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'Music will be with me forever'

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Vocal student Annette Malinowski and her music teacher Theresa Pothier are raising the bar for musical accomplishment in Niagara.

During the Kiwanis Music and Arts Festival of St. Catharines in May, 19-year-old coloratura vocalist Malinowski placed first in three classes — Soprano, Italian and Concert — which took her to the Ontario Music Festival Association finals held in Peterborough, where she placed second in the Vocal Grade 9 category.

"It felt great," she said. "I was among many talented singers, and to be recognized by placing second is an honour." Gena VanOosten of Toronto placed first.

For the competition, which was held in June, Malinowski performed three songs, including pieces by Hyden, Head and Caccini, she said.

"Generally, with my teacher I practise classical and operatic vocal works," she said. "But I also play guitar and piano on my own, and play pop and Broadway, too."

Her interests are also diverging professionally, as Malinowski said she's taking Psychology at Brock University.

"I didn't want to take music and become a teacher afterward," she said. "But I'm going to keep improving and learning for as long as I can. Music will be with me forever."

She's also found a way to make music profitable by occasionally performing at weddings and funerals, and at the Riverbend Inn and Vineyard with her teacher.

Since the age of 11, Malinowski has been taught by piano and voice teacher Pothier.

"She's amazing," said Malinowski. "In my opinion she's the best there is around here."

The Niagara Falls branch of the Ontario Music Teachers' Association recognized Pothier's significance as well by giving her the Special Teacher Award, which will be presented to her on July 18.

"You always feel like tons of people deserve the award," said Pothier. "But it's very nice to be recognized again at my age."

Born in Halifax, Pothier began playing piano and singing at age eight. She eventually earned a Bachelor of Music from Dalhousie University and received a scholarship to attend the Juilliard School of Music in New York.

In 1952 she moved to St. Catharines with her husband and raised six children while teaching and performing.

Although retired, Pothier continues to teach.



'Music will be with me forever'. Theresa Pothier stands with her vocal student, Annette Malinowski. Malinowski recently placed first in three classes at the Kiwanis Music and Arts Festival in St. Catharines.

Although retired, Pothier continues to teach.

"I love teaching," she said. "It's like having a young family all the time."

Pothier said it's students like Malinowski that make teaching worthwhile.

"She's just amazing," she said. "She's just worked very hard, she's a very good student."

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