

HONENS MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HONENS PIANO COMPETITION ANNOUNCES 2015 SEMIFINALISTS

TEN PIANISTS FROM SIX COUNTRIES VIE FOR WORLD'S TOP PRIZE OF ITS KIND

CALGARY, AB, June 24, 2015—Ten pianists have been chosen to advance to the Semifinals of Canada's Honens Piano Competition. The pianists (ages 22 to 30) come from six countries: Italy, Russia, South Korea, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States. One will be named the Honens Prize Laureate and win the world's largest award of its kind—\$100,000 (CAN) and an artist development program valued at a half million dollars. The Semifinals and Finals of the Honens Piano Competition take place during the 2015 Honens Festival & Piano Competition in Calgary, September 3 to 12.

Honens' First Jury, comprised of pianists Inon Barnatan, Stewart Goodyear and Noriko Ogawa, and founder and President of Minneapolis–St Paul's Frédéric Chopin Society, Mary Sigmond, selected the ten pianists after a week of deliberations earlier this month at The Banff Centre. The foursome reviewed 46 recitals and interviews that were recorded during the Honens Quarterfinals in Berlin, London and New York.

"I want to congratulate our 2015 First Jury, made up of three internationally recognized pianists and a veteran presenter," said Eric Friesen, Honens' Interim Artistic Director, who also acts as Jury Facilitator. "Their diverse experience on and off the concert stage gives a wide perspective to Honens' selection process and they have identified a group of potential Complete Pianists who will come to Calgary in September to delight our audience."

The ten Semifinalists are: Luca Buratto (Italy), Scott Cuellar (United States), Dasol Kim (South Korea), Yoon-Jee Kim (South Korea), Henry Kramer (United States), Sejoon Park (United States), Karim Said (United Kingdom), Samson Tsoy (Russia), Alexander Ullman (United Kingdom) and Artem Yasynskyy (Ukraine).

Each Semifinalist performs two recitals (September 3 to 7): a 65-minute solo recital and a 65-minute collaborative recital with soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, clarinetist James Campbell and violist Hsin-Yun Huang. Three pianists will advance to the Finals (September 10 and 11) for performances with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Yan Pascal Tortelier. The Honens Prize Laureate will be announced at an awards show following the Finals on September 11.

Honens also presents a variety of concerts during the ten-day festival, including performances by 1992 Honens Laureate Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, the Gershwin Piano Quartet, a Bison Noir club evening, a Storytellers presentation of *Paddington Bear's First Concert*, and a free outdoor chamber recital for the entire community.

Festival Passes—offering significant discounts—and single tickets, ranging from \$10 to \$95, are available now from the Honens Box Office at (403) 299-0140 and online at honens.com.

- more -

Honens discovers, nurtures and presents Complete Pianists—21st century artists for 21st century audiences. Calgary philanthropist Esther Honens dreamed of discovering and launching the careers of the world's most promising pianists. In 1991, she established the Honens Foundation with a gift of \$5 million, creating a legacy for musicians and music-lovers around the world. Today, the Honens Piano Competition takes place every three years as part of the Honens Festival—Canada's International Festival of Piano. The Honens Prize for Piano—\$100,000 CAN and an artistic and career development program valued at a half million dollars—is the largest prize of its kind.

The 2015 Honens Piano Competition is presented by TD Bank Group, the 2015 Honens Festival is presented by Nexen Energy, a CNOOC Limited company; Lead Partner is TransAlta Corporation; Supporting Partners are RBC Foundation and Sir Jack Lyons Charitable Trust. Other Partners include: Arts Commons, Avenue, Calgary Herald, Canadian Natural Resources Limited, CBC Radio 2, Deluxe Design Group, ecentricarts inc., Enbridge Inc., medici.tv, Pattison Outdoor Advertising, Shaw Communications, Sunesis Consulting Inc., The Banff Centre, The Fairmont Palliser, WAX Partnership Inc. Honens also thanks Masters Gallery, Jaguar / Land Rover Ottawa, Renaissance Wine Merchants Ltd, Nicole Gourmet Catering, Philip Chong Flower Bar; and industry partners Calgary Downtown Association, Calgary Hotel Association, Travel Alberta and Tourism Calgary. Piano partners: Fazioli / Michael Lipnicki Fine Pianos, Steinway & Sons / Steinway Piano Gallery Calgary. Public and Foundation Partners include Calgary Arts Development Authority / City of Calgary, Calgary Foundation, Alberta Foundation for the Arts / Government of Alberta, Alberta Lottery Fund, Department of Canadian Heritage, Harry & Martha Cohen Foundation and Rozsa Foundation. The Competition culminates with the Semifinals and Finals in Calgary, Canada from 3 to 12 September 2015.

