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Contact:

Mikalia Bradberry

Bradberry.mikalia@macphail.org

MCKNIGHT MUSICIAN FELLOWSHIP GRANTS FOUR OF OUR STATE'S TOP MUSICIANS WITH \$25,000 AWARDS

MINNEAPOLIS – May 16, 2023 – MacPhail Center for Music proudly announces the four recipients of the 2023-24 McKnight Fellowship for Musicians: Shaiwna Adams aka The Lioness, Rascal Miles, Evelyn Speers aka EVV and Ann DuHamel.

The process for the recipients began in January, with 59 solo musician applications consisting of recording samples, artist statements, and resumes. Nine finalists were chosen by a four-member panel of experienced and well-respected music professionals. The four previously mentioned recipients were selected to receive the \$25,000 McKnight Fellowship for Musicians at the finals on Friday, May 5, 2023.

MacPhail Center for Music administered the McKnight Fellowship for Musicians, a component of the McKnight Artists Fellowships Program, for the 27th year. Founded on the belief that Minnesota thrives when its artists thrive, the McKnight Foundation's arts and culture program is one of the oldest and largest of its kind in the country. Support for individual working Minnesota artists has been a cornerstone of the program since it began in 1982. The McKnight Artist Fellowships Program provides annual, unrestricted cash awards to outstanding mid-career Minnesota artists in 14 different creative disciplines. Program partner organizations administer the fellowships and structure them to respond to the unique challenges of different disciplines. Currently the foundation contributes about \$2.8 million per year to its statewide fellowships.

The 2023-2024 McKnight Musician Fellows



Shaiwna Adams aka The Lioness, Vocalist – Hip Hop, Minneapolis

The Lioness is a native of North Minneapolis, Minnesota. Having started her hip-hop career 19 years ago, she has inevitably become one of the Twin Cities' premier homegrown artists'. The conscious lyricist speaks to the souls of marginalized populations by addressing issues of racial inequalities and social justice, in efforts to encourage and empower Black bodies, bodies of culture, queer bodies, and women across the country.

The Lioness's solo projects include: *The Most Anticipated* (2011); *Lost Tapes* (2012); *Queen* (2013); *Growing Pains* (2016); *Greater Vision* (2018) and her latest, *gemINI* (2021).

Taking her passion and skills to a broader audience, The Lioness has completed six national and two international tours. With her rapidly growing fanbase and mission to encourage and inspire, it is only a matter of time before she becomes a global headliner.



Rascal Miles, Voice, Electric Guitar, Acoustic Guitar, Electric Bass Guitar, Drum Set, Mandolin, Cello, Banjo, Percussion, Glockenspiel, Piano, Keyboards, Synths, Trombone, Soundscapes, Digital Audio Workstations, - Indie Art Rock Minneapolis

Rascal Miles (he/they) is a songwriter, one-man-band and multi-disciplinary artist based in Minneapolis whose work always revolves around three things: sound, storytelling, and emotion. To talk about Miles' music, think Radiohead's creativity meets Andrew Bird's curiosity, but with a healthy dose of tender authenticity that only an underdog could know. Originally from a small town in Florida, Miles spent over a decade growing roots in the indie, folk & DIY punk scenes in the Pacific Northwest, recording in friends' living rooms and touring the West Coast, both solo and in other bands. When the pandemic hit, Miles was 6-months-sober, had recently come out as trans and had top surgery, lost his job, and was living alone in a tiny basement studio, events which together became the perfect

storm for Miles to dive headfirst into audio engineering and write his self-recorded (including full instrumentation), debut full-length album *Tailor-Made*. Fueled by the fundamental truth that representation in art and media create the change we want to see in the world, each song on the record is a chronological chapter of his trans experience throughout his life. His story has gone on to earn the stamp of approval from NPR Music, including a special feature by indie icon Phoebe Bridgers, to award him two Make|Learn|Build grants from the Regional Arts & Culture Council, and to provide

performance opportunities with queer musical heroes such as Chris Pureka and Esmé Patterson. Miles continues to craft his songs from the perspective of misunderstood characters, like the monsters in his 80's New Wave-inspired Halloween EP *Songs for the Graveyard*, as well as the robot surviving the human apocalypse in his upcoming dystopian (more-electronically-focused) concept album. As a highly sensitive, neurodiverse sound nerd with ADHD, Miles is always exploring new ways to manipulate sounds and build worlds for his characters, often blurring lines between genres, learning new techniques for sound design and production, adventuring on nature trips to collect textural field recordings, designing plugins to use while recording, implementing the element of chance into his writing process, searching for what is lingering in the air but isn't being said, and then saying it with his distinctive musical voice.



