

## MacPhail Center for Music

For Immediate Release

May 14, 2010

### **MacPhail Center for Music awards \$25,000 McKnight Fellowships to Minnesota's finest performing musicians**

MacPhail Center for Music recently awarded four McKnight Artists Fellowships to Minnesota's finest performing musicians. For the 14<sup>th</sup> year, MacPhail administered the competition, a component of the McKnight Foundation Artist Fellowships program, which is intended to provide recognition and financial support to Minnesota musicians as they explore and develop their skills. The fellowships ultimately serve to enrich Minnesota's cultural community.

Of the 100 soloists and ensembles that applied for the fellowships by submitting recordings, artist statements and resumes, nine solo/ensemble finalists were chosen, by a panel of national and regional judges, to perform in a live audition on May 7. Of the nine finalists, four soloists/ensembles were each awarded \$25,000 fellowships.

#### **The four winners of 2010-2011 McKnight Artist Fellowships for Performing Musicians are:**

**Bryan Nichols** – pianist from Minneapolis.

Nichols is a Minneapolis-based pianist and composer, working primarily in jazz and other instrumental music. In addition to playing regularly with many well-known Twin City artists, Nichols performs with his own trio and quartet as well as composing and teaching jazz piano at MacPhail Center for Music.

**Nirmala Rajasekar** – veena player from Plymouth

Rajasekar is an accomplished veena player and vocalist, performing a classical music which has origins in South India. Performing for more than 25 years, Rajasekar has received many accolades including being invited to perform in venues such as the United Nations and Carnegie Hall in New York City.

**Parker Quartet** – Daniel Chong, violin, from St. Paul; Karen Kim, violin, from St. Paul; Jessica Bodner, viola, from St. Paul; Kee-Hyun Kim, cello, from St. Paul.

The Parker Quartet has been hailed as “something extraordinary” and is quickly becoming one of the preeminent ensembles of its generation. In addition to an extensive performing and touring schedule, the Quartet spends a great deal of time each year working with young musicians through educational residency activities.

**Carrie Henneman Shaw** – voice, from Minneapolis

Shaw is a soprano who brings a sense of adventure and style to the concert stage. A member of St. Paul's Rose Ensemble, Glorious Revolution Baroque, and Chicago's dal Niente, she has been acclaimed as a "major musical force."

*Other McKnight finalists who won \$1,000:*

- **The New Standards** – John Munson, bass and vocals, from Minneapolis; Chan Poling, piano and vocals from Prior Lake; Steve Roehm, vibes, from New Hope.
- **The Pines** – David Huckfelt, guitar and vocals, from Minneapolis; Benson Ramsey, guitar and vocals, from St. Paul.
- **Nichola Miller** – voice, from Minneapolis.
- **Jill Dawe** – piano, from Minneapolis.
- **Jeff Lambert** – guitar, from St. Louis Park.

### **McKnight Foundation**

Founded in 1953, the McKnight Foundation contributes more than \$1.5 million per year to assist individual artists in 12 disciplines. McKnight Artist Fellowships programs support musicians, ceramic artists, choreographers, composers, dancers, photographers, playwrights, screenwriters, theater artists, visual artists, filmmakers and writers. For more information visit: [www.mcknight.org](http://www.mcknight.org).

### **About MacPhail Center for Music**

Few organizations have had a longer and more positive influence on the community than MacPhail Center for Music. MacPhail has been an integral and central foundation of lifelong learning through music for the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota for more than 100 years. More than 8,200 students throughout the state and beyond participate in MacPhail's music education programs, making it second-largest community music education center in the country. MacPhail faculty and staff continue to perform and present nationally and internationally. For more information visit: [www.macphail.org](http://www.macphail.org)