

# HONENS MEDIA RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **FIFTY QUARTERFINALISTS CHOSEN FOR THE 2021 HONENS INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION**

Calgary, AB, December 15, 2020—Fifty pianists from 18 countries have been chosen to compete in the Quarterfinals of Canada's tenth Honens International Piano Competition, despite the challenges presented by a global pandemic. The Applicant Screening Jury evaluated 130 candidate submissions based on proposed Competition programming, experience relative to age, and reference letters.

The Quarterfinals / International Audition Round is currently scheduled to take place in New York (March 11 to 13) and Berlin (March 22 to 24) as long as the Competition can do so safely while maintaining the highest possible artistic standard. The health and safety of those involved in the Competition remains the organization's top priority and Honens continues to consider various scenarios given the evolving pandemic.

"We were astounded at the quality of the 130 applicants. Narrowing them down to only 50 was a very difficult task, but the members of the Applicant Screening Jury were up to the challenge. We are confident in the 50 amazing young artists we chose, and hope to see a number of the other applicants return in 2024 to apply for the next Competition," says Honens Artistic Director Jon Kimura Parker, who, along with acclaimed pianists Bernadene Blaha, David Jalbert, and Hyeeyeon Park, was a member of the Applicant Screening Jury.

For the Quarterfinals, each of the 50 pianists performs a 40-minute self-programmed solo recital and completes an interview with an arts journalist. All performances are recorded on video for review by the First Jury, comprised of both pianists and arts professionals: Katherine Chi, chair (2000 Honens Prize Laureate), Loie Fallis (Vice-President of Artistic Planning of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra), Roman Rabinovich (Prizewinner at the 2008 Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition), and Gilles Vonsattel (2009 Honens Laureate and recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant). Ten pianists will be chosen to advance to the Semifinals in Calgary. Semifinalists will be announced Spring 2021. The Competition culminates with the Semifinals and Finals in Calgary, Canada from October 14 to 22, 2021 with collaborative musicians violinist Martin Beaver, Viano String Quartet, and the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of celebrated conductor Peter Oundjian. The triennial Honens International Piano Competition awards its Prize Laureate \$100,000 (CAD) and a comprehensive three-year artistic and career development program. The prize, awarded to the pianist who most embodies Honens' philosophy of the Complete Artist, is one of the largest of its kind in the world.

Calgary philanthropist Esther Honens dreamed of discovering and launching the careers of the world's most promising pianists. In 1991, she established The Esther Honens International Piano Competition Foundation with a gift of \$5 million, creating a legacy for musicians and music lovers around the world. Legacy Partners follow in Esther Honens' footsteps by securing Honens' future and ensuring its continued ability to offer a broad scope of programming and community outreach projects.

For additional information about the 2021 Honens International Piano Competition, please visit, [honens.com/2021](https://honens.com/2021).

## QUARTERFINALISTS

Pianist	Age*	Country of Origin	Pianist	Age*	Country of Origin
Kevin Ahfat	27	Canada	Minkyu Kim	26	South Korea
Adam Balogh	23	Hungary	Ji Yong Kim	30	United States
Nathan Ben-Yehuda	27	United States	Maxim Kinasov	28	Russia
Xander Benham	25	United Kingdom	Elizaveta Kliuchereva	22	Russia
Giovanni Bertolazzi	23	Italy	Bruce (Xiaoyu) Liu	24	Canada
Rachel Breen	25	United States	Danilo Mascetti	28	Italy
Łukasz Byrdy	27	Poland	Dominic Muzzi	27	United States
Yangrui Cai	20	China	Kyle Orth	30	United States
SaeYoon Chon	26	South Korea	Illia Ovcharenko	20	Ukraine
Dmytro Choni	28	Ukraine	Élisabeth Pion	25	Canada
Federico Gad Crema	22	Italy	Zhora Sargsyan	26	Armenia
Timofey Dolya	27	Russia	Philipp Scheucher	28	Austria
Benjamin Dominguez	23	United States	Sophiko Simsvie	29	Georgia
Dan Evans	26	United Kingdom	Lorenzo Soulès	29	France
Motti Fang Bentov	23	Israel	Sergey Tanin	26	Russia
Robert Fleitz	28	United States	Jean-Luc Therrien	27	Canada
George Fu	30	United States	Arthur Wang	20	Canada
Umi Garrett	21	United States	Derek Wang	23	United States
Anna Geniushene	30	Russia	Yun Wei	27	China
Francesco Granata	22	Italy	Ka Jeng Wong	30	Hong Kong
George Harliono	20	United Kingdom	Alexander Yau	26	Australia
Jaeden Izik-Dzurko	22	Canada	Gabriel Yeo	23	Germany
Carter Johnson	25	Canada	Joon Yoon	28	South Korea
Simon Karakulidi	24	Russia	Dmitry Yudin	20	Russia
Aleksandra Kasman	26	United States	Angie Zhang	25	United States

\*Age as of October 22, 2021.

### **Backgrounder Attached**

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### **Information**

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# **BACKGROUND**

## **THE COMPLETE ARTIST**

The Complete Artist is:

- a thoughtful interpreter, a consummate collaborator, an awe-inspiring virtuoso, a communicator, a risk-taking explorer.
- a pianist who expresses and interprets ideas from a wide cultural context and keen imagination through performances and programming choices that are informed and seasoned by a fascination for life outside the practice studio.
- an emerging artist whose distinctive voice, versatility, and ease clearly demonstrate the level of preparedness and mastery necessary to embark upon a professional career.

