it was a good idea.

When I would go back at dinner time, he and I would discuss the news, politics, religion, Steven Hawking, and the war days, which is when I realized Oscar was actually a man of many words. His favourite foods were bacon, chicken wings ("vings") and apples. Every Sunday, after church, I would bring a plate of goodies from the Ladies of St. John's Anglican Church, Rockwood and the church bulletin. Oscar would read it cover to cover. I would hum a familiar hymn while doing the dishes, and Oscar would join in. He had an amazing bass voice.

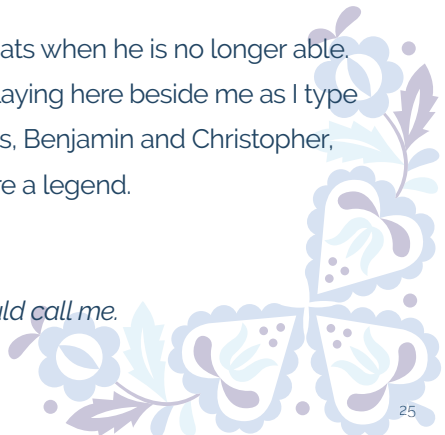
After dinner Oscar would say "Vut is the program tonight?" I would google who was playing hockey or soccer and write it down for him and set up the television. When I was ready to go, he would give me a big hug. I would say "See you tomorrow." and he would respond, "I'll be here." I used to say, "You'd better be, because you have a six-month subscription to the National Post!" He would laugh, and so would I.

My sons would look after Oscar when I needed a day off, and Oscar adored them. They would discuss music – modern and classical, inventions of Oscars, war days, and he would show them around the music room. It brought a spark back into his eyes.

Oscar always asked me to look after his cats when he is no longer able. I promised him that I would, and they are laying here beside me as I type my memories of Clara and Oscar. My boys, Benjamin and Christopher, summed it up best: The Bookbinders were a legend.

Rest in Peace. I love you Oscar and Clara!

From Your "Good Neighbour" as Oscar would call me.





With Love from Rockwood Students...

Memories of Chrystal Vermeulen

The memories I have of the Bookbinders were a very big part of my childhood. They were like grandparents you didn't know you had. You learn to admire many things when you're at the age of 6. I always admired how Klara could make her fingers dance across the keys so flawlessly, with a dull pencil woven between her fingers. I remember I would learn a song and practice at home, then try to hold a pencil between my fingers just as she did, to try to be as good as she was.

Growing up, I always thought last names were something you could choose when you got married. So, to me it made perfect sense why Klara was a Bookbinder. She wrote children's music books and had them bound...I was fully content with that idea for the longest time.

I very briefly got to know about Klara's personal life and why she came to Canada. Her thick Hungarian accent was tough to understand at times, but it was even harder to understand what she escaped from in her country at that age. She didn't talk about it. All she wanted was to share her knowledge and love of music with many of her students.

Taking piano lessons once a week meant a regular occurrence of listening to her phone ring off the hook. I would play a song for Klara and I would hear the phone start to ring so I would stop. She would pause in concern thinking I'd forgotten the notes. I told her the phone was ringing and she would scurry out of the room and stand in the narrow hallway. She would shout into the phone as her phone line was always interrupted by the man's voice on the answering machine. She could never understand why there was a strange man who kept interrupting the person on the other end.

Klara always made the most of our time together. Our lesson had ended, but Klara would hurry over to the tall window in the waiting room and pull the blinds apart and peak through. She would insist I play the piece through once more since my ride hadn't arrived yet.

Of course, there were difficult times at piano lessons. There were days I dreaded going, days I just didn't want to practice anymore, but I kept going. She often scolded me for not reading the music.





I have very good memory for the sound of music, but Klara always knew I was trying to get by without reading the music. I learned to associate sound with the section of the sheet music and memorize it. I would do everything in my power to avoid having to stop and read. But she never failed to say her famous words, "No. Wrong. Again. Read the music!". If I would have stopped and read the music when I was younger, it would have been much easier to pick up piano now that I'm older. I wish I would have listened. At a young age, its hard to understand why. But I get it now.

