



Saskatoon Tenor, Spencer McKnight, Wins the 2018 Wallis Opera Competition



The Saskatchewan Music Festival Association (SMFA) President, Karen Unger, is pleased announce that the 2018 Gordon C. Wallis Memorial Opera Competition was won by tenor Spencer McKnight. The Saskatoon singer performed works by Gurney, Stravinsky, and Donizetti and was accompanied by Mark Turner. He was awarded the prize of \$5,000 and the opportunity to be a featured soloist in an upcoming season with the Regina Symphony Orchestra and the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra.

Spencer McKnight began singing at the age of 17. He was encouraged to pursue music by an adjudicator who heard him sing at his local music festival. His passion for music finds him frequently immersed in music of all periods, especially Baroque and bel canto. This season McKnight will be featured with the Saskatoon Symphony in two works. McKnight is also touring with his concert, *Songs of the Great War*, throughout

Saskatchewan and Canada. McKnight studied with teacher and mentor Lisa Hornung, and presently works with Toronto teacher and vocal pedagogue, Mark Daboll. In the past few years he's been a featured soloist with many groups including University of Toronto Men's Chorus, St. Peter's Chorus, Saskatoon Men's Chorus, Saskatoon Opera, and Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra.

Twelve singers competed on Saturday, February 24, in the Riddell Theatre at the University of Regina, followed by a masterclass on February 25. The competition was judged by Dominique Labelle (Montreal) and Brian Deedrick (Edmonton). The competition was established by the late Gordon C. Wallis, former assistant director of the University of Regina, Conservatory of Music and is presented by the Saskatchewan Music Festival Association. The competition is held every two years and is intended to support young singers in further studies in opera.

For more information visit www.smfa.ca.

The Saskatchewan Music Festival Association (SMFA), established in 1908, is a non-profit charitable organization whose mission is to promote excellence in music and speech arts by providing performance and educational opportunities through 47 competitive music festivals in the Province of Saskatchewan.

