

## **Jean Desmarais**

International performing artist and pedagogue, pianist Jean Desmarais earned his Masters degree and Premier Prix in Piano and Chamber Music at the Conservatoire in Montreal and continued his studies in Paris, Berlin and in the USA. He studied with Monique Collet-Samyn, Anisia Campos, Monique Deschaussées (Paris), Johanna Stieler (Berlin) and Dalton Baldwin (USA).

He has collaborated with artists such as Kiri Te Kanawa, Ben Heppner, Tracy Dahl, Amanda Forsyth, Pinchas Zukerman, Robert Cram, Shauna Rolston, Kevin McMillan, Monica Whicher, Julie Nesrallah, Steven Dann, Bob Becker, Alain Trudel, Rivka Golani, Denis Lawlor, Joel Quarrington, Donna Brown, Carlos Garcia, Michel Brousseau, Johannes Debus and many others.

Mr Desmarais is sought after for a wide and eclectic range of repertoire.

This season he has been soloist in the Beethoven Concerto no.5 "Emperor" with orchestra, he performed solo and 2 piano works (with pianist Darrett Zuskó) by Ligeti and Rachmaninov for a dance show called "Morphoses" and choreographed by world renowned Christopher Wheeldon (Resident choreographer at the New-York City Ballet), offered Lieder recitals with Baritone Denis Lawlor and soprano Maghan McPhee in programs including Schubert's Die Schone Mullerin and Die Winterreise, he coached the Canadian Opera Company Production of Carmen by Bizet and interpreted many new solo and ensemble works by Canadian Composers including Gary Kulesha, Carson Becke and many more.

Last July he was invited to perform at the Canadian Senate for a special concert for the Emperor and the Empress of Japan celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

In November 2007, he was the only Canadian pianist performing in the 50th Anniversary Concert Celebration of the famous recital given by Glenn Gould in 1957. This concert took place at the Tchaikowski Conservatory in Moscow.

In January 2009 he gave a solo piano recital part at an international Conference on Joseph Haydn at the National Arts Center.

Mr. Desmarais has been guest soloist of various orchestras including the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Philharmonic Orchestra of Brasov (Romania), Philharmonic Orchestra of Stettin (Poland), Philharmonic Orchestra of Chihuahua (Mexico), Orchestre Philharmonique du Nouveau-Monde, Les Violons du Roy and I Musici of Montreal.

As an international performer, he has embarked on a collaboration with Baritone Denis Lawlor that enables him to perform art songs and chamber music on restored historical instruments in Berlin.

He has also performed in France, Italy, Switzerland, Poland, Romania, Germany, Russia, Mexico, USA and Canada.

Recently he was hired as a coach for the Canadian Opera Company for its productions of Don Carlos, Pelléas et Mélisande, War and Peace, Rusalka and

Carmen. Next season he will return to COC to coach Mozart Magic Flute under Johannes Denis direction.

He regularly joins the NAC orchestra to play the keyboard parts (piano and celesta) in works such as Tchaikowski's Nutcracker, Mozart Die Zauberflöte and Prokofiev Romeo and Juliet.

Mr Desmarais was the music director and resident pianist for the popular Lectures-Midi series organized by the NAC French Theatre and NACO.

He has performed for many concerts broadcast on SRC/CBC, at the Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival, for the chamber music series Music for a Sunday Afternoon and the Debuts Series (NAC), at the Banff Centre for the Arts and the Elora Music Festival.

Mr Desmarais was the pianist in the famous Ensemble Pierrot; chamber ensemble lead by Robert Cram and devoted to performing Canadian Contemporary Music.

For the last 6 years, Mr. Desmarais has been on the faculty at the National Arts Centre Young Artists Program (Vocal Program with Soprano Benita Valente), Young Conductors Program (assisting Maestri Panula and Kiesler) and Young Composers Program (under the supervision of Gary Kulesha and Alexina Louie), he taught at Carleton University, the International Music Academy of Nice (assistant of Lorraine Nubar from the Juilliard School), the International Neil Semer Vocal Academy in Germany and was invited as Guest Professor at Ottawa University.

Many of Mr. Desmarais' former students have gone on to study at La Sorbonne in Paris, the Cleveland Music Institute, and the University of Montreal.

Mr. Desmarais is the Artistic Director of the Festival Pontiac Enchanté in the Gatineau-Ottawa area.

Winner of few International Competitions and Laureate of the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation (Paris), his recording of the Sonata for piano and violin by Henri Sauguet (with violinist David Lefèvre) received the highest distinctions from the international critique; namely from Le Diapason (Paris) and Le Repertoire des disques compactes (Paris).

Mr. Desmarais has received the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of Canada for his remarkable contribution to the arts in Canada and abroad.