



CONCOURS MUSICAL INTERNATIONAL DE MONTRÉAL

Impact Report
2025-2026

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On the cover: The competitors of the Concours 2026

Front row: Michael Germer (Denmark), Lorenz Karls (Sweden), Hannah Tam (Hong Kong), Bade Dastan (Belgium/Turkey), Chiara Sannicandro (Germany/Italy), Hyun Jae Lim (South Korea), Koshiro Takeuchi (Japan), Sijun Kim (South Korea)

Back row: Belle Ting (Canada), Yuki Hirano (Japan), Amia Janicki (Austria/Switzerland), Aozhe Zhang (China), Sara Watanabe (Japan), Shaoheng Zhong (China), Tsukushi Sasaki (Japan), Laurel Gagnon (United States), Paloma So (Canada/Hong Kong), Thomas Briant (France), Vilmos Csikos (Belgium/Hungary), Justin Saulnier (Canada), Charlotte Spruit (Netherlands), Dayoon You (South Korea), Yume Zamponi (Italy/Japan), Seoyeon Baik (South Korea)

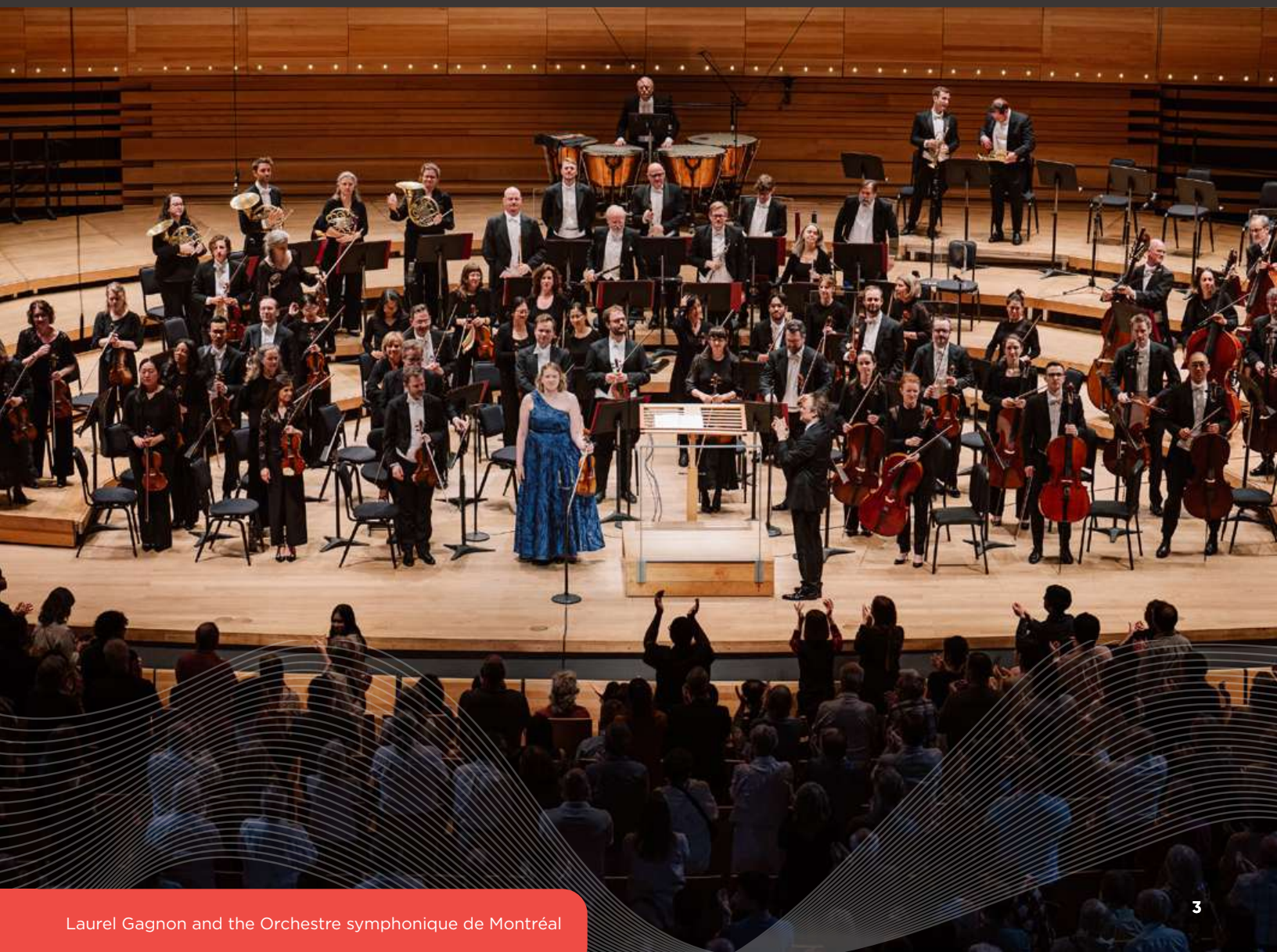
Photos: Tam Photography

THE CONCOURS MUSICAL INTERNATIONAL DE MONTRÉAL

The Concours musical international de Montréal stands among the world's leading classical music competitions. Since 2002, it has welcomed, in turn, singers, violinists, and pianists to Montréal.

Deeply woven into Québec's vibrant artistic ecosystem and a major event on Montréal's cultural calendar, the Concours champions the cultural richness, openness to the world, and unique warmth that is a hallmark of the city. Through its activities and impact, the Concours celebrates virtuosity and contributes to Québec's cultural dynamism.

By taking part in the Concours, competitors measure themselves against their peers by performing before a jury of international luminaries. This exceptional showcase offers invaluable professional opportunities, allowing the Concours' laureates to continue on to perform on the world's most prestigious stages.



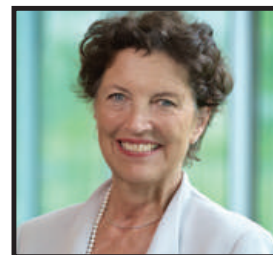
A WORD FROM THE CHAIRS

Dear members of the Concours musical international de Montréal community,

The 2025-2026 season once again demonstrates that the success of a cultural organization like ours is measured not only by the quality of its central event, but also by the strength of the community surrounding it. We therefore wish to take this opportunity to express our most profound and sincere gratitude to each and every one of you.