Backgrounder Attached

- 30 -

Alberta Media Relations

Janet Bwititi
Honens
Office: (403) 299-0130 ext. 138
Mobile: (403) 978-6510
jbbwititi@honens.com

National Media Relations

Karen Lorenowicz
KL Strategic Communications
Office: (416) 245-2475
karen.lorenowicz@gmail.com

BACKGROUND

THE COMPLETE PIANIST

Honens searches for Complete Pianists—21st century artists for 21st century audiences.

The Competition's mission is to identify talent that is unusual, imaginative and informed—an artist not limited to displays of virtuosity but one who is capable of thoughtful, expressive music-making, and is ready for a professional career.

Honens sees the Complete Pianist as a consummate communicator and collaborator, a risk-taking explorer, a dreamer. Through performance and programming choices, he/she expresses and interprets ideas from a wide cultural context with keen imagination, informed and seasoned by a fascination for life outside the practice studio. The Complete Pianist inspires the heart and engages the intellect.

Pianists taking part in the Honens Competition must also express—through their stage deportment, program design and interviews with arts journalists—sensitivity to contemporary culture and a willingness and ability to communicate effectively with today's audiences.

PIANISTS

Luca Buratto

Italy
Age 22

Luca Buratto made his debut in 2003 at age ten in the Sala Verdi of the Conservatory of Milan, performing music by his great grandfather Renzo Massarani on Holocaust Remembrance Day. He has since appeared with Milan's I Pomeriggi Musicali Orchestra, Orchestra Sinfonica Giuseppe Verdi; Magdeburgische Philharmonie, and in recital in France, Italy and Switzerland. Buratto has received top prizes in several competitions, including third prize in the 2012 International Robert Schumann Competition (Zwickau) and the special 'Acerbi' prize, awarded to a distinguished Finalist at the Shura Cherkassky International Piano Competition (Milan). He also took part in the 2013 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition and the 2014 Gina Bachauer International Artists Competition. After obtaining his piano Diploma under Edda Ponti at the Milan Conservatory, he earned his Masters at Bolzano Conservatory with Davide Cabassi. In 2013, after studies with William Grant Naboré as a Theo Lieven Scholar, he received his Master of Advanced Studies from the Conservatory of Lugano. Buratto's favourite composer is Schumann and his interests range from physics and American post-modern literature, to soccer and jigsaw puzzles. He lives in Milan.

Scott Cuellar

USA

Age 25

New York Concert Review has described Scott Cuellar as “virtuosic in scope and expression, like a great man of the theater.” Cuellar holds a Master of Music from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Julian Martin, and a Bachelor of Music from Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Alvin Chow. He won first prize at the 2013 Virginia Waring International Piano Competition (California) and, during his time at Oberlin, earned three of the school's most prestigious prizes, winning the Oberlin Concerto and Arthur Dann Competitions and receiving the John Elvin Piano Prize. Cuellar has performed throughout the United States, including appearances at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, the Newport Music Festival (Rhode Island), the Greene Space of WQXR (New York) and with both the Minnesota and St Paul Civic Symphonies. He has also been a guest recitalist at the Shenyang Conservatory of Music (China) and Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music (Evanston, Illinois). Cuellar was one of ten pianists invited to study under Jerome Lowenthal at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara (California) and is today a doctoral student at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University (Texas), where he studies with Jon Kimura Parker. He is an avid baseball fan.

