



For immediate release

## International Organ Competition Promises to Dazzle

*World premiere event unveils a stellar programme honouring The King of Instruments*

**Montreal, September 25, 2008** – As autumn begins so will the Canadian International Organ Competition (CIOC), which will take place between October 8 and 19, 2008. Not only is this Montreal's first major international organ competition, but also promises to be one of the largest and most prestigious in the world. "This international competition will give audiences the opportunity to enjoy world-class performances by young organists who will give enthusiasts of organ music moments of pure delight," said Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada and Honorary President of the CIOC, in a message sent to the organisers. The Competition reveals a stellar programme providing spectators with a unique sound and visual experience.

### **A prestigious international competition**

As the only international organ competition in the Americas in 2008, the CIOC will welcome 15 brilliant young organists from 11 countries to Montreal, the cradle of the organ. "Today is a celebration of teamwork and its successful outcome. Unveiling our programme is the fruit of this labour and marks a very important step for Montreal, as it reaffirms the city's status as a North American organ capital," declared Noël Spinelli, Chairman of the CIOC's Board of Directors.

### **A Unique Spectator Experience**

Enhanced by large screens, as well as the innate surround sound quality of the organ, the CIOC will provide the public with a unique concert experience. Spectators will enjoy free admission to the Competition, in which they will see and hear the talents of 15 world-class organists demonstrating their mastery of what Mozart once called 'The King of Instruments'. "With the combination of visual and natural surround sound settings and free admission, we offer the audience a feast for the senses," said René Fréchette, Executive Director of the CIOC. Radio-Canada and CBC will contribute to the experience as the Competition's broadcasters, both on the Radio and the Web.

### **Organ 'à-la-carte'**

The Competition itself is comprised of three rounds running from October 8 to 17. The First Round will take place at *Église Immaculée-Conception* on the famous Beckerath organ between October 8 and 10. The Second Round will be held at *Église Saint-Jean-Baptiste* on the Casavant organ on October 13 and 14. And the Final Round will take place at *Basilique Notre-Dame* on October 17 on a Casavant organ as well.

In addition to its competitive rounds, the CIOC offers a programme featuring special concerts, recitals by jury members, master classes and guided tours. These activities will enable the public to learn about the artists, the organs, as well as experience Montreal's rich architectural heritage.

Prior to the First Round of the Competition, an Opening Gala Concert, held in collaboration with the *Festival Orgue et couleurs* will take place on Sunday, October 5 at 7:30 PM at the Church of St. Andrew & St. Paul. American organist and jury member James Higdon, is the soloist, while Jacques Lacombe will conduct the *Orchestre symphonique de Trois-Rivières*. Finally, a Closing Gala Concert featuring an Awards Ceremony and recitals by the top three prizewinners will be held on Sunday, October 19 at 7:30 PM at *Église Saint-Jean-Baptiste*.

### **Largest Monetary Prize**

A world-renowned jury will present the largest total prize money of any major organ competition in the world. Thanks to the contributions of the Competition's partners, a total of \$72,000 in prize money will be awarded. A generous award from the Dane and Polly Bales Foundation brings the first prize to \$30,000. The audience will determine the recipient of the Richard Bradshaw Audience prize of \$5,000 among the five competitors performing at the Finals on October 17. "This award is in honour of our friend and colleague, the late Richard Bradshaw, a great supporter of the Competition," expressed John Grew, the CIOC's Artistic Director. The public will be able to submit their vote on site during the Finals or on the CIOC's Website ([www.ciocm.org](http://www.ciocm.org)) until noon on Sunday, October 19.

### **Partners and visionaries**

It is thanks to the generous efforts and commitment of the members of the Competition's Board of Directors that important financial assistance has been obtained. With the support of the pipe organ world, private sponsors, donors, and founding partners, namely RBC, Team Spinelli, Cantos Music Foundation, Sun Life Financial and Hydro Québec, the CIOC will play a leading role in promoting organ music through the talent of young organists, who are able to bring out the spectacular, and often unknown, nature of these instruments. The event is also being bolstered by the support of the three Quebec Ministries namely Municipal and Regional Affairs, Tourism and Culture, Communications and the Status of Women, as well as the City of Montreal and many valuable partners. Greatly encouraged by all this support, CIOC will 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 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](http://www.ciocm.org).

-- 30 --

### **Information:**

Dina Barghout  
Canadian International Organ Competition  
514 233-3510

Roch Landriault  
NATIONAL Public Relations  
514 843-2345