

The Next Career Development Award

By Annette Sanger

There's always something exciting happening at the WMCT; amazingly, last season was our 125th with an exceptionally impressive line-up of chamber musicians as well as the release of *Counterpoint Three*, the continuation of our history, by Robin Elliott. And now we are preparing for the next [Career Development Award](#) competition: the winner will be announced at our March 6, 2024 concert. As usual, this is a collaborative project with the CBC. It is funded by the WMCT Foundation with a prize of \$25,000 as well as a recital in our *Music in the Afternoon* series.

The CDA committee – Kathy Halliday, Tamar Adaskin Nelson, Adair Hope, Matthew Parsons (CBC) and myself – began its deliberations back in the summer with a review of the definition, selection process and timeline. CBC producers then chose nine young Canadian classical musicians embarking on performing careers; they are from all over Canada and play a range of instruments:

1. Christ Habib, guitar | <https://christhabib.com/bio>
2. William Leathers, trumpet
<https://www.nashvillesymphony.org/about/orchestra-conductors/william-leathers/>
<https://toronto.citynews.ca/2023/10/03/julliard-mississauga-musician-returns-to-play-with-toronto-symphony-orchestra/>
3. Brandyn Lewis, double bass | <https://ensemblebiora.com/bio-brandynen>
4. Jonathan Mak, piano | <https://www.jonathanmakpiano.com/>
5. Midori Marsh, soprano | <https://www.wlu.ca/academics/faculties/faculty-of-music/assets/concert-programs/2022/midori-marsh-biography-2022.html>
6. Elisabeth Saint-Gelais, soprano
<https://mcgillnews.mcgill.ca/s/1762/news/interior.aspx?sid=1762&gid=2&pgid=2447>
7. Jonelle Sills, soprano | <https://jonellesills.com/>
8. Tony Yike Yang, piano | <https://www.tonyyikeyang.com/>

Maybe you have already heard some of them. If you click on the links to find out more, you cannot fail to be impressed by the cornucopia of talent!

A jury of five accomplished musicians is also in place, conforming to our broad criteria of varied expertise, experience adjudicating/teaching masterclasses etc., cross-Canada representation and diversity:

Philip Chiu | <http://philipchiu.ca/about/>

Accompanist/coach at McGill and Université de Montréal. Creator/Director of the collaborative piano program at the Domaine Forget International Festival & Academy.

Collaborative pianist, teacher, chamber musician, accompanist in competitions in Canada & the US.

Professor Gillian MacKay | <https://www.music.utoronto.ca/mob-our-people.php?fid=5>

Conductor, adjudicator, teacher, clinician, trumpeter. Wind ensemble/band conductor at the University of Toronto and internationally, e.g. Singapore, US, Thailand, Korea.

Natasha Aziz (chair) | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/natashaaziz/?originalSubdomain=ca>

CBC Producer in Vancouver

Professor Sung-Ha Shin Bouey | <https://www.upei.ca/profile?u=sshinbouey>

University of Prince Edward Island

Opera & oratorio singer, choral & orchestral conductor, chamber musician, adjudicator

Dinuk Wijeratne | <https://www.dinukwijeratne.com/biography/>

Ottawa-based.

Sri-Lankan-born composer, conductor, pianist, educator, former director of the Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra, Carnegie Hall debut in 2004 as a performer, conductor & composer with Yo Yo Ma & the Silk Road Ensemble, extensive Canadian and international experience, diverse cultural interests and influences.

The candidates are currently preparing their audio/visual/written materials for submission to the jury later in the fall. A big thank you to Matthew Parsons, our CBC representative, who will be collating and sending everything out to the jury. We are also extremely grateful to the jurors who will have a huge amount of material to review before reaching their decisions.

We all eagerly look forward with great anticipation to welcoming the 2024 winner to the WMCT CDA family!