

New Music Festival Composer & Artist Biographies

COMPOSERS:

Andrew Balfour (composer, CAN)

Available for interviews

Andrew Balfour is the founder, conceptual creator, arranger and conductor of Camerata Nova. Andrew studied voice under Mel Braun, Doris Mayoh and Donald Hadfield. Since 1998, Andrew has written more than 16 original compositions, including a Mass, choral motets, a carol in Cree, a Magnificat for choir, organ and brass and a work for solo viola. Of these, 9 have been performed publicly. Andrew has been involved extensively in editing and arranging music, particularly choral and brass, for 17 years. Since Camerata Nova's inception in 1996, Andrew has specialized in arrangements of medieval, Renaissance and early Baroque choral music.

Abbie Betinis (composer, US)

Reviewed as "most audacious... edgy and thrilling," the music of Abbie Betinis is being performed increasingly in the United States and abroad. At age 29, Betinis has been commissioned by more than 40 music organizations including the Alchemy Project, American Suzuki Foundation, Cantus, Cornell University Chorus, Dale Warland Singers, and the Young New Yorkers' Chorus. Betinis holds a BA from St. Olaf College, and MA in music composition from the University of Minnesota. She has also attended the European American Musical Alliance summer sessions in Paris, France, where she studied harmony and counterpoint in the tradition of Nadia Boulanger. Betinis has received grants and awards from the American Composers Forum, American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP), the Jerome Foundation, and the Minnesota Music Educators Association.

Tim Brady (distinguished guest composer, CAN)

Bilingual: Available for interviews

"One of the 30 most important guitarists in the world for the future of the electric guitar"

-Guitar Player Magazine (USA) – 1997

Composer / guitarist Tim Brady simply defies categorisation - an electric guitar virtuoso who writes operas, plays concertos and feels as comfortable with a laptop electronic improv or jazz group as with a string quartet. His solo concerts concentrate on the multi-textured music he has been creating for solo guitar and electronics for the past 20 years. His chamber and orchestral music is often influenced by strong jazz and rock rhythms, combined with a subtle sense of harmony and texture, and a flair for dramatic forms and structures. Sixteen CDs, numerous commissions, broadcasts, two operas, two symphonies and dozens of international tours later, his music continues to engage listeners around the world. www.timbrady.ca

Derek Charke (distinguished guest composer, CAN)

Available for interviews

Derek Charke is a Composer, a flutist and an assistant professor of music at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada. Derek's music is increasingly performed and commissioned by world renowned artists including the Kronos Quartet, the St. Lawrence String Quartet and the National Flute Association. His music increasingly pairs electroacoustic elements, many derived from environmental sounds, with acoustic instruments. Ecological sound as an artistic statement on environmental issues has become an impetus, and his interest in the Arctic like-wise has played pivotal roles in several compositions.

Michael Colgrass (composer, US/CAN)

Michael Colgrass (b. 1932) began his musical career as a jazz drummer in his native Chicago. Throughout his career, Michael Colgrass has won many prestigious awards including the 1978 Pulitzer Prize for *Music for Déjà vu*, First prize in the Barlow and Sudler International Wind Ensemble Competitions, and the 1988 Jules Leger Prize for Chamber Music. Following studies at the University of Illinois, and two years as timpanist in the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra in Stuttgart, Germany, he spent 11 years supporting his composing activities as a freelance percussionist in New York City. Colgrass has received commissions from the New York Philharmonic, The Boston Symphony (twice), the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (twice), the National Arts Centre Orchestra (twice), Canadian Broadcast Corporation, The Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, the Manhattan and Muir String Quartets, The Fromm and Ford foundations, and numerous other orchestras, chamber groups, choral groups and soloists.

Brett Dean (composer, AU)

Brett Dean began composing in 1988, initially working on film and radio projects. His career writing concert works grew rapidly during the 1990s and he is now one of the most internationally performed composers of his generation. Leading interpreters include conductors Simon Rattle, Markus Stenz and Daniel Harding, and his works have been performed by the major Australian orchestras, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Ensemble Modern, London Sinfonietta and Ensemble InterContemporain. He has also created music for dance, including *One of a Kind*, choreographed by Jiri Kylian and staged internationally more than 40 times by the Nederlands Dans Theater, and has created sound installations commissioned for the millennium celebrations at the Berlin Kulturforum.

