

Donna Rhodenizer, recipient of the 2011 Jubilate Award of Merit.

The Canadian Music Educators' Association (CMEA) awards program was established to acknowledge excellence in music education occurring across the country. Awards are presented once every two years if there is a worthy recipient. One of these awards, the Jubilate Award of Merit, is presented in recognition of significant contribution to music education in Canada. Donna Rhodenizer was the 2011 recipient of this award which was presented at the October Nova Scotia Music Educators' Association (NSMEA) conference in Antigonish, NS. Donna's music education colleagues acknowledged her accomplishment with a standing ovation as she received her award.



Donna is currently an elementary music education specialist at Kings County Academy in Kentville, NS. Donna's involvement in music education began while she was still in university. She taught private violin and piano students while attending Acadia University and continued instructing violin students as she pursued her Masters of Music Education at Brandon University.

When Donna began teaching elementary school music in 1985, she began composing songs for her students to sing. Since then, she has published 60 songs in eight publications, two of which are in French, two dozen choral octavos, multiple violin and piano compositions and 10 recordings. She is a Juno nominee and an ECMA winner, representing endorsement by the music industry for her excellent children's recordings.

Donna's music is well-loved by students and teachers alike for its imagination, musicality and memorable tunes. Her music has been used and performed by elementary school students and choirs across Canada and the US as well as in Austria, Ireland, Spain, Sierra Leone, Australia, Trinidad and Tobago, England and Nepal.

Donna is also known for over 30 choral pieces and is in demand as a commissioned composer. She was commissioned by the NSMEA to write a composition celebrating the 50th anniversary of the NSMEA. Her song, "Celebrate!" was premiered at the conference by a group of her enthusiastic teaching colleagues and included singers, handbells, recorder, percussion and piano.

Donna not only creates music for students, she also shares her passion for music and her knowledge and wealth of teaching experience with music educators across the country. She has delivered workshops for teachers in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

One of the mandates of the CMEA organization is to "foster the advancement of teaching and the life-long learning of music." Donna Rhodenizer has certainly internalized that mandate with creative passion, the results of which have provided music educators and their students a rich and lasting legacy of music.

Donna Rhodenizer



2011 Canadian Music Educators Association (CMEA) [Jubilate Award of Merit](#) recipient, Donna Rhodenizer, is an accomplished *composer and music educator*. Her song lyrics sparkle with imagination and humour reflecting a writer who has the ability to reach into the imaginations and hearts of children. She is a *music education specialist* who has been teaching elementary school music for over 26 years. This wealth of experience with children and music is very evident in the songs she creates.

Donna has written four songbooks with recordings for elementary level students: [Computer Cat](#), [Dinosaurs, Dragons and Me](#), [It's Christmas Time](#), and [Blue Skies and Pirates](#). The recordings, created with singing partner Andy Duinker, have received local, regional or national recognition.

Computer Cat	--- ECMA Award
Dinosaurs, Dragons and Me	--- Juno nomination
	--- ECMA nomination
	--- Nova Scotia Music Award
It's Christmas Time	--- ECMA nomination
Blue Skies and Pirates	--- ECMA nomination

Music teachers use Donna's songbooks in music programs across Canada and in the U.S., and watch with great anticipation for her newest offerings. She has written and published over 100 songs, with an additional two dozen awaiting publication. The fall of 2011 marked the release of Donna's first collection of songs in French entitled "[La vie pour moi](#)". Donna's [It's Christmas Time](#) collection has also been adapted into French and is distributed as a bilingual publication.

Donna also writes *original songs and arrangements for adult audiences*. Her songs reveal a writer in touch with people and life experiences, a strong wit and a unique way of seeing the world. Donna's music reflects her love of harmony and beautiful singable melodies instilled through her choral experience and classical music training. These strengths have resulted in Donna being commissioned to write songs and/or arrangements for several leading choirs in Nova Scotia. Her music is well-loved by the choirs that include her songs in their regular repertoire. Donna has written over forty choral compositions in a variety of voicing configurations for professional, community and school choirs. Her music is printed and promoted by Red Castle Publishing, the company she co-founded and co-owns with Andy Duinker.

In addition to writing and publishing, Donna is an active *performer and recording artist*. She performs and records with Andy Duinker in a variety of musical settings. The duo "Donna & Andy" can be found singing for children and families. Adult audiences attending an "Andy Duinker and Donna Rhodenizer" concert are treated to original, adult folk, contemporary, easy listening, or sacred arrangements, depending on the venue.

Donna shares her musical expertise as a *workshop clinician*, equally at home discussing her own composing journey as well as encouraging fellow educators to experience music with children in their classrooms. She has been a conference clinician at the International Society of Music Educators (ISME), Ontario Music Educators Association (OMEA), New Brunswick Music Educators Association (NBMEA) and the Nova Scotia Music Educators Association (NSMEA), as well as presenting music teaching workshops for teachers in Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Her passion for music making is very evident in her life pursuits, her substantial output of songs, and her active involvement in performing, recording and publishing.

Donna's work in the field of music education has been recognized by her musical colleagues. She has received four nominations for [Educator of the Year](#) from Music Nova Scotia (MNS). Donna received the NSMEA [Musica Viva Award](#) in 2009 for her contribution to music education. In October 2011 the NSMEA marked their 50th anniversary with the performance of Donna's **newly commissioned choral work entitled "Celebrate"**. At that momentous event, Donna was also presented with the Canadian Music Educators Association (CMEA) [Jubilate Award of Merit](#) for her significant contribution to music education in Canada.