

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **MORDEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESENTS LOREENA MCKENNITT AWARD**

For years, The Morden and District Chamber of Commerce considered how we could locally recognize Loreena McKennitt's many musical accomplishments. In 1995 we decided that, since the Morden Festival of the Performing Arts is where Loreena got her musical start, it would be the place where a lasting tribute to her would be most appropriate. We decided that a cash award and trophy, presented with pride in Loreena's name, would provide lasting recognition, to recognize her success and thank her for graciously remembering her roots in Morden, Manitoba.

In consultation with the Morden Festival of the Arts organizers, we are pleased to sponsor this Award for the Student judged to have reached a level of excellence in their musical studies and has shown the greatest inclination to continue these studies and pursue a career in the Performing Arts.

From its inception, our recipients have been Leanne Zacharias, Andrea Letkeman, Kyla Friesen, Kelly Cumming, Tara Pauls, Karen Hoepfner, Keith Cumming, Jenna Hamm, Andrew Rampton, Aaron Loepky, Ainsley Schroeder and Duncan Halstead.

In 2007 we are very proud to announce that the thirteenth recipient of the Morden and District Chamber of Commerce Loreena McKennitt Award is **JESSICA PERSSON**.

Jessica has a broad musical interest and music stands out as her favorite pastime and receives priority over all her interests, touching every area of her life. She first entered the Morden Festival of the Arts five years ago in categories of Strings, Piano, Band, Choir, Visual Arts and Dance and has received awards for

Strings and Piano, winning awards in Band, Art, Vocal Jazz and was nominated for the Provincial Festival in Intermediate Strings in 2006.

Since moving from South Africa in 2001, Jessica has sung with the Sound F/X Jazz Choir, the Central Manitoba Youth Choir, Manitoba Provincial Honour Choir as well as her Church Worship group, singing and playing violin.

She has played her violin with the Pembina Hills Community Orchestra for the past three years and has attended music camps at the University of Manitoba and International Peace Gardens.

She took up clarinet as a school band instrument in Grade 8 and was selected for the Manitoba Provincial Honour Band, a highlight of which was playing alongside the well known 'Canadian Brass' in 2006. She will also be competing at MusicFest Canada – a national band festival later this year.

If that was not enough, this multi-talented young lady has also turned her talents to performing at numerous fundraisers and banquets including High School Graduation, the grand opening of Focal Point, the Evening to Honour Loreena McKennitt and the Pembina Hills Arts Council fundraising banquet. She has also participated in vocal, violin and other group performances at the Manitou Coffee House, busks regularly for enjoyment playing fiddle, saxophone and clarinet at the Corn and Apple Festival and Chamber of Commerce Farmers Markets and has participated in school musicals, singing and dancing in Guys and Dolls and A Midsummer Night's Fever.

She plans to study medicine at the University of Manitoba next year and will include as much music in her courses as she can. She hopes to play in the jazz ensemble, orchestra and sing in the university choir. She will continue violin

instruction in Winnipeg and will always maintain a connection with an ensemble of some sort. This truly is her passion!

We are happy to present a cheque in the amount of \$100.00 and a trophy, upon which each of our winners' names is engraved. The trophy is proudly displayed in the Chamber of Commerce Office.

**JESSICA** has worked hard and is a very worthy recipient of this award. We congratulate her and wish her all the best for the future.

We thank the Festival Board and Organizers for their assistance in choosing our 2007 Winner.

- 30 -

For more information contact:

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