Sophie Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté (composer, CAN)

Born in Moscow as Sofia (Sonia) Fridman-Kochevskaya, Eckhardt-Gramatté studied at the Conservatoire de Paris, where her teachers included Alfred Brun and Guillaume Rémy for violin, S. Chenée for piano, and Vincent d'Indy and Camille Chevillard for composition. She also embarked on several concert tours of Western Europe, on which she performed her own works. Eckhardt-Gramatté died in Stuttgart, as a result of an accident. Her legacy is preserved through the work of the Eckhardt-Gramatté Foundation. Her compositions included: a symphony; a concerto for orchestra; a triple concerto for trumpet, clarinet, bassoon, strings, and timpani; three piano concertos; two violin concertos; a piece for two pianos and orchestra; a bassoon concerto; various chamber works; as well as numerous instrumental solos for piano and violin.

Gordon Fitzell (composer, CAN)**Available for interviews**

Gordon Fitzell is a sound artist whose music has been performed internationally. He has received awards and acknowledgements for his compositions from various organizations including CBC Radio, the SOCAN Foundation, and the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (USA). In 2009, his chamber work "*violence*" was performed at the ISCM World New Music Days in Sweden by Norwegian group BIT20, under the direction of Reinbert de Leeuw. Fitzell is an Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition at the University of Manitoba, and recently became an Artistic Director of GroundSwell, Winnipeg's new music series.

Christos Hatzis (composer, CAN)

With two recent Juno awards and a SOCAN Award to his credit and a slew of new commissions by internationally recognized touring artists such as violinists Angèle Dubeau, Hilary Hahn and Jennifer Koh, percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie, soprano Suzie Leblanc, the Pacifica Quartet and Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra among others and an opera collaboration with renowned author Margaret Atwood, Christos Hatzis is widely recognized as "one of the most important composers writing today" (CBC), "a contemporary Canadian Master" (the New Yorker) and "a Canadian icon and an international cultural institution" (See Magazine). Hatzis' music is influenced by early Christian spirituality, Pythagorean and Hermetic ideas, his own Byzantine music heritage, world cultures and religions, and various classical, jazz and pop music idioms from the past and present.

Jim Hiscott (composer, CAN)**Available for interviews**

Jim Hiscott was born in 1948 in St. Catharines, Ontario. In 1971, after earning a Masters Degree in Theoretical Particle Physics, he switched to music composition, studying with Samuel Dolin at the Royal Conservatory of Music and David Lidov and Richard Teitelbaum at York University. He is the recipient of the Creative Arts Award of the Canadian Federation of University Women. His compositions have been performed across North America, in Europe and Asia by many artists including the Hilliard Ensemble, the St. Lawrence String Quartet, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the Vancouver New Music Society ensemble, Rivka Golani, Arraymusic, and Philadelphia's Relache.

Randy Hostetler (composer, US)

During his brief career Randy Hostetler accomplished a great deal. His catalogue includes over 40 works in a wide range of media - instrumental solo and chamber works, vocal music, film music, tape music, intermedia works, experimental film and video, visual art and performance art. His Living Room Series provided an outlet for experimental composers, artists and performers in Los Angeles, often attracting participants from as far away as the Bay Area and Las Vegas. - Arthur Jarvinen.

Mike Janzen (composer, CAN)**Available for interviews**

Originally from Manitoba, Michael Janzen now lives with his wife Jodi in Toronto where he is a freelance composer and jazz pianist. He completed his Masters in Composition from the University of Toronto where he studied with Chan Ka Nin, Walter Bucynski and Christos Hatzsis. His orchestral arrangements have been played by orchestras across North America and he has worked and recorded with artists such as Steve Bell, Hugh Marsh, Daniel Lanois, George Koller, Ben Riley, Jacob Moon and the WSO. He is thrilled to be commissioned by the CBC and working alongside the WSO.

