

WHITNEY MCMEEKIN

An Ode to Anne Foster

Mixed media (vintage props, records, sheet music, paper, vintage 1940's dress, photos and articles)

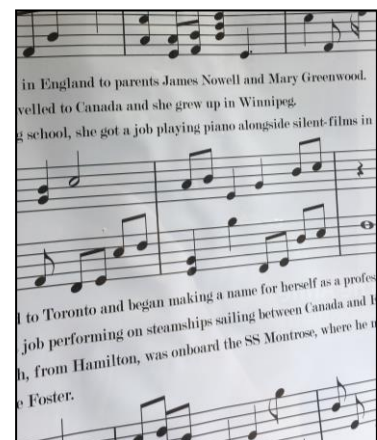


“*An Ode to Anne Foster* is a window recreating a display at the Anne Foster Music Shop in the 1950s as well as a celebration of the woman behind it, Anne Foster. My objective was to focus on who Anne was and why her story is so remarkable, while creating a nostalgic display that would evoke a feeling or memory in the viewer. I wanted to shine a light on a business that was run by a notable female entrepreneur and which contributed to the Hamilton music scene so greatly. Anne was an accomplished musician before starting the business, and it was her love and knowledge of music that made her shop a go-to for those learning a new instrument, full-time musicians, or the local music teachers. In this way, her shop shaped and nurtured so many practicing musicians at the time and she was a pioneer in shaping Hamilton as a music city.

When my research into Anne first started it became apparent that there was so little known about this woman who played such a large role in Hamilton's music and economic history. I met with her daughter Margaret and learned about her personal life through her daughter's eyes, and getting this intimate look into her life was very special. Hearing how people remember a person; the small tidbits that stick with them, the moment's shaped in their mind, are all part of a person's story and I wanted to visually-illuminate Margaret's memories, and hopefully the city's as well. Nostalgia and memories have a magical way of uniting people and serve as a way to celebrate our city's past as well as our future.

I used a mix of vintage objects and props, all sourced and collected over time and from various places. The historical information and facts came through a combination of sources; an interview with Anne's daughter, archival information and historical databases. In my creative work, I find the most inspiration in digging deep through dusty crates, in library corners, and serendipitous meetings and conversations with people who have a story to tell.

Learning about Anne and creating this display has been great and I can't help but admire this woman who accomplished so much in her lifetime and set out as a



female entrepreneur in a time when women had much less opportunity. She created a congregating point in our city and by dedicating her life to her customer's musical appreciation and learning, she serves as a notable pillar within our community. As a shop owner myself, I strive to create links and moments for people to come together in my own way, so learning about Anne Foster has been an inspiring and fulfilling experience. Delving into her story and Hamilton during the time she ran the shop (1940s-1960s) has made me appreciate my city and the people who make it what it is even more."

- Whitney McMeekin

About the Artist:

Whitney McMeekin has a BDes from Ryerson University, where she attended for Fashion Communication. In 2013, she opened her shop, Girl on the Wing, specializing in vintage and retro-inspired clothing and gifts. Through her business and various projects she demonstrates her passion for bringing people together through unique experiences. Most notably, she also runs the Hamilton Flea, an "every-once-in-a-while" pop-up event that occurs in historical Hamilton spaces that haven't been used in years and illuminates them with local makers and artists while seeking to tell their story. Her true passion is history and nostalgia, and her work seeks to visually express the influence the past has on what she creates. You can usually find her at her shop Girl on the Wing (181 King St East), obsessively building up collections of vintage artifacts, or daydreaming. Find Whitney on Instagram @girlonthewinghamilton and Twitter @gotw_hamilton or contact her via email whitney@girlonthewing.ca.

The Anne Foster Windows:

As part of the City of Hamilton, Tourism and Culture Division's ongoing support of the creative industries, local artists will be invited to create and install window displays that celebrate Hamilton's music scene. This space, the Anne Foster Window, is a fitting home for music themed displays as the entryway lead to the Anne Foster Music shop for almost 50 years (1947-1995). For more information visit www.hamilton.ca/music.

