

HONENS MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HONENS LAUNCHES “KEYS FOR NEWCOMERS” MUSIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

PILOT PROGRAM FOCUSES ON UKRAINIAN FAMILIES AND TEACHERS WHO HAVE RECENTLY ARRIVED IN CALGARY

Calgary, AB, August 25, 2023—In association with the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS), Honens proudly launches Keys for Newcomers, a program providing Calgary newcomers with accessible music education for students and opportunities for piano teachers. Lessons begin in September.

Honens has a long history of bringing its world class Laureates and music appreciation to schools and the community with programs such as Honens in the Classroom, Honens High, Junior Jurors, Storytellers, masterclasses, and other community concerts. Now seeking to meet the growing need for approachable music education for refugees and newcomers to Calgary, Honens’ Keys for Newcomers pilot project begins by focusing on families and teachers who have recently arrived from Ukraine by providing grants to students from low-income households, aged 5 to 18. The grant covers the cost of piano lessons, instruments, and music books.

Furthermore, the program provides a pathway for experienced piano teachers new to Calgary by supporting the development of their own music studio, including the provision of quality Roland keyboards, mentorship, and referral of same language students. Honens has partnered with local organizations to provide rent-free spaces for teachers who prefer to teach at a public locale including Mount Royal University Conservatory, CCIS, and St. Vladimir’s Ukrainian Orthodox Sobor. Honens is also grateful to both Heather Edwards and the Burns Family Foundation for start-up program grants, and to Steinway Piano Gallery Calgary and Roland for support in the purchase of keyboards.

The arrival of thousands of refugees and evacuees in Calgary in the last few years has dramatically increased awareness of their plight, and the need for establishing social supports that facilitate a newcomer’s integration into Canada. Many leave behind homes and jobs, but also interests and passions that are a source of joy and a sense of pride. Families and children are forced to abandon extracurricular activities as parents labour to provide the necessities during the initial stages of resettlement. When it comes to music education, this forced interruption can lead to loss of skills, but more importantly, it takes away from the child a place of solace and enrichment. Honens’ Keys for Newcomers aims to empower and integrate immigrants through music.

One of the Keys for Newcomers teachers, Karina Kharlamova, comments, “For me, it is a great joy to be part of a wonderful program like Keys for Newcomers. My attention is always directed to support and help our children. This project is very important to me as we will teach children to play the piano, to feel music with all their hearts. During such a difficult time, it is music and creativity that gives me strength and motivation to not give up. For me, this is the time to be brave, unite, and to help for the sake of our common future.”

To learn more about Keys for Newcomers, please visit [Honens’ website](#). The program is expected to expand its reach to other immigrant communities in future years through the addition of new languages and multi-language small group lessons.

[Backgrounder Attached](#)

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Information

Alberta Media Relations
Amanda Smith
Honens
403 975 7438
asmith@honens.com

Worldwide Media Relations
Patricia Price
8VA Music Consultancy
1 800 530 3318
patricia@8vamusiconconsultancy.com

BACKGROUND

ABOUT HONENS

Honens discovers, nurtures, and presents Complete Artists—21st century pianists for 21st century audiences. 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.