Arthur Kampela (composer, BR)

Arthur Kampela is an internationally acclaimed composer and guitar player. His new work, *Macunaíma*, was recently premiered by the New York Philharmonic conducted by Magnus Lindberg in December 2009. In 2007, his "Elastics II" (for flutes, guitar, and electro-acoustic sounds) and "Percussion Study V" (for viola and-acoustic sounds) were premiered at Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg, by the Linea Ensemble; and in 2006, his *Antropofagia* (for electric guitar and large chamber ensemble) was premiered at the ISCM World Music Days 2006 Festival, by the Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin with Wiek Hijmans on electric guitar. Kampela holds a Doctorate degree (DMA) from Columbia University, having been taught by such composers as Mario Davidovsky, at Columbia, and abroad by the British Brian Ferneyhough.

Michael Matthews (composer, CAN)**Available for interviews**

Michael Matthews' music has been performed in countries around the world. He has been the recipient of numerous commissions and awards; in 2000 he held a Rockefeller Foundation residency at the Bellagio Center in Italy. His orchestral work *Two Interludes* was awarded third prize in the 1997 du Maurier Arts Ltd. New Music Festival Canadian Composers Competition. He has also received Canada Council and Manitoba Arts Council grants, the Winnipeg Rh Institute award for interdisciplinary research, a residency at the EMS computer music studios in Stockholm, Sweden, and a prize in the Premio Musicale Città di Trieste, Italy for his orchestral piece *The Wind Was There*.

Diana McKintosh (composer, CAN)**Available for interviews**

Bravo TV called Diana McIntosh a national treasure. With a dynamic stage presence, she has an active career as a distinctive, provocative, and innovative composer/pianist/performance artist having performed throughout Canada, widely in the USA, in Europe and Nairobi, Kenya. She has been commissioned by many soloists, ensembles and by the WSO and CBC. Most recently CBC commissioned a piano Prelude and Fugue for their Glenn Gould celebration concert in Toronto, and *Prodigies of the Nose* for percussion and piano. In October 2009 she performed in the premiere of her theatrical *The Rehearsal's the Thing* for four speaking/playing musicians.

Darren Miller (composer, CAN)**Available for interviews**

Darren Miller was born and raised in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. In 2005 he received his B.Mus. with great distinction from the University of Saskatchewan. In 2008 he completed an M.Mus. at the University of Victoria, and attended the infamous Darmstadt Summer Courses for New Music in Darmstadt, Germany. Darren then spent a year at the Banff Centre on a self-directed creative residency before accepting a PhD offer from the prestigious composition program of SUNY Buffalo.

Joshua Penman (composer, US)**Available for interviews**

Joshua Penman enjoys simultaneous fledgling careers as a concert composer, film composer, music psychology researcher, and installation artist. He has received awards from ASCAP, BMI and the Bearn's Prize, and was a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center. His large ensemble music is published by E.B. Marks. His computer-controlled installations have appeared several times at the Burning Man festival - a source of deep inspiration for all his work. Additionally, he has worked for several years and is writing a book with ethnomusicologist Judith Becker about the relation between ecstatic trance and physiological responses to emotionally moving music. He also performs as a singer. Joshua Penman has studied composition with Louis Andriessen, William Bolcom, Bright Sheng, Evan Chambers, Karen Tanaka, John Halle, and Betsy Jolas. He holds a BA in Music and Mathematics from Yale University, and an MM and DMA in composition from the University of Michigan.

John Psathas (distinguished guest composer, NZ)**Available for interviews**

John Psathas is one of a few New Zealand composers who have made a mark on the international scene, particularly in Europe and North America. He is now widely considered one of the three most important living composers of the Greek Diaspora. Raised in Taumaranui and Napier, John is the son of Greek immigrant parents who arrived in New Zealand in the early 1960s. After studying piano and composition at Victoria University, he studied privately in Belgium with Jaqueline Fontyn before returning to take up lecturing at the New Zealand School of Music in Wellington. John's music has been commissioned and performed by many great musicians and orchestras around the world.