Our organization's financial stability and remarkable successes are in large part due to your unwavering commitment. Thanks to your trust, dedication, and loyalty, we have been able to overcome challenges and seize new opportunities, further growing the awareness and influence of our Concours.

This success belongs to our entire community! On behalf of the Boards of Directors of the Concours and its Foundation, we extend our heartfelt thanks for your essential contribution. It is with immense pride and renewed confidence that we embark on the coming year, which will bring us together for our 25th edition.



Louise Roy

Chair, Concours Board
of Directors



Daniel Lalonde

Chairman, Concours Foundation
Board of Directors



Our prize partners figure among the key players in the
Concours 2026's successes. – See the complete list on page 10.

THE SUCCESS OF AN ENTIRE COMMUNITY

- **24 young violinists** among the best in the world invited to Montréal
- **102 local artists** hired by the Concours
- **124 cultural workers in Québec** actively involved in carrying out our mission
- **28 local businesses** working behind the scenes at the Concours
- **8 expert members** of the International Jury
- **6 members of the preliminary jury** tasked with a major undertaking
- **3 venues outside Montréal** presenting the Concours On the Road
- **10 young violinists from Montréal and Toronto** serving on the Junior Jury
- **22 host families in Montréal** who provided accommodation for our artists
- **1 proud spokesperson**: the renowned actress Guylaine Tremblay
- **4 higher education institutions** that enrich their students' learning through pedagogical activities offered by the Concours
- **21 volunteers** who drive our success behind the scenes
- **27 volunteer board members** from varied professional domains, whose complementary expertise contributes to sound governance, fundraising, and the fulfillment of our mission
- **84 corporate partners, companies, foundations, and sponsors** who generously support the Concours
- **155 private sponsors and loyal donors** who support the Concours with generosity and commitment
- **18 prize partners**
- Leading **artistic partners**
- Creative **media partners**
- As well as all those we were unable to name here.



