



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 20, 2020

Brittany Rae wins 43rd E-Gré National Music Competition in Voice



Brandon, MB - The 43rd Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition (E-Gré) for the performance of Canadian and contemporary music is pleased to announce its 2020 prize winners:

1st Prize

Brittany Rae (with pianist Jesse Plessis)

2nd Prize

Jennifer Routhier (with pianist Natasha Fransblow)

3rd Prize

Virginie Mongeau (with pianist Jesse Plessis)

City of Brandon Prize for the Best Performance of the Commissioned Work

Jennifer Routhier (with pianist Natasha Fransblow)

Finalist Prizes (in alphabetical order)

Rebecca Gray (with pianist Cheryl Duvall)

Jayne Hammond (with pianist Lisa Rumpel)

Sarah Parkin (with pianist Ben Smith)

On September 19 and 20, 2020, six of Canada's best emerging vocalists performed live-streamed recitals for the **43rd Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition (E-Gré)** in Voice. The E-Gré Competition began in 1976 and is the most important annual Canadian and contemporary music competition. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the competition was held entirely online for the first time, with each finalist live-streaming their final recital from a safe performance space in their hometown.

All six competitors performed one final recital, and each program was required to include at least 50% Canadian music, as well as this year's commissioned work: *Han Kang: Lost in Translation* by **Gordon Fitzell**.

First place winner, **Brittany Rae**, received a cash award of \$6000, and will embark on a virtual cross-Canada tour in October and November 2020. The Winner and their pianist will each receive ca. \$5000 in performance fees.

Second prize winner, **Jennifer Routhier**, received a cash prize of \$2500 and third prize winner, **Virginie Mongeau** received the Q Country 91.5, 94.7 Star FM & Westman Communications Group Prize of \$1500 cash. The City of Brandon Prize of \$1000 for the best performance of the 2020 commissioned piece, *Han Kang: Lost in Translation* by **Gordon Fitzell**, was awarded to **Jennifer Routhier**. The remaining competing finalists each received a \$1000 cash prize.

The jurors for this year's competition were Adrienne Pieczonka, Helen Pridmore, Steven

Philcox, and the President and CEO of the Canadian Music Centre, Glenn Hodgins.

"I am ecstatic that Jesse and I have been awarded 1st place for the 43rd edition of the E-Gré Competition! I feel so passionate about this competition and what it means for the representation of Canadian and contemporary music. I am so thankful to E-Gré for providing such an important platform for young artists and for fearlessly embracing this new digital format to keep this opportunity alive! Jesse and I can't wait to further explore this format as we embark on the digital Winner's National Tour! I would also like to extend a huge bravo and congratulations to my fellow finalists who offered such inspiring and exceptional performances!"

-Brittany Rae, 2020 E-Gré Winner

The 2020 E-Gré Competition gratefully acknowledges the support of CBC Music, Brandon University School of Music, Canada Council for the Arts, Manitoba Arts Council, SOCAN Foundation, the City of Brandon, Westman Communications Group, Sheringham Distillery, and many corporate and private donors.

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**BACKGROUNDER 1:
1st Prize Winner, E-Gré Competition 2020
September 20, 2020**

Brittany Rae, soprano



Originally from Calgary, AB, soprano, Brittany Rae, is currently based in Montréal, QC. Past season highlights include Susanna (Le nozze di Figaro) with Toronto City Opera, Songbook IX with Tapestry Opera, Oper'Actuel 2019 with Chants Libres, Lucia (Lucia di Lammermoor) with Opera McGill and performer in several exhibitions at Fondation Phi pour l'art contemporain. An avid performer and advocate of contemporary music, Brittany recently attended the SoundSCAPE Festival 2019 where she studied with soprano and contemporary music specialist, Tony Arnold. Brittany also attended Against the Grain Theatre's 2019 Summer Modern Intensive opera program. This season's highlights include attending the 'Concert in the 21st Century' residency at the Banff Centre, a performance of Sensors IV (Alcides Lanza) with Société de musique contemporaine du Québec and performances for Le Vivier's 'Concert Vivier Interuniversitaire' and the McGill Association of Composers. Brittany recently completed a Graduate Artist Diploma (McGill University) studying with Dominique Labelle.

Jesse Plessis, piano



Jesse Plessis, born in Sparwood British Columbia, regularly appears in concert series and music festivals across Canada, England, and continental Europe, performs as a guest artist with several ensembles in Canada, and has garnered numerous awards in both piano and composition. As a composer, his works have been called "ardent and incredibly well-structured" and have been performed by many musicians and groups in Canada including the Land's End Ensemble and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. In 2013 he founded the Centric Festival, a classical music festival that continues annually in Lethbridge, Alberta. Having a particular affinity for several contemporary composers, he has given premieres of works by Arlan Schultz, Marcel Bergmann, Kaija Saariaho, John Corigliano, Nico Muhly, and Kjartan Olafsson. Plessis is pursuing doctoral studies with Paul Stewart at the University of Montréal.