The Complete Artist's interpretations are founded upon the intellectual and emotional understanding of musical text and the ability to synthesize and express such understanding so as to challenge and stir the listener on multiple levels. This creative awareness stems not only from knowledge of a particular composition itself but from a wider knowledge of related music, of musical literature as a whole, and of the arts in general. If the resulting interpretation appears unusual and unconventional, it appears so freshly and naturally. Artists taking part in the Honens International Piano Competition must also express—through stage deportment, program design, and interviews with arts journalists—a sensitivity to contemporary culture and a willingness and finesse to communicate effectively with audiences regardless of age, location, background, or degree of musical sophistication.

## **CASH AWARDS**

Honens Prize Laureate (one)  
\$100,000 CAD

Best Performance of Commissioned Work  
\$2,500 CAD

Finalists: Raeburn Prizes (two)  
\$10,000 CAD each

Best Performance of a Beethoven Violin Sonata  
\$2,500 CAD

Semifinalists (seven)  
\$2,500 CAD each

## **REPERTOIRE**

Honens believes that a Complete Artist explores both the pivotal works of the piano literature and the music of our time (i.e. works composed during the last 50 years). Applicants are therefore encouraged to include both in their programs.

## **QUARTERFINALS**

Each Quarterfinalist performs a 40-minute solo recital in either New York or Berlin in March 2021 (to be confirmed). Quarterfinal recitals are not open to the general public. Additionally, each Quarterfinalist undertakes a 10-minute English-language interview with an arts journalist.

## **SEMIFINALS**

Each Semifinalist performs a 65-minute solo recital, which must include a newly commissioned 8-minute work by Canadian pianist / composer Stewart Goodyear. In a separate 60-minute solo / collaborative recital, each Semifinalist also performs a program including one of Beethoven's ten violin sonatas and one piece from Fritz Kreisler's *Alt-Wiener Tanzweisen*, both with violinist Martin Beaver, and solo repertoire to complete the program.

## FINALS

Each Finalist performs one three-part concert consisting of a Mozart concerto (from a prescribed list) with the Viano String Quartet plus a bassist, and a set of Schubert lieder (from a prescribed list) with a soprano. In an additional concert, each Finalist performs any concerto composed after 1791 with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and acclaimed conductor Peter Oundjian. Each Finalist also undertakes a 30-minute English-language interview with an arts journalist.

## JURIES

Honens Competition juries include concert pianists and other individuals including artist managers, collaborative musicians, and presenters from the musical world who play a meaningful role in a concert artist's career. All jurors have extensive knowledge of the piano literature and represent and / or are aware of the qualities an artist must possess in order to build and sustain a career in today's musical world. Biographies of all jurors can be found at [honens.com/juries](https://honens.com/juries).

### APPLICANT SCREENING JURY

Jon Kimura Parker (Canada / United States)\*  
Bernadene Blaha (Canada / United States)  
David Jalbert (Canada / Canada)  
Hyeyeon Park (Korea / United States)

*\*indicates country of origin / country of residence*

### FIRST JURY (QUARTERFINALS)

Katherine Chi, chair (Canada / United States)  
Loie Fallis (Canada / Canada)  
Roman Rabinovich (Israel / Canada)  
Gilles Vonsattel (Switzerland / United States)

### SECOND JURY (SEMIFINALS AND FINALS)

Michel Béroff (France / France)  
Earl Blackburn (United States / United States)  
Imogen Cooper (United Kingdom / United Kingdom)  
Stewart Goodyear (Canada / Canada)  
Janina Fialkowska (Canada / Germany)  
Ick-Choo Moon (Korea / Korea)  
Orli Shaham (Israel / United States)

## MENTOR-IN-RESIDENCE

In addition to feedback meetings which are required for all Semifinalists and Finalists to discuss questions of their technique, musicianship, and artistry with members of the Second Jury, Honens chooses an internationally respected, actively touring pianist to serve as its Mentor-in-Residence. Each Semifinalist who does not advance to the Finals will meet with the Mentor-in-Residence for a one-hour meeting on the days following the Semifinals. The Mentor-in-Residence also attends the Finals after which he meets with the two Finalists and the Honens Prize Laureate.

The 2021 Mentor-in-Residence is Jeremy Denk.

## COLLABORATING MUSICIANS

Solo performance, chamber music, and collaboration with orchestra are all essential for a concert pianist today. These elements are therefore integral to Honens' search for the Complete Artist. Semifinalists collaborate with a violinist. Finalists perform with a string quintet, a soprano, and with orchestra. The choice of collaborating musicians allows for both a meaningful musical partnership and a mentorship opportunity for all Competition pianists.

Martin Beaver violin      Peter Oundjian conductor      Viano String Quartet + Bass      Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra

## IMPORTANT DATES

March 11 to 13, 2021	Quarterfinals: New York (TBC)
March 22 to 24, 2021	Quarterfinals: Berlin (TBC)
October 14 to 18, 2021	Semifinals I / Semifinals II
October 18, 2021	Announcement of three Finalists
October 21, 2021	Finals I
October 22, 2021	Finals II & Announcement of the Honens Prize Laureate

## ABOUT HONENS

The Honens International Piano Competition takes place every three years and is considered one of the world's most prestigious events of its kind. Honens prepares its Laureates for the rigours and realities of professional careers in music and creates opportunities for growth and exposure. The annual Honens Festival is one of Canada's premier classical music events, intended to share Mrs. Honens' love of world renowned music with Albertans every year.

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 gave \$5 million to endow an international piano competition in her hometown of Calgary, Canada. Her generosity, vision, and love of music continue to touch the lives of Calgarians, Canadians, musicians, and music-lovers around the world.

Honens Legacy Partners support the ongoing growth and development of Esther Honens' vision by securing the organization's future. The Legacy Partners Endowment Fund enables Honens to provide wide-reaching programming through its annual festival, and other enriching community education and outreach initiatives.