“Through my involvement with the Concours musical international de Montréal, I discovered a vibrant community.”
Guylaine Tremblay, spokesperson of the Concours 2026, with the 24 competitors and Executive and Artistic Directors Chantal Poulin and Shira Gilbert.

A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

What a delight it was to welcome such remarkable and accomplished violinists, on the cusp of promising careers, to our Concours 2026.

Over the course of nine days of a closely fought competition, the 24 musicians invited to Montréal showcased their full range of skills.

From one round to the next, the international jury was impressed by the competitors' flawless technique and expressive depth. After evaluating all the rounds, the jury selected three laureates who we are already looking forward to hearing again, here at home as well as on the world's greatest stages.

Beyond their musical performances, we witnessed these artists' passion, diligence, and exemplary discipline. As we listened to their playing, we discovered and were inspired by true models of excellence.

The Concours is also a profound human adventure. Young virtuosos hailing from 17 countries came together in harmony, embodying the universal beauty of music. Their presence on one stage reminds us how fundamental art is as a pillar of our shared humanity.

What a privilege to experience virtuosity without borders here in Montréal!

A photograph of two women, Chantal Poulin and Shira Gilbert, sitting side-by-side. Chantal Poulin is on the left, wearing a dark blue jacket and red-rimmed glasses, leaning on a white chair. Shira Gilbert is on the right, wearing a purple blazer, sitting on a brown leather sofa. The background is a neutral, textured wall.

Chantal Poulin
Executive Director

Shira Gilbert
Artistic Director

CONCOURS 2026: THE VIOLINISTS HAVE THEIR SAY



VILMOS CSIKÓS

Belgium and Hungary

"It was a very enriching experience, both musically and personally. I really appreciated the atmosphere of the Concours, as well as all the people I got to meet. It was a great honour and pleasure to play in Montréal."



LAUREL GAGNON

United States

"My week at the Concours was incredible! The team was so friendly and supportive, really managed to remove all potential external stressors that often arise at big competitions, and made everything run so smoothly. What a wonderful collection of humans!"



JUSTIN SAULNIER

Canada

"What a dream to be able to perform at this magnificent competition! Thank you to the whole team."



HYUN JAE LIM

South Korea

"I really appreciated the opportunity to meet some of the most promising musicians from all around the world, sharing our passion for music, and experiencing the very inspiring atmosphere of Montréal. I hope the Concours will always remain a place where young artists feel encouraged, inspired, and confident that their musical expressions are truly valued."



SIJUN KIM

South Korea

"I am leaving Montréal with many beautiful and unforgettable memories. I would like to sincerely thank all the organizers, and everyone involved in making this competition such a wonderful experience! Everything was organized with much care, smoothly and with great professionalism. My host family was absolutely marvelous and made my stay in Montréal even more special."

COMPELLING RESULTS

A COMMITTED PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY

The Concours relies on a supportive community that believes in its mission.

\$1,000,000

Amount raised during the 2025-2026 season

239

Number of donors (all categories combined)

\$1,572.37

Average individual donation (Concours and Foundation)

\$12,311.91

Average corporate donation (Concours and Foundation)

\$475,000

Raised at the annual benefit event on April 29, 2026

\$108,000

In-kind sponsorships

\$150,000 +

Awarded in prizes and grants during the Concours 2026

A HEIGHTENED DIGITAL PRESENCE OVER THE PAST YEAR

The Concours has significantly expanded its digital presence on social media, on its website, via Google searches, and on streaming platforms.

Number of followers across our various platforms:



58,648

an **+4.7%** increase over the past year.

Social Media – Key highlights for the 3 months surrounding the Concours:

3.5 million views

Content posted on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn

44 %

Increase of Facebook visits

Instagram account growth during the three months surrounding the Concours:

20 %

More followers

140,533

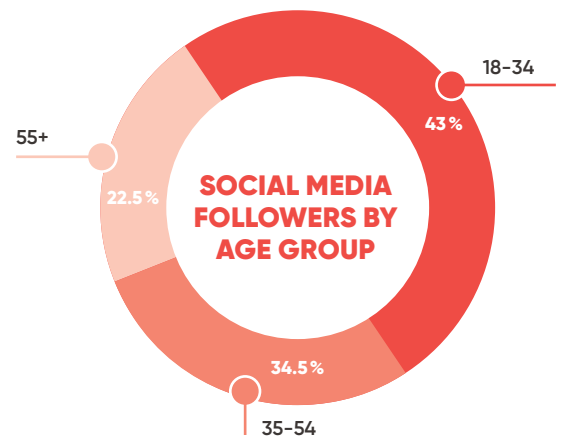
Unique accounts viewed our content

Our social media channels reach a vast community:

77 % of our Instagram followers and **47 %** of our Facebook followers are outside Canada.