I can remember rehearsing my pieces for the Kiwanis Music Festival, practicing all the way up until the very day. She would lean back in her chair with the biggest smile on her face, her hands neatly folded in her lap as I would run though the piece once more. I could feel her sense of pride and accomplishment. She could barely contain her excitement. One day, she suddenly got up and left the room. She returned to her chair shortly after and Oskar joined us in the small piano room. I was terrified. This was really the first time I properly saw Oskar. I vividly I remember the strong scent of pipe smoke that instantly filled the room. He stood at the back of the room, next to the tall bookshelf which was nearly his height. I took a deep breath and played the piece from the top, constantly wondering about this mysterious figure. I got part way through the first section and I felt him take a step forward. I continued playing, feeling so hesitant and nervous. I reached the chorus of the song and he was suddenly behind me. He began tapping very lightly, using his pipe to touch the centre of my spine in rhythm with the song. It shocked me, but I quickly realized he was trying to slow me down and really take my time with those delicate notes. When I finished the song, I looked over at Klara as I always had, she looked at Oskar and my eyes followed. They exchanged a silent head nod, a small smile, and he left the room.

After 12 years of lessons, sitting at a piano bench feels like there's something missing. She sat to my right, counting the bars of music aloud and it always warmed my heart. The thrill I felt after finally mastering the tough part of Für Elise was why I kept with piano: I knew how happy Klara was. Another favourite song of mine is Autumn Glow by Martha Mier. To this day, it is a favourite of mine to play in memory of Klara.

Piano has had a great impact on my life. It gave me the confidence to perform, encouragement to perfect my skills and a deeper appreciation for the joy that classical music brings to people's lives. Piano is important to me because I know it makes the important people in my life happy - my parents, my aunt and most importantly, my grandparents. I have Klara and Oskar to thank for that and it's been a privilege to learn from such inspiring people. Their spirit lives on in me, as well as in the hearts of many others whose lives the Bookbinders have touched.





Memories of Heather (Brown) Reid

I met Mr. and Mrs. Bookbinder when I attended Rockwood nursery school. At nursery school, and then later in kindergarten, Mr. and Mrs. Bookbinder would let us try out a number of different instruments and lead us in singing games. By far my most favourite singing game was "Bluebell". I could not get enough of the repeated words "Bluebell, Bluebell, open up. Let this honey bee in your cup."

After kindergarten, I started taking piano lessons with Mrs. Bookbinder at her house. I played by memory at first, thinking that Mrs. Bookbinder wouldn't notice I wasn't reading the music if my eyes were on the paper. Mrs. Bookbinder wasn't so easily fooled and after a few years she informed me that it was past time I learned to read music.

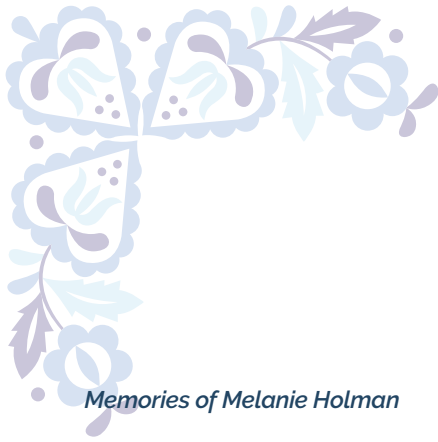
Over the following years Mr. and Mrs. Bookbinder grew into musical grandparents. I would often find Mrs. Bookbinder's homemade cookies in my pocket on the way home. If I had a cold, she would make me a special drink of orange juice, apple juice, spices, and perhaps a hint of something stronger. When I went away for university Mrs. Bookbinder shared some of her homemade recipes with me so I could eat healthy when I was away.

Lessons over the years always started with going up the front steps and hearing the dogs announce my presence. Concerts at the Rockwood library were a regular affair. Our preparation for the concert always included reciting "I will be playing ___ by ___" followed by a bow. My favourite part of the concerts were her homemade cookies.

Lessons with Mr. Bookbinder were challenging and diverse. While Mr. Bookbinder held his pipe he would lead me through exercises for sight singing (you cannot play what cannot hear in your mind), sight reading (often a selection from the "371 Harmonized Chorales" by Bach), playing along with the computer to master a complicated passage, discussing interpretations of how to play a piece of music, and theory. His dry sense of humour permeated our lessons and made them engaging and interesting.