Paul William Pura (composer, CAN)**Available for interviews**

Paul William Pura was born in Manitoba, and received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Manitoba followed by a Masters of Fine Arts degree from Indiana University. He is currently professor at the University of Manitoba School Of Art. Recent musical works include the chamber opera *Batoche, Der Holzweg: The Way through the Woods*, for solo cello, and the score for Talia Pura's aerial dance video for the 2010 Winter Olympics. He is currently working with Edmonton pianist Sylvia Shadick-Taylor on a recording of his major works for piano.

Einojuhani Rautavaara (composer, FI)

Rautavaara was born in Helsinki in 1928 and studied with Merikanto at the Helsinki Academy (1948-52), with Persichetti at the Juilliard School in New York (1955-56), and with Sessions and Copland at Tanglewood (1955). He first came to international attention in 1955 when the neo-classical *A Requiem in Our Time* for brass and percussion won the Thor Johnson Composer's Competition in Cincinnati. He studied serialism and soon integrated twelve note techniques, without displacing his essential Romanticism. In the late 1960s Rautavaara distanced himself from serialism and his mystical character came more to the fore in music of rich colour and sweeping melodic profile, at once accessible and evocative.

Sid Robinovitch (composer, CAN)**Available for interviews**

Sid Robinovitch's music has been widely performed in Canada and abroad and frequently broadcast on CBC radio. In addition to his concert works, Robinovitch has written music for film, radio and TV, where he is probably best known for his theme for CBC-TV's satirical comedy series, "The Newsroom." *Klezmer Suite*, a recording devoted entirely to his music performed by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Bramwell Tovey, received a Prairie Music Award for outstanding classical recording in 2002. *Sefarad*, a CD featuring his music for guitar, was released in 2008 on the Marquis label, and received both Juno and Western Canadian Music Award nominations for classical recording of the year.

Valentin Silvestrov (composer, UA)

Silvestrov began private music lessons at age 15. He studied piano at the Kiev Evening Music School from 1955 to 1958, then at the Kiev Conservatory from 1958-1964; composition under Borys Lyatoshynsky, harmony and counterpoint under Levko Revutsky. Silvestrov is perhaps best known for his avant-garde musical style; some, if not most, of his works could be considered neoclassical and modernist. Using traditional tonal and modal techniques, Silvestrov creates a unique and delicate tapestry of dramatic and emotional textures, qualities which Silvestrov suggests are otherwise sacrificed in much of contemporary music. "I do not write new music. My music is a response to and an echo of what already exists," Silvestrov has said.

Steven Stucky (distinguished guest composer, USA)**Available for interviews**

Winner of the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for his *Second Concerto for Orchestra*, in recent years Steven Stucky has also fulfilled commissions for the BBC, the New York Philharmonic, the Singapore Symphony, the Aspen Festival, the Dallas Symphony, Chamber Music Northwest, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and many others. He was resident composer of the Los Angeles Philharmonic for 21 years (1988-2009). Based at Cornell University, he has been an influential mentor to young composers for three decades, with additional teaching at Aspen, Eastman, and Berkeley. He is active as a conductor, advocate, writer, and lecturer, and chairs the board of the American Music Center.

John Tavener (composer, UK)

Tavener first came to public attention in 1968 when his avant-garde oratorio *The Whale* was premiered at the inaugural concert of the London Sinfonietta. As the years progressed, his music became increasingly spiritual in conception, contemplative in its idiom, and popular with audiences worldwide. In 1977 he joined the Orthodox Church which was a major inspiration on his work for the following two decades. From the late 1990s his religious interests diversified and his music embraced many different traditions, including Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the spirituality of the American Indians.

PERFORMERS:

Brandon University New Music Ensemble (BUNME)

The Brandon University New Music Ensemble (BUNME), under the direction of Professor Megumi Masaki, is a collaboration of undergraduate students, comprising all programs, years, and instruments. The group explores a diverse array of contemporary repertoire from around the world, for large and small ensembles and presents an annual New Music Festival at Brandon University. The upcoming 2010 festival, "Sights and Sounds," will feature composer-in-residence Nicole Lizée. Past festivals have featured collaborations with composers T. Patrick Carrabré of Brandon and Jorge Córdoba Valencia of Mexico City.

