

Michelle Aalders

Originally from Nova Scotia, pianist and educator Michelle Aalders is known for her diverse musical background and her versatility in performing. She holds a Masters degree in Piano Performance & Pedagogy from Westminster Choir College of Rider University studying with Frances Clark, Louise Goss, Phyllis Lehrer and Dalton Baldwin. She obtained a Bachelor of Music Degree and a Bachelor of Music Education Degree from Acadia University studying under Janice Stephens.

She was the principal pianist with the Saskatoon Children's Choir from 2002-2023 which included performances of the Opera Brundibar by Hans Krása, world premieres of 3 mini-operas by Peter Tiefenbach; Songbridge Project in Hong Kong/China; Summa Cum Laude Festival in Vienna, Austria; Sing Africa humanitarian and performance tour in South Africa; Llangollen International Music Eisteddfod in Northern Wales; Grand Prix of Nations and 2nd European Choir Games in Germany; Musica Eterna Roma and Ravenna Festival in Italy; and the International Choral Kathaumixw in B.C. where they received the "Choir of the World" award on her final tour. She has also recorded with them on their CD's "On Prairie Wings", and "Fields Interrupted"

Michelle plays piano and keyboard regularly with the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra including several world premieres and "live to film" concerts. She has also been the Collaborative Pianist for the Cardston Girls Choir (Alberta); the Cantabile Choirs of Kingston, Ontario (under the direction of Mark Sirett); the Kingston School Of Dance (Ontario), the Saskatoon Summer Players, Saskatoon Opera in the Schools; the National Music Festival, and the International Saito Conductor's School.

Michelle was the music director and organist at the former Third Avenue United Church in Saskatoon for 15 years where she co-ordinated the "Thursdays at 3rd Ave" noon hour concert series. In 2023 she was the featured piano soloist with the Saskatoon Jazz Orchestra performing "Rhapsody in Blue" with trumpeter Jens Lindemann. Michelle also made her Piano Fridays debut at the Bassment Jazz Club in Saskatoon in October, 2023 and will be playing again in their 2024- 25 season.

Michelle's teaching career has spanned more than 35 years which includes students in Nova Scotia, New Jersey, British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan. While in Alberta she was a sessional lecturer at the University of Lethbridge, taught music & movement and piano classes at the Conservatory of Music, and adjudicated for the Lethbridge Piano Class Festival. She has been an active member of the Saskatoon Branch of the SRMTA since 2002 and has served on the executive in several capacities including president. Most recently Michelle received the RCM Teacher of Distinction Award which she considers a real honour (2024).