



# William Andrews

Canada Music Week® Awards / Prix semaine de la musique canadienne<sup>md</sup>

Prince Edward Island / Kitchener-Waterloo ORMTA

## Prince Edward Island

PEIRMTA invited composer Christine Donkin to give workshops to teachers and students on November 17 and 18 in Charlottetown. Many of our piano and violin students enjoy playing Christine's pieces, so we were pleased to have her come and be part of our Canada Music Week® celebration. Our plans nearly went awry as Christine's arrival on Friday afternoon was delayed by an early winter storm. Thankfully, everything went ahead as planned on the next day.



Saturday morning began with a "Composition Club" workshop attended by twenty-five elementary students. Christine led the group through some activities to help stimulate creative thinking. Workshop participants were commissioned to write three pieces for piano and one for violin with piano accompaniment. The titles and descriptions for the pieces were created in advance by other students: *Mischievous Monkey* is a fast and fun piece, with a surprise at the end; *Catnap* calls for a mellow mood and slow tempo; *The Blizzard* is mostly fast, using the high notes of the piano; *Song of the Red Fox* is a happy tune at a moderate tempo. The students had lots of fun working together in groups to create motives for each of the four compositions. During the afternoon workshop for intermediate and advanced students, participants used

these motives to begin composing the pieces. Teachers also attended an informative session on teaching composition, in which Christine presented a step-by-step approach to guide students through the creative process.



We finished the day with a Young Musicians Recital in the Steel Recital Hall at UPEI. Thirty-nine piano and violin students performed works by composers from across Canada. Many of the students played pieces by Christine Donkin, and were excited to have her in the audience. To close the recital, Christine gave a short talk about her piano composition *Peace Country Hoedown*, which was performed by one of the students. She described how the piece was created, from the original idea of writing a fiddle tune for the piano to finally being published. All of the performers received Canada Music Week pencils and stickers for their participation in the recital.

PEIRMTA students and teachers had a great day celebrating Canadian music and learning from Christine's engaging presentations. Many of the students came away inspired to compose their own music. We are looking forward to the premiere of the four pieces created by the "PEI Composition Club" at a future Young Musicians Recital.

## Comments from students:

*Audrey: Composing was fun.*

*Evan: I liked to make the music.*

*Sophie: I liked making the fox and bunny story into music.*

*Stephanie Cole*



# William Andrews

Canada Music Week® Awards / Prix semaine de la musique canadienne<sup>md</sup>

## Prince Edward Island / Kitchener-Waterloo ORMTA

### ORMTA - Kitchener-Waterloo

Music is Power!

This phrase resounded within me as I talked with Nina, a guest artist at our Canada Music Week® celebration.

Yes, of course we know that music is powerful. Many of us have been both moved to tears and uplifted to joy by the music of Bach, Beethoven and Mozart. But the power that Nina was talking about was something different, something that she and her friends shared with us on November 24<sup>th</sup>, something that we in the audience won't soon forget.

Nina and her friends are members of Indigenous tribes in Ontario. They form a community here in Kitchener-Waterloo known as Healing of the Seven Generations. The name reflects the time needed to work through and heal from the painful trauma which they have experienced when white people took away their land, their children, their language and culture. Talking with Nina made me realize that I needed to learn more. Her stories would be fascinating for our students, their parents and our teachers. But how would this connect with our celebration of Canadian music?

Well, it's obvious that music is our common denominator. A true celebration of Canadian music cannot omit native songs that existed here before white settlers came. We share a

common bond of music. What a wonderful gift! Our planning committee got excited about the possibilities of integrating Indigenous music into our program.

Our Canada Music Week® event was a full Saturday of music by Canadian composers. Master classes ran from 9 am to 4:30 pm. Teachers had been informed in June and had prepared their students. Participation was encouraged by ensuring students that each class would be a positive, non-competitive experience with helpful coaching by our clinician of the day.

Scheduling was done in order to accommodate each student's busy life, making it a comfortable day for everyone. Complimentary coffee and tea provided a relaxed friendly atmosphere for parents and teachers. About 40 students from elementary to advanced levels performed a wide variety of piano and vocal pieces by composers such as Susan Griesdale, Martha Hill Duncan, Anne Crosby Gaudet, Linda Niamath, Sophie Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté, Oscar Peterson and Alexina Louie.

Highly recommended master class clinician Kati Gleiser from Owen Sound was wonderfully positive, knowledgeable and insightful. With a doctorate in Piano Performance from Indiana University, Kati, a former CFMTA/FCAPM competition winner, provided excellent instruction for both pianists and singers. Her tremendous talent and skill in piano, voice and improvisation were instructive for students and teachers.



**Debra Wanless Music**

**All Your Creative Teaching Needs**

Ensembles • Fakebooks • Method Books • Piano Solos  
Technique Books • Theory & Textbooks



debrawanless@everus.ca  
[debrawanless.com](http://debrawanless.com)



# William Andrews

Canada Music Week® Awards / Prix semaine de la musique canadienne<sup>md</sup>

Prince Edward Island / Kitchener-Waterloo ORMTA

## ORMTA - Kitchener-Waterloo - cont.

The culmination of the entire day was the Canada Music Week® recital in which 30 students performed, along with guest artist Nina and her friends. Dressed in native clothing, they sang and drummed their traditional songs. We were encouraged to listen to them with open ears and open hearts. Students learned that First Nations' people here in Canada, as recently as 50 years ago, were arrested and imprisoned for singing their native songs. The room became quiet with the realization that open expression through our music is a privilege we take for granted. Sadly, our First People have been deprived of this right, and punished for expressing their musical heritage in the dark part of Canada's history.

We learned about the love and respect of Indigenous people for the environment. Songs and stories about the value of water made us aware of our precious resources and the importance of conservation. We learned that drumming circles help to heal people's pain. We were reminded that singing together brings peace and unity. We recognized that we are on the land which belonged to our native people first. If we are to live together in community in Canada, sharing our music and culture is a powerful first step.

As our Indigenous women faced east, south, west and north, chanting their farewell song to us, and our students performed our Canadian music for them, we came to understand each other a bit better. Music is powerful. Let us continue to value and nurture our deep rich Canadian heritage as we celebrate Canada Music Week®.



*Submitted by Joanne Bender, Chair  
On behalf of Julie Armes and Laura Burke*



## HAVE YOU MOVED???

To ensure your *Canadian Music Teacher Magazine* is delivered, please update your address with your **Provincial** Registrar. *Thank you!*



## AVEZ-VOUS DÉMÉNAGÉ???

Pour vous assurer de ne manquer aucun numéro du magazine *Le professeur de musique canadien*, veuillez mettre à jour votre adresse en communiquant avec votre registraire **provincial**. *Merci!*