Dasol Kim

South Korea

Age 26

Dasol Kim has appeared with some of the world's finest orchestras, including the Tonhalle-Orchestra Zurich, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (Munich), Orchestre de la Suisse Romande (Geneva), Berlin Chamber Orchestra, MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra, Concerto Budapest, Belgium National Orchestra (Brussels) and the New York Philharmonic. Conductors with whom he has performed include Alan Gilbert, David Zinman, Michael Sanderling, Marin Alsop and Li Xincuo. He has also performed with collaborators including David Geringas, Yeol Eum Son, Andreas Brantelid and Svetlin Roussev. Notable festival appearances include La Roque d'Anthéron (France), Kissinger Sommer (Germany) and Great Mountains Festival (South Korea). Kim's first contact with the piano was at age 11 when he imitated recordings of Bartók's children's dances at the keyboard. He studied with In Il Kim in Busan (South Korea), with Gerald Fauth at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Leipzig and with the late Karl-Heinz Kämmerling and Arie Vardi at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover. He has won prizes at numerous international competitions, including the Queen Elisabeth (Brussels), Geneva, Munich ARD and Nagoya. In 2012, he won the top prize at the Géza Anda Competition in Zurich. Kim's debut recording, on the Universal Music label (Korea), features works by Schubert and Schumann.

Yoon-Jee Kim

South Korea

Age 30

Yoon-Jee Kim is both a pianist and conductor. She was born in Seoul and moved to Tokyo at age three where she began piano studies a year later. She studied at the Central Special Music School of the Tchaikovsky Conservatory (Moscow) at age eight and soon moved to New York to train at the Pre-College division of The Juilliard School. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Yale, postgraduate degrees in piano and conducting at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover, and a Master of Music degree in conducting from the Royal Northern College of Music (Manchester). Kim now studies with Matti Raekallio in Hannover. She has won prizes at the International Piano Competition 'Delia Steinberg' (Madrid), the Dranoff International Two Piano Competition (Miami), and the Marsala International Piano Competition (Trapani, Italy). As part of the Perlman Music Program, she has performed chamber music with Itzhak Perlman at Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center (New York). As conductor, Kim has performed with the Manchester Camerata, Yale Symphony Orchestra and Gwangju Symphony Orchestra (South Korea). Her recent Southbank (London) performance of

Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* won critical acclaim. Kim learns languages for fun and can speak English, German, Japanese and Korean.

Henry Kramer

USA

Age 28

Henry Kramer gave his Alice Tully Hall (New York) recital debut earlier this year after being named winner of the 2015 William Petschek Recital Debut Award from The Juilliard School. In recent seasons, he has performed with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony and Portland Symphony Orchestra (Maine), and made his European debut in recital at the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam). As chamber musician, Kramer has been featured in performances at Lincoln Center, as part of the Steans Institute at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago, at La Jolla Music Society's Summerfest! and, most recently, at the Verbier Festival Academy in Switzerland, where he was the recipient of the Tabor Foundation Award. As part of a recent Ravinia Steans Music Institute tour, he performed at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Boston) and the Morgan Library (New York), and travelled to Havana, Cuba as a cultural ambassador. Kramer holds a Master of Music and Bachelor of Music from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Robert McDonald and Julian Martin. He recently completed his Artist Diploma with Boris Berman at the Yale School of Music, where he received the Charles S. Miller Prize for most outstanding first-year pianist. He is now pursuing his doctoral studies at Yale. Kramer enjoys being active and keeps moving with yoga, Pilates, running, swimming and alpine skiing.

Sejoon Park

USA

Age 25

Sejoon Park was born to cellist parents in Seoul, and made his orchestral debut with South Korea's Busan Philharmonic Orchestra at age ten. He has won prizes from the New Orleans International Piano Competition, the PianoArts Competition (Milwaukee) and the Southeastern Piano Competition (University of South Carolina), and has performed on the stages of Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall (New York), the Kennedy Center (Washington DC) and the Benedict Music Tent (Aspen). A PianoArts Fellow and Volunteer Artist for Sing for Hope, Park is actively involved in musical outreach activities across the United States. He performs regularly for audiences ranging from school children in Milwaukee to healthcare patients and seniors in under-resourced communities in New York. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree from The Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University and a Master of Music degree from The Juilliard School. He is now an Artist Diploma candidate at The Peabody Institute. His major teachers have included Boris Slutsky and Choong-Mo Kang. Park strives to create innovative musical performances that bring classical music closer to audiences. He is now working on a project of water-related modern piano music to present at the National Aquarium in Baltimore in support of water conservancy groups. In his spare time, he likes to dance; he has been practicing the tango for a few years.

