

Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music to launch external probe into historical sexual-abuse allegations

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PUBLISHED 6 HOURS AGO

UPDATED 5 HOURS AGO



The Royal Conservatory of Music is seen in Toronto, on Friday.

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The Royal Conservatory of Music, one of Canada’s most prestigious music-education institutions, says it will launch an external investigation into sexual-abuse allegations from the 1970s and 1980s.

The Toronto institution said in a press release Friday that it has already conducted an internal review, and it was aware of public frustration about accountability and student safety.

The announcement did not name any individuals under investigation, but it followed numerous [reports from the Toronto Star](#) describing allegations that influential music educator Boris Berlin sexually abused his students while at the institution. Berlin, who also wrote books on piano education and was an officer of the Order of Canada, died in 2001.

The Royal Conservatory said it began its internal review when it first learned of abuse allegations in February and that it was completed in April.

With an internal review now complete, the Royal Conservatory said, it plans to study further historical records with the participation of the University of Toronto, which ran the music institution until 1991.

A third-party investigation will begin once this work is completed, the press release said. The Royal Conservatory has not yet identified who would conduct the investigation but said it would seek an investigator that would provide a safe, sensitive and confidential process.

The Royal Conservatory said no one was available Friday for an interview to discuss the announcement. “The complexity and historical nature of this work have reinforced both the urgency and the need for a more robust, independent approach,” board chair Tim Price said in the press release.

The conservatory’s numerous divisions include the community-oriented Oscar Peterson School of Music, the degree-granting Glenn Gould School and the performance venue Koerner Hall.

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