Ads on Meta garnered nearly **450,000 views** and nearly **12,000 clicks**, reaching **234,000 people**. Digital ads on *Québecor* (banners, web, and outdoor advertising), *La Presse*, *Radio-Canada* and *Astral* generated nearly **8 million online impressions**, in addition to print ads in *Le Devoir* and *Le Journal de Montréal*.

A priceless gift
A three-year loan of a Guarneri del Gesù violin and a bow
“It is truly inspiring to know that I will be able to create and share my music through this magnificent instrument in the months and years ahead. It is a privilege beyond words, and I am deeply grateful.”
Koshiro Takeuchi
Grand Laureate of the Concours 2026



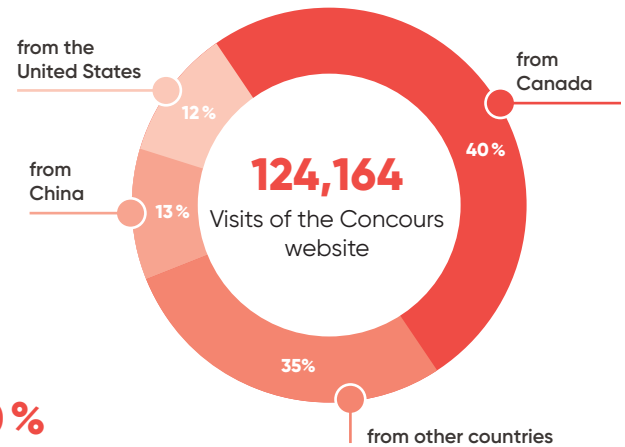
STREAMING AND WEBSITE VISITS OVER THE PAST YEAR

1,738,423 views

On YouTube, Vimeo, Amadeus, Weibo, and The Violin Channel

+100 countries

A significant international exposure for Montréal and its Concours



A DIVERSE AUDIENCE

20 %

Of tickets for Bourgie Hall sessions were purchased as part of a package

3 sessions

Were sold-out

30 %

Of tickets were sold to people outside of Montréal

THE CONCOURS IN THE MEDIA

The Concours generated significant media coverage, with a reach that extended well beyond Canada's borders.

- **117 mentions** in the media (web, radio, TV, print)
- **11 appearances in various media** by our spokesperson Guylaine Tremblay, including 2 TV interviews
- **55 different media** outlets reached, including 20 outside Canada
- **84 mentions** in Canadian media (both in French and English)
- Among major Canadian and Québec media outlets, highlights include **6 articles** in *Le Devoir* and **9 appearances** on *Radio-Canada*
- **Media coverage in 10 countries:** Canada, United States, Europe (France, Belgium, Netherlands, England, Italy, Luxembourg), and Asia (Japan, China)
- **Articles in 7 languages:** French, English, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and Mandarin
- **3 Semifinal rounds** of the Concours 2026 broadcast live on ICI Musique (*Radio-Canada*), hosted by Marie-Christine Trottier with commentary by Québec violinist Marie Bégin



Hyun Jae Lim, a Concours 2026 competitor, being interviewed on CTV.

A major event

"This year's edition has reaffirmed the CMIM's status as one of the major events on the international circuit."

Pierre-Jean Tribot
Crescendo Magazine

A lot of emotions

"Competitions stir up a lot of emotions in everyone who witness them – the competitors, the judges, and the audience. (...) It will be interesting to follow the careers of these incredibly talented young people (and not just the three laureates) as they venture into the wild!"

Julie Thériault
Pan M 360

Convincing results

"Under the joint leadership of Chantal Poulin and Shira Gilbert, the Concours musical international de Montréal seems to be doing quite well indeed. There's little hot air, but convincing results. The Executive Director and Artistic Director tackle head-on the various issues that could cast a shadow over the competition."

