

# HONENS MEDIA RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **NEIL EDWARDS APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF HONENS**

CALGARY, AB, June 14, 2016—After an extensive international search, Honens announces the appointment of Neil Edwards as President.

Neil Edwards joins Honens from the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra where, as CEO for the last five years, he has been instrumental in shaping the organization into a prominent musical force in Atlantic Canada. He has over 15 years experience in arts leadership as Executive Director of both the Nova Scotia Kiwanis Music Festival Association and of Debut Atlantic, Atlantic Canada's premiere arts touring organization offering first touring opportunities and career support to Canada's outstanding emerging artists.

"On behalf of the Board, we are delighted that Neil Edwards will be the next President of Honens," said Eric Friesen, Board Chairman. "He is an arts leader of vision and practical mastery, with a sterling personal and professional reputation, and a most engaging personality. He is ideally suited to lead Honens in its next phase of life and growth."

Edwards joins Honens on September 1, 2016. He succeeds Stephen McHolm who has successfully led the organization for 12 years. McHolm stays on as Artistic Director until the end of 2016.

"I am honoured by my appointment to the role of President of Honens, an organization for which I have the utmost respect," said Neil Edwards. "For me, it is the combination of two great passions; fostering and supporting the careers of emerging artists and, of course, the piano. I embrace with great excitement both the challenge that lies ahead and the opportunity to experience life in Canada's beautiful west."

Honens discovers, nurtures and presents Complete Artists—21<sup>st</sup> century pianists for 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences. The Honens 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 piano events. Earlier this year, the 2015 Honens Festival & Piano Competition was named 'Festival of the Year' at Tourism Calgary's White Hat Awards. The 2016 Honens Festival takes place in Calgary, September 8 to 11. The next Honens Piano Competition is held in 2018.

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 and musicians and music-lovers around the world. Honens Legacy Partners follow in Esther Honens' footsteps by securing Honens' future. They support achievements in realizing Esther Honens' vision, including wide reaching programming through the annual Festival and enriching community outreach projects.

**Backgrounder Attached**

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# **BACKGROUNDER**

## **NEIL EDWARDS**

Neil Edwards is CEO of the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra. He is an accomplished musician and a nationally recognized innovative cultural executive. He consistently delivers among the best and most creative expertise to the arts organizations he leads. A staunch proponent of live orchestral music, music education, and the support and development of the careers of emerging artists, Edwards' continued support for the arts is evident in the many long-standing corporate, government, and private partnerships he has created on local, provincial, regional and national levels.

As a singer, Mr Edwards appeared frequently in oratorio, recital, and concert opera performances. His great flexibility and range as an actor and singer put him in great demand as a coach, clinician, adjudicator and accompanist. He has a Bachelor of Music (voice performance) from Memorial University.

Mr Edwards is a Past Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Maritime Conservatory of Performing Arts (Halifax), past Board Member of Debut Atlantic (Halifax), and a current member of the Provincial Circle of Advisors of The Singing Network (St. John's), a provincial-national-international network of individuals and organizations interested in singing and song. He is also the Project Consultant for Canadian singer Eleanor McCain's mammoth recording project *True North: The Canadian Songbook*.