

**BENJAMIN MORENCY, FLUTE**  
**Grand Prize winner of the 2017 OSM Manulife Competition**  
**Maison symphonique de Montréal**



Charles Milliard, co-president of the OSM Manulife Competition, Jean Paré, donor of the Michèle-Paré Prize, Benjamin Morency, Grand Prix du Concours OSM Manuvie 2017, Pierre A. Goulet, co-president of the OSM Manulife Competition et Laurent Bayle, president of the jury

**Montréal, November 25, 2017** – The 2017 edition of the **OSM Manulife Competition** concluded today with the declaration of the winner, Benjamin Morency (flute, 22 years old, Quebec) following an exciting finale at the Maison symphonique de Montréal in front of a delighted audience. Benjamin Morency will have the opportunity to share the stage with the Orchestre

symphonique de Montréal on January 10, 2018, at a concert conducted by Maestro **Conrad van Alphen**.

This edition of Canada's most prestigious national performance competition allowed 22 semi-finalists to perform and share their talent with classical music lovers from near and far. They offered the judges and audiences outstanding performances. The numerous prizes and scholarships awarded as part of this illustrious competition amounted to more than \$100,000. Baritone Hugo Laporte, winner of the 2014 edition, was the ambassador of the 2017 Competition, and Laurent Bayle, director of the Cité de la musique and president of the Philharmonie de Paris, served as president of the jury for this edition.

"The Competition's strength, is to uphold thanks to the OSM, the volunteers, the donors and the implication of numerous OSM musicians, a collective adventure in a world characterized by an excessive individualism. Including in the program works by living Canadian composers provides candidates with an expanded view of classical music. Today's creation is the heritage of tomorrow", said Laurent Bayle.

The public attended the performances of our up-and-coming classical musicians, both for the semi-finals at McGill University's Tanna Schulich Hall and the finals, which took place at the Maison symphonique. Access to the performances was made possible thanks to a generous donation made to the OSM by Mrs. Barbara Bronfman and her family. For those who could not attend in person, in particular the families and friends of candidates across the country, the semi-finals and finals could be followed live on the websites of the OSM and our partner ICI Musique!

"We believe in the importance of the OSM Competition to act as a stepping stone for these young Canadian artists so that they may strive in this industry that passionates them," said Madeleine Careau, OSM Chief Executive Officer

#### **Stingray Rising Stars Award: Public's Choice – Dakota Martin, Flute**

In addition to being able to attend the various performances, the public was invited to learn about the semi-finalists on the OSM's Facebook page and website, as well as to vote for the candidate of their choice on the page of our partner Stingray Music. This year, it was **Dakota Martin**, flute, who won the public's heart.

### **THE RESULTS**

#### **OSM Manulife Grand Prize**

This prize is awarded to the finalist who distinguishes himself or herself most overall, all categories combined, during the course of the Competition. The **Grand Prize winner of the 2017 OSM Manulife Competition, Benjamin Morency**, receives the following awards:

- A \$10,000 Manulife scholarship;
- A concert with the OSM under the direction of conductor Conrad van Alphen, on January 10, 2018 at the Maison symphonique de Montréal;
- The ICI Musique Prize: a professional audio recording at one of Radio-Canada's studios and the broadcast of this recording on ICI Musique's radio stations and website;

- The Orford Music Prize: a recital at Orford Music, presented in 2018;
- The YOA Orchestra of the Americas Award: a concert tour in the summer of 2018. This prize is presented with the support of the Fondation Ariane Riou and Réal Plourde;
- The National Arts Centre Prize: a performance opportunity at the National Arts Centre as part of the 2018-2019 season and a grant to take part in the 2018 Young Artists Program;
- The Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra Prize: a concert in St. John's, Newfoundland, as part of the NSO's 2018-2019 season;
- The Northern Arts and Cultural Centre Prize: a recital in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, as part of the NACC's 2018-2019 season;
- The winner also receives the Michèle-Paré Prize, a \$5,000 grant to support the development of a professional career in music.

"By supporting this prestigious competition, Manulife is reaffirming its commitment to organizations in the communities where we operate," said Richard Payette, President and Chief Executive Officer, Manulife Quebec. "We are proud to be a partner in the OSM Manulife Competition and to help provide young Canadian musicians with a platform to demonstrate their talent. Congratulations to the winners!"

