

LIFESTYLE

Malton pianist comes home for competition

By Joseph Chin

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Malton pianist Christopher Miranda has been selected to participate in the second Toronto International Piano Competition, a musical event showcasing the world's elite young pianists every four years, starting this weekend.

Miranda is among 24 pianists from 11 countries (six from Canada) vying for \$31,000 (U.S.) in cash prizes, plus solo and orchestral engagements.

The competitors, who range in age from 18 to 35, will take part in the two opening rounds, Oct. 25-28 at the P.C. Ho Theatre in Scarborough. From these, six will be chosen to compete in the semi-final round on Oct. 30. In the final round, three pianists will perform concertos with the Toronto Concert Orchestra Nov. 1 at Koerner Hall.

More than 100 pianists submitted entries. "It was an extremely difficult task to narrow them

down to 24 pianists; we were overwhelmed with the high calibre of this year's entrants," said artistic director Lang Ning Liu.

Miranda, 32, who grew up in Malton and attended Ascension of Our Lord Catholic Secondary School before going on to the University of Toronto where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in music performance, is looking forward to performing in his backyard.

"No one in these parts has heard from me in years, so it will be fun," he says.

That's because, following the U of T, he's been mainly south of the border continuing his studies at Yale and currently at Indiana University. Not that he hasn't been performing, only closer to school. At Indiana, he won first prize in the Indiana University Concerto Competition as well as the audience prize in the Indiana Univer-

sity Travel Grant Competition.

Early on as a young pianist, he won the coveted Rose Bowl at both the Peel Music Festival and the Kiwanis Music Festival of Greater Toronto, among others. He's also a past winner of the Mississauga Arts Council's Emerging Performing Artist Award.



Christopher Miranda

Miranda enjoys the full spectrum of the great composers and styles, with a particular love for Frédéric Chopin.

"His compositions have an emotional honesty that I really like ... he's not showy for the sake of being showy," he says.

Miranda hopes to do himself and his country proud at the competition, but realizes he and his fellow Canadians are up against a tough field.

"Many (of them) have a higher pedigree than myself, and have been in more competitions," he says modestly.

Still, Miranda's going to give it his all. In fact, he's put his studies at Indiana on hold in order to focus on the event.

"(My studies) have been on the backburner for a year now," he says, noting it's not unusual for him to spend up to 12 hours a day prepping for a major competition.

But it's a labour of love.

"I love to perform ... that's why we do competitions," he says.

Despite his busy schedule, Miranda aims to complete his doctorate at Indiana by the end of this year.

"I have only a piano performance and then a thesis to do," he says.