Christophe Huss
Le Devoir

PRIZES AND GRANTS



FIRST PRIZE MORE THAN \$70,000

- Grand cash prize (\$30,000) offered in partnership with the **Ville de Montréal**
- Joseph Rouleau Career Development Grant (\$40,000) offered in partnership with the **Azrieli Foundation**
- Loan for a period of three years of a Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù violin and a bow of inestimable value, offered in partnership with the **Canimex Music Instrument Collection**
- Artistic consultation offered in partnership with the **Agence Station Bleue**

Koshiro Takeuchi – Japan



SECOND PRIZE \$25,000

- Cash prize Pierre-Péladeau et Raymonde-Chopin (\$15,000) offered in partnership with **Québecor**
- Joseph Rouleau Career Development Grant (\$10,000) offered in partnership with the **Azrieli Foundation**
- Artistic consultation offered in partnership with the **Agence Station Bleue**

Sara Watanabe – Japan



THIRD PRIZE \$20,000

- Cash prize (\$10,000) offered in partnership with **Stingray Classica**
- Joseph Rouleau Career Development Grant (\$10,000) offered in partnership with the **Azrieli Foundation**
- Artistic consultation offered in partnership with the **Agence Station Bleue**

Laurel Gagnon – United States





ICI MUSIQUE AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD - \$5,000

- Offered in partnership with ICI Musique
- Bade Dastan** - Belgium and Turkey



CANADIAN WORK PRIZE - \$2,500

- Offered in partnership with the Lupien Family Foundation



ANDRÉ BOURBEAU AWARD for the Best Canadian Artist - \$5,000

- Offered in partnership with the Fondation Bourbeau
- Justin Saulnier** - Canada



ROBERT TREMPE JUNIOR JURY PRIZE - \$1,500

- Offered in partnership with Richard Tremblay
- Charlotte Spruit** - Netherlands



MOZART PRIZE \$3,000

- Offered in partnership with Wilder & Davis
- Sara Watanabe** - Japan



FINALISTS GRANTS 2 X \$3,000

- Offered in partnership with the Rouleau Family and Jacques Vincent
- Bade Dastan** - Belgium and Turkey
Aozhe Zhang - China



BAROQUE PRIZE \$2,500

- Offered in partnership with Andrew Wan, Concertmaster of the OSM
- Koshiro Takeuchi** - Japan

PRIZES AWARDED AT A LATER DATE

- OSM Prize offered in partnership with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal
- Artist residency at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity offered in partnership with the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity
- Chamber Music Prize offered in partnership with the Montreal Chamber Music Festival



DMYTRO UDOVYCHENKO – A LAUREATE'S JOURNEY



Concours 2023 Grand Laureate
Dmytro Udovychenko enjoys enormous success and recognition on the international stage. We continue to follow him from Montréal.

“My experience in Montreal truly gave my career a boost.”

When we first met him, the Ukrainian violinist was already a talent to watch, having won prizes at competitions in Singapore and Helsinki. Dmytro was accepted into the Concours just a few months into the ongoing war in Ukraine, and the Concours team helped him navigate a fast-track visa process.

“Travelling to North America for the first time was a wonderful journey that gave me a lot of life experience.”

During the Concours, his technical mastery and rare artistic intensity resulted in captivating performances. His interpretation of Shostakovich's *Violin Concerto No. 1* in the Final, with Rafael Payare and the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, was an unforgettable moment.

Dmytro returned to Montréal last summer, reuniting with Maestro Payare and the OSM. ***“Winning such a major competition was, of course, a huge step in my career. And returning to Montréal felt like meeting an old friend.”***

Since his win in Montréal, Dmytro shares his artistry with audiences around the world. This past season he reprised the Shostakovich *Violin Concerto No. 1* with the Orchestre National de France in Paris and the Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Bologna, and made his Carnegie Hall debut with the Kronberg Academy soloists. Next season, he will make his debut with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican Centre in London, and he will return to the United States for a tour.

“Every concert that I play, I always believe there are at least a few people who will be touched by the performance, who might receive something from the music. I think that's the role of music: to show the beauty of this world, which we might otherwise miss.”



