

February 22, 2025

## Saskatoon Pianist wins 2025 SMFA Concerto Competition



The Saskatchewan Music Festival Association (SMFA), Dianne Gryba, President is pleased to announce the winner of the 2025 SMFA Concerto Competition. Avery Guo of Saskatoon won the competition with her performance of Robert Schumann's *Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54*. Avery was accompanied by Kathleen Solose. The top prize for this competition is \$2,000 and the opportunity to perform with both the Regina Symphony Orchestra and the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra in their upcoming seasons.

Avery Guo is a 16-year-old pianist who has been living in Saskatoon since moving from Chongqing, China five years ago. She began piano lessons at the age of five and now studies with Kathleen Solose. Avery competes each year in her local music festival and has advanced to the SMFA Provincial Finals in several classes. Avery was also honoured to receive first prize at the 2024 Gordon C. Wallis Piano Competition, sponsored by the Saskatchewan Registered Music Teachers' Association. She recently completed her ARCT exam with the Royal Conservatory of Music. When not playing the piano or focusing on her high school classes, Avery enjoys working as a lifeguard and swimming instructor.

Eleven musicians competed in the 2025 SMFA Concerto Competition, which was held virtually on February 22. Graeme Scott, flautist originally from Regina (now living in Montreal, QC), placed 2<sup>nd</sup>. Elisha Ruo, violinist from Saskatoon, and Leah Macfarlane, pianist originally from Carnduff (now living in Victoria, BC) tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> place. The competition was judged by Audrey Sproule (violinist, Paris), Younggun Kim (pianist, Toronto), and Gordon Gerrard (conductor, RSO).

The next SMFA Concerto Competition will be held in 2027.

