

# BILL ANDREWS CANADA MUSIC WEEK 2011® AWARD NOVA SCOTIA - HALIFAX CHAPTER

submitted by Elizabeth Shearouse



**Back Row:** Elizabeth Shearouse, Julia Jones, Rebekah Maxner, Miranda King, Sonja Pikel

**3<sup>rd</sup> Row:** Skippy Mardon, Sarah Bradbury, Sylvanna Feneyanos,  
Johanna Feneyanos, Aislinn Perry, Hind Debbach

**2<sup>nd</sup> Row:** Madeleine Kubik, Kevin Liu, Nathan Shearouse, Allie Martin,  
Steven Dockerty, Julia Crowell

**Front Row:** Bridget Duggan, Olan Collins, Libby Williams

Canada Music Week® calls for a special celebration! In Nova Scotia, the Halifax Chapter hosted an outstanding Canadian recital with a focus on Nova Scotian composer Rebekah Maxner. With nine teachers and close to forty students involved, attendance was extraordinary and the audience stretched the capacity of the Elsie MacAloney Room on the afternoon of November 26.

The first half of our two-hour recital was a talk by Rebekah Maxner, interspersed with the performance of several of her



compositions and other compositions by selected Canadian composers. Rebekah's topic was "Finding Your Voice as a Composer." She explained to eager students what it means to have a unique "voice" as a composer, comparing it to how each person has a distinct speaking voice which enables us to recognize our parents or friends on the phone. In composing, it can take many years of hearing and imitating other composers' voices before we discover that one of the voices we are hearing is our own.

Rebekah read short letters from seven Canadian composers (Teresa Richert, Beverly Porter, Janet Gieck, Joanne Bender, Christine Donkin, Susan Griesdale, and Martha Hill Duncan), describing their own voices as composers. After each letter, one or two of that composer's pieces were performed.

Finally, Rebekah described her own journey as a composer. Beginning with her irresistible childhood urge to improvise and eventually write music, she went on to relate the discouragement she faced as an adult when she came to the conclusion that the kind of music she craved to compose was not the sort of music anyone wished to play. Although she did compose occasionally during this time, she was afraid to share her compositions with anyone. Finally she showed some of her compositions to her students. They were thrilled! Surprised but pleased, she began to realize that she could find success as a composer, and went on to publish five books of piano music. As Rebekah concluded her talk, several students performed her pieces, with the final number being a student-teacher duet.

The second half of the recital showcased more Canadian music. A variety of instruments, levels, and styles were represented. The Maple Leaf Players (a group of fiddles and other instruments)

played several songs, including *O Canada* and *Scotland the Brave*. Piano students performed pieces by Linda Niamath, Anne Crosby, Alexina Louie, Stephen Chatman, and others.

We heard a vocal solo and a violin duet and trio. Six students, ranging in level from beginner to ARCT, performed their own compositions, and in conclusion, Rebekah performed one of her own advanced pieces, *Snow Angels*.

Each student who participated received a Canada Music Week® pencil and seal. After the final photo, cookies and

juice were served, and students and parents had the opportunity to chat with Rebekah and browse her book table. A few happy students came away with an autographed copy of *The Color Collection* or *Old MacDonald Had the Blues*.

As organizer of the event, I would like to thank Rebekah for coming to speak, the students for performing, the parents for attending, the teachers for assisting with various aspects of the recital, and the CFMTA/FCAPM for honouring us with the Bill Andrews award.



L to R: Lorna Wanzel, Rebekah Maxner and Elizabeth Shearouse



**Back Row:** Rebekah Maxner, Daniel Quick, Brian Quick  
**Middle Row:** Zachary Rice, Rebecca Zhang, Lian Vroeghe, Meg Currie, Davis Feng, Patrick Donovan, Janet Shearouse  
**Front Row:** Olivia Liu, Lareina Shen, Yu Yu Liu, Shuting Tia, Kaiwang Tia, Bailee Ens, Sarah Workman