#### **In the Woodwinds category**

- First prize: a \$10,000 Manulife scholarship (included in the Grand Prize)  
The winner is: **Benjamin Morency**, flute, 22 years old, Quebec
- Second prize : a \$5,000 scholarship offered by the Marjorie and Gerald Bronfman Foundation  
The winner is: **Eric Abramovitz**, clarinet, 24 years old, Quebec
- Third prize : the \$2,500 V. E. Lambert scholarship offered by the Succession Lambert-Fortier-Gagnon  
The winner is: **Dakota Martin**, flute, 24 years old, Ontario
- Prize for the best performance of the Canadian work: a \$2,500 scholarship offered by the OSM Volunteer Association  
The winner is: **Eric Abramovitz**, clarinet, 24 years old, Quebec

#### **In the Brass category**

- First prize: a \$10,000 Manulife scholarship  
The winner is: **Brian Mangrum**, French horn, 22 years old, Quebec
- Second prize: a \$5,000 scholarship offered by Fondation Paul A. Fournier  
The winner is: **Hillary Simms**, trombone, 23 years old, Labrador Newfoundland
- Third prize : the \$2,500 Aline-Hector-Perrier scholarship, offered by the Fonds Les Amis de l'Art (\$2,000), Mrs. Louise-Marie Dion and Mr. Réjean Breton (\$500);  
The winner is: **Alec Michaud-Cheney**, French horn, 21 years old, Quebec
- Prize for the best performance of the Canadian work: a \$2,500 scholarship offered by the OSM Volunteer Association  
The winner is: Charles-Antoine Solis, trumpet, 25 years old, Quebec

#### **In the Voice category:**

- First prize: a \$10,000 Manulife scholarship  
The winner is: **Anna-Sophie Neher**, soprano, 27 years old, Quebec

- Second prize: the \$5,000 V. E. Lambert scholarship, offered by the Succession Lambert-Fortier-Gagnon  
The winner is: **Elizabeth Polese**, soprano, 27 years old, Ontario
- Third prize: a \$2,500 scholarship offered by Mrs. Barbara Bronfman  
The winner is: **Catherine St-Arnaud**, soprano, 28 years old, Quebec
- Prize for the best performance of the Canadian work: a \$2,500 scholarship offered by Ms. Juliana Pleines  
The winner is: **Anna-Sophie Neher**, soprano, 27 years old, Quebec

#### **Stingray Rising Stars Award: Public's Choice**

- A \$2,500 scholarship offered to the candidate who received the most votes live on the Web and at the Maison symphonique during the finals on November 25, 2017:  
The winner is: **Dakota Martin**, flute, 24 years old, Ontario

#### **Complementary prizes**

- The Aspen Music Festival and School Prize: a scholarship covering tuition and accommodations for eight weeks of advanced training at the Aspen Music Festival and School during the summer of 2018.  
The winner is: **Hillary Simms**, trombone, 23 years old, Labrador Newfoundland
- The Banff Centre Prize: scholarships covering tuition and accommodations for three weeks of advanced training in the Music and Sound Department at the Banff Centre, in 2018.  
The winners are:  
**Brian Mangrum**, French horn, 22 years old, Quebec  
**Catherine St-Arnaud**, soprano, 28 years old, Quebec  
**Hugo Lee**, oboe, 23 years old, Quebec
- The Orford Music Prize: scholarships covering tuition and accommodations for two weeks of advanced training at Orford Music, in 2018.  
The winners are:  
**Anna-Sophie Neher**, soprano, 27 years old, Quebec  
**Dakota Martin**, flute, 24 years old, Ontario  
**Lucas Von Lierop**, tenor, 29 years old, British Columbia
- The Domaine Forget Prize: scholarships covering tuition and accommodations for two weeks of advanced training at Domaine Forget, in 2018.  
The winners are:  
**Elizabeth Polese**, soprano, 27 years old, Ontario  
**Alec Michaud-Cheney**, French horn, 21 years old, Quebec  
**Antoine St-Onge**, bassoon, 23 years old, Quebec

- The Schulich School of Music Prize: two scholarships covering complete tuition for a performance program at McGill University's Schulich School of Music.

