



For immediate release

Canadian International Organ Competition: A “First” in Montreal!

Major new event launches, 16 international competitors revealed

MONTREAL, May 5, 2008 – This Fall, between October 8 and 19, Montreal will welcome 16 brilliant young organists from around the world under the auspices of the first edition of the Canadian International Organ Competition (CIOC). “This Competition will showcase Montreal’s diverse heritage, notably through the exceptional collection of instruments held in churches throughout the city,” commented Kent Nagano, Music Director of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and Honorary Patron of the competition. “I salute the efforts made in demystifying the organ and its music, and I am proud to offer my support in preparation for this major musical happening.” The only international organ competition in the Americas in 2008, this triennial event is of such high quality that it offers the public a new musical experience of international calibre.

Montreal, cradle of the organ

City of a hundred churches, Montreal possesses an extraordinary collection of priceless organs. Professors of organ music at Quebec universities and conservatories are well renowned and the talent of our organ builders is recognized all over the world. “With all these elements playing in favour of Montreal, the creation of an international organ competition here was inevitable. October 2008 will be memorable in Canada’s history of the organ!” so said Mr. John Grew, Organist at McGill University and Artistic Director of the CIOC.

With the arrival of this competition, a new rendezvous is now written in the cultural agenda of all Montrealers and all visitors to Montreal. “I am thrilled that we are holding this international competition in the heart of the city,” declared Ms. Catherine Sévigny, associate councillor for culture and downtown, City of Montreal. “This new event is without a doubt a source of great pride, and contributes to the influence of Montreal as a cultural centre.”

A prestigious international competition

After a major launch in 1500 faculties and conservatories of music around the world, the CIOC recruitment campaign brought forward 60 candidates from 17 countries. In addition to this important number of entries for a new event, the high level of talent in the musicians became rapidly obvious.

Of the 16 organists chosen by a preliminary jury, 13 are already prize winners in well-established international organ competitions. Representing 11 countries, this selection of very high calibre talent includes six women and ten men with an average age of 28 years. For the Competition, a jury of nine eminent specialists from seven countries will determine the winners, and who will ultimately receive the \$65,000 in prizes and other special awards. “It is thanks to the quality of this international jury and the appeal of the Competition’s

generous prizes, which are greater than any other organ competition in the world, that the Canadian International Organ Competition has attracted 16 of the finest young organists from across the globe,” declared Mr. Grew, who will preside over the jury next October.

The competitive part of the event will take part in three rounds, between October 8 and 17, and will close with a Gala Concert showcasing the winners on October 19. The first round will take place at the Immaculate Conception Church, the second at the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Church and the final round at the Notre-Dame Basilica. Artistic Director John Grew promises that a number of concerts and educational activities will be held conjointly. The exact place and time of these will be announced in September.

“The CIOC will confirm Montreal’s status as North America’s pipe organ capital. And for its first edition, we want the CIOC to position itself as one of the most prestigious organ competitions in the world,” commented Mr. E. Noël Spinelli, C.M., Chairman of CIOC’s Board of Directors.

Partners and visionaries

It is thanks to the generous efforts and the commitment of the members of the Competition’s Board of Directors that important financial support has been obtained. Radio-Canada will contribute to the experience as the contest’s official broadcaster. The support of the pipe organ world, private sponsors, and founding partners, such as RBC, Team Spinelli, Sun Life Financial and Hydro Québec, will allow the CIOC to play a leading role in highlighting those new talents that are able to bring out the spectacular, and often unknown, nature of these instruments. The event is also being bolstered by the participation of the Quebec Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism and the City of Montreal. Greatly encouraged by this support, CIOC is actively seeking other sources of funding to ensure the success of this first edition of the Competition and guarantee its continuance.

About CIOC

The Canadian International Organ Competition (CIOC) welcomes young organists to Montreal from around the world. Each year, the organization works to promote the organ as a major instrument in the world of music, and also contributes to the development of the careers of the young organists. The Competition, by showcasing these impressive instruments in their historically beautiful settings, plays an important role in emphasizing the value of our heritage, and recognizing Montreal as a major North American centre for pipe organ music. Please visit the CIOC’s website at www.ciocm.org.

-- 30 --

Information:

Dina Barghout
Canadian International Organ Competition
514-510-5678

Roch Landriault
NATIONAL Public Relations
514-843-2345