

HONENS MEDIA RELEASE

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HONENS PRO-AM: ALL-STARS EDITION READY TO HIT THE STAGE

Calgary, AB, November 22, 2019—Tomorrow, for the first time ever, three prior Honens Pro-Am Champions come together to unleash their creative energy and spirit in a friendly competition and fundraiser for Calgary’s Honens International Piano Competition and Festival. Engineer David Dixon (2011 Champion), headhunter Lachlin McKinnon (2003 Champion), and periodontist Thomas Yu (2014 Champion) have been preparing for months, not only giving their time and talent, but actively fundraising by seeking pledges. To date, the three have raised more than \$40,000.

Honens’ Pro-Am, which features accomplished pianists who have chosen career paths other than music, sees each pianist perform a 15 to 20-minute program which is adjudicated by a panel of arts leaders. The 2019 Pro-Am jury includes Rune Bergmann, Music Director, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra; Joanne Harada, Former Vice President, Artistic Operations & Education, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra; and 1992 Honens Laureate, pianist Krzysztof Jablonski.

“The fact that these three extraordinary pianists agreed to take this on and add it to their very busy lives is outstanding to me. That they’ve been so successful in their fundraising endeavours is truly exceptional,” says Neil Edwards, Honens’ President & CEO.

More than half a million dollars has been raised since Honens’ first Pro-Am event in 2003, all of which flows directly back into the community through accessible programming and public performances offered at no cost.

Honens Pro-Am: All-Star Edition, hosted by Jonathan Love, takes place on Saturday, November 23 in the Bella Concert Hall at the Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts (Mount Royal University) at 2 pm. Pledges can be made, and tickets purchased, at honens.com/pro-am.

Backgrounder Attached

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BACKGROUNDER

DAVID DIXON

David Dixon was the pianist in the University of Calgary Jazz Big Band for two years where he also obtained his Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering. In 2011, he earned an Associate Diploma (ARCT) in Piano Performance with distinction from the Royal Conservatory of Music.

He has over a decade of performance experience with choirs and musical theater groups, most recently as 2017 Music Director and accompanist for Mary Poppins with the St. Peter's Players in Calgary. Over the last few years, David has performed with various arts organizations in Calgary including at the 2016 Honens Festival, as a guest artist for the Mount Royal University Suzuki program, and in six sold out concerts for the Calgary Salon Series. He also attended the 2019 Coimbra World Piano Meeting and Competition in Portugal.

David has worked in oil and gas for over ten years, originally at CNOOC-Nexen and Devon Canada, and now with Canadian Natural Resources (CNRL). He specializes in Steam-Assisted Gravity Drainage reservoir engineering. David also enjoys chess and badminton.

LACHLIN MCKINNON

Lachlin McKinnon is the co-founder of Prospector, an executive search and consulting firm that recruits and develops leaders for organizations that advance the greater good.

Lachlin studied piano in Calgary with Marilyn Engle, earning an ARCT in 1991. He has degrees in philosophy and political science, as well as law. Lachlin served as special advisor to the 26th Governor General of Canada, where he had the privilege of playing and caring for Glenn Gould's Steinway B. Following his tenure at Rideau Hall, he practiced civil litigation; nowadays, he just practices piano. Thankfully, the law has stayed in remission.

Lachlin grew up in a musical family. His earliest musical memories are of drifting off to sleep as his father played Chopin, Rachmaninov, and Ravel on a 1927 Heintzman. This summer, Lachlin and his wife, Julianne, had that piano fully restored to its original condition, and it is now played by two of their three daughters. The youngest, ever forging her own path, has chosen the violin.

Active in the community, Lachlin is currently Board Secretary of Calgary Opera. He is also happy to get active outside the city for extended wilderness canoe trips in Canada's North.

THOMAS YU

Thomas Yu has been a busy periodontist in Calgary for the past ten years and is also one of the most sought-after amateur musicians in the world. He has performed with BBC Orchestra of Wales, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra (South Africa), to name a few. He has appeared as a guest soloist in such prestigious venues as Berliner Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall (New York), Théâtre du Châtelet (Paris), and Glenn Gould Studio (Toronto).

Over the last 13 years, Thomas has won several international amateur piano competitions, including the Honens Pro-Am in 2014 and 7th Cliburn International Amateur Piano Competition in 2016, taking home the gold medal as well as Press and Audience Awards. He is proud to represent his hometown when he travels, and also performs regularly at home with the Calgary Civic Symphony.

Thomas' dual life is only made possible by the support of his wife, Michelle. He is also a proud father of two very young boys, Alexander and Nicolas.

ABOUT HONENS

The triennial Honens International Piano Competition is regarded as one of the world's most prestigious music events and the only one of its kind in Canada. Honens prepares its Laureates for the rigours and realities of a professional career as a concert pianist and creates opportunities for growth and development. The annual Honens Festival is one of Canada's premiere celebrations of fine piano and chamber music and was designed to share the love and appreciation of live acoustic performance through concert and educational experiences.

Esther Honens created a legacy of musical excellence to be enjoyed for generations. In 1991, knowing she was near the end of her life, Mrs. Honens created a \$5 million endowment to establish an international piano competition in her hometown of Calgary. Her generosity, vision, and love of music continue to touch the lives of musicians and music-lovers across Canada and around the world.