The winners are:

**Benjamin Morency**, flute, 22 years old, Quebec

**Brian Mangrum**, French horn, 22 years old, Quebec

**Anna-Sophie Neher**, soprano, 27 years old, Quebec

- The Paul Merkelo scholarship: a \$5,000 scholarship, awarded by a jury chaired by Paul Merkelo, principal trumpet of the OSM  
The winner is: **Brian Mangrum**, French horn, 22 years old, Quebec
- The President of the OSM Manulife Competition special prize scholarship: two \$750 scholarships, awarded by the jury, from Pierre A. Goulet, co-president of the competition and Yves Lévesque  
The winners are:  
**Kendra Heslip**, saxophone, 24 years old, Alberta  
**Dimitri Katotakis**, baritone, 26 years old, Ontario

## THE 2017 EDITION OF THE COMPETITION

### A remarkable international jury

The jury for this edition was presided by **Mr. Laurent Bayle**, director of the Cité de la musique and president of the Philharmonie de Paris. The grand jury was made up of internationally renowned musicians: **Mr. Zarin Mehta**, former General manager of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and former CEO of the New York Philharmonic and **Mr. Masaaki Suzuki**, artistic director of the Bach Collegium Japan.

The principal judges in the Woodwinds category were **Mr. Martin Fröst**, clarinetist and conductor, **Mr. Timothy Hutchins**, principal flute of the OSM and **Mr. Nathan Hughes**, principal oboe of the Metropolitan Opera. The judges in the Brass category were **Mr. Jens Lindemann**, trumpet soloist, **Mr. Jörgen van Rijen**, principal trombonist, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and **Ms. Claudia Strenkert**, principal horn, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra. The judges in the Voice category were **Mr. François Leroux**, baritone, **Mr. Alexander Neef**, general director, Canadian Opera Company and **Ms. Evamaria Weiser**, director of artistic administration, Salzburg Festival.

“The presence of renowned musicians among the jury coming from the American continent, from Europe and from Asia, confers an international perspective vital to the prestige of the Competition”, said Laurent Bayle.

This past week, candidates had the opportunity to take part in mentoring activities **with OSM musicians** and master classes given by **jury members**, among others, which meant they were

able to benefit from the invaluable advice of **Jörgen van Rijen** and **Martin Fröst**.

### **The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal**

Since its founding in 1934, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal has distinguished itself as a leader in the orchestral life of Canada and Québec. A cultural ambassador of the highest order, the Orchestra has acquired an enviable international reputation through the quality of its many recordings and tours. The OSM carries on that rich tradition under the leadership of its current music director, Kent Nagano, featuring innovative programming aimed at updating the orchestral repertoire and strengthening the Orchestra's connection with the community. Over the years the OSM has undertaken over 40 tours and roughly 30 national and international excursions. The Orchestra has made more than 100 recordings, on the Decca, EMI, Philips, CBC Records, Analekta, ECM and Sony labels, as well as on its own label, which have garnered it over 50 national and international awards.

The **OSM Manulife Competition** came into being in 1940, on the initiative of Wilfrid Pelletier, the first music director of the Société des Concerts symphoniques de Montréal, which in 1954 would become the OSM. To date, more than 350 prize-winners have made a name for themselves during this performance competition's rounds, among them **Angela Hewitt, James Ehnes, Louis Lortie, André Laplante, Angèle Dubeau, Karina Gauvin, Jonathan Crow, Stéphane Tétreault, Jan Lisiecki** and **Andrew Wan**.

### **Manulife – Official presenter**

**Manulife Financial Corporation** is a leading international financial services group that helps people achieve their dreams and aspirations by putting customers' needs first and providing the right advice and solutions. We operate primarily as John Hancock in the United States and **Manulife** elsewhere. We provide financial advice, insurance, as well as wealth and asset management solutions for individuals, groups and institutions. At the end of 2016, we had approximately 35,000 employees, 70,000 agents, and thousands of distribution partners, serving more than 22 million customers. As of September 30, 2017, we had over \$1 trillion (US\$806 billion) in assets under management and administration, and in the previous 12 months we made \$27.1 billion in payments to our customers. Our principal operations are in Asia, Canada and the United States where we have served customers for more than 100 years. With our global headquarters in Toronto, Canada, we trade as 'MFC' on the Toronto, New York, and the Philippine stock exchanges and under '945' in Hong Kong.

### **Indispensable partnerships for the OSM**

The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal thanks the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts de Montréal and the Ville de Montréal for their generous support.

The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal is presented by Hydro-Québec.

BMO Financial Group is the OSM's 2017-2018 season partner.

Air Canada is the official carrier of the OSM

The OSM Manulife Competition is presented by Manulife in collaboration with Stingray Music.

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