

**THE CMIM PRESENTS THE IMPOSED CANADIAN WORK
BY ANISHINAABEKWE COMPOSER BARBARA ASSIGINAAK**

Montréal, February 15, 2024 - The Concours musical international de Montréal (CMIM) is pleased to present the imposed Canadian work for the Piano 2024 edition by **Anishinaabekwe composer Barbara Assiginaak**. The new work for solo piano, *Mzizaakok Miiniwaa Mzizaakoonsak (Horseflies and Deerflies)*, will be premiered during the Semifinal of Piano 2024, on May 11 and 12.

Each competitor is required to include the new work in their Semifinal recital programme. At the conclusion of the Semifinal round, the André-Bachand Prize for the Best performance of the imposed Canadian work, valued at \$2,500 and offered by Claudette Hould, will be awarded.

Every year, the CMIM contributes to the dissemination of the music of Canadian composers in Mon-treal and around the world. We are particularly proud this year to have the privilege of collaborating with an extraordinary First Nations composer.

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Mzizaakok Miiniwaa Mzizaakoonsak (Horseflies and Deerflies) tells the story of *Makwa* (the bear), hounded by horseflies and deerflies while looking for berries and fish to eat. At first, just a single horsefly follows along, then joined by another until eventually more and more horseflies are summoned. Some land on bear's head, crawling around through the fur and then the deer flies swoop in, to circle around. What ensues is a battle like none other! After a final double swoop of *Makwa's* paws, the silence of the flies signals the death of their leader-fly. Nearby, the water nymphs sing a song in memory.

These two types of flies are among those blood-sucking warriors who remind us humans, how insignificant and vulnerable we really are ... Elders with whom I have been close over several decades and in traditional ceremonies have always talked about the importance of the web-of-life held in balance. Even if we find bugs are annoying and they test us continually, their role is vital in countless ways for the continuity of life for all beings.

- Barbara Assiginaak

Mzizaakok Miiniwaa Mzizaakoonsak (Horseflies and Deerflies) is an excerpt of Book II of a group of piano pieces called *Mnidoonskaa (An Abundance of Insects)*. In 2023, pianist Philip Chiu's re-cording of Book I for the ATMA label received a JUNO Award.

BARBARA ASSIGINAAK, C.M., O.ONT.

Composer and musician Barbara Assiginaak is Anishinaabekwe (Odawa, Ojibwe and Potawatomi; Mniidoo Mnissing, Giniw Dodem) and balances her time composing with performing and teaching music; spending time with elders in traditional ceremonies; and engaging in land-based environmental activities and teaching work rooted in traditional Anishinaabek teachings. Composing for the pipigwan (traditional wood flute), dewe'igan (drum), and voice in the oral/aural traditions of the Anishinaabe way since an early age, Barbara is also classically trained. She is a graduate of the University of Toronto (Bachelor of Music with Honours in Composition), Musikhochschule in München, Germany (Meisterklassendiplom in Komposition, Aufbaustudium), and Centre Acanthes, and also holds an ARCT Diploma (Piano Performance). Professionally active since 1995, Barbara has an extensive body of works that includes solo, chamber, art song, choir and orchestral (including concerti) compositions, and she has written for theatre, dance, film, opera, and multimedia and interdisciplinary projects. Barbara often performs in her own solo, chamber and orchestral works as a soloist (vocals, pipigwan, drums, and other Anishinaabe instruments).

Barbara's awards and honours include the Glenn Gould Award in Composition (University of Toronto); a Dora nomination; shortlisted three times for the Hunter Award in the Arts; numerous scholarships at the Glenn Gould School/Royal Conservatory of Music and from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (1992-96); and a Visual and Expressive Arts Program Award from the National Museum of the American Indian. Barbara's works have been broadcast on CBC Radio One and Radio Two, Bayerische Rundfunk (Bayern 3), Deutsche Radio Swiss (DRS-II), Radio France, Italian National Television, APTN, and other online streaming broadcasts. Barbara is Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Composition at the Faculty of Music, Wilfrid Laurier University.

Recently, Barbara has also composed for Innu and Quebec-based soprano Elisabeth St-Gelais, including a commission from Salle Bourgie—a solo setting of Innu poet Maya Cousineau Mollen's poem, *Rien ne Tuera ma Lumière* (in Innu and French) which was premiered at the Musée des Beaux-Arts Montréal as part of a commemorative Truth and Reconciliation Event in September 2023.

Assiginaak's music expresses the traditions and messages of Indigenous history. A direct descendant of hereditary chiefs who signed significant treaties in Ontario, the composer Barbara Assiginaak is a child and grandchild of residential school survivors.

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Experience the thrill of music and be at the forefront of the Piano 2024 edition, from May 5 to 16.

[Tickets and packages are on sale now on the Place des Arts website](#)

ABOUT THE CMIM

The Concours musical international de Montréal (CMIM) is a prestigious competition that showcases the international elite of the new generation of classical musicians. Founded in 2001, the CMIM enjoys an undeniable reputation worldwide. Top-level artists come to Montreal from around the globe to participate. Since its creation, nearly 5,000 young musicians from 90 countries, graduates of renowned music schools, have applied for the competition. The CMIM is firmly rooted in the artistic ecosystem of Montreal and proudly embodies the cultural richness, global openness, and human warmth that characterize our city. Proud of this heritage, the CMIM promotes the connection between the public and exceptional mentors to reveal and propel the young talents of our time. The CMIM aims to make classical music accessible to a broader audience, through live performances and live streaming on its website. The CMIM editions have garnered over 1 million views from around the world.

Full details at concoursmontreal.ca.

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Source:

Judith Dorvil

Director, Communications and Marketing

514-845-4108 (ext. 233) | jdorvil@concoursmontreal.ca