

Hessian Merit Award for Excellence in Teaching by a Full-Time Instructor
Presented to Dr. Magdalena von Eccher
Faculty of Arts - Department of Music
Written by Amy MacFarlane
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UPEI Faculty Association Recognition Night
Fox Meadow Golf and Country Club
Stratford, PEI

Dr. Magdalena von Eccher is an elite musician, masterful performer, and outstanding teacher as described by her colleague Dr. Dale Sorensen. Dr. Sorensen shared with the committee that “Magdalena is able to coax the best out of each student, motivate them to work hard in pursuit of their best work, and help them reach their full potential.”

To be afforded a glimpse into Dr. Magdalena von Eccher’s teaching practice through her own lens was a real privilege. She shared in her dossier that, “a key quality in teaching, if not the most important, is equanimity—valuing every student equally. Though abilities may vary, each person’s identity is unique and irreplaceable. Ensuring a healthy learning environment in the studio and in the classroom encourages a community in which each individual feels appreciated and supported in learning to their full potential.” She wrote about her efforts to achieve a “structured balance between accessibility and challenge” and utilizing “teaching practices that establish a non-judgmental learning environment.”

Her students (three of whom took the time to nominate her for this award) are clearly appreciative of her efforts. One student stated, “Dr. von Eccher's expectations are high but not impossible to meet.” Another shared that “she is flexible enough that it allows students to grow and reach excellence at their own pace.” Further, a student noted that Dr. von Eccher is “tough, but her caring and thoughtful approaches to the material allow us as her students to understand concepts quickly and effectively without feeling discouraged or disengaged during the process. As a professor, she pushes her students to be their absolute best selves while encouraging us to enjoy the process of getting to our collective goals.”

Dr. von Eccher stated that she is “committed to a campus culture that fully embraces and values each person. An environment that celebrates individuality, inclusivity, and equity welcomes and supports each person, ensuring their success academically, socially, and culturally.”

Student testimony suggests she is excelling at creating just such an environment.

Perhaps one student said it best - “Dr. von Eccher is a *treasure* to not only the music department but to UPEI”. Please join me in congratulating Magdalena on receiving one of this year’s Hessian Merit Awards for Excellence in Teaching by a Full-Time Instructor.