Jacque Dawson (conductor)

Jacqueline Dawson, a native of St. John's, Newfoundland, received undergraduate degrees in music and music education from Memorial University of Newfoundland and holds a Masters degree in conducting from the University of Manitoba. She has attended the Conductor's Art Symposium at the University of Wisconsin and completed the Canadian Wind Conductor's Development Program in Winnipeg. Jacquie is active as a guest conductor, clinician and adjudicator throughout Manitoba and was the conductor of the University of Manitoba Wind Ensemble (2007). She currently teaches band at Vincent Massey Collegiate (Winnipeg) and is Past-President of the Manitoba Band Association Board of Directors.

Eighth Blackbird Ensemble (distinguished guest ensemble)

Available for interviews

Grammy-winning eighth blackbird promises – and delivers – provocative and engaging performances to its burgeoning audiences. Combining bracing virtuosity with an alluring sense of irreverence, the sextet debunks the myth that contemporary music is only for a cerebral few. The ensemble attracts fans of all ages to its performances and recordings, which sparkle with wit and pound with physical energy; it inhabits and explores the sound-world of new music with comfort, conviction, and infectious enthusiasm. The New York Times raved: "eighth blackbird's performances are the picture of polish and precision, and they seem to be thoroughly engaged...by music in a broad range of contemporary styles."

eXperimental Improv Ensemble (XIE)

Available for interviews

The eXperimental Improv Ensemble is an interdisciplinary performance group of the University of Manitoba Faculty of Music. Directed by Gordon Fitzell, the ensemble engages in a variety of creative pursuits ranging from live soundtrack performance to the mounting of media art installations. Recent projects include collaborations with Architecture, Computer Science, Electrical Engineering and Sculpture, as well as with external partners such as GroundSwell, Cinémathèque, the Museum of Clear Ideas and Amnesty International. The XIE also hosts Jamming the Dragon, an open stage for improvised experimental music.

Elroy Friesen (conductor)

Elroy Friesen is Director of Choral Studies at the University of Manitoba where he directs numerous choirs and teaches conducting and music education. He is currently completing his doctoral studies at the University of Illinois (DMA) researching the choral music of Finnish composer, Einojuhani Rautavaara. His choral ensembles have received numerous awards for their performances in Manitoba and Canada, they have toured internationally, and they have performed with many outstanding arts organizations, including the WSO, the Royal Canadian College of Organists, Kokopelli, Soundstreams Canada and Groundswell. Mr. Friesen is the founder and past artistic director of Prairie Voices and has held the positions of Director of Choirs at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Urbana, and director of the U of I University Chorus in Illinois.

Yuri Hooker (cello)**Available for interviews**

Yuri Hooker is principal cellist for both the Winnipeg Symphony and the Manitoba Chamber Orchestras. He makes regular concerto appearances with both orchestras and has been featured on CBC Radio 2. He is also a regular performer at GroundSwell New Music, the Winnipeg Chamber Music Society, and the Clear Lake Chamber Music Festival. Yuri is also a dedicated teacher and the founder of the Winnipeg Summer Cello Institute. He holds a B.Mus from Brandon University after which he pursued graduate studies with Janos Starker at Indiana University.

Aiyun Huang (percussion)**Available for interviews**

Percussionist Aiyun Huang was born in Taiwan. She is known for her work in percussion-theater, her percussion ensemble work with red fish blue fish, her chamber music work with Toca Loca. She has performed throughout North America, Mexico, Europe and Asia as a soloist and chamber musician. She received her DMA from the University of California, San Diego. Currently she heads the percussion program at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

Yuri Klaz (conductor)

Yuri Klaz earned his MA and postgraduate degrees in choral conducting at the Leningrad Conservatory and was professor at the Petrozavodsk State Conservatory in Russia. In 1995, President Boris Yeltsin bestowed upon him the title of "Honoured Artist of Russia". Mr. Klaz came to Winnipeg in February 2000 to become the artistic director and conductor of the Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir. He quickly became a leader in Winnipeg's choral community. In April of 2003, Mr. Klaz was appointed the artistic director and conductor of the Winnipeg Singers. He also directs the First Mennonite Church Choir, the Shaarey Zedek Synagogue Choir, and the University of Winnipeg Student Choir.

