

HONENS MEDIA RELEASE

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HONENS NAMES PIANIST JON KIMURA PARKER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

CALGARY, AB, March 27, 2017—Canada’s Honens International Piano Competition is pleased to announce the appointment of pianist Jon Kimura Parker as Artistic Director. Mr Parker assumes his new role in January 2018.

“This is a historic day,” said Honens President, Neil Edwards. “Jon Kimura Parker, apart from being one of the most highly respected pianists and teachers in the world, is a Canadian icon. A better fit for Honens I can’t imagine. We look forward to 2018 with great anticipation.”

Parker is one of Canada’s most celebrated pianists, enjoying a multi-faceted international career performing with leading orchestras and in recital on the world’s great concert stages. A committed educator, he is also Professor of Piano at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University in Houston. Jon Kimura Parker has had a long relationship with Honens, having served on the 1992 and 2012 Competition juries. He values Honens’ artistic philosophy of discovering a unique, imaginative and informed artist—an emerging Complete Artist whose distinctive voice, versatility and communication skills demonstrate the level of preparation required to embark upon a successful career.

“Honens represents the highest standards of what a piano competition should be. The triennial Competition and annual Festival have become focal points of artistic and musical expression for the city of Calgary and, indeed, for all of Canada. Having performed in Calgary for more than 30 years, I have always been met with the warmest possible welcome and a sense of joy in discovering the artistic possibilities of great piano music,” said Jon Kimura Parker. “I am absolutely thrilled to become the Artistic Director of Honens. This is a beautifully run organization dedicated to increasing awareness about the vast riches of piano music and to identifying young musicians who have artistic vision.”

Honens discovers, nurtures and presents Complete Artists—21st century pianists for 21st 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. The 2017 Honens Festival takes place in Calgary, September 8 to 11. The next Honens Piano Competition will be 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. 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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BACKGROUND

JON KIMURA PARKER *oc*

Jon Kimura Parker is a pianist known for his passionate artistry and engaging stage presence. He has performed as guest soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Wolfgang Sawallisch in Carnegie Hall, toured Europe with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Andre Previn, and shared the stage with Jessye Norman at Berlin's Philharmonie. He has worked with some of the world's leading conductors including Teddy Abrams, Pablo Heras-Casado, Claus Peter Flor, Hans Graf, Matthew Halls, Jeffrey Kahane, Peter Oundjian, Larry Rachleff, Bramwell Tovey, Xu Zhong and Pinchas Zukerman. A true Canadian ambassador of music, Parker has given command performances for Queen Elizabeth II, the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Prime Ministers of Canada and Japan. He is an Officer of The Order of Canada, Canada's highest civilian honor.

Parker performs as duo partner with James Ehnes, Aloysia Friedmann, Lynn Harrell, Jamie Parker, Orli Shaham, and Cho-Liang Lin, with whom he has given world premieres of sonatas by Paul Schoenfield, John Harbison and Steven Stucky. He performs regularly with the Miró Quartet and is a founding member of the Montrose Trio with violinist Martin Beaver and cellist Clive Greensmith. *The Washington Post's* review of the Montrose Trio's first tour in 2015 proclaimed it "poised to become one of the top piano trios in the world". As a member of the outreach project *Piano Plus*, Parker toured remote areas including the Canadian Arctic, performing classical music and rock 'n' roll on everything from upright pianos to electronic keyboards. In commemoration of his special performances in war-torn Sarajevo in 1995, he was a featured speaker alongside humanitarians Elie Wiesel and Paul Rusesabagina at the 50th Anniversary of the relief organization AmeriCares.

An unusually versatile artist, Parker has jammed with Audra McDonald, Bobby McFerrin, and Doc Severinsen, and this season performed tangos on two pianos with Pablo Ziegler. He also tours his new project *Off the Score* in a quintet that includes legendary Police drummer Stewart Copeland, featuring both original compositions and fresh takes on music by Ravel, Prokofiev and Stravinsky. He hosted the television series *Whole Notes* on Bravo! and CBC Radio's *Up and Coming*. His YouTube channel showcases the *Concerto Chat* video series, with illuminating discussions of the piano concerto repertoire.

This season, Parker performs as concerto soloist with the Ann Arbor, Colorado, National (Washington, D.C.), Pittsburgh, San Diego, Toronto and Vancouver Symphony Orchestras as well as the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. He gives recitals with Cho-Liang Lin and throughout the season performs with the Montrose Trio.

Parker is a committed educator and is Professor of Piano at The Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. His students have won international piano competitions, performed with major orchestras across the United States, and given recitals in Amsterdam, Beijing, New York and Moscow. He has lectured at The Juilliard School, The Colburn School, Ravinia's Steans Institute, New York University, and Yale University. He is also Artistic Advisor of the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival where he has given world premieres of new works by Peter Schickele and Jake Heggie. Parker has recorded the music of Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Chopin and P. D. Q. Bach for Telarc, Mozart for CBC, and Stravinsky, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Di Liberto and Hirtz on his own label. His new recording *Fantasy* features fantasies of Schubert and Schumann, as well as the sensational *Wizard of Oz Fantasy* by William Hirtz, receiving this praise from *Classical Candor*: "The reading is riveting. Parker scores with another favorite recording of the year."

'Jackie' Parker studied with Edward Parker and Keiko Parker privately, Lee Kum-Sing at the Vancouver Academy of Music and the University of British Columbia, Robin Wood at the Victoria Conservatory, Marek Jablonski at the Banff Centre, and Adele Marcus at The Juilliard School. He won the Gold Medal at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition. He lives in Houston with his wife, violinist Aloysia Friedmann, and their daughter Sophie.