



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2018

**Amy Hillis, violin, with pianist Katherine Dowling,
wins 41st E-Gré National Music Competition in Strings**



Brandon, MB - The Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition for the performance of Canadian and contemporary music is pleased to announce its 2018 prize winners:

1st Prize

Amy Hillis, violin, with Katherine Dowling, piano

2nd Prize

Katya Poplyansky, violin, with Emily Rho, piano

3rd Prize

Sarah Gans, cello, with Emily Rho, piano

City of Brandon Prize for the best performance of the Commissioned Work

Katya Poplyansky, violin, with Emily Rho, piano

Finalist Prizes (in alphabetical order)

Ariel Carrabré, cello, with Katherine Dowling, piano

Yena Lee, violin, with Wesley Ducote, piano

Elizabeth Skinner, violin, with Suren Barry, piano

From Friday May 4th through Sunday May 6th, 2018, six of Canada's best emerging violinists and cellists and their collaborative pianists gathered at the School of Music, Brandon University for the **41st Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition** (E-Gré) in Strings. The E-Gré Competition began in 1976 and is the most important annual Canadian and contemporary music competition.

All six competitors played semifinal and final round recitals; each program was required to include at least 50% Canadian music, as well as this year's commissioned work: *Foxy Fox's Musical Games* by **Carmen Braden**.

First place winner, **Amy Hillis**, received a first-prize award of nearly \$15,000 including a cash prize of \$8,000, a residency and debut recital in Italy at the Casalmaggiore International Music Festival in July, and an 8- to 10-city cross-Canada Winner's Tour planned for October and November.

Second prize winner, **Katya Poplyansky**, received a cash prize of \$3,000 and third prize winner, **Sarah Gans** received the Harvey Janzen Prize of \$2,000 cash, named in memory of the longtime E-Gré board member. The City of Brandon Prize of \$1,000 for the best performance of the 2018 commissioned piece, *Foxy Fox's Musical Games* by **Carmen Braden** was awarded to **Katya Poplyansky**. The remaining competing finalists each received a \$1,000 cash prize.

The jurors for this year's competition were the musicians of the renowned **Afiara Quartet**: Valerie Li, violin; Timothy Kantor, violin; Eric Wong, viola; and Adrian Fung, cello. The Afiara Quartet performed a gala concert on Friday, May 4th.

Amy Hillis: "I was incredibly honoured to be among these performers: the five other finalists are musicians who I've looked up to for as long as I've known them. Right now, I just feel like this is the cherry on top – I get to perform with Katherine Dowling, a true mentor for me, for even more audiences this fall. I'm looking forward to sharing this repertoire, written by Canadian composers of our time, with audiences across Canada. We had a beautiful sunny weekend here in Brandon: the whole competition felt like a true celebration of the performers' personalities, our interpretations, our ways of playing music – and a celebration of what music of our time can represent."

The 2018 E-Gré Competition gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, Manitoba Arts Council, SOCAN Foundation, Brandon University, the City of Brandon and many corporate and private donors.

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**BACKGROUNDER 1:
1st Prize Winner, E-Gré Competition
May 6, 2018**

AMY HILLIS, violin



Amy Hillis has "a rich, warm sound and has mastered the violin with such ease, that it is impossible to ignore her passion in performance" (*Ludwig Van Montréal*). Originally from Regina, Saskatchewan, Amy collaborates with musicians from around the world in order to explore new approaches to classical and contemporary music. Amy was a 2017 artist-in-residence at La Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, a residency awarded by the Conseils des Arts et des Lettres du Québec. She is also the winner of the 2017 McGill Concerto Competition and the prestigious Sylva Gelber Foundation Music Award. Amy is currently pursuing a Doctor of Music in Violin Performance at McGill University in Montréal with the esteemed violin professor, Axel Strauss. Her studies are funded by a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Doctoral Scholarship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). She performs on the 1820 Joannes Franciscus Pressenda, on loan from the Canada Council for the Arts Musical Instrument Bank.

KATHERINE DOWLING, piano



Praised by the New York Times for her “crystalline performances, gestural expressiveness, and careful attention to color”, and by the Boston Globe for her “effortless incisiveness”, award-winning pianist Katherine Dowling performs across North America and the United Kingdom. Equally compelling as a solo, collaborative, and ensemble performer, she holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Stony Brook University.

Recent engagements include her solo debut with the Britten-Pears Festival Orchestra under the baton of Oliver Knussen at the Aldeburgh Festival, her Dutch debut at the Orlando Festival, a cross-Canada tour with violinist Joshua Peters (Montreal Symphony Orchestra) under the auspices of the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition, regular performances as a member of California-based ensemble Son à Trois, solo recitals at live@CIRMMT (Montréal) and Gallery 345’s ‘Art of the Piano’ series (Toronto), and appearances at the Ottawa, Regina, Ritornello, and Silicon Valley chamber music festivals. As a member of the chamber ensemble Gruppo Montebello, Dr. Dowling appears on several critically-acclaimed recordings on the Etcetera label, under the umbrella of New Arts International; recent performances have also been broadcast on the CBC (Canada) and National Radio 4 (Holland). Dr. Dowling is further familiar to audiences as a multi-year fellow of the Tanglewood Music Center, as a New Fromm Fellow, as a Britten-Pears Young Artist, an International Musicians’ Seminar at Prussia Cove artist, and through extensive involvement and numerous positions at The Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.

As an educator, Dr. Dowling has held positions teaching lessons, chamber music, accompaniment, keyboard skills, and music appreciation at Stony Brook University (New York), Chamber Music Silicon Valley (California), Community Music Programs (New York), the University of Toronto, and the University of British Columbia Learning Exchange (Vancouver), and has worked privately as a teacher and practice coach for over fifteen years. She has enjoyed adjudicating at both the regional and provincial level (Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba), served on the jury for the National Finals of the 59th Canadian Music Competition (Gatineau/Ottawa), and teaches masterclasses throughout Canada every season. She credits her teacher own teacher, celebrated American pianist and pedagogue Gil Kalish, as well as Dr. Henri-Paul Sicsic and Janice Elliott- Denike, as the major influence in her musical life.

For further information, to listen and to read reviews: www.katherinedowling.com