Luc Leestemaker (artist)**Available for interviews**

Luc Leestemaker was born in the Netherlands and moved to the US in 1990. Living and working in the US created a stylistic journey that would take him from early inspiration by the CoBrA movement through densely abstract expressionist compositions, to the "Inner Landscape" and "Transfigurations" series, inspired both by Mark Rothko and 17th and 18th Century Dutch and English landscape painters (notably Constable, Ruysdael, Van Goyen). Recently he has also exhibited newly abstracted series of works, titled "Voyager" and "Map of the Wind." His paintings are exhibited throughout the US and internationally. The documentary "Swimming Through The Clouds" about the artist's life and work, was screened at a number of Film Festivals around the world.

Jenny Lin (distinguished guest artist, piano)**Available for interviews**

Jenny Lin is one of the most respected young pianists today, admired for her adventurous programming and charismatic stage presence. She has been acclaimed for her "remarkable technical command... a gift for melodic flow" by The New York Times, the Washington Post praises "Lin's confident fingers... spectacular technique..." and Gramophone Magazine has hailed her as "an exceptionally sensitive pianist". Her engagements have included American Symphony Orchestra and Collegiate Chorale, SWR Rundfunkorchester, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI and Spoleto Orchestra, at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, MoMA, National Gallery of Art, and Festivals worldwide. Her extensive discography can be found on Koch, Hänssler Classic, and BIS Records with releases such as Shostakovich's *24 Preludes* and *Fugues*, music by Valentin Silvestrov, *Piano Concerto* by Ernest Bloch, *The 11th Finger* and *InsomniMania*.

Fraser Linklater (conductor)

Fraser Linklater is an Associate Professor in the Marcel A. Desautels Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba where he directs the Wind Ensemble, Concert Band and Chamber Winds and teaches courses in music education and conducting. Under his direction, the University of Manitoba Wind Ensemble has released two CDs devoted to Canadian wind band music: "North Winds I & II." Dr. Linklater was the guest conductor of the 2006 National Youth Band of Canada and has also guest conducted at the 2008 and 2009 Winnipeg New Music Festivals.

Greg Lowe (guitar)**Available for interviews**

Greg Lowe was born in Winnipeg Canada on June 30, 1957. Initially inspired by blues and rock musicians, he eventually found jazz, and proceeded to Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton to learn the basics of jazz harmony. He toured across Canada with Toronto's renowned R&B band The Lincolns in the late 80s and returned to Winnipeg to release his first of seven CDs in 1990. Focusing on composition as much as guitar performance, Lowe's body of work has grown to include large orchestra, chamber ensembles, theatre, film, television and radio. He can be heard performing locally with the Ministers Of Cool and the Fusion Knights.

Megumi Masaki (piano)**Available for interviews**

Award-winning pianist Megumi Masaki has established herself as an international artist renowned for her warm rapport with audiences and her superb musicianship. Her multi-faceted career as acclaimed soloist, chamber musician, pedagogue, conductor, champion of contemporary music and multidisciplinary researcher of Peak Performance has taken her across Canada, the USA, Europe and Asia. Megumi is presently Associate Professor of Piano at Brandon University, is on faculty at the Casalmaggiore International Music Festival Italy and the Waterford Summer Music Festival Utah USA, and is the artistic director of the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition.

Ndidi Onukwulu (singer)**Available for interviews**

Vancouver-based singer-songwriter Ndidi Onukwulu (oh-NEW-kwuh-loo) was born in rural British Columbia. She left home at an early age and wound up in New York City to pursue her singing career. Starting out by singing a cappella on the city's open-mic circuit, she encountered some hip-hop and blues players. After leaving New York for Toronto, she sang in a rock band, then in an electronic one. Onukwulu has performed at Toronto's Massey Hall in the Women's Blues Revue. She won the New Artist of the Year Award at the 2007 Maple Blues Awards, and was also nominated for a 2007 Indie Award for Blues Artist of the Year.

