



# 2026 BADER & OVERTON CANADIAN PIANO COMPETITION

**Applications Open: September 8, 2025, at 9:00 AM EDT**  
**Deadline: December 8, 2025, at 11:59 PM EDT**

August 21, 2025

Kingston, ON ...The Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts at Queen's University is pleased to announce the **2026 Bader & Overton Canadian Piano Competition/ Bader & Overton Concours Canadien de Piano**.

The Semi-Finals and Final Rounds of the competition will be held **May 6-9, 2026**, at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts ("the Isabel") in Kingston, Ontario. The Bader & Overton Canadian Piano Competition has been made possible through the generosity of **Bader Philanthropies, Inc.**

A strategic priority of the competition is to champion the next generation of artists by providing much needed support to gifted young Canadian performing artists. The vision for the 2026 competition is drawn from the Isabel's 2025-2026 season theme of "Extending the Rafters," invoking the Haudenosaunee tradition of building good relations. Inspired by this theme, we are motivated to explore ways piano competitions can be diversified with respect to Indigenization – Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Black Racism, and Accessibility.

A goal of the 2026 competition is to create spaces for underrepresented groups to participate and thrive at all stages of the competitive process. Strategic processes have been created to foreground equity, diversity, and inclusion. For instance, the 2026 competition has diversified repertoire requirements, including a commissioned test piece by an Indigenous composer required for semi-finalists. In addition, two special prizes have been established for the preliminary round: 1) most outstanding performance of a work by a BIPOC composer; and 2) most outstanding performance of a work by a woman composer.

"The Isabel is excited about promoting this expanded frame of the competition and the potential for an immediate ongoing impact on audiences and talented emerging pianists. It is our intention that 'Extending the Rafters' in these ways will help to open up new pathways of inclusion at the same time as sustaining the highest standards of performance excellence."  
Gordon E. Smith, Director, Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts.

As of **September 8, 2025**, at 9:00AM EDT, applications will be available online at: <https://app.getacceptd.com/theisabel>, and the deadline for applications is **December 8, 2025**, at 11:59 PM EDT. Applicants need to be Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada between the ages of 18 to 29 as of January 1, 2026. The **Semi-Final Rounds** for the jury-selected six (6) semi-finalists will take place at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts in Kingston ON on **May 6 and 7, 2026**.

The **Final Round** for the jury-selected three (3) finalists is on **May 9, 2026**. For the Semi-Finals and Final Rounds, there will be a live audience and the performances will be livestreamed and recorded.

## CREATIVE COMPONENTS OF THIS COMPETITION

The Semi-Finals Round includes the performance of a newly commissioned work by acclaimed Indigenous composer, Cris Derksen.

The Final Round has a feature called the Creative Demonstration where the pianist creates their own program with works that may include the pianist's own composition, a work by a BIPOC composer, and/or a work by a woman Canadian composer.

## THE PRIZES

**FIRST PRIZE:** The Isabel Overton Bader, Clifford Overton and Francoise Landry Prize for **\$20,000 CAD**, a future engagement to perform a concerto with the Kingston Symphony, and a future engagement to perform a recital at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts that will be recorded by CBC Music for national broadcast.

**SECOND PRIZE:** The Margaret Foster and Katherine Foster Prize for **\$10,000 CAD**.

**THIRD PRIZE:** The Marion Dick Memorial Prize for **\$5,000 CAD**.

**THE BADER FAMILY AUDIENCE PRIZE: \$1,000 CAD to be awarded to one of the three finalists.**

**The Woodland Wealth Prize** for the Outstanding Performance of the Commissioned Work by an Indigenous Composer: **\$1,000 CAD** in the semi-final round.

**The Director's Prize** for Outstanding Performance of a Work by a woman Composer: **\$1,000 CAD** to be awarded in the preliminary round of the competition.

**The Director's Prize** for Outstanding Performance of a Work by a BIPOC Composer: **\$1,000 CAD** to be awarded in the preliminary round.

## COMPETITION JURY

The Competition Jury is comprised of renowned pianists and teachers from across Canada and the United States.

**Louise Bessette (Jury Chair)** MONTREAL, QC – concert pianist, recording artist, professor at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal, Member of Order of Canada, Officer of Ordre national du Québec and Knight of the Ordre de Montréal, Governor General's Performing Arts Award, Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award for Classical Music.

**Lydia Artymiw** MINNEAPOLIS, MN – soloist and educator, Emerita Distinguished McKnight Professor at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, recipient of top prizes in the 1976 Leventritt and the 1978 Leeds Competitions, studied with Gary Graffman.