OUR JURIES

The International Jury

Comprised of leading figures from the violin world, the International Jury listened attentively to all rounds of the competition. It evaluated, on a cumulative basis, the violinists' technical skills, artistic sensibility, mastery of varied repertoires, and readiness to launch an international career.

The results are tallied using an approval voting system in which jury members bring forward the violinists they deem most deserving. This method eliminates complex numerical rankings, while avoiding conflicts of interest and potential strategic voting that could be unfairly advantageous or detrimental to a competitor.

The International Jury also offers competitors valuable feedback for advancing their careers.



Bottom: Glenn Dictrow, Lucie Robert (President of the Jury), and Barry Shiffman
Top: Régis Pasquier, Yuzuko Horigome, Ju-Young Baek, Simin Ganatra, and Pavel Vernikov



“I’ll cherish precious and wonderful memories of this competition, the most beautiful I’ve heard among the major competitions. You are incredible!” Régis Pasquier, member of the International Jury 2026, with laureate Sara Watanabe.

The preliminary jury

The members of the preliminary jury – Timothy Chooi, Mengla Huang, Michiko Kamiya, Mayumi Seiler, Livia Sellin, and Guillaume Sutre – had the important task of selecting the 24 competitors of the Concours 2026 from among 250 applications received from 37 countries.

A GREAT INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION IN MONTRÉAL

THE JUNIOR JURY

The Junior Jury is a wonderful initiative of the Montréal competition. It offers higher-level music education institutions in Montréal and Toronto the opportunity to take advantage of the Concours as a pedagogical tool. Tasked with listening to and evaluating all the performances in the First Round, the young violinists comprising the Junior Jury benefitted from a privileged look behind-the-scenes at an international competition, developing their critical thinking and refining their listening abilities, skills that will resonate with their own instrumental practice.

At the conclusion of the deliberations, the 10 students selected the Dutch violinist Charlotte Spruit as the recipient of the Robert Trempe Junior Jury Prize.



The 2026 Junior Jury, presided by Ana Drobac – centre – featured students from the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal, the Schulich School of Music at McGill University, the Faculty of Music at the Université de Montréal, and the Glenn Gould School at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

LA JOURNÉE DU VIOLON

Eager to give members of its community the opportunity to benefit from the presence of violin luminaries in Montréal, the Concours helped organize the Journée du violon at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal, which took place on June 1. During this event, Ju-Young Baek and Pavel Vernikov, members of the International Jury, offered masterclasses to students at the Conservatoire. This provided a wonderful opportunity for young musicians to learn from leading experts and expand their network internationally.



“I would like to thank the Concours from the bottom of my heart – on my own behalf and on behalf of the artistic community in Montréal, in Canada, and around the world – for its extraordinary contribution to Culture, with a capital C, to which we are all wholeheartedly devoted, especially for our young people and for future generations. BRAVISSIMO!”

Anne Robert, violinist and pedagogue
Conservatoire de musique de Montréal

Ju-Young Baek, a member of the International Jury of the Concours 2026, gives advice to Michael Sun, a young violin student at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal.

“JE REVIENDRAI À MONTRÉAL” GRANT

Valued annually at **\$25,000** and made possible through a valuable partnership with the **Nawacki Family Foundation**, this grant allows the Concours to support and encourage its laureates to return to the city.



Concours 2023 laureate, SongHa Choi, in concert in November 2025.

THE CONCOURS ON THE ROAD

For the third consecutive year, the competitors who did not advance to the Semifinal of the Concours 2026 had the opportunity to perform in three venues around and beyond Montréal, as part of the Concours On the Road: L'Île-des-Sœurs (Concerts sur le fleuve), Farnham (Le Vaisseau d'Art) and Richmond (Centre d'art de Richmond).

Nine high-level violinists representing Switzerland, Austria, France, Belgium, Hungary, Canada, South Korea, Sweden, Japan, Netherlands, Italy, and Germany performed their programs outside of Montréal. This initiative greatly enriched Québec's cultural offerings while further embedding the Concours within the local cultural ecosystem.

