Choirs Ontario

CHOIRS ONTARIO ANNOUNCES BRAD BARNHAM AS THE WINNER OF THE 2024 RUTH WATSON HENDERSON CHORAL COMPOSITION COMPETITION



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TORONTO, ONTARIO | MAY 12, 2024 - Choirs Ontario is thrilled to announce that *Brad Barnham* has been selected the winner and recipient of the 2024 Ruth Watson Henderson Choral Composition Competition.

Over 16 submissions were received from composers across the province. The compositions were reviewed by an accomplished jury panel of composers, conductors and choral professionals.

Moonset by Niagara based composer Brad Barnham, was unanimously selected as the winner. Brad will receive a cash prize of $2,000.00 and a premiere performance of his winning composition.

“The jury was moved by the beautiful and accessible writing for both the treble voices and the piano. ‘Moonset’ is a wonderful setting on an E. Pauline Johnson text that choir's will be sure to enjoy performing.”

The selection committee would also like to give honourable mentions to Janet Correia (“I Dream of a Place”) and Yolanda Lichty (“We Cry”) for their submissions to the Ruth Watson Henderson Choral Composition Competition.

Statement from President of Choirs Ontario, Charissa Bagan

The Board of Choirs Ontario is so grateful to see the enduring musical legacy of Ruth Watson Henderson highlighted through this Choral Composition Competition, opening up new doors for talented composers in Ontario. The Board is equally thrilled to congratulate Brad Barnham on being unanimously selected by a distinguished selection panel as the recipient of the 2024 Ruth Watson

Henderson Choral Composition Competition Award for his SSA piece, “Moonset.” We look forward to hearing many performances of this exquisite work at concerts around the province and beyond!

Brad Barnham is the Director of Music & Choral Activities at St. George's Anglican Church in St. Catharines, Music Director of Toronto’s Wavestage Theatre Company and is currently the assistant conductor of Avanti Chamber Singers and conducts the Changed Voice Ensemble of Chorus Niagara Children’s Choir. Brad holds a MMus (Hon. Choral Conducting) degree from the University of Toronto and a BMus (Hon. Theory & Composition) degree from Western University.

Frequently sought-after as a guest conductor and clinician for national and regional vocal festivals, Brad has been honoured to serve as the guest conductor for the Conference of Independent Schools Music Festival and recently adjudicated the 2024 Ontario Vocal Jazz Festival. In 2016, Brad contributed his expertise as a judge for the Classical Award at the JUNO Awards panel.

As a composer, Brad has seen his work premiered and commissioned by notable ensembles in Ontario and beyond and recently received a distinguished Honourable Mention in the 2024 Diane Loomer Competition for Choral Writing for his piece “At That Hour”. This summer will mark his first choral publishing deal with “Moonset”, published by *Suomen Naiskuoroliitto* (eng. Association of Finnish Female Choirs). Brad has also been commissioned to compose the final piece of the 2024 Ontario Youth Choir program, a piece that will also be performed in Beijing and Poland in the coming year.

ABOUT THE RUTH WATSON HENDERSON COMPOSITION COMPETITION

The ***Ruth Watson Henderson Choral Composition Competition*** was born out of a concert held in November 1992 to honour Ruth’s 60th birthday including Toronto Children’s Chorus, Elmer Iseler Singers, Amadeus Choir, Bach Children’s Chorus, Elora Festival Singers, Oriana Women’s Choir, and TMC Youth Chorus. The proceeds of this joint concert were used to establish the RWH competition. The administration of the competition was handed over to Choirs Ontario with Ruth Watson Henderson involved in judging the competition up until 2017.

One of Canada’s foremost musicians, Ruth Watson Henderson is renowned internationally both as a composer and pianist. Her works are acclaimed, performed, and recorded worldwide. The Ruth Watson Henderson Choral Competition was established in 1996 to recognize Ms. Watson Henderson’s invaluable contribution to the art of choral music. Ms. Henderson is very pleased to encourage the contribution to Canadian choral music that the competition provides, and appreciates the work of Choirs Ontario who administers this program.

Choirs Ontario is proud to support Canadian composers and add to the rich legacy of Canadian choral music through the Ruth Watson Henderson Choral Composition Competition. Past winners of the competition include: Matthew-John Knights, Nicholas Kelly, Jason Jestadt, Mark Sirett, Leonard Enns, Allan Bevan, and Elise Letourenau.

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