



For immediate release

Canadian International Organ Competition crowns Champion!

French competitor Frédéric Champion wins First Prize in the first edition of the Canadian International Organ Competition – as well as Audience Prize

Montreal, October 21, 2008 -- The new Canadian International Organ Competition (CIOC) ended on a high note Sunday night as each of the Competition's three top prizewinners performed a farewell recital to a packed Saint-Jean-Baptiste Church during a memorable Closing Gala Concert. There were over 1,000 people at the Church. "It was quite fitting that this event was held on October 19, seeing as it's the international **Organ Spectacular** day, when organs all around the world were being played," said René Fréchette, Executive Director of the CIOC. Even more fitting is that the winner of the First Prize and the Richard Bradshaw Audience Prize is named Champion - Frédéric Champion.

As the only international organ competition of its kind in the Americas in 2008, the CIOC held its first edition in Montreal between October 8 and 19 in three different churches: Immaculée-Conception, Saint-Jean-Baptiste and Notre-Dame Basilica. Following two highly intense rounds, the Final Round at Notre-Dame was nothing short from spectacular. "It was just amazing! The competitors, the performance, the people – there were at least a thousand people at the Basilica!" said Noël Spinelli, C.M., C.Q., Chairman of the Board of directors of the CIOC, of the Finals. "The Canadian international Organ Competition is a success - this is what teamwork is all about!"

During the finals, five competitors from five different countries each played a 60-minute recital for which the programme was left to their discretion. The competitors vied for a total of \$72,000 in prizes, with a First Prize of \$30,000. This prize was awarded by an international jury of nine organ experts to Frédéric Champion. The Frenchman also wins a three-year career management contract with Karen McFarlane Artists and a CD recording with ATMA Classique. As for the Second Prize of \$15,000, it went to British competitor Andrew Dewar, who also won the \$5,000 Messiaen Prize in the Second Round. And the Third Prize (\$10,000) was awarded to Jens Korndörfer from Germany. Els Biesemans from Belgium, one of the finalists, won the \$5,000 Bach Prize for the First Round. And finally, the jury presented the \$2,000 Royal Canadian College of Organists (RCCO) prize to the most promising Canadian competitor - Jonathan Oldengarm.

The jury awarded all the prizes except for the \$5,000 Richard Bradshaw Audience Prize, which was announced Sunday night during the Closing Gala Concert at Saint-Jean-Baptiste Church. In addition to the official awards ceremony, the closing event featured recitals by the top three prizewinners. Jens Korndörfer played a piece by Louis Vierne: *Symphonie n° 3 op. 28 (excerpts), (iv. Adagio – v. Final)*, followed by Andrew Dewar's rendition of Max Reger's *Fantaisie über Halleluja! Gott zu loben bleibe meine Seelenfreund!*, op. 52 n° 3. While Frédéric Champion closed the evening by performing

two pieces: *Allegro* de la Sixième Symphonie en sol mineur, op. 42 n° 2 by Charles-Marie Widor and *Sicilienne et Toccata*, excerpts from Suite, op. 5 by composer Maurice Duruflé. His recital confirmed not only the jury's choice for First Prize but why he was voted as the public's favourite for the Richard Bradshaw Audience Prize. "Audiences in music competitions don't always agree with the jury's choice for First Prize. But in this Competition, Frédéric Champion was a clear favourite among both the jury and the audience!" declared John Grew, Artistic Director of the CIOC. Mr. Grew was joined by Diana Bradshaw, widow of the late Richard Bradshaw, to make the announcement and to present the Audience Prize to Champion. "This award is in honour of our friend and colleague, the late Richard Bradshaw, who brought the first Opera house to Canada. He was also a great supporter of this Competition," added John Grew.

Recital engagements featuring Champion are already planned for 2009 and 2010, namely at the Bales Organ Recital Hall at the University of Kansas, at the Bach Festival in Montreal and in Calgary in collaboration with Cantos Music Foundation.

About CIOC

The Canadian International Organ Competition (CIOC) welcomes young organists to Montreal from around the world. Each year, the organisation works to promote the organ as a major instrument in the world of music, and also contributes to the development of organ music through the talent of 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 recognising Montreal as a major North American centre for pipe organ music. For additional information on the CIOC, visit www.ciocm.org.

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Information:

Dina Barghout
Canadian International Organ Competition
514 233-3510

Roch Landriault
NATIONAL Public Relations
514 843-2345