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Renowned pianists will teach budding stars in inaugural Pianofest



By Kevin Maimann, Edmonton Examiner Sunday, July 7, 2013 5:17:34 MDT PM





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Pigeon Lake. PHOTO SUPPLIED Budding piano prodigies will get a rare chance to learn from the masters this



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month at the inaugural Alberta PianoFest. The two-week festival, running July 6-21, will bring internationally renowned

pianists Robert Shannon, Stéphane Lemelin, Ursula Oppens and Jason Cutmore to several venues in Edmonton and Pigeon Lake to teach lessons and master classes to young piano students. A dozen advanced students aged 12-18 were selected to take part through a competitive audition and application process. Cutmore, an Edmonton native living in New York, who is serving as Pianofest's

executive and artistic director, says the festival started as a "crazy dream." "I was coming back to Alberta quite frequently, especially in the summers, and I

thought it was odd that the population had grown so much, the economy had grown so much, but unlike other places that I'd been and had played in music festivals, Alberta didn't seem to have fine arts festivals around all the lakeside vacation destinations," Cutmore says. "I thought it's probably only a matter of time until it does, so I wanted to start something like that." Festivities will kick off with the Inaugural Gala Concert Saturday at St. James

United Church in Pigeon Lake, and will feature a short talk with former CBC host Rick Phillips and a performance by Cutmore with French and Spanish masterpieces by Albeniz and de Severac. It will be followed by a reception at the Mulhurst Community Centre.

A Classical Concert for Kids will take place the following afternoon at Rundle's Mission in Pigeon Lake, featuring a musical re-telling of Peter and the Wolf

designed to introduce children and families to classical music. The festival will also include concerts by the Shannon, Lemelin and Oppens who hail from across North America, and who Cutmore calls "super players and

Cutmore says the festival aims to inspire young piano players to keep pushing forward.

wonderful teachers" — at the two Pigeon Lake venues as well as Alberta

*For me, when I was that age, it was incredibly motivating and inspiring to hear peers play the wonderful music that I wasn't familiar with. It kind of propelled me to want to reach those levels," he says.

"But also to have access to great teachers, and different teaching methods and ideas than one is used to in their week-to-week lessons, these things were terribly important for me."

Festival Passes range from \$30 – \$50 and single tickets are \$12, or \$5 for children and students, through Tix on the Square.

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For more details, visit albertapianofest.com.

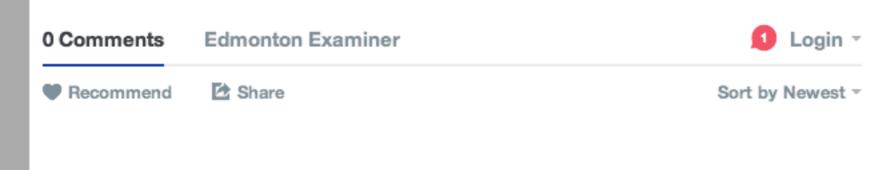
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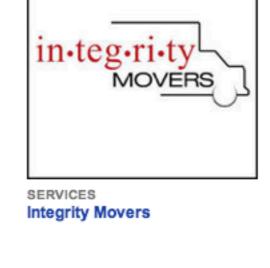


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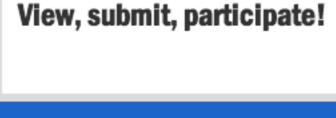


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