

May 23, 2013

MUSIC

Bachman, Ezrin, Pieczonka honoured by Royal Conservatory of Music

David Rockne Corrigan

Randy Bachman, Bob Ezrin, and Adrienne Pieczonka were named Honourary Fellows of The Royal Conservatory of Music on Wednesday night at Toronto's Koerner Hall.

At the *Royal Occasion Gala*, audience members were treated to performances by the internationally-acclaimed musicians.

Pieczonka, an alumna of The Royal Conservatory, is a soprano opera singer who has performed all over the world. Raised in Burlington, she looks back fondly on her time studying piano at the Royal Conservatory in Hamilton, and she has maintained a relationship since.

"I trained at Western University and at U of T but the Royal Conservatory is so close to the faculty of music at U of T that I often spent time there — either practicing or in the wonderful bookshop," she said.



Adrienne Pieczonka, pictured here in 2011, was honoured at last night's "Royal Occasion Gala" at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

Pieczonka, who is also an Officer of the Order of Canada and recipient of a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, says Canadians should take pride in their musicians, especially as more people are starting to notice them on the global stage.

"Canada is a fantastic place to train as an opera singer," she said. "I sing all over the world and I am often asked, 'Why are there so many great Canadian opera singers?' I think the training is getting even stronger. I am so impressed hearing the young artists in the [Canadian Opera Company's] ensemble program or the students in the voice programs at the universities."

Some of those students were given an opportunity to perform last night—young musicians from the Conservatory's Glenn Gould School and the Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists also took the stage.

Pieczonka, who is currently playing Madame Lidoine in the Canadian Opera Company production of *Dialogues des Carmélites* (until May 25), had some advice for aspiring classical musicians.

"I think young musicians and aspiring opera singers need to know that having a successful career takes lots of hard work and discipline," she said. "I think shows like *American Idol* and *The Voice* make young people believe they can be stars 'overnight.' This simply doesn't happen in the classical music world. Perseverance, passion, and dedication are the requirements."

Randy Bachman—best known as a founding member of The Guess Who, and also wrote the huge international hit "You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet" for Bachman-Turner Overdrive—was also honoured at the gala. Bachman currently hosts the CBC radio program *Vinyl Tap*.

Bob Ezrin was honoured for his many contributions to Canadian music as a producer, arranger, and songwriter. As a producer, he worked on several chart-topping albums over the last four decades, and has collaborated with artists like Rod Stewart, Alice Cooper, KISS, and Aerosmith.

The Royal Conservatory of Music—originally founded in 1886 as the Toronto Conservatory of Music—is the largest music and arts educator in Canada. This year's honorary fellows join a list of other distinguished Canadians that includes Robertson Davies, Oscar Peterson, and The Tragically Hip.