

# Bells of Baddeck's 'Mabel' nominated for ECMA award

Allison Angelo's debut album nominated for "Classical Recording of the Year"



The cover of *Moon Loves its Light*, the debut classical album that has earned Angelo a 2017 ECMA nomination.

ANDREW BROOKS

Allison Angelo, who starred as Mabel Bell in Lorna MacDonald's production *The Bells of Baddeck* for the past two summers, has been nominated for a 2017 East Coast Music Award. Accompanying pianist, Simon Docking, was also nominated. Angelo's debut album, *Moon Loves Its Light*, is up against four other nominees in the Classical Recording of the Year category.

Currently based in Toronto, the Nova Scotian soprano recorded and produced the album exclusively in Nova Scotia, working with as many local artists and technicians as possible. The rising star says she is lucky to come from a province with so much homegrown talent.

"I'm thrilled to be able to

say that 'I'm thrilled to be nominated,'" jokes Angelo with the trademark lightheartedness she is known for on stage. She is quick to add, "But seriously, I truly am excited to be included on a list of such talented folks."

Angelo has been busy over the past few years, juggling recordings and live shows with motherhood. In addition to her *Bells* performance, she debuted last year with the Elmer Iseler Singers as the soprano soloist in *Handel's Messiah*, performed at the St. Cecilia's Retreat in Mahone Bay as well as the Mountain View Concert Series in Calgary. Previous engagements include performances with Symphony Nova Scotia, the Boston POPS, and being a featured artist with the Toronto, Edmonton, Victoria, Vancouver, and Kingston Symphonies.

Classical Recording of the Year isn't the only nomination associated with the album. Angelo's brother, Nova Scotian composer and pianist Ian Bent, also picked up a Best Classical Composition nomination for the track *Old Moon*.

"I sent him a list of requirements for my voice. Having grown up together, he knows my musical personality very well. I gave him ideas of what I felt would be good for my voice, and he nailed it perfectly in composing the piece," says Angelo in praising her brother's work.

Angelo had also asked the late Nova Scotian poet and family friend Roger Field to contribute a poem as libretto for an original song. Field was in the late stages of cancer but was grateful to work with both Ian and Allison. When the music was written, Bent played the piece on his keyboard at Field's bedside. Though Angelo couldn't make it home at the time, she recorded a version on her iPhone from Toronto and sent it for him to hear in his final days. The siblings eventually sang the piece at his memorial.

Nominations for the 2017 East Coast Music Awards were announced on January 31 in Halifax. The industry gathering will take place this year in Saint John, New Brunswick, April 26-30. Angelo says she plans to attend the ceremony in April and is in discussion with organizers to perform at one of the showcases. *Moon Loves Its Light* is available on CD Baby and through her website, [www.allisonangelo.ca](http://www.allisonangelo.ca).

# Cartoonist contributor gets to meet his hero



Editorial cartoon contributor to The Victoria Standard Josh Kaiser poses with his longtime idol, award-winning Halifax Herald cartoonist Bruce MacKinnon.

ANDREW BROOKS

If you ask a kid who their cartoon superhero is, you're likely to get 'Superman', 'Ironman' or a similar character with unparalleled strengths. Growing up in Baddeck, Josh Kaiser was drawn to a different sort of idol. His hero took a 'pen is mightier than the sword' approach as he fell politicians and celebrities with a single stroke (or two) of ink. As an aspiring illustrator, Josh's hero was, and still is, Bruce MacKinnon, the award-winning cartoonist for The Chronicle Herald.

Unlike most fans, Kaiser recently had the chance to not only meet his hero, but discuss the art of illustration over dinner. A close friend of Kaiser volunteers for the Chisholm Services for Children charity which holds an annual "Blind Date with a Star" fundraiser in Halifax. Through a series of fortunes, Kaiser won the chance to have dinner with MacKinnon, along with several other attendees of the event.

"I was sitting at the other end of the table, so I didn't get a chance to talk with him directly at first. Then there was an opening and I monopolized him for the next 45 minutes. Just a class guy. You certainly didn't feel like he was waiting to get out of there."

Kaiser says the table talked a lot with him about how to balance satire with sensitivity when a topic is controversial. The two then zeroed in on the technical aspects of illustration, discussing paper types, watercolours and which pens they use.

Just how influential has the cartoonist been for Kaiser, who

now lives and works in Halifax?

"I've followed him for years. I pick up the Herald and the first thing I do is flip to the editorial and look for his cartoon. As a kid, it [the cartoon] really helped develop my own ability. I would save all his cartoons and copy them. I would sit at home and draw a Bruce MacKinnon, but turn it into a comic book character, essentially stealing his style."

Although Kaiser says he is still developing his own style, he says laughingly that his artistic influences have been a mix of Monet and Bruce MacKinnon.

"I always liked the impressionist approach. When you look at it closely, it's just a mess. But when you pull back, it all comes together and you get a beautiful image. His was a different style but the same principle as a Monet."

Mackinnon himself started his drawing career early when he began contributing a weekly cartoon to Antigonish town and county newspaper, The Casket. MacKinnon has been the regular political cartoonist for the Herald for 31 years. In that time, he has collected numerous awards, including 18 Atlantic Journalism Awards, 6 National Newspaper Awards, the World Press Freedom Award (2014), the Order of Nova Scotia (2011) and the Order of Canada (2016).

Kaiser says MacKinnon looked through his portfolio and was extremely complimentary, noting the breadth of mediums that he has been willing to explore. As the evening came to a close, the two exchanged contacts and the cartoon giant with the long red cape told the aspiring Kaiser to stay in touch.

## FIDDLER'S CORNER by Paul S. Cranford.

If you have a tune you would like to share with other Cape Breton fiddlers or a musical event that could be promoted in this column contact The Victoria Standard or Cranford Publications ([www.cranfordpub.com](http://www.cranfordpub.com)). Email: [psc@cranfordpub.com](mailto:psc@cranfordpub.com).

reel **JP's Reel** by Arthur Muise

D.C.

Almost a year has passed since Cheticamp fiddler Arthur Muise passed away. One of this island's best players, he will be long remembered. In his early years Arthur played mostly old Scottish tunes which he picked up from tapes of both Angus and Cameron Chisholm. In the 80's he befriended the Stubbert family and learned many Irish tunes from them and from tapes of Johnny Wilmot. Later younger players, including both Natalie MacMaster and Ashley MacIsaac, learned tunes from home tapes of Arthur and eventually recorded them on CD. Today many of those same settings circulate widely.

I learned the above tune from Northside fiddler Brent Aucoin. Brent was a close friend of Arthur and considers him to be his main influence. During his lifetime most of Arthur's tunes were untitled. Apparently when he played this one for JP Cormier, it caught JP's ear and so Arthur said "You like it? I'll name it for you."