Mr. and Mrs. Bookbinder cared deeply and blessed me with a lifelong love of learning music. I continue to play and learn music and am also now passing that gift forward to my children.





Memories of Melanie Holman

My siblings, Jennifer, Mark, Sarah, and I began taking lessons with Mrs. Bookbinder sometime in the early 1980's. I believe that it was after a neighbour in Oustic recommended Mr. and Mrs. Bookbinder for music lessons that our parents decided to switch us from our teacher in Guelph. At that time our lessons were in the music room at the school in Rockwood. What I remember most from those early days is my sister Jennifer learning Fur Elise, my brother learning some jazz-inspired pieces and my younger sister using circles of wood to learn note names. Memories of my own experiences with Mr. and Mrs. Bookbinder are from the time I spent taking lessons and visiting them in their home.

Like everyone, I felt a huge surge of adrenaline as I rushed past their dogs who never seemed to recognize me at all and made me feel like an intruder. But once I crossed the threshold to the music room I instantly felt safe and welcomed - and, to be honest, usually a little bit guilty for not practicing enough.

As a teacher, I now understand that Mrs. Bookbinder made it all seem so easy. She knew just what songs to present and when, how to push and how to be supportive. all at the same time. Her depth of knowledge of music and pedagogy was invisible to me then, but so very obvious now upon reflection.



I continued my studies with Mr. Bookbinder as I finished high school and prepared for auditions to study music at the post-secondary level. I vividly recall the slightly cool front room, the stool at the grand piano, and of course, Mr. Bookbinder and his pipe. I am grateful that I had this time to study with him. Prior to these lessons I didn't really know him at all. I had found his quiet demeanour and obvious knowledge of music intimidating. During my lessons though, I came to know him more and enjoyed my time with him. He was a patient and astute teacher who didn't give compliments freely - which made me want to earn one even more. I remember once laughing with him as he jokingly tried to stretch my pinky to make the seemingly impossible octave passage within reach.

I can trace so many of the good moments of my life directly back to Mr. and Mrs. Bookbinder. Because of studying music with them, I had various music-centered part-time jobs, such as working at the Garden



Street Music Shop, being a rehearsal pianist for a dance school and for musical rehearsals, being an accompanist, and even a piano teacher for a short time. Not to mention the five minutes of fame that my sister Sarah and I had when Mrs. Bookbinder convinced us (as teenagers!) to appear on the local show, Big Top Talent - good times... and good laughs for years afterwards. I also believe it is because of their influence that I eventually became an elementary school teacher.

Not only did my time with them influence me professionally, it had a profound effect on me personally. I learned from both Mr. and Mrs. Bookbinder's examples about kindness, integrity, work ethic, humility and generosity. I also feel fortunate to have experienced a bit of their Hungarian culture through the music they taught me, through food shared during visits, and through their beautiful home decor. This too has had an influence on my life.

A few years ago while visiting them, I tried to express my gratitude for all that they had given to me and brought to my life. I struggled then, as I do now, to find the right words.

I will be forever grateful to them for sharing their time and their love of music with me, and for the impact they had, and continue to have on my life.

They are missed.





The Bookbinder Legacy

Oskar and Klara were extremely hard-working and lived simply. When they passed, they left much of their estate to charity. Three outstanding organizations have received transformational donations from the Estate of Klara and Oscar Bookbinder. These organizations have committed to stewarding the legacy of the Bookbinders by enhancing access to rural healthcare services, supporting Canadian music teachers through the Kodaly method, and of course, ensuring the sustainability of Klara's beloved Kiwanis Festival. The impact of these donations is described by each organization:

Hospice Wellington

*Kiwanis Festival
of Guelph*

*Kodaly Society
of Canada*



Hospice Wellington –

Pat Stuart, Executive Director

Every day in the Hospice Wellington Residence, we take care of people at the end of their lives, knowing what trust is given to us by those same people and their loved ones. Our staff and volunteers have a deep commitment to offering peace, welcome and respect at the end of life. Those same intentions apply to our Community Services team who provide programs to support both individuals facing a life-limiting illness living in the community, and loved ones who are learning to walk with their own grief after death.