Karim Said

United Kingdom

Age 26

Karim Said launched his career in 2009 with the English Chamber Orchestra under the direction of the late Sir Colin Davis, and a BBC Proms debut with Daniel Barenboim and the West Eastern Divan Orchestra. He has collaborated with Waltraud Meier, Dorothea Röschmann, Gabriel Croitoru, Adrian Brendel and the Utrecht String Quartet, and last season debuted at La Roque d'Anthéron, the Lucerne and Piano aux Jacobins (Toulouse) festivals, and performed for the first time with the Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra in Tokyo's Mustachio Civic Cultural Hall. He also recently curated a series of three concerts as part of the International Piano Series and The Rest is Noise Festival at the Southbank Centre (London). Said

was born in Amman, Jordan where he began piano studies with Russian teacher Agnes Bashir-Dzodtsoeva. He moved to the United Kingdom at age 11 to study piano, composition and conducting at the Purcell School, moving on to the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied with Tatiana Sarkissova. He has also studied with Tessa Nicholson and, more recently, Hinrich Alpers. Said's development at the Purcell School is documented in Christopher Nupen's film, *Karim's Journey*. This season, he performs with actress Vanessa Redgrave in her latest production of *A World I Loved* in Spoleto, Italy, and continues his long association with Daniel Barenboim and the West Eastern Divan Orchestra, performing at the Mozarteum as part of the Salzburg Music Festival.

Samson Tsoy

Russia

Age 26

Samson Tsoy was born in Kazakhstan and began playing piano when he was eight. He studied with Olga Amelina at the Inozemtsevskaia School of Music and, upon graduation, attended the Krasnodar State Rimsky-Korsakov College of Music and the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory, where he studied with Nelly Mezhlumova and Yury Airapetian. Today he studies with Norma Fisher and Vanessa Latache at the Royal College of Music in London, where he is supported by an ABRSM scholarship. Tsoy has been recognized for his talent by the Hattori and Mstislav Rostropovich Foundations, received the National President's Order 'Young Talent of Russia' and, in 2012, was named Laureate of Spain's Santander International Piano Competition. His numerous festival performances include Switzerland's Verbier Academy, Spain's Santander, Italy's Casalmaggiore and Russia's Mstislav Rostropovich and Rodion Shchedrin Jubilee Festivals. He has also performed at the Konzerthaus in Berlin, Salle Gaveau in Paris, Auditorium di Milano and at the Great Halls of the Moscow Conservatory and St Petersburg Philharmonia. He regularly performs in piano duo with his close friend and colleague, Pavel Kolesnikov. Upcoming engagements include recitals and performances with orchestra at the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, London's Southbank Centre, Royal Albert Hall and Bridgewater Hall in Manchester. Tsoy has recently realized that ballet is his greatest passion apart from music. He also has a brown belt in karate and loves to paint.

Alexander Ullman

United Kingdom

Age 24

Alexander Ullman studied at the Purcell School of Music with William Fong and at The Curtis Institute of Music with Leon Fleisher, Ignat Solzhenitsyn and Robert McDonald. He has also studied with Elisso Virsaladze at the Fiesole Scuola do Musica (Florence) and is now completing his Master's in performance at the Royal College of Music with Ian Jones and Dmitri Alexeev. In 2014, he was selected for support by the United Kingdom's Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) and, in 2011, he won the top prize at the Franz Liszt International Piano Competition (Budapest). Ullman has performed throughout Europe, Asia and the United States. Recent engagements include a tour of China and recitals at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Archive Nationales (Paris), Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (Copenhagen), Auditorio de la Diputación de Alicante, the Festival Pontino & Teatro Rossini (Italy), La Jolla Arts Festival (California), and concerts in the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany and France with the Dover Quartet. He has also appeared at the Montreal Chamber Music Festival and Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany), performed recitals at the Purcell Room, Wigmore Hall, Bath International and Beaumaris Festivals, Théâtres des Variétés (Monaco), and was soloist with the Cardiff Philharmonic.