“ This Concours On the Road journey was truly enriching, on both human and musical levels.. The violinists' performances were greatly appreciated during the concert held at the Vaisseau d'Art. This concert marked the close of our season, and the audience left feeling moved and delighted. Many told us they got goosebumps or felt tears welling up in their eyes.”

Michelle Courchesne, General Manager
Le Vaisseau d'Art, Farham



A few participants of the Concours On the Road alongside pianist Martin Jacobs and Michelle Mercier, organizer, Concerts sur le fleuve.

CANADIAN WORKS

The Concours 2026 provided a wonderful occasion to shine a light on the music of composers from Québec and Canada to an international audience. Competitors could either perform a Canadian work of their choice during the Semifinal or select one from a list provided by the Concours.

This year, 13 works by 11 Canadian composers were on the program of the 24 competitors.



American violinist Laurel Gagnon was awarded the Canadian Work Prize, offered in partnership with the Lupien Family Foundation, for her performance of the Suite pour violon seul by Montréal composer Jean Papineau-Couture.

ARTISTIC PARTNERS

The Concours actively contributes to the vitality of its milieu by employing hundreds of local artists and cultural workers each year.

In addition to the 24 competitors, the members of the International Jury, and Guest Conductor Sascha Goetzel, 102 local artists contributed to the success of the Concours 2026, among them the musicians of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and the Orchestre de l'Agora, its Guest Conductor Benoit Gauthier, the four official pianists of this edition, and many others.

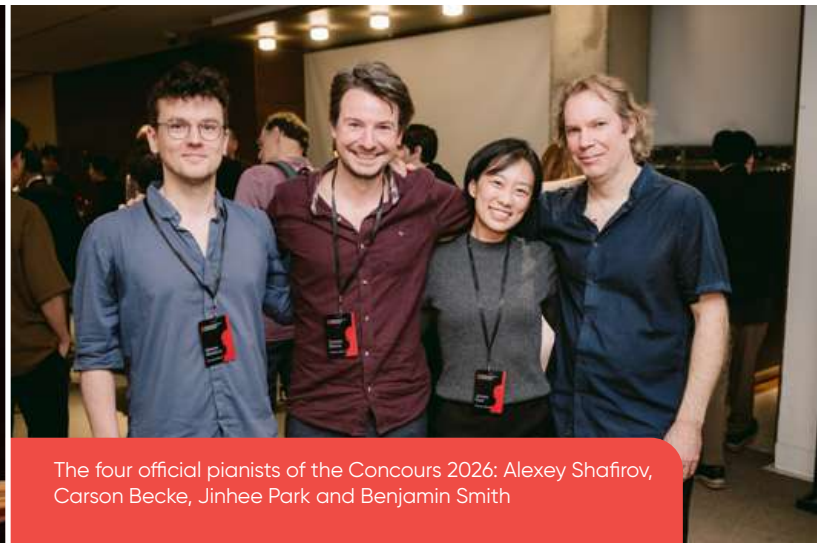
The Concours also relied upon 124 cultural workers and arts professionals (stage managers, stage technicians, cultural administrators, and box office staff), whose talent and expertise are essential in producing this major international event in Montréal.

The Concours promotes the transmission of skills and contributes to the dynamism of Québec's cultural sector. By supporting it, the entire Québec cultural ecosystem benefits.

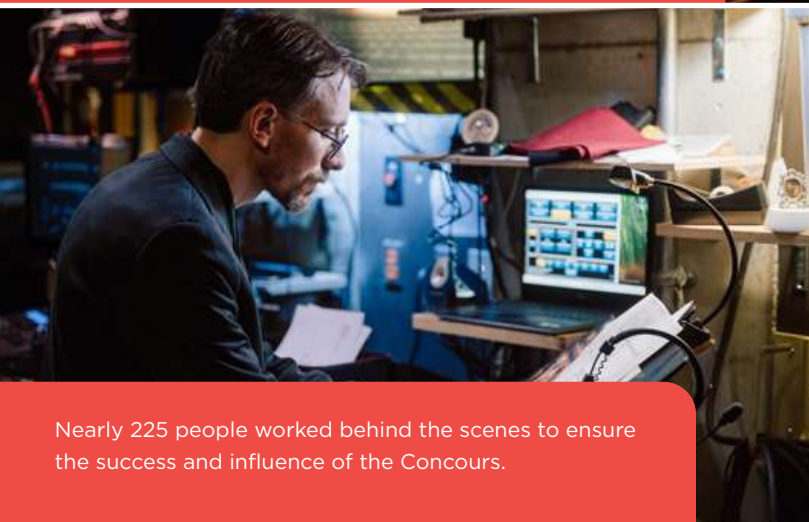
"What you have created is truly special. Not only because of the artistic level, which was remarkable, but because of the care, humanity, and generosity behind every detail. Everyone was simply exceptional, which made it possible to fully focus on the music and on the young artists." - Sascha Goetzel



