

What an honor it was to be the recipient of the Governor General's Performing Arts Award Mentorship Program and a privilege it was to be mentored by Oliver Jones. As an aspiring jazz musician, I grew up listening to and admiring Mr. Jones for his beautiful, emotive and timeless artistry on the piano. Before meeting him I just knew that his heart would be full of elegant beauty because love comes shining through in his music. After meeting him, exchanging ideas and performing with him on multiple occasions I can truly say that I was right! The most important lesson that Oliver Jones taught me is the power of authenticity. He taught to me live in my own truth and always sing, emote, compose and perform from that place. I will never forget that moment when we performed Oscar Peterson's "Hymn to Freedom" together for its induction into the Canadian Songwriter's Hall of Fame. The message of the song is all about one love, hope, unity, peace and dignity for mankind. I truly believe that we brought that spirit of oneness to that performance (which earned us a Gemini Nomination for Best Performance). I love that we still occasionally get the chance to perform together.

Dione Taylor
Singer-songwriter
2009 Protégé