

Vocal Adjudicator - Jean MacPhail



A distinguished artist and educator, mezzo-soprano Jean MacPhail has nurtured the talents of young singers for more than 35 years.

Ms. MacPhail is responsible for the voice program of The Royal Conservatory's Glenn Gould School: one offering rich, individualized training for young singers, as well as instruction in the historical, cultural, and linguistic framework of art music.

Among her acclaimed students are sopranos Isabel Bayrakdarian and Miriam Khalil; mezzo-soprano Wallis Giunta; and tenor Gary Rideout. Her students have won numerous international competitions, including the Metropolitan Opera auditions, the Marilyn Horne Competition, the George London Competition, the Kathleen Ferrier and the Jeunes Ambassadeurs Lyriques, and have performed with some of the world's leading opera companies, including Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, and La Scala.

The founding President of the Ontario chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, Ms. MacPhail has helped build a community of educators across the province dedicated to the art and science of voice teaching.

As a performer, she has sung for the BBC, CBC, the English National Opera, and the Canadian Opera Company, as well as the Toronto Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic, and the National Arts Centre Orchestras.

She has lectured extensively on voice studies and opera and is a past judge of the Metropolitan Opera Competition, the Juno Awards, and panelist on CBC's Saturday Afternoon at the Opera.

Ms. MacPhail is an Honorary Fellow of The Royal Conservatory of Music.

Piano Adjudicator - Benjamin Smith



Described as having “scintillating technique” (Barrie Examiner), pianist Benjamin Smith has performed both as soloist and chamber musician across Canada and the United States. He has been a laureate of numerous competitions, including the Virginia Waring International Piano Competition and the CMC Stepping Stone Competition. Guest appearances include the Stony Brook Symphony Orchestra, the New Juilliard Ensemble, the Las Vegas Young Artists Orchestra, the Ontario Philharmonic, Orchestra London, the Burlington Symphony, the Windsor Symphony, and the University of Toronto’s Hart House Orchestra.

As soloist, he has performed under esteemed conductors Rossen Milanov, Marco Parisotto, and Yunion Lopez, with concertos including rarities such as the Schoenberg Piano Concerto. Festival performances include repeat appearances at Toronto, Banff, Stratford, Niagara, Port Milford, and New Park (Ithaca, NY). American performances include recitals for the Texas Chopin Society and Chicago’s Landowska Harpsichord Society. Recent seasons have seen two concerts in Carnegie Hall: once as soloist in Gershwin’s Rhapsody In Blue with the Hart House Orchestra, and previously in recital with Canadian cellist Dongkyun An. A disc with Mr. An of Saint-Saens, Schumann, and Beethoven was released in December 2016. Other commercial recordings include a disc of Canadian chamber music (Aboriginal Inspirations, 2017) and extensive solo recordings for the 2022 Royal Conservatory Celebration piano series.

Devoting considerable time to chamber music, Ben has been heard nationally across Canada on CBC Music, as well as radio broadcasts in the UK. He has partnered in recital with a myriad of renowned artists including Martin Beaver, Timothy Chooi, Colin Carr, Narek Hakhnazaryan, Jacques Israelievitch, Jinjoo Cho, Stanislav Pronin, Gábor Tarkövi, Øystein Baadsvik, and William VerMeulen, as well as with ensembles such as the Penderecki, Cecilia, Annex, and Tokai string quartets. For two seasons he performed as one-third of the Israelievitch-Smith-Ahn piano trio. Involved with music of our time as well, he is regularly found playing keyboards with the Esprit Orchestra in Toronto. Increasingly in demand as a teacher, Ben often serves as a juror for music festivals and competitions, and has adjudicated many of the largest music festivals in Canada. His students have had success in this realm as well, including the CFMTA National festival. He has also served on panels for competitions internationally, most recently for the OPUS competition in the US.

Dr. Smith currently resides in Toronto, maintaining a concert schedule and serving on the faculties of both the Glenn Gould School (GGS) and the Taylor Young Artist Academy at the Royal Conservatory. Previously, he held a position on the piano faculty at Western University. His principal teachers included Andrea Battista, James Anagnoson, Julian Martin, and Christina Dahl. Along with a DMA from Stony Brook University, he holds a Bachelors degree from the University of Toronto, an Artist Diploma from the GGS, and a Masters from Juilliard.

Piano Adjudicator - Coral Solomon



"Young Canadian pianist Coral Solomon demonstrated a remarkable maturity of interpretation, musicality and sensibility which proved a great talent and an intelligent and original approach" -Libertatea, Bucharest Romania

Israeli born pianist, Coral Solomon has been praised for her “distinct sensibility” and “original view” (Radio Romania Musical) and has performed numerous solo recitals throughout Canada, USA, Italy, France, Spain, Romania, and Israel. She has appeared as soloist with over a dozen orchestras across Canada, Italy, and Romania- where she performed with the state philharmonic orchestras of Sibiu, Timisoara, Brasov, Bacau, Arad, Tergu Mures, Ploiesti, Ramnicu Valcea, among others. She returned to collaborate with the Bacau Philharmonic Orchestra for the 3rd time, as she debuted a piano concerto transcription of Rachmaninoff’s Variations on a Theme by Corelli. The work was written and dedicated to her by conductor emeritus of New Jersey Plainfield Symphony, Sabin Pautza, who also conducted the premier.

Actively engaged in creative projects in her hometown, she previously served as artistic director for the first Canadian edition of the George Enescu International Festival (originating in Romania, it is one of the largest classical music festivals in the world) and performed in the Festival’s opening concert with the concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Jonathan Crow; worked with Academy Award winning actress Cate Blanchett, as her piano coach for the TV series: “Mrs. America”; and appeared as the piano soloist in Toronto’s internationally acclaimed Fall for Dance North Festival that took place in the Meridian Hall (formally known as the Sony Centre).

Devoted to her community’s musical education scene, Coral currently maintains a full-time private music studio at her home in North York. She is also the director of the Berkovsky-Solomon Academy of Music founded by her and her husband, Michael Berkovsky, which offers additional instructors for piano, theory, and violin lessons in several locations as well as online. Coral regularly adjudicates festivals such as the Classicalia Global Televised Music Competition, Pickering Rotary Music Festival, Unionville Music Academy Competition, Durham Showcase Music Festival, Ann Southerland Award (part of the Canadian Contemporary

Showcase), as well as the ORMTA Central Toronto, Scarborough, Newmarket, Barrie, and Oshawa branches. She was also the founding director of the Avenue Road Music and Performance Academy.

After moving with her family to Toronto in 2004, Coral was a student at the Young Artist Performance Academy of the Royal Conservatory of Music. Prizewinner of several competitions, Coral was interviewed by numerous North American and European television channels and has participated in intensive international summer festivals such as the Pianofest in the Hamptons (Long Island, NY), the Morningside Music Bridge Institute (Calgary), and the Toronto Summer Music Institute.

She has completed her undergraduate degree at the Cleveland Institute of Music and her Master's degree at Boston University, under the tutelage of Antonio Pompa-Baldi and Pavel Nersessian respectively. During her studies in the United States, she was a recipient of the generous Canada Council for the Arts' Musician Grant. For her high academic standing in her graduate studies she was awarded recognition from the Pi Kappa Lambda honorary society. Coral is currently pursuing her Doctoral of Music degree in piano performance at the University of Toronto with Enrico Elisi, on full scholarship.