

BEVERLEY JOHNSTON, O.C.

PERCUSSION

Beverley Johnston is one of Canada's most celebrated percussionists, internationally acclaimed for her electrifying performances on marimba and percussion. Known for her unconventional and theatrical style, she seamlessly blends classical transcriptions, contemporary works, and dramatic flair to captivate audiences across North America and around the globe.

In 2024, Johnston was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada, inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame and received The Toronto Musicians' Association Lifetime achievement Award—honours that reflect her profound impact on the musical landscape. In 2025 she was awarded the Oskar Morawetz Award for Excellence in Music Performance. Past laureates of this award include pianist Angela Hewitt, conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin and singer Russell Braun.

Her performances and recordings have been broadcast worldwide, and she has released eight solo albums, including:

- *Finding Her Voice* (2026, Navona Records)
- *The Spirit and the Dust* (2020, Centrediscs)
- *Woman Runs with Wolves* (2013, Centrediscs)
- *Ming* (2009, Centrediscs)
- *Alternate Currents* (1992, Centrediscs)
- *Marimbach* (1989, CBC Records Musica Viva)
- *Impact* (1986, Centrediscs, JUNO nominee)
- *Garden of Delights* (CD Baby re-release, available online)

Johnston has performed at major percussion festivals across Canada, the U.S., Europe, and Asia, including the Zeltsman Marimba Festival, the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, the Stockholm International Percussion Event, and the Shenyang International Percussion Festival. She has twice served as faculty at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, premiering Dinuk Wijeratne's *The Spirit and the Dust* in 2016 and returning in 2024 for teaching, coaching, and performances.

Over the past few decades, Johnston has maintained an active schedule of concerto and recital appearances, premiering Canadian concerti by Patrick Cardy, Chan Ka Nin, Omar Daniel, Alice Ho, Christos Hatzis, Gary Kulesha, and Larysa Kuzmenko, among others. She has also performed major works by Tan Dun (*Water Concerto*), Maki Ishii (*Afro-Concerto*), and James MacMillan (*Veni, Veni Emmanuel*).

Her collaborations span a wide range of ensembles and artists, including Amici Chamber Ensemble, Penderecki String Quartet, The Art of Time Ensemble, TorQ Percussion Quartet, NEXUS, violinist Marc Djokic and Flautist Susan Hoepfner. She has appeared with leading festivals and organizations such as New Music Concert, Music in the Morning, Vancouver New Music Society, the Winnipeg New Music Festival, Festival of the Sound, and Thirteen Strings.

A passionate advocate for Canadian composers, Johnston was named an Ambassador of the Canadian Music Centre in 2009. She has championed numerous works by Christos Hatzis, including *Fertility Rites*, *Pyrrhic Dances*, and *Tongues of Fire*, many of which were written expressly for her.

Her multidisciplinary interests have led to collaborations with dance, theatre, and visual artists. Highlights include *Psionic Interference*, a solo dance/music work with percussion integrated into her costume, and *Frankenstein's Ghosts*, a multimedia project with choreographer Michael Montanaro. Recent commissions include *Clockwork Cummings* by David Occhipinti and *wild with the music of color* by Holly Winter, inspired by Georgia O'Keeffe.

In 2022, Johnston premiered *Finding HER Voice*, a one-woman show celebrating mythological and historical female figures through works by Holly Winter, Christos Hatzis, Norbert Palej, Alice Ping Yee Ho, and Frederic Rzewski. Since 2023, she has premiered new Canadian works, including *Ice Woman* by Alice Ho, a trio by Michael Pepa, a solo vibraphone and audio playback piece called *Lyrics 2* by David Jaeger, and recorded chamber music with ICOT (Iranian-Canadian Composers of Toronto).

Her commitment to outreach is reflected in over 25 years of school concerts, both solo and with the Toronto Percussion Ensemble. Earlier in her career, she performed with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Canadian Opera Company Orchestra, and National Ballet Orchestra, and contributed to numerous studio sessions for film and television.

Since 1996, Johnston has been a dedicated educator at the University of Toronto, where her holistic teaching approach nurtures creativity, discipline, and musical passion in her students.

She received her training at Vanier College in Montreal and studied with Russell Hartenberger at the University of Toronto. She currently resides in rural Ontario with her husband, composer Christos Hatzis.

Beverley Johnston is a Marimba One and Paiste Artist.

For more information, visit www.beverleyjohnston.com or follow her on Facebook.

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