Frankly as an organizational leader, it was heartbreaking that we had no further capacity within our walls to host more programs for community members.

The wonderful gift from the estate of Klara and Oscar Bookbinder has made it possible to take Hospice Wellington programs outside of our walls further into the rural community of Guelph-Eramosa where they lived, to the County of Wellington and to other sites in Guelph. Their vision of serving others will mean that so many people may access vital services closer to home, where people feel most comfortable. It seems so fitting that, as in life, Klara and Oscar Bookbinder continue to make life-impacting learning possible.

Kiwanis Festival of Guelph –

Heather Fleming, Festival Coordinator

“The Kiwanis Music Festival of Guelph is one of the extremely fortunate recipients of funding from the Bookbinder estate. The incredibly generous contribution of \$250,000 will ensure the sustainability of the Festival for decades to come and will also enable the implementation of several exciting initiatives in honour of Klara and Oscar.

The Oscar Bookbinder Composition Competition will give the opportunity for emerging composers to submit a piece to be judged by multiple adjudicators and to receive written feedback. The winning submission will receive a \$1,000 prize, the Oscar Bookbinder Composition Trophy, and the chance to have their work published and performed.

A Scholarship Competition for Advanced Level Performers will take place following the Festival each year and will feature the top 2 solo performers from each discipline as selected by the adjudicators. The 1st prize winner of this live, adjudicated competition will receive a \$1,000 prize, the Klara Bookbinder Memorial Cup, and the opportunity to perform at a future concert organized by the Festival.

The Festival is also happy to announce several initiatives for music education and community support including: a new workshop for elementary music teachers, bursaries for busing subsidies, bursaries to assist with student needs such as entry fees, accompanists, lessons and instrument rentals, as well as new scholarships for rural students.

The Kiwanis Music Festival is delighted to receive such a generous gift from the Bookbinder’s estate and is so grateful for the positive impact it will have on the lives of countless talented and dedicated musicians and their families and teachers.”





Kodaly Society of Canada –

Dr. Jody Stark, President

The Kodály Society of Canada (KSC) is honoured to have received a \$250 000 gift from the estate of the late Klara and Oscar Bookbinder and proud to be part of the Bookbinder's legacy in Canada. The gift in honour of the Bookbinder's commitment to music education and association with Hungarian composer, ethnomusicologist and pedagogue Zoltán Kodály will allow the KSC to support quality music education in Canadian schools and communities in a variety of ways. The majority of the money has been invested into an endowment that will provide annual funding for projects in four pillar areas:

- 1. *Teacher education and professional learning for music educators:***
Workshops, scholarships, and other supports for future and current music teachers;
- 2. *Music curriculum development and pedagogical resources:***
Early childhood resources, creation and dissemination of Canadian resources;
- 3. *Research in support of quality music education:*** *Including early childhood music education and Canadian song research;*
- 4. *Outreach and operations:*** *Supporting provincial branches financially in offering local professional learning opportunities, administrative support for the national and provincial organizations.*

The impact of this gift from the Bookbinder Estate is enormous for music education in Canada. The Board of Directors of the Kodály Society of Canada anticipate being able undertake many initiatives that will have a direct benefit to music educators and students across the country. The Kodály Society of Canada wishes to express its heartfelt thanks to Mr. Peter Hannam, the Estate Executor, and his daughter Carol.



Notes about this Booklet

Executor of the Bookbinder Wills - Peter Hannam

Research and Editor of this Booklet - Carol Hannam

All three of the Hannam children (Rob, Greg, and Carol) took piano lessons from Klara and Oskar for approximately a decade after the Bookbinders moved to Rockwood. Even after their mother, Sandra, had long finished driving her children to lessons, she continued her friendship with the Bookbinders. In their later years, as the Bookbinders aged, Sandra spent more and more time visiting Oskar and Klara and making sure their needs were met. In the early 2000's, Klara and Oskar asked Sandra and Peter to be their Power of Attorney and ultimately executor of their estate. In their final years, Peter was instrumental in managing the care and support services that fulfilled Klara and Oscar's wish to stay in their beloved and familiar Rockwood home until their passing at the ages of 89 and 93, respectively.

Many thanks to Cara Scheerer of Pixel Dust Graphics for designing the booklet.