**Philip Chiu** HALIFAX, NS/ MONTREAL, QC – concert pianist and broadcaster, soloist, chamber musician, collaborative artist, 2023 JUNO winner for Best Classical Solo Album and inaugural Mécénat Musica Prix Goyer laureate.

**Jane Coop** VANCOUVER, BC – recitalist and educator, longtime faculty member at the University of British Columbia, member of the Order of Canada and the Order of British Columbia, founding Artistic Director of the Young Artists' Experience.

**Cécile Desrosiers** OTTAWA, ON – pianist, harpsichordist, pedagogue, Carleton University, founding member of Terzetto, researcher of Women and BIPOC Composers, collaborator with Conservatory Canada to add more than 250 pieces by 60 women and BIPOC composers to the piano syllabus.

**Jarred Dunn** MONTREAL, QC – concert pianist and music educator, laureate of the Lithuanian Chopin (Gold Medal), Hoffman, Vitti, Zinetti, and Rome Premio International Competitions, lectures and teaches master classes at Juilliard, co-Artistic Director of Kallmünz Piano Festival.

**Lang-Ning Liu** TORONTO, ON – concert pianist, chamber music specialist, recording artist, professor, faculty of Glenn Gould School and Taylor Academy, passionate advocate for musical education and community outreach.

**Jonathan Mak** TORONTO, ON – winner of the 2023 inaugural Bader & Overton Canadian Piano Competition and the 2024 Concours international de musique de Sorel-Tracey, doctoral student in piano performance at Rice University (Texas),

recipient of the Canada Council for the Arts-Michael Measures award, 2025-2026 Rebanks Fellow at the Glenn Gould School.

**Stephen Runge** WINNIPEG, MB – soloist and educator, Vice-President of the Canadian Music Festival Adjudicators' Association, recently appointed to dual role of Dean, Desautels Faculty of Music and Director, School of Art, University of Manitoba.

**Timothy Steeves** ST JOHNS, NL – professor at Memorial University, partner in the Duo Concertante, recording artist, co-founder and co-artistic director of the Tuckamore Festival, Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

*Jury subject to change.*

## COMPETITION REPERTOIRE

### PRELIMINARY ROUND

Not to exceed 50 minutes. All music must be memorized.

- **Video 1:** One Prelude and Fugue from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* by J. S. Bach OR two contrasting Sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti
- **Video 2:** One complete classical sonata by Franz Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart OR Ludwig van Beethoven
- **Video 3:** One virtuoso work by Frédéric Chopin, Cécile Chaminade, Unsuk Chin, Claude Debussy, Franz Liszt, Florence Price, Maurice Ravel, Sergei Prokofiev, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Clara Schumann OR Robert Schumann
- **Video 4:** One 20th or 21st-century Canadian work

### SEMI-FINAL ROUND

Not to exceed 50 minutes. All music must be memorized.

- A complete classical sonata
- A complete piece by a 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup>-century composer, such as Lili Boulanger, Johannes Brahms, Frédéric Chopin, Louise Ferrenc, Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, Fanny Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann, Robert Schumann
- A complete piece by a 20th or 21<sup>st</sup>-century composer
- The Competition's commissioned work (5-7 minutes)

### FINAL ROUND

Not to exceed 50 minutes. Concerto must be memorized. The music in Part One: Creative Demonstration may be played with the score.

#### Part One: Creative Demonstration

Pianists select any or several of the following options. For clarity, this is a **choice of options**. The pianist is **not** required to perform all options listed.

- Finalist's own composition
- A major work by a BIPOC composer
- A major work written by a Canadian woman composer

#### Part Two: Concerto

Performed with piano accompaniment. Competition pianists must provide the piano reduction of the orchestral score to the collaborative pianist.

- Isaac Albeniz, Piano Concerto No. 1, Concierto fantástico
- Béla Bartók, Piano Concerto No. 3 in E Major, Sz. 119
- Amy Beach, Piano Concerto in C Sharp Minor
- Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37
- Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58
- Sergei Bortkiewicz, Piano Concerto No. 1 in B Flat Major, Op. 16
- Johannes Brahms, Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15
- Yin Chengzong and Chu Wanghua, Yellow River Concerto based on Yellow River Cantata by composer Xian Xinghai
- Frédéric Chopin, Concerto No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 11
- Lūcija Garūta, Piano Concerto
- Sergei Prokofiev, Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Op. 26
- Maurice Ravel, Piano Concerto in G Major
- Camille Saint-Saëns, Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22
- Clara Schumann, Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 7
- Peter Tchaikovsky, Piano Concerto No.1 in B flat Minor, Op. 23

*Repertoire subject to change.*

For further information, please contact Gordon E. Smith, Director, Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts at [isabelcompetition@queensu.ca](mailto:isabelcompetition@queensu.ca).

**We acknowledge with gratitude the generous support from**

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