

OLIVER SCHROER: 52

FIDDLER COMBINED BACH WITH TRADITION

July 7, 2008

Toronto -- Oliver Schroer, the acclaimed Canadian fiddler and composer, died Thursday of leukemia at Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto. He was 52.

Born in Germany, he came to Canada with his family as a boy and grew up near Collingwood, Ont. As a youngster, he embraced most forms of music until he discovered fiddling, only to become entranced by its sound and culture.

For a time, he attended university in Toronto and then dropped out to pursue full-time subway busking. Eventually, he became a sought-after sideman with dozens of different Toronto bands and in 1993 he brought out two albums. One of them, *JIGZUP*, got rave reviews and a Juno nomination. Eight more were to follow. Along the way, he composed 1,000 songs.

The Globe's music critic, Robert Everett-Green, described his playing as a "fusion of Ontario fiddling traditions with the kind of architectural, string-crossing music of Bach's solo violin works."

In 2003, Mr. Schroer launched The Twisted String, a teaching and performance concept to inspire young fiddlers. He attended one of their performances in Toronto's Distillery District on June 28. His own last performance occurred two weeks earlier.

A full obituary is forthcoming.