Prairie Voices Choir, Kristel Peters (director)

Prairie Voices is an award-winning company of singers ages 18-25 dedicated to the performance of innovative contemporary choral music from all over the world. Placing an emphasis on Canadian and Manitoban composers, the choir uses energy, expressiveness and movement to connect avant-garde composition with a popular audience. Hailed by composer Sid Robinovitch as "the wave of the future for choral music," Prairie Voices is known for their passionate style of performance, which combines exceptional vocals with engaging presentation to provide the ultimate choral experience.

Sylvia Shadick-Taylor (piano)

Pianist Sylvia Shadick-Taylor is a superb soloist and chamber musician who has toured in Europe, Asia and North America. Her highly expressive performances reflect an intense exploration of composers' artistic visions. Sylvia lives in Edmonton and is active as a teacher, clinician and vocal coach.

Tanya Tagaq (distinguished guest artist, throat-singer)**Available for interviews**

'Indescribable' is not an appropriate word to begin an artist's bio, nor is it suitable as a description of a musician. The problem is this: when Tanya Tagaq Gillis' music fills your ears -- either in person or on her new CD *Auk* -- she is genuinely one of those rare artists whose sounds and styles are truly groundbreaking. 'Inuit throat singer' is one part of her sonic quotient. So are descriptions like 'orchestral' 'hip-hop-infused' and 'primal'...but these words are not usually used collectively. In the case of Tagaq, however, they are.

University of Manitoba Wind Ensemble, director Fraser Linklater

Now in its fourth decade, The University of Manitoba Wind Ensemble continues to program and perform first-class repertoire. They have performed throughout Western Canada and the northern United States, have been an invited guest ensemble at the Cantando International Music Festival in Edmonton on three occasions, as well as having performed at the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's New Music Festival and on CBC Radio. The Wind Ensemble has released a CD of Canadian wind band music entitled *North Winds* and is currently preparing a follow up *North Winds II* CD.

University of Manitoba Women's Choir, Elroy Friesen (director)

The University of Manitoba Women's Chorus is comprised of singers from the Marcel A. Desautels Faculty of Music, the wider university campus, and the surrounding community. This choir was first formed by Henry Engbrecht in 1990, and has had many performances with various local arts organizations including the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the New Music Festival, and the Women's Chorus Festival. They recently had the honour of singing at the 25th anniversary celebrations of the Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies and look forward to an Eastern Canada Tour scheduled for this coming spring. This is their third season under the direction of Elroy Friesen, Director of Choral Studies at the University of Manitoba.

Winnipeg Singers, Yuri Klaz (director)

The Winnipeg Singers has long been regarded as one of Canada's finest choral ensembles. The Winnipeg Singers consists of 24 trained voices, performing music that spans the times from the Renaissance to the present. Each year the choir commissions new Canadian works and premieres other new works for its Manitoba audiences. The Winnipeg Singers have performed joint concerts with various diverse organizations, appears regularly as guests of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, and have given concerts and workshops for local social agencies, business firms, and high schools.

Winnipeg Wind Ensemble, Jacquie Dawson (director)

The WWE was formed in the fall of 1985 by band directors and other professional Winnipeg musicians. Currently the membership consists of 31 teachers, 7 students, 6 with music related employment, 4 military musicians and 5 musicians who pursue non-music related day jobs. All players have extensive music training and have submitted to an entrance audition. A wind ensemble typically consists of woodwinds, brass, string bass and percussion with little or no doubling of parts. The WWE has shared the stage with many local and visiting soloists and bands, providing unique and rewarding opportunities for all involved. The WWE has collaborated with trumpet legend Armando Ghitalla, tuba player John Griffiths, the Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir, The University of Manitoba's Wind Ensemble and Concert Band, the Manitoba Honour Band and soloists from within the Winnipeg Wind Ensemble.

Byron Wood (percussion)**Available for interviews**

Byron Wood is currently in his final year of a percussion performance degree at the University of Manitoba. He has been a soloist with the University of Manitoba Wind Ensemble, and will be featured with the University of Manitoba Symphony Orchestra. He has also performed with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, MUSAIC Chamber Orchestra, The Little Opera Company and the Winnipeg Wind Ensemble. A student of Jauvon Gilliam, Byron has participated in masterclasses with Evelyn Glennie, Chris Deviney, Arnie Lang and Paul Yancich.