Artem Yasynskyy

Ukraine

Age 27

Artem Yasynskyy was born in Donetsk, Ukraine into a family of professional musicians. At age seven he became a student of Albina Oryshuk at the Special School for Gifted Children in Donetsk, and later continued his musical studies at the Donetsk State Musical Academy. Since 2010, he has studied with Patrick O'Byrne at the University of Arts in Bremen. Yasynskyy has won prizes at several major international piano competitions, including the Gina Bachauer, Sendai, Gian Battista Viotti, Horowitz and the First German Competition of Polish Music. Earlier this year, he won the Cincinnati World Piano Competition's Gold Medal. He has performed at festivals including Bremer Musikfest, the Maggio Piano Festival Vercelli, the Summer Night Music Festival of Kiev, the Festival 'Days of Slavic Culture' in Rome and Hamburg's Polish Music Festival and has made appearances in Australia, Japan, South Korea, the United States and throughout Europe. Yasynskyy loves delving into biographies of important cultural and historic personalities. He can also be found behind the lens of a camera making his own impressions of the world around him.

2015 HONENS FESTIVAL & PIANO COMPETITION SCHEDULE

3 to 7 September 2015

12:30 and 7:30 pm

Competition Semifinals

Jack Singer Concert Hall at Arts Commons

Calgary

Ten Semifinalists perform a 65-minute solo recital and a 65-minute collaborative recital with soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, clarinetist James Campbell and violist Hsin-Yun Huang.

8 September 2015

6 pm

HONENS HONOURS

The Fairmont Palliser

Calgary

Celebrate two extraordinary Calgarians—Mary Rozsa de Coquet and James Stanford OC—and their commitment to the city's musical life at this fundraising dinner. Proceeds support the 2015 Honens Festival & Piano Competition and its outreach to the community.

8 pm

GERSHWIN PIANO QUARTET

Jack Singer Concert Hall at Arts Commons

Calgary

The Gershwin Piano Quartet sheds new light on the music of George Gershwin. The Quartet, brought from Switzerland especially for the Honens Honours, features four pianists on four grand pianos, playing, arranging and improvising on some of Gershwin and his contemporaries' most popular compositions. Classics like *Rhapsody in Blue*, *An American in Paris* and *I Got Rhythm* make for a fun listening and viewing experience fit for a celebration of two of our city's extraordinary champions of music.

MISCHA CHEUNG piano

ANDRÉ DESPONDS piano

BENJAMIN ENGELI piano

STEFAN WIRTH piano

9 September 2015

7:30 pm

JEAN-EFFLAM BAVOUZET

Jack Singer Concert Hall at Arts Commons

Hear why pianist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet is celebrated for the breathtaking clarity of his performances. Bavouzet is a Laureate of the 1992 Honens Piano Competition and serves as the 2015 Competition's Mentor-in-Residence.

JEAN-EFFLAM BAVOUZET piano

Beethoven Sonata No. 24 in F-sharp minor Op. 78
 Sonata No. 27 in E minor Op. 90
 Sonata No. 28 in A major Op. 101

Ravel Sonatine

Debussy Images série I
 L'isle joyeuse

10 September 2015

7:30 pm

COMPETITION FINALS I

Jack Singer Concert Hall at Arts Commons

Three Finalists each perform a concerto by Beethoven or Mozart with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Yan Pascal Tortelier.

10 pm

BISON NOIR JAM

Royal Canadian Legion No. 1

Let loose at Bison Noir where Competition pianists, jurors and musicians from the Wild West New Music Ensemble jam into the wee hours.

11 September 2015

7:30 pm

COMPETITION FINALS II & AWARDS SHOW

Jack Singer Concert Hall at Arts Commons

Calgary

Three Finalists perform a second concerto of their choice with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Yan Pascal Tortelier. The 2015 Honens Prize Laureate is announced and awarded \$100,000 and an artist development program valued at a half million dollars.

12 September 2015

1 pm

HONENS OPEN AIR: STORYTELLERS

Central Memorial Park

Calgary

Enjoy a free performance of *Paddington Bear's First Concert* with the whole family. Don't forget to have teddy bear in tow.

2 pm

HONENS OPEN AIR: BEETHOVEN & MENDELSSOHN

Central Memorial Park

Calgary

Join 2012 Honens Prize Laureate Pavel Kolesnikov and friends for a free Festival closing concert featuring some of the most enchanting chamber music of all time.