Sascha Goetzel, Guest Conductor of the Concours 2026.



The four official pianists of the Concours 2026: Alexey Shafirov, Carson Becke, Jinhee Park and Benjamin Smith



Nearly 225 people worked behind the scenes to ensure the success and influence of the Concours.



The Orchestre de l'Agora, under the direction of Guest Conductor Benoit Gauthier, during the Mini Violini.

MINI VIOLINI

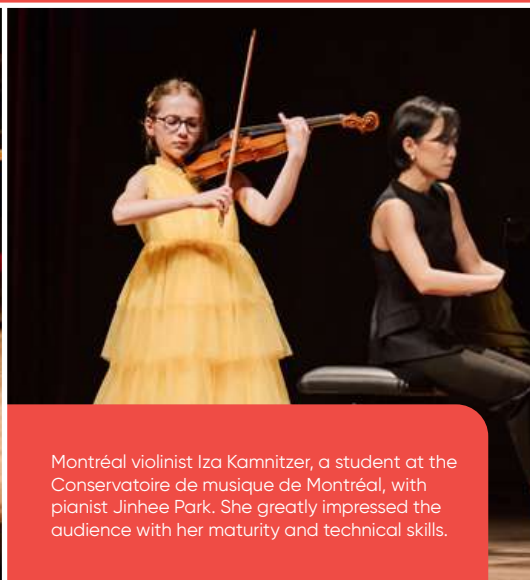
The **Mini Violini** was one of the highlights of the 2026 edition. It showcased the talent of four violin prodigies aged 10 to 14. We were entranced by these exceptional young violinists who delighted us with a moving performance of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*.



Élise Spinelli, Iza Kamnitzer (Canada), Ria Kang (South Korea/United States), Laura Jin (Australia), and Sacha Jorba-Wu (Canada)



Cellist Stéphane Tétreault hosted the Mini Violini 2026.



Montréal violinist Iza Kamnitzer, a student at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal, with pianist Jinhee Park. She greatly impressed the audience with her maturity and technical skills.



Sacha Jorba-Wu and the Orchestre de l'Agora (OA), led by Guest Conductor Benoit Gauthier. The OA and the Guest Conductor's participation was made possible thanks to the Fondation Marie-Christine Tremblay et Jacques Marchand. The young Canadian violinist won the Audience Choice Award, valued at \$2,000.

SPINELLI

Official sponsor of Mini Violini 2026.

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TEAM AND COLLABORATORS



Volunteers happy to be part of the Concours' family.



Host families who opened their homes to artists of the new generation.

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Artistic Coordinator

Nathalie Allen
CPA
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ANNUAL BENEFIT EVENT

On April 29, 2026, the annual benefit event for the Concours and its Foundation took place at The Ritz-Carlton Montréal.

The evening, brilliantly hosted by tenor **Marc Hervieux**, raised nearly \$475,000. This remarkable achievement speaks to the vitality of the philanthropic community surrounding our organization.

Special thanks go to the event's Honorary Chairs, **Marie-Claude Dumas**, President, WSP Canada, and **Abe Adham**, Managing Director and Head, Quebec Investment Banking Chair, Québec Market – TD Bank Group.



Elegance and conviviality came together at The Ritz-Carlton Montréal on April 29.



Prestigious creations by Guerlain and Kaufmann de Suisse captivated those in attendance.



Chantal Poulin, Executive Director of the Concours; Pascale Bourbeau, Vice-Chair of the Concours Foundation; Louise Roy, Chair of the Concours; and Kan Mangachi, BMO Private Banking.

ANNUAL BENEFIT EVENT

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