Ann DuHamel, Piano – Classical, Morris

Praised as poetic and “... a delight for the ears and the soul” (Encuentro Universitario Internacional de Saxofón, Mexico City), pianist Ann DuHamel delights in a multi-dimensional and eclectic musical career. Her performances have spanned 18 countries and 37 of the United States, including Carnegie Weill Recital Hall.

Hailed as a “forward thinking classical pianist” (*Midwest Record*) and applauded for “the depth of programming and playing” (*Piano Magazine*) for her debut album *Rückblick* (Furious Artisans, 2020), Ann actively champions contemporary composers, commissioning all of the works for this release. She can also be heard on *Tyler Kline: Orchard* (Neuma Records, 2022); *Fanfare Magazine* praised her performance as “alive ... [played with] aching expression.” Tracks from *Rückblick* and *Orchard* have been featured on radio stations across the U.S.

Ann’s project “Prayers for a Feverish Planet” responds to the climate crisis with 60+ new works from composers around the world. In the spirit of eco-artivism, the program asks urgent questions of the listener: How can we live more mindfully as global citizens? How can we use our artistic talents to make a difference?

Featured in interviews on *Modern Notebook Radio* (WSMR) and Minnesota Public Radio’s *All Things Considered* with Tom Crann, Ann has been awarded artist residencies at Tofte Lake Center (MN) and Everwood Farmstead Foundation (WI), in addition to grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Lake Region Arts Council, and the University of Minnesota. She currently serves as Associate Professor of Music at the University of Minnesota Morris, where she devotes herself to the mission of sharing high quality traditional and contemporary classical music with students and the greater community. She is Immediate Past President of the Minnesota Music Teachers Association.



Evelyn Speers aka EVV, Lead Vocals/Lead Guitar – Blues, Metal, Indie, Jazz, Rock, Minneapolis

EVV is a Minneapolis-based musician that refuses to claim a genre. Drawing influences from blues, jazz, metal, and rock, the solo project of Ev Speers is one that is years in the making. With each song, EVV sings about heartbreak and their experiences as a black femme in today's society. EVV hopes to inspire young black folks to pursue the art that inspires them, and to let their voices be heard.

In addition, five solo artists were named finalists and will receive \$1,000: Ben Noble of Minneapolis (guitar, keys, voice – Indie Folk), Nyttu Chongo of Fridley (kora, mbira, timbila, inanga, guitar, xipendani, xizambi - World Music/jazz Bantu), Tonia Hughes of Minneapolis (Vocalist – Contemporary), Gregory Byers of Minneapolis (cello, bass, voice – Jazz, Latin, Fusion) and Tearra Rosario (voice, percussion - Afro Boricua).

About the McKnight Foundation The McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based family foundation, advances a more just, creative, and abundant future where people and planet thrive. Established in 1953, the McKnight Foundation is deeply committed to advancing climate solutions in the Midwest; building an equitable and inclusive Minnesota; and supporting the arts in Minnesota, neuroscience, and international crop research.

About MacPhail Center for Music

MacPhail Center for Music is the nation's largest center for music learning and performance and one of Minnesota's top ten arts organizations. Since 1907, MacPhail Center for Music has been providing meaningful opportunities for people and is committed to transforming lives and strengthening communities through music learning experiences that inspire. Each year, MacPhail offers programming to 15,000 students of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities, at locations in Minneapolis, White Bear Lake, Chanhassen, Apple Valley, Austin, and Madeline Island, WI., as well as 103 community partnerships across the Twin Cities. An industry leader in online music education, MacPhail's Live Online and Online School Partnerships programs have reached students for the past ten years. MacPhail has a 115-year history of excellence, promoting life-long learning and building long-term relationships between students and teachers. For more information, visit macphail.org.

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