

## Ensemble Made in Canada's latest nets another Juno win for Aurora's Norbert Kraft



Canada is a cultural mosaic, something that has been immortalized in visual art, poetry and on our screens. But it has also been immortalized in music, including by Ensemble Made in Canada through their latest album, *Mosaïque*.

*Mosaïque*, which is the culmination of the ensemble's project of the same name, brings together 14 separate Canadian composers of all backgrounds representing Canada's different provinces, territories and regions, who were each tasked with penning something distinctly representative of their region.

This landed Ensemble Made in Canada the 2021 Juno Award for Classical Album of the Year (Solo or Chamber) and another win for producer Norbert Kraft.

"Thank you to The Juno Awards for this incredible honour and our 14 amazing composers, whose music brought this project to life," said the group. "Thank you to our producer/engineer Norbert Kraft, our graphic designer Marc Lafoy, Western University, Chamber Factory, the Canadian Music Centre, Factor, Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Council and Toronto Arts Council and to Virginia Atkin and all the individual donors and presenters that made this possible, as well as to our families we are so grateful," said pianist Angela Park, who is joined in Ensemble by violinist Elissa Lee, violaist Sharon Wei, and cellist Trey Lee.

Mr. Kraft, a long-time resident of Aurora, says he knew as soon as the tracks started to be recorded at CBC's Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto that he was working on a very special project.

"Ensemble Made in Canada is four female musicians who are, in their own individual rights, wonderful players," says Mr. Kraft. "As a group, they played traditional repertoire by standard composers, but as a project they undertook this initiative commissioning 14 separate Canadian composers to do something quite distinctly representative of a particular region.

"It is a huge diversity of styles ranging from very atonal and contemporary-sounding music, right down to the folksy. It is really accessible and eye-opening music really fantastic stuff."

Once the project was completed, Ensemble Made in Canada took their album on tour, incorporating visual elements into the show depending on their venue or the landscape in which they were playing.

"I kept nudging them saying it was time to record this before you forget to play, so it finally came about," he says. "They got the granting, had lots of support both individually and [from] corporate and government support, to do a magnificent recording and that

is what this is. The recording experience was wonderful. We set aside four days, which is somewhat generous, but given the complexity of the nature of the music, it was not too much time at all. We had time to do lots of detail.

?They are not just four musicians that get together now and again. These people are so well-knitted together and seeking the same musical directions at every moment so every moment has something to say. There are classical musicians who are really great players technically and it is really great to see how they execute the piece, then there are others who where every moment, every phrase, every little thing has some kind of spark or direction to it and it pulls you in as a listener. That is what these women have. It is thoroughly engaging, always.

?It was evident to me that this was not only a special project, especially from a diversity standpoint, but most of them represented so many different aspects of musical styles that, in a sense, it almost sums up the 20th century of serious music. It's like a little encyclopedia of what serious music has gone through in the past 120 years.?

With their first Juno win in hand, Mr. Kraft says he is excited for what the future holds for Ensemble Made in Canada, and says the accolade will only propel the group towards greater success.

?It's an affirmation of the incredible work they have done,? he says. ?It is incredibly difficult music for them to play. Contemporary music is not often the kind of thing that can be easily programmed, but because of this award I think many, many sponsors will want to hear the whole group and they will be touring with this actual show, which is so meaningful, which has been so much work not only from the composers but the players themselves.?

For more on Ensemble Made in Canada, visit [www.ensemblemadeincanada.com](http://www.ensemblemadeincanada.com).

**By Brock Weir** Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter