
CMf
Collingwood Music Festival
July 6–18

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INTERWOVEN
A Tapestry of Community & Sound



The Collingwood Music Festival acknowledges that we gather on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat peoples, within the lands protected by Treaty 18 (1818).

Our festival is a tapestry of sound, woven into the long history of Indigenous stewardship in this region. As everything is connected, the artist, the audience, and the earth, we offer our gratitude to the original storytellers and knowledge-keepers of this land, as we weave our story into a future of creative collaboration together.

Cover photo credit – Tjalling Photography

Welcome from the Artistic Director



Welcome to the 2026 Collingwood Music Festival.

Each summer, it is a privilege to watch our town come alive through music, and this season feels especially charged. From July 6 to 18, we return with two weeks that bring together large-scale choral works, intimate chamber music, and vibrant outdoor performances across Southern Georgian Bay.

This year's highlights include the power and spectacle of Carmina Burana, a gospel finale with the Toronto Mass Choir, and the luminous sound of the Dagilėlis Boys' Choir from Lithuania. We are also proud to present a new work by Juno Award winner Andy Milne, alongside performances by Mark Fewer and friends, Ménestrel, Les Rugissants, and a Bernstein and Rodgers tribute with Louise Pitre.

Our commitment to young artists continues to grow. The Youth Masterclass returns to Osler Bluff Ski Club, bringing together exceptional mentorship and emerging talent, while our outreach and free outdoor concerts at the Collingwood Amphitheatre and Creemore Village Green ensure the festival remains open, accessible, and rooted in community.

Thank you, as always, for being part of this journey. I look forward to sharing these summer evenings with you.

Daniel Vnukowski
Artistic Director

Welcome from Terry Dowdall



As the Member of Parliament for Simcoe-Grey, I am delighted to welcome you to the 2026 Collingwood Music Festival! This year promises another outstanding season, featuring high-calibre performances by artists from around the world. Audiences can discover many exciting new acts, including Carmina Burana, a powerful gospel finale with the Toronto Mass Choir, the Dagilėlis Boys' Choir from Lithuania, and Voices of Ukraine, an a cappella choral concert celebrating Ukrainian musical heritage. We are also fortunate to hear new work by Juno Award winner Andy Milne, along with performances by Mark Fewer and friends, Ménestrel, Les Rugissants, and a Bernstein and Rodgers tribute with Louise Pitre.

The Arts play a vital role in our community, and the Festival supports that through its strong support of local young talent and the return of the Youth Masterclass at Osler Bluff Ski Club. Add in the free outdoor concerts at the Collingwood Amphitheatre and Creemore Village Green, and the Festival remains welcoming and accessible to all, while also drawing visitors from across the region and beyond who come to enjoy the performances and the beautiful Collingwood area.

Special thanks to Daniel Vnukowski, Founder and Artistic Director, for his ongoing vision and dedication. Thanks as well to Michael Dawe, Chair, the Board, and staff for their tremendous effort in creating such a memorable event. Further gratitude goes to the Town of Collingwood and all our generous sponsors, donors, partners, advertisers, and volunteers for their steadfast commitment to the arts and our community. We could not do it without you! Please enjoy the show and everything that Simcoe-Grey has to offer.

Terry Dowdall, Member of Parliament Simcoe-Grey

Welcome from Brian Saunderson



Music has a unique way of bringing people together. It connects us across generations and cultures, and often becomes part of the moments and memories we carry with us.

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the annual Collingwood Music Festival. This event has become an important part of the summer season in Southern Georgian Bay, bringing exceptional talent to our region and creating opportunities for residents and visitors to come together and enjoy live performance.

I am also pleased to recognize the support this festival has received from the Province of Ontario. Through programs such as the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Ontario Creates, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund, this support is helping to strengthen the festival's continued growth, including initiatives like the CMF Masterclass program. Events like the Collingwood Music Festival also play an important role in supporting local tourism and economic activity. By attracting visitors to the region, the festival helps showcase our communities, support local businesses, and contribute to a vibrant and growing regional economy.

Over the course of the festival, audiences will experience a wide range of performances, showcasing both established artists and emerging talent. That balance is part of what makes this festival so special.

I would like to thank the organizers and volunteers whose dedication and hard work make this event possible each year. Your efforts continue to strengthen our local arts and culture community.

To those visiting, I encourage you to take the time to enjoy all that Simcoe-Grey has to offer during your stay. Please accept my best wishes for a successful and memorable festival.

Brian Saunderson, MPP, Simcoe-Grey

Welcome from Yvonne Hamlin



It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2026 Collingwood Music Festival. This year's program offers an outstanding and inspiring range of performances that truly reflect the festival's commitment to artistic excellence, cultural diversity, and community connection.

This year's festival runs from July 6th to 18th, offering unforgettable and exceptional performances. Over this vibrant period, audiences will enjoy an impressive variety of music and artistic experiences, including choral works, orchestral and solo performances, world music, jazz, Broadway favourites, youth and rising-star concerts, workshops, and free community events.

The Collingwood Music Festival would not have been possible without the generous support of sponsors, partners, and dedicated volunteers. I would also like to thank the Board of Directors and Advisory Committee for their vision, leadership, and hard work throughout the year.

On behalf of Town Council and the Town of Collingwood, I extend a warm welcome to all artists, visitors, and residents attending the 2026 Collingwood Music Festival. I hope you enjoy this celebration of music, creativity, and community.

Mayor Yvonne Hamlin, Town of Collingwood

A Visual Journey: The CMF Retrospective Exhibition

July 3 – 31

Pressroom Gallery, Simcoe Street

THIS EVENT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE GRACIOUS SUPPORT OF:
Rick and Anke Lex



Since the very first notes, the CMF has been a tapestry of unforgettable performances and community spirit, and we are now bringing those memories to life through a curated Overview Exhibition. This unique showcase features a breathtaking collection of art photography by award-winning photographer Tjalling Halbertsma, captured throughout our history. The photos offer a rare look at the magic of performances at the First Presbyterian Church and other venues.

The images tell the story of how CMF became a vibrant cultural cornerstone. You have the opportunity to revisit the foundational moments that defined our early years and explore the growth of our festival through the lens of world-class performance photography. From the passion and precision of the musicians on stage to the smiles of the students and supporters in our community, this exhibition is a tribute to everyone who has championed us from the beginning.

ARTIST
Tjalling Halbertsmaw

Schedule of Events

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Signature Series | *Rising Star Series* | *Free Events*

Youth Academy Masterclass

Osler Bluff Ski Club
795534 The Blue Mountains Clearview Townline, The Blue Mountains

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FACULTY

VOICE
Andrea Ludwig (opposite page, left)
Gino Quilico (opposite page, right)

VIOLIN
Sharon Lee (top)

PIANO
Daniel Vnukowski (middle)

TRIO IN RESIDENCE
Gryphon Trio (bottom)

STUDENTS

Chiara Asztalos
Sally Bruce
Joy Cha-Kang
Marion Cha-Kang
Justin Chen
Theodora Chung
Bryson Cleland
Priscilla Han
Elizabeth Hu
Caralina Knights
Theadora Koski
Gabrysia Kowalik
Micah Lam
Titus Lam
Asher Leung
Liam Leduc
Isabelle Li
Junyi Li
Helen Murphy
Peter Peng
Cinzia Rossi
Daniel Small
Emilie Tam
Valerie Tam
Elsha Tiemersma
Aldo Regier
Maddison Wilkey
Naomi Williams
Harvey Xiaoci Xu
Elsha Zhu







Music from Zimbabwe

Tuesday, July 7 at 7pm

Amphitheatre, 2 N Maple Street in Collingwood



ARTISTS
Nhapitapi

Nhapitapi – a Shona word meaning "sweet sounds" – is a dynamic six-piece ensemble of Zimbabwean musicians, singers, and dancers who bring an irresistible energy to the stage. Their music is a kaleidoscopic journey that expertly weaves ancestral rhythms with contemporary African diasporic flavors. Grounded in the healing and sacred sounds of the mbira (thumb piano) and marimba, the group creates a "musical magic" that travels seamlessly from the ancient voices of the African continent to modern Afro-jazz, funk, and reggae.

Designed for the whole family, a Nhapitapi performance is as much a visual spectacle as it is a musical one. The group's fiery dance moves and upbeat, "entrenched-in-ceremony" spirit make it impossible to stay still, turning every concert into a joyous community celebration. Whether they are performing at a major festival or an intimate venue, Nhapitapi's soulful storytelling and infectious grooves offer a fun, immersive experience that connects audiences of all ages to the vibrant heart of Zimbabwean culture.

This performance is offered on a pay-what-you-can basis.

Flamenco Underground

Wednesday, July 8 at 7pm

Amphitheatre, 2 N Maple Street in Collingwood



ARTISTS
Tamar Ilana & Ventana

Tamar Ilana & Ventanas is a Toronto-based ensemble renowned for a high-energy fusion of Flamenco dance and music, Sephardic love songs, and Balkan dance tunes. Performing in over 20 languages, the group blends traditional material with lyrical original melodies, utilizing an eclectic array of instruments including Flamenco guitar, Middle Eastern darbuka, Greek oud, and classical violin. The result is a vivid, cross-cultural performance that weaves together soulful vocals, jazz improvisation, and the fiery intensity of live dance to create a truly global sound.

This performance is offered on a pay-what-you-can basis.

Niawenkowa

Thursday, July 9 at 7pm

Amphitheatre, 2 N Maple Street in Collingwood

THIS EVENT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE GRACIOUS SUPPORT OF

Scenic Caves Nature Adventures

Sisters, aunties, daughters, mothers and grandmothers from the **Wolf Clan family of the Kanienkehaka Nation**. Women holding a great responsibility of sharing traditional teachings and the protection and preservation of the language and the stories of past generations through their songs.

Kontiwennenha:wi; *(pronounced: goon dee wa na ha wee)*, are from Ahkwesahsne which is located where present-day Ontario, Quebec and New York State intersect, settling in their territory on the St. Lawrence River. They are **Kanienkehaka, People of the Flint** but are more commonly known as Mohawk.

Kontiwennenha:wi formed as a singing group in 1997, at a time when their children were learning the songs and dances of the Kanienkehaka at the **Ahkwesahsne Freedom School**. The school played an important part in holding on to the language and traditions that would have otherwise been lost if the children continued to learn in government run public schools. Two of the women in the group, **Iawentas** and **Tekonwakwenni**, were students at the Ahkwesahsne Freedom School and are now teachers of the language. The women share social songs of the **Six Nations** and have created some verses of the *Women's Dance*.

A water drum and horn rattles are used by the women when they perform.

Bear Fox is a singer/song writer of folk songs that are shared with the accompaniment of the women's voices. Many of the songs incorporate the Mohawk language and some of Bear's songs were written and performed in English. The women have been recipients of the Native American Music Awards, as a group and Bear Fox, as a solo artist, too. The women are proud to share their songs and their lives as traditional women, at this moment in time.

This performance is offered on a pay-what-you-can basis.



Photo credit: Tahila Mintz

ARTISTS
Kontiwennenha:wi-ahkwesahsne Women Singers:
Bear Fox, Iawentas Nanticoke, Tekonwakwenni Nanticoke, Elizabeth Nanticoke

THE GRAND FINALE
Masterclass Youth Concert

Friday, July 10 at 7pm

First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple Street in Collingwood

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To celebrate the culmination of an intensive week of mentorship, we invite you to the **CMF Youth Academy Grand Finale**, a showcase performance featuring the extraordinary young talents of our 2026 season. After five days of rigorous training with our world-renowned faculty, these gifted musicians take the stage to share the results of their hard work in a program filled with passion, technical brilliance, and the vibrant energy of the next generation. Join us for an inspiring evening that celebrates the remarkable growth of these rising stars.



Dagilėlis: Lithuanian Boys Choir

Saturday, July 11 at 2pm

First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple Street in Collingwood

Established in 1990 by Remigijus Adomaitis, the Dagilėlis Boys' Choir of Šiauliai, Lithuania is one of the most prominent choral ensembles in the Baltic region. Renowned for their vibrant voices and emotional depth, the choir has performed in prestigious concert halls across the globe, as they continue to be celebrated ambassadors of Lithuanian choral art and tradition.

ARTISTS

Dagilėlis Boys' Choir
Remigijus Adomaitis, conductor
Vitalija Bulzgiene, piano

PROGRAM

John Rutter (1945 -)
The Peace of God

Alessandro Scarlatti (1685 - 1757)
Exsultate Deo

Ola Gjeilo (1978 -)
The Ground

Vytautas Klova (1926 - 2009)
Rūta žalioji

César Franck (1822 - 1890)
Panis angelicus

Vaclovas Augustinas (1959 -)
Tėvyne mūsų

Donatas Zakaras (1979 -)
Da pacem Domine

Vaclovas Augustinas (1959 -)
Du dob dob

Urmas Sisask (1960 - 2022)
Omnis una

Algirdas Martinaitis (1950 -)
Žemaičių plentas

Vytautas Kernagis (1951 - 2008)
Baltas paukštis

Jacques Arcadelt (1507 - 1568)
Ave Maria

Karl Jenkins (1944 -)
Healing Light: A Celtic Prayer

Keith Hampton (1957 -)
Praise His Holy Name

Christopher Tin (1976 -)
Baba yetu



The Elmer Iseler Singers

Saturday, July 11 at 7pm

First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple Street in Collingwood

THIS EVENT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE GRACIOUS SUPPORT OF

Gail Selley and John Cleghorn

ARTISTS Elmer Iseler Singers
CONDUCTOR Lydia Adams
PIANO Andy Milne
ENSEMBLE Bergman Duo (piano), Alejandro Céspedes (percussion), Michelle Colton (percussion), Tim Francom (percussion), Dan Morphy (percussion)
SOLOISTS Amy Dodington, Camille Labonté, Peter MacGillivray, William Salinas-Crosby

PROGRAM

Calixa Lavallée (1842 - 1891) O Canada
Text: Sir Adolphe-Basile Routier; translation by Robert Stanley Weir

Edward Enman Between the Alleys of the Stars
Poem: Lola Ridge (1873 - 1941)

R. Murray Schafer (1933 - 1921) Epitaph for Moonlight
Soloist: Amy Dodington

Andy Milne (1969 -) Try to Fly
Poem: Shelly Grace

Intermission

Carl Orff (1895 - 1982) Carmina Burana
Soloists:
Camille Labonté
Peter MacGillivray
William Salinas-Crosby



2026 CMF Commissioned Work

July 11

First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple Street in Collingwood

THIS EVENT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE GRACIOUS SUPPORT OF:

Barbara and Pierre Lemaire

Maureen Quigley and Patrick Reid



Commissioned by the Collingwood Music Festival, 2x Juno Award winner **Andy Milne** composed his debut choral composition. "Try to Fly" is set to the powerful words of celebrated poet Shelly Grace. The piece speaks to the journey of growth and the unique experience of living across the past, present, and future simultaneously.

The world premiere of the composition takes place on July 11, 2026 at the Collingwood Music Festival, performed by the **Elmer Iseler Singers** under the baton of Lydia Adams.

Daniel Vnukowski: Solo Recital

Sunday, July 12 at 3pm

First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple Street in Collingwood

Internationally acclaimed concert pianist, New Classical FM radio broadcaster and CMF Artistic Director, Daniel Vnukowski brings a program of striking contrasts, exploring the forces of unrest and stillness at the heart of great music. Beethoven's *Tempest Sonata* anchors the evening with its dramatic intensity, followed by a virtuosic solo piano suite from Bernstein's *West Side Story*, alive with rhythmic energy and lyricism.

The second half features Chopin's complete 24 Preludes, a masterful sequence of miniature worlds that shift seamlessly between storm and calm, forming a compelling and deeply expressive musical journey.



PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)
Piano Sonata No. 17 in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2 (The Tempest)

Leonard Bernstein (1918 - 1990)
Piano Suite from West Side Story

Intermission

Frédéric Chopin (1810 - 1849)
24 Préludes, Op. 28

Symphony Under the Stars:
Magic, Movies & Musicals

Sunday, July 12 at 8pm

Village Green, Creemore

THIS EVENT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE GRACIOUS SUPPORT OF

THE ARRELL FAMILY
FOUNDATION

Experience an unforgettable evening in the heart of Creemore as the **Kindred Spirit Orchestra** brings beloved songs from *Wicked* and *The Phantom of the Opera* to life under the summer sky. Enjoy the magic of live symphonic music, soaring vocals, and timeless melodies in a breathtaking outdoor setting. Bring your family, your picnic blanket, and your sense of wonder for a night of drama, romance, and musical brilliance!

This performance is offered on a pay-what-you-can basis.

ARTISTS

Kindred Spirit Orchestra
Émile Prou, conductor
Olivia Morton, soprano (*Wicked:* Glinda; *The Phantom:* Christine Daaé)
Julia Kennific, soprano (*Wicked:* Elphaba; *The Phantom:* Meg Giry)
Jobert Sevilleno, tenor (*The Phantom*)
David Moote, tenor (*Wicked:* Fiyero; *The Phantom:* Raoul de Chagny)
Daniel Vnukowski, host

PROGRAM

John Williams (1932 -)
Raiders March (from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*)

Stephen Schwartz (1948 -)
As long as you're mine (from *Wicked*)
Defying Gravity (from *Wicked*)

John Williams
Suite from *Jaws* ((The Shark Theme, Out to Sea, The Shark Cage Fugue)
March from *Superman*

Andrew Lloyd Webber (1948 -)
The Phantom of the Opera Suite



Schmaltz & Pepper

Monday, July 13 at 7pm

First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple Street in Collingwood



ARTISTS

Eric Abramovitz, Rebekah Wolkstein, Drew Jurecka, Jeremy Ledbetter, Michael Herring

Classy Klezmer – Chamber Music and Jazz Infused with Schmaltz

A uniquely virtuosic and entertaining chamber ensemble performing original music inspired by Klezmer, Yiddish Swing, Jazz and Classical music.

Ménestrel

Tuesday, July 14 at 7pm

First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple Street in Collingwood

THIS EVENT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE GRACIOUS SUPPORT OF:
SENSOR TECHNOLOGY PRASAD FOUNDATION

Featuring a beautiful collection of folk songs collected by Helen Creighton, considered Canada's First Lady of Folklore, whose collection amassed over 4,000 songs across Maritimes Canada. Hear music from the oral and written traditions that were present in Canada in the 17th and early 18th centuries, for a musical snapshot of the melodies and rhythms emblematic of Eastern Canada. Ménestrel's sound is grounded in historical practice, yet their sensibility is disarmingly modern, shaped by the emotional clarity and immediacy of folk and popular styles.



PROGRAM

Songs of the Mayflower (subject to change)

Come all ye old Comrades
traditional, Creighton Collection

The Sea Captain
traditional, Newfoundland folksong

Fear a Bhata
traditional, Creighton Collection

Ye Rambling Boys of Pleasure
traditional, Creighton Collection

The Blackbird
traditional, Creighton Collection

She's like the Swallow
traditional, Newfoundland folksong

When I was in my Prime
traditional, Creighton Collection

À la Claire Fontaine
traditional, Quebec

Lochaber
traditional

Plains of Waterloo
traditional, Creighton Collection

Bold Pedlar and Robin Hood
traditional

ARTISTS

Ménestrel: Janelle Lucyk – soprano, violin
Kerry Bursey – tenor, lute
Antoine Malette-Chénier – harp
Caroline Tremblay – recorder

Ménestrel is represented by Latitude 45 Arts/Promotion

Mark Fewer & Friends

Wednesday, July 15 @ 7pm

First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple Street in Collingwood

THIS EVENT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE GRACIOUS SUPPORT OF:

RYDLO FAMILY FUND



ARTISTS

Mark Fewer, Amy Hillis, Julia Mirzoev, Russell Iceberg – violin
Humberto Ramirez, Maxime Despax – viola
Emma Schmiedecke, Beth Silver – cello

PROGRAM

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
String Quartet in B-flat Major, Opus 33, No. 4
Allegro moderato – Scherzo:Allegretto – Largo – Presto

Jared Miller (b.1988 -)
"Follow" for string Octet

Intermission

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847)
Octet for Strings in E-flat Major, Opus 20
Allegro moderato ma con fuoco – Andante – Scherzo: Allegro leggerissimo -Presto

This program features youth in many forms. Beginning with one of Joseph Haydn's earlier quartets (he wrote 68!), it is full of the invention and humour that string players love and trust – no wonder he has garnered the nickname "Papa Joe". Immediately after Haydn, a work by the young Canadian composer Jared Miller entitled "Follow", premiered at the Stratford Summer Music Festival to celebrate their 25th Anniversary Season. Commissioned by Robert Lemon in memory of his late partner Robert Ledingham, the work is filled with discovery, joy, and ultimately peace. To conclude, one of the most popular works in the chamber music repertoire (still – after 200 years), the famous string Octet of Felix Mendelssohn, all of 16 years old when he wrote it.

Voices of Ukraine

Thursday, July 16 at 7pm

First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple Street in Collingwood

THIS EVENT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE GRACIOUS SUPPORT OF:
Jack and Wendy Ward

Voices of Ukraine is an a cappella choral concert celebrating the richness of Ukrainian musical heritage through performances of sacred works, contemporary compositions, and folk-inspired arrangements. The project invites audiences into a fully spatial musical experience. Singers unfold across the concert space, and at times encircle the listener entirely, weaving sound through the architecture and acoustics that make each venue unique. Each concert integrates cultural mediation, offering audiences historical and contextual insights into the repertoire, transforming every performance into both an artistic and educational encounter.



PROGRAM

Dmitry Bortnyansky (1751 - 1825)
Concert n° 6 "Glory to God in the highest heavens"

Mykola Lysenko (1842 - 1912)
Bozhe Velykyj

Mykhailo Verbytsky (1815 - 1870)
Otche Nash

Mykola Leontovych (1877 - 1921)
Ukrainian Folk Songs arranged for mixed choir

Kyrilo Stetsenko (1882 - 1922)
A Dream

Ihor Shamo (1925 - 1982)
Kupalska II from the folk opera The Eyes of Yatra

Lessia Dychko (1939 -)
Slava

Evgen Stankovych (1942 -)
The Cherry Tree Orchard Near The House

ARTISTS Les Rugissants
Xavier Brossard-Ménard, conductor

Louise Pitre... Encore!

Friday, July 17 at 7pm

First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple Street in Collingwood

THIS EVENT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE GRACIOUS SUPPORT OF:

Mandy Macrae

JANE MOYSEY REAL ESTATE
LOCATIONS NORTH

Louise Pitre is Canada's most acclaimed musical theatre star. In **Encore!** she sings selections from shows that have captivated audiences in Toronto, New York, Montreal and Paris. Featured are songs from *Mamma Mia, Les Misérables, Gypsy*, Edith Piaf and Jacques Brel among others. Louise will be joined by Nathan Carroll, one of the brightest young lights on Canadian musical stages. Her collaborative pianist is Diane Leah, who recently dazzled Collingwood with *Broadsway*.

The program will be announced from the stage.







ARTISTS
Louise Pitre, top
Nathan Carroll, left
Diane Leah, right

Gospel Music
Enjoying the Journey!

Saturday, July 18 at 5pm

First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple Street in Collingwood

THIS EVENT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE GRACIOUS SUPPORT OF:

Catherine MacLean in memory of Donald R. MacLean

ARTIST
Karen Burke



Learning to sing gospel music more authentically is easier when you understand where this music comes from. Discover the key elements of authentic gospel music performance practice from the Artistic Director of the Juno award-winning Toronto Mass Choir. This workshop is helpful for those who are looking for a 'way in' to this exciting genre.

The participants of the workshop will join the choir for one of the songs during the evening concert.



Toronto Mass Choir



Saturday, July 18 at 7pm

First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple Street in Collingwood

THIS EVENT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE GRACIOUS SUPPORT OF:

Catherine MacLean in memory of Donald R. MacLean

The Juno Award-winning Toronto Mass Choir (TMC) brings Canadian gospel music to the Collingwood Music Festival.

Capping off their 37th season, TMC's energetic presentations always include both traditional and contemporary gospel music styles such as power ballads, exciting a cappella anthems and Caribbean grooves. While TMC often includes music by gospel greats such as Kirk Franklin, Donald Lawrence and Hezekiah Walker, their concerts also feature favourites from their fifteen albums supported by live musicians.

Audiences will not be able to remain in their seats as the Toronto Mass Choir takes them on a unique musical journey!

ARTISTS Toronto Mass Choir
Karen Burke, conductor



Biographies

On the following pages, you will find the stories behind the musicians and ensembles joining us this season. This year's lineup brings together a diverse group of performers, from established international soloists to emerging local talents, specializing in everything from classical masterpieces to vibrant world music.

We hope these biographies give you a deeper look into the dedication and craft each artist brings, reminding us why live music remains such an essential part of our lives.

Enjoy getting to know the people behind the music.



Eric Abramovitz has held the position of Principal Clarinet of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since 2021, having previously served as Associate Principal and E-flat Clarinet from 2018. Prior to the TSO, he held positions with the Nashville Symphony and Santa Barbara Symphony, and has appeared as guest principal with the Canadian Opera Company and the National Ballet of Canada. He has toured with the NY Symphonic Ensemble and MSO in Japan and South Korea, and performed with the New York Philharmonic at Bravo Vail 2021.Named one of CBC's "30 Hot Classical Musicians Under 30," Eric was a Vandoren Emerging Artist in 2017 and won first prize at the OSM Standard Life Competition in 2011. He has made solo debuts with the TSO on both clarinet and alto saxophone, and is a recipient of the Sylva Gelber Career Grant (2016). He holds degrees from McGill University's Schulich School of Music and the University of Southern California.



Lydia Adams, hailed by the Canadian Music Centre as "the new leading exponent of the Canadian choral composer," has dedicated her career to Canadian choral music. She is Artistic Director of the Elmer Iseler Singers, national leaders in commissioning, premièring, and recording Canadian choral works. In 2016, she was appointed director of the Western University Singers. A native of Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, she studied at Mount Allison University, the Royal College of Music, and the National Opera Studio in London. She has conducted works by leading Canadian composers and toured extensively, recently leading the world's first Cree opera, Pimooteewin: The Journey. An innovative programmer, she has championed over 50 new commissions in 13 years. Ms. Adams has been recognized by the City of Scarborough, the Ontario Choral Federation, and the Women's International Network. She holds honorary doctorates from Mount Allison University and Cape Breton University. Among her many accolades, she won the Ontario Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts (2013), the Parks Canada CEO Award for Excellence (2016), and the Roy Thomson Hall Award of Recognition (2012). 2023 marked her 25th anniversary as Conductor and Artistic Director of the Elmer Iseler Singers. On June 30, 2023, she was awarded the Order of Canada for her distinguished contributions to arts and culture.



The Bergmann Piano Duo – Elizabeth and Marcel Bergmann – has captivated global audiences for over two decades with dynamic performances and uniquely eclectic programming. Their celebrated career has taken them to prestigious stages across North America, Europe, and Asia, including recitals and orchestral collaborations in Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and China. They are frequent guests at renowned festivals such as the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, the Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival, and the Banff Arts Festival. Their extensive discography, featured on labels like Naxos and Brilliant Classics, includes Marcel's innovative arrangements of Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* and the acclaimed *American Stories*. Beyond performing, the Bergmanns are influential arts leaders, serving as ArtisticDirectors of White Rock Concerts. Their academic contributions include faculty positions at Mount Royal University and the University of Calgary, alongside award-winning work with the Land's End Chamber Ensemble. Trained in Hannover and Montréal, the duo's foundation is built on technical brilliance and a commitment to expanding the keyboard repertoire. As laureates of the Murray Dranoff International Two Piano Competition, they have commissioned and premiered numerous works by Canadian composers. Spanning from the Baroque to the contemporary, their performances seamlessly blend tradition with Marcel's virtuosic original compositions, ensuring every concert is a sophisticated and transformative musical experience.

Biographies



Roman Borys – For more than two decades, cellist and producer Roman Borys has distinguished himself as one of Canada's leading artistic voices. A founding member of the three-time Juno Award-winning Gryphon Trio, Roman has released 22 acclaimed recordings; toured internationally since 1993; and broken new artistic ground through cross-genre collaborations and multimedia performances. Honours include 11 nominations and three Juno Awards for Classical Album of the Year. In 2013, Canada Council for the Arts presented Gryphon Trio with the prestigious Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts. In 2015, Roman received an Honorary Doctorate from Carleton University, in Ottawa, as recognition for his contributions to the community. As Artistic Director of the Ottawa Chamber Music Society, from 2007 to 2020, Roman programmed the summer Ottawa Chamberfest (among the world's largest chamber music festivals); a highly successful fall-winter concert series; and a suite of community engagement and education initiatives, which included sensory-friendly concerts for families with children on the autism spectrum. Deeply committed to classical music outreach and audience development, Roman conceived, developed, and produced the Gryphon Trio's flagship educational program, Listen Up!, in communities acrossCanada. Listen Up! now has two permanent hubs in Ottawa and Etobicoke, Ontario. With Gryphon Trio members Annalee Patipatanakoon and Jamie Parker, Roman leads Orford Music Academy's Piano Trio Workshop, and the Classical Music Summer Programs at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. Gryphon Trio are ensemble-in-residence at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts in Kingston, Ontario and artists-in-residence at Trinity College, University of Toronto. Roman lives and works in Toronto.



Xavier Brossard-Ménard – Known for his fiery spirit, lively interpretations and innovative programming, Xavier Brossard-Ménard is the artistic director and conductor of the professional vocal ensemble Les Rugissants. Singing Casting Partner of the Cirque du Soleil since 2017, he leads international auditions for the company. In 2018, he conducted the Orchestre symphonique de Longueuil in a Latin program for choir and orchestra, and again in 2019 for the 100th anniversary celebrations of the Saint-Lambert Choral Society in a flamboyant program featuring Vaughan Williams and Bernstein. In the 2020-21 season, he became Assistant Conductor of the Orchestre classique de Montréal and the Brott Music Festival, conducting more than 10 symphonic concerts. In 2022, he conducted the Moroccan Philharmonic Orchestra in a Vivaldi program, with the violinist Christophe Quatremer by his side. Since September 2022, he is president-elect of Choral Canada, the association that federates and promotes choral singing in Canada. Over the course of his career, he has directed several renowned ensembles including Les Muses Chorale, the Toronto Children's Chorus, the McGill Conservatory Singers, the Youth Choir of the Faculty of Music of the Université de Montréal, the choirs of the École de musique Vincent-d'Indy and was artist-in-residence at F.A.C.E school. A seasoned chamber clarinetist, he was artistic director of the ensemble QAT, recipient of the LOJIQ-RIDEAU grant and of the Conseil des arts de Montréal's Prix de tournée for his show 1938.



Karen Burke – Born in Brantford, Ontario, Karen Burke is a visionary conductor, educator, and composer who has profoundly shaped the landscape of Canadian gospel music. After developing a passion for choral conducting at McMaster University, where she earned her Bachelor of Music, she furthered her credentials with an A.R.C.T. Diploma in Piano Teaching and a Master of Education. An Associate Professor at York University, Burke's distinguished academic career included serving as the Chair of the Music Department and founding the acclaimed York University Gospel Choir. Her professional journey took a definitive turn in 1988 when she and her husband, Oswald Burke, co-founded the Toronto Mass Choir. Together, they began steering the creative direction behind the ensemble's fifteen (15) recordings. Karen has written numerous original compositions and arrangements that celebrate the Canadian gospel music identity. Beyond her leadership of the choir and her work through Burke Music Inc., Burke is a highly sought-after clinician and adjudicator. She has shared her expertise through workshops at the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Massey Hall, and international music festivals and served as an artist-in-residence at several Canadian universities to mentor the next generation of musicians. Her commitment to fostering an environment where gospel music can be authentically created and recorded has made her a pivotal figure in the arts community. Whether conducting on the world stage or teaching in the classroom, Karen Burke continues to inspire through her dedication to musical excellence and cultural diversity, ensuring that the transformative power of choral music reaches audiences far and wide.



Nathan Carroll has performed on stages across Canada, from Vancouver to St. John's. His credits include *Next to Normal* (Musical Stage Co./Mirvish), *Vimy* (Western Canada Theatre), *Hook Up* (Tapestry), Buddy in *The Buddy Holly Story* (1000 Islands Playhouse), *Once* (Mirvish + The Grand/Manitoba Theatre Centre), Terry Fox in *Marathon of Hope* (Drayton), *The Drawer Boy* (Port Stanley), *The Sound of Music* (Citadel), and *The Book of Esther/ Bordertown Café* (Blyth). He has developed new work for Theatre Aquarius, the Musical Stage Co., the Belfry, the Segal Centre, Blyth, and the Stratford Festival. A graduate of George Brown Theatre School, he has been a member of 3 Dora Award-winning ensembles for *Once* (Mirvish), *The Wizard of Oz* (YPT), and *Chasse Galerie* (Storefront). Nathan lives in Toronto with his dog Henry.



Alejandro Céspedes, MMus, is a University of Toronto Faculty of Music alumnus. He has performed with ensembles such as the National Opera and Ballet Orchestra of Cuba, theToronto Symphony, as well as multiple theatre and dance companies. As an educator, he has been a guest clinician for orchestral percussion, steelpan, Latin and body percussion at conservatories and universities throughout North America. Alejandro formerly served as Events Manager at the Royal Conservatory of Music. In that role at RCM, he was the project creator of the Music Fair and he led the event strategy of the Certificate Program at international conferences. Additionally, he planned and executed RCM's annual Recital and Award Ceremonies at Carnegie Hall, as well as Convocations both virtually and in person at Koerner Hall, Bella Concert Hall and Chan Centre for the Performing Arts. Alejandro was the Ceremonies & Communications Coordinator at York University where he planned convocation ceremonies and coordinated everything related to ceremony protocol and production. He was also responsible for managing Institutional Ceremonies, Special Guests, and Stewardship Events.



Michelle Colton is a versatile percussionist who has performed throughout North America, Asia, Europe, and Central America. She has performed with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Canadian Opera Company, Soundstreams, and is the co-founder of Oregano Percussion as well as her singer-songwriter duo, MacAulay Colton. She has also performed with NEXUS, Keiko Abe, Michael Burritt, and Dame Evelyn Glennie. Her debut solo album, Unpredictable Nature features three of her original compositions. She can also be heard on the JUNO Award-winning album, Detach. She earned her Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees from the University of Toronto and her Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Iowa. She has directed the University of Toronto Steel Pan Ensemble, Royal Conservatory SteelPan Ensemble, and currently instructs steel pan and band in the Toronto District School Board. She is also the director and founder of the University of Toronto Percussion Preparatory Department. She has been guest faculty with the Birch Creek Percussion and Steel Pan Academy, Prairie Music Residency, and the Iowa Ambassadors of Music European tours. Dr. Colton serves as the Chapter President of the Ontario Percussive Arts Society. She has presented her research about movement and gesture in marimba performance at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention. She is an artist/endorser of Adams/Pearl Musical Instruments and Dream Cymbals and Gongs.



Dagilėlis, the Boys' Choir of Šiauliai is one of the most prominent groups in the choir genre category in Lithuania and all Baltic regions. Each year "Dagilėlis" holds a number of concerts. The choir has been listened to and applauded by hundreds of listeners in various cities in Lithuania and abroad. The young singers rejoice the hearts of the audience by their perfect performance, emotionality and their vibrant sounding voices. The contribution of "Dagilėlis" to the cultural life of Šiauliai and Lithuania, efforts of cherishing the choir singing traditions and the representation of the Lithuanian choral art in foreign countries have been awarded by acknowledgments of Presidents of the Republic of Lithuania, numerous diplomas and the Lithuanian choral nominations "Golden Bird". In 1990 the Boys' Choir "Dagilėlis" was established and then has been directed by **Remigijus Adomaitis**. Due to artistic, pedagogical and organizational abilities of the energetic artistic director, the creative biography of the choir has been enriched with important and significant achievements. The number of choir members has been growing fast and in 1999 the choral singing school "Dagilėlis" was established. The Boys' Choir "Dagilėlis" has performed in USA, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, Spain, Russia, China, Poland, Estonia, Czech Republic, Belarus, and other countries. The choirregularly prepares new programs and cooperates with the famous art collectives and soloists. The Boys' Choir "Dagilėlis" of Šiauliai constantly participates in various international projects, festivals and achieved highest winnings at the twelve international choir competitions.

Biographies



Maxime Despax Canadian violist Maxime Despax is an active chamber and orchestral musician. Currently, he is pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Toronto under the tutelage of Teng Li, with whom he also completed a Master's degree in Viola Performance. Originally from Gatineau, Quebec, he has studied at the Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau and the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal with Emmanuel Beaudet and Jocelyne Bastien. Maxime has performed alongside many distinguished musicians such as members of the New Orford String Quartet, the Gryphon Trio, Rob Kapilow, Krisztina Szabó, Philip Chiu, Alex Kerr, and Yehonatan Berick. He has also performed as a soloist with the Orchestre du Conservatoire de Musique de Gatineau, as well as the Indiana University Summer String Academy chamber orchestra. An avid chamber musician, Maxime is a co-founding member of the Interro String Quartet, which is based in Toronto. Maxime is an active member of Quatuor Despax, a string quartet that tours extensively throughout Canada, as well as internationally in France, Italy, and Colombia. He is a member of the OrchestreSymphonique de Gatineau and has performed with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. A strong advocate of contemporary music, Maxime has collaborated with many prominent living composers and has performed in the Canadian premieres of Salvatore Sciarriano's operatic work "Luci Mie Traditrici" and Toshio Hosokawa's "The Raven". Maxime is passionate about music education and outreach. He currently lives in Toronto where he teaches with Neighbour Note, an online school that offers lessons throughout Ontario.



Elmer Iseler Singers – The JUNO Award winning Elmer Iseler Singers (EIS), conducted by artistic director Lydia Adams since 1998, is singing its 46th Concert Season in 2024/25. This 20-voice professional choral ensemble, founded by the late Dr. Elmer Iseler in 1979, has thrilled audiences internationally, and led the way in developing exciting new choral works and experiences, building a stellar reputation in Canada, the United States and abroad, performing a wide range of repertoire with a focus on Canadian composers. EIS presents a concert series in Toronto each season, and the choir is featured as guest artists and collaborators with many professional colleagues, including Esprit Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and the Gryphon Trio, among others. The EIS tour regularly throughout Canada, East, West and North, engaging community singers and conductors of all ages through workshops and concert performances. Most recently, the EIS and TSO received a 2019 GRAMMY nomination and 2019 JUNO award for their Ralph Vaughan Williams' Chandos CD recording, with Peter Oundjian conducting. The Elmer Iseler Singers are dedicated to the education of emerging choral singers, conductors and composers, and sponsor conducting and compositional workshops, as well as the James T. Chestnutt Scholarship, a choral mentorship with Lydia Adams and the Singers. The Singers are thrilled to have joined with the VIVA Singers as Associate Choirs. This collaboration will include an ongoing mentorship model and we are delighted to share the skills and knowledge of the Elmer Iseler Singers with the VIVA Singersand their stated aims of performance artistry, vocal music education, inclusion, leadership and mentoring, and community



Mark Fewer: In a career spanning over three decades, Mark Fewer has established himself as a visionary interpreter of music across virtually every genre. From the hallowed stages of Carnegie Hall and Wigmore Hall to the innovative energy of Le Poisson Rouge, his versatility is unmatched. As a soloist, he has performed with major symphonies in Toronto, San Francisco, and Melbourne, while collaborating with eclectic icons ranging from Stevie Wonder and the Chieftains to the Zapp Quartet. A champion of contemporary music, Fewer has premiered over 200 works, including more than 50 written specifically for him. His "intrepid" performances on the six-string electric violin and his "clairvoyant" jazz interpretations have earned him a Grammy, multiple Junos, and most recently, an ECMA for his album *Alikeness*. This extraordinary range led to his recent induction into the CBC In Concert Hall of Fame, celebrating Canada's greatest classical musicians of all time. Fewer's distinguished leadership includes roles as Concertmaster of the Vancouver Symphony and Artistic Director of the SweetWater Music Festival; he is currently in his eighth season leading Stratford Summer Music. As a chamber musician, he performs as the first violinist of the Axelrod String Quartet at the Smithsonian Institution, playing exclusively on rare Stradivari and Amati instruments. Now an Associate Professor at the University of Toronto and a Senior Fellow at Massey College, Fewer continues to shape the future of Canadian music through his dedicated teaching and boundary-pushing artistry.



Tim Francom For over 20 years Tim Francom has been committed to providing high quality music education. In 2002 he became a faculty member of the Regent Park School of Music (now Community Music Schools of Toronto), where among other projects he created a large hand drumming group, and helped to develop the school's music camps. He regularly appears as a clinician for events and programs with TDSB, TCDSB, and local private schools. Tim offers individual lessons and group classes to suit any age or musical goals. Tim's teaching is informed by an extensive performing and research career. Based in Toronto, he has performed and recorded with orchestras and ensembles across the province. He is the Principal Timpanist/Percussionist with London Symphonia, and has also been Section Percussionist with the Windsor Symphony Orchestra since 2004. Tim regularly performs with many other groups including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, and TO Live productions, among others. A freelance musician in high demand, Tim can also be seen and heard in the worlds of contemporary music and musical theatre (most recently, as a substitute percussionists for Mirvish Productions presentation of Disney's The Lion King). Tim holds a Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree from the University of Toronto where he studied percussion with Russell Hartenberger, John Rudolph, and Beverly Johnston. His research focused on elements of Indian tabla repertoire and technique. He was privileged to work with Prof. James Kippen as his research advisor, and to study tabla with Ustad Ilmas Hussain Khan of Lucknow, India.



Gryphon Trio – With over 1,500 performances worldwide, the Gryphon Trio—violinist Annalee Patipatanakoon, cellist Roman Borys, and pianist Jamie Parker—stands among the world's leading piano trios. Renowned for dynamic programming, they bridge classical masterworks with bold contemporary and multimedia collaborations. Now in their fourth decade, they present ECHOES: Memories of the World, a compelling multimedia project exploring cultural resilience through music, narrative, and film, featuring mezzo-soprano Marion Newman Nege'ga and narrator čačumḥi Aaron M. Wells. Their 22-album discography on Analekta and Naxos has earned 11 JUNO nominations, including three JUNO wins and a plethora of accolades. Dedicated to expanding the repertoire, they have commissioned over 85 new works. Equally at home on major stages and in intimate venues, the Trio tours internationally while mentoring emerging artists. Residencies include the Isabel Bader Centre and Trinity College, University of Toronto, alongside their national Listen Up! initiative fostering community-based creation across Canada.



Tjalling Halbertsma was born and raised in the Netherlands. Until his 30s, he explored art and film school and owned a business in water filtration. Following those years, Tjalling and his family moved to the Caribbean island of Sint Maarten. There, he and his wife operated a successful business specializing in the design, supply, and installation of high-end building components and interior solutions, ranging from residential to large-scale commercial developments. In the winter of 2015, the family moved to Canada and made a complete change of life. In this new adventure, Tjalling returned to his roots as a filmmaker by taking up the camera. This sparked a burst of inspiration, allowing him to tell his stories while discovering this fascinating form of art. Since he is passionate about many subjects, he works across multiple areas of photography, which is why you can find so many different subjects and styles on his website: portraits, athletes, music, colours, nature, and his personal journey. His favourite projects focus on visual stories and events such as the Collingwood Music Festival, Ski Cross World Championships, and the Heineken Regatta in St. Maarten. His work has earned several honours, including the S1 Group & District 28 Award of Excellence, the Red Cardinal Award, the Extreme Imaging DPAI Award, and selection as a finalist for both the Salt Spring National Art Prize and the CAPIC Xposé in Toronto.



Michael Herring JUNO-nominated double-bassist and composer Michael Herring leads or co-leads multiple ensembles including Way North, Peripheral Vision (JUNO-nominated, six albums), Vertigo, The Uplifters, and Harrington. He has performed with Joel Frahm, Ernesto Cervini, Kevin Breit, Ken Vandermark, Bucky Pizzarelli, Percy Sledge, Ernest Ranglin, and many others. He is a recipient of the Chalmers Arts Fellowship.

Biographies



Amy Hillis As a performer and educator, Amy Hillis pursues opportunities to build community relationships using music inside and outside the traditional concert hall. As a violinist, she has commissioned Canadian works by Matt Brubeck, Fjóla Evans, Gabriel Dufour-Laperrière, Laurence Jobidon, Vincent Ho, Andrew Staniland, Jocelyn Morlock, Nicole Lizée, Carmen Braden, Randolph Peters and Jordan Pal. Her debut album titled Roots demonstrates the connections between select Canadian compositions and works from the traditional canon of classical repertoire. As part of the *meagan&amy* duo, Amy Hillis performed this repertoire in ten Canadian provinces during the inaugural "Pan-Canadian Partnership" Recital Tour. She also toured Canada as winner of the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition. As artist-in-residence at La Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, she studied the relationship between French and Québécois repertoire. Amy Hillis is also the founding member and manager of the prairie-based Horizon String Quartet with whom she has presented seven concert tours of interactive performances for schools across western Canada. Amy Hillis'current research as a community music practitioner investigates the importance of a community's "identity". How can community musicians facilitate transformative music experiences by deepening a community's sense of identity, whether this identity is geographical, racial, cultural or gender-based? Amy Hillis continues to perform and promote music by underrepresented composers, particularly in the classical music genre, in order to empower the voices of marginalized communities.



Russell Iceberg A multiple award-winner, Russell received grand prizes at the Golden Violin Competition and the Peter Mendell Award, alongside top prizes at the Prix d'Europe and the Schadt String Competition. As a soloist, he has performed with the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, the Colorado College Summer Music Festival Orchestra, and the Festival Bach International de Montréal, collaborating with conductors such as Elizabeth Schulze and Scott Yoo. Russell's career focuses heavily on chamber music. As a founding member of the Myriade, Persée, and Iceberg String Quartets, all mentored by Professor André Roy, he won grand prizes at the McGill and WDAV competitions and participated in the Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition. He also co-founded Ensemble Urbain, a conductor-free chamber orchestra dedicated to underrepresented works, and performs with Trio 888 and the Tahanan Trio. Recently, he co-founded Duo Chromatika with his partner, Julia Mirzoev, performing as both violinist and guitarist. He has shared the stage with world-class artists including Andrew Wan, Charles Richard-Hamelin, and Mark Fewer. As an orchestral musician, Russell has servedas assistant and associate concertmaster with I Musici de Montréal and the Festival Bach International de Montréal, and has performed with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal. A graduate of McGill and Northwestern Universities, he was mentored by Andrew Wan and Blair Milton. Beyond classical music, Russell is an accomplished blues, folk, rock, and jazz guitarist. He performs on a 1761 Nicolò Gagliano violin and an 1830s Étienne Pajeot bow, generously on loan from a private sponsor.



Tamar Ilana & Ventanas is a Toronto-based ensemble performing original and traditional material in over 20 languages. Their performances weave together fiery Flamenco, Greek, Turkish, and Sephardic love songs, upbeat Bulgariantunes, and lyrical melodies, leading audiences through "windows" into diverse lands and cultures. Lead singer Tamar Ilana's powerful vocals are complemented by Flamenco guitar, Middle Eastern darbuka, Greek oud, classical violin, contrabass, and Jazz improvisation. Tamar Ilana is Ashkenazi Jewish and a member of Pasqua First Nation, with Scottish and Roma-Romanian ancestry. Growing up on the road with her ethnomusicologist mother, Dr. Judith Cohen, deeply influenced her career. Formed in 2011 after Tamar returned from studying Flamenco in Seville, Ventanas includes musicians of Greek, Italian, French Canadian, and Peruvian descent. Their name, meaning "windows" in Spanish, reflects a sound as multicultural as Toronto itself. During the pandemic, Ventanas helped found FabCollab, a non-profit showcasing BIPOC women and minorityvoices. As the resident band for the *Women in Song* series, they have collaborated with stars like Meesha Shafi and Measha Brueggergosman-Lee. These performances, livestreamed by the National Arts Centre, have reached international audiences of up to 43,000. The group has toured Canada, the US, Ireland, Colombia, Spain, and Portugal. Notable venues include Koerner Hall, the Aga Khan Museum, Vancouver Folk Music Fest, and the Skirball Centre, solidifying their reputation as a powerhouse of global music and dance.



Drew Jurecka Grammy-nominated multi-instrumentalist Drew Jurecka trained in classical violin at the Cleveland Institute of Music before touring for five years with Jeff Healey's Jazz Wizards. He has performed as a session musician on over 300 albums, working with artists including Dua Lipa, Dermot Kennedy, Metric, Alvvays, Mastodon, Ron Sexsmith, Jill Barber, and Donovan Woods. His soundtrack work includes Anne with an E, Horizon: Forbidden West, and Cuphead's Delicious Last Course. As the bandoneon player in Payadora Tango Ensemble, Drew contributed to "Silent Tears," which reached #1 on World Music charts. He received a CFMA nomination for Producer of the Year in 2024.



Kindred Spirits Orchestra – Founded in 2009 under the leadership of Music Director Kristian Alexander, the Kindred Spirits Orchestra (KSO) is a distinguished, auditioned-based civic ensemble based in Markham, Ontario. The orchestra performs regularly at venues such as the Flato Markham Theatre, the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, and the CBC Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto. The KSO is committed to presenting both classical masterpieces and contemporary works, with a particular emphasis on Canadian composers. In 2011, the orchestra established a partnership with the Markham Contemporary Music Festival, showcasing compositions by artists like Gary Kulesha, Brian Current, and Larysa Kuzmenko. The KSO has also premiered significant pieces, including John Williams' "On Willows and Birches" and James Campbell's Concerto for Harp and Orchestra. Beyond performances, the KSO engages in community outreach and educational initiatives. Notably, in 2015, the orchestra donated musical instruments to Easter Island, aiding in the establishment of its first music school. The KSO also offers programs that provide professional development opportunities for emerging artists, music educators, conductors, and composers. Embracing technological advancements, the KSO became the first Canadian orchestra in 2021 to implement an eco-conscious digital music library, replacing paper-based operations with iPad Pro tablets for all musicians. This initiative significantly reduced the orchestra's carbon footprint and garnered recognition from both the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.



Kontiwennenha:wi-ahkwesahsne Women Singers: Bear Fox, Iawentas Nanticoke, Tekonwakwenni Nanticoke, Elizabeth Nanticoke. Sisters, aunties, daughters, mothers and grandmothers from the Wolf Clan family of the Kanienkehaka Nation. Women holding a great responsibility of sharing traditional teachings and the protection and preservation of the language and the stories of past generations through their songs. Kontiwennenha:wi; (pronounced: goon dee wa na ha wee), are from Ahkwesahsne which is located where present-day Ontario, Quebec and New York State intersect, settling in their territory on the St. Lawrence River. They are Kanienkehaka, People of the Flint but are more commonly known as Mohawk. Kontiwennenha:wi formed as a singing group in 1997, at a time when their children were learning the songs and dances of the Kanienkehaka at the Ahkwesahsne Freedom School. The school played an important part in holding on to the language and traditions that would have otherwise been lost if the children continued to learn in government run public schools. Two of the women in the group, Iawentas and Tekonwakwenni, were students at the Ahkwesahsne Freedom School and are now teachers of the language. The women share social songs of the Six Nations and have created some verses of the Women's Dance. A water drum and horn rattles are used by the women when they perform. Bear Fox is a singer/song writer of folk songs that are shared with the accompaniment of the women's voices. Many of the songs incorporate the Mohawk language and some of Bear's songs were written and performed in English. The women have been recipients of the Native American Music Awards, as a group and Bear Fox, as a solo artist too. The women are proud to share their songs and their lives as traditional women, at this moment in time.



Camille Labonté is a compelling and versatile soprano based in Toronto, Canada. Equally at home in both traditional and contemporary repertoire, she is recognized for her musical sensitivity and captivating stage presence. One of Canada's most promising emerging young artists, Camille was a prize-winner of the 49th annual Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition in Voice. Camille's operatic credits include Lucia (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Prima Donna (*Viva la Mamma!*), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*), and world premiere performances as Antigone (*With the Telling Comes the Magic*) and Anna Massey (*Avenue of Avarice*). Past concert appearances include soprano solos in *Carmina Burana*, Handel's *Messiah*, and *Considering Matthew Shepard*. Camille graduates in June 2026 with a M.Mus in Opera Performance from the University of Toronto, and holds a B.Mus with Honours in Vocal Performance, also from UofT.



Diane Leah is an experienced pianist, composer/arranger, educator, and music director with credits spanning 40 years in Canadian music. As a young musician, she founded the jazz vocal group Cloudburst before serving as music director for Catherine McKinnon and Don Harron from 1983 to 2000. From 1999 until 2019, Diane was the Director of Music for the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto. Her original compositions helped grow its choir into an acclaimed ensemble that performed at major events, including the Celebration of Life for Jack Layton. Upon her retirement, the City of Toronto recognized her with a scroll for her "leadership and dedication." Since 2011, Diane has been the music director for Broadsway, featuring Julie Michels and Heather Bambrick. Her theatre credits include Beauty and The Beast (YPT) and We Will Rock You (Mirvish). She was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for A Year with Frog and Toad and received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2013. Diane has collaborated with a vast array of artists, including Jackie Richardson, Thom Allison, and Micah Barnes. As the long-time music director for Tony Award–nominee Louise Pitre, she has performed across North America and collaborated on the album La Vie en Rouge. As an educator, Diane has worked with aspiring actors at Toronto's RandolphAcademy since 2001.



Jeremy Ledbetter: Juno Award-winning pianist Jeremy Ledbetter brings over 35 years of performing experience and more than 20 years as a music director, bandleader, producer, andarranger. His music has been heard in 26 countries across five continents. He performs regularly with the Larnell Lewis Band, Rich Brown's Abeng, Joy Lapps Project, CaneFire, and many others. He has been twice nominated for the US Independent Music Awards for Jazz Album and Song of the Year.



Sharon Lee – Aptly pegged "a compact fireball" (*La Scena Musicale*), Sharon Lee gave her violin concerto debut at age ten. She is a recipient of the Ontario Arts Council's Orford String Quartet Award and a 2024 Professional Development grant from the Canada Council for the Arts. Sharon has served as Concertmaster and Contractor of the Toronto Concert Orchestra since 2014 and was recently named its Co-Artistic Director alongside her husband, Marcus Scholtes. She is also the Artistic Director of the Toronto Chamber Players and Music Director of the Korean Canadian Symphony Orchestra. Her passion for orchestral music was ignited by the New York String Orchestra, leading to her appointment as Principal Second Violin of the Thunder Bay Symphony at age 26. Previously, as a founding member of the Cecilia Quartet, Sharon performed globally and held fellowships at the Aspen Music Festival and the Schleswig-Holstein Meisterkurse. Devoted to music of our time, she has performed in the world premieres of roughly 200 new works and collaborates with contemporary ensembles like Toy Piano Composers and Tapestry. She also performs original Prog Rock with the Dévah Quartet as a YAMAHA and D'Addario Canada Artist, and has backed legends such as Barbra Streisand and Earth, Wind & Fire. Sharon's educational impact includes workshops with the Ontario String Association and projects with the Toronto District School Board. The final pupil of the late Professor Lorand Fenyves, she performed at his memorial concert and remains a dedicated mentor to the next generation of musicians.



Andrea Ludwig – BoJuno and Dora award winning mezzo soprano Andrea Ludwig is an artist of tremendous depth, musicality and scope. Her charm, warmth and easy sense of humour areperfect for the stage and her vibrant musicality makes her a favourite to all her audiences. Her versatility and ability to interpret many styles are impeccable. Hailed by Halifax Chronicle Herald critic Stephen Pedersen as having "tones of silver and gold," Andrea has appeared with the Canadian Opera Company in numerous roles. Very much in demand for contemporary opera, Andrea has been involved in many of Tapestry New Opera's projects. Andrea was Nada in the multi Dora-nominated Queen of Puddings' production of Ana Sokolovic's Svadba. She reprised the role of Nada in di□erent countries, and at the prestigious Festival D'Aix en Provence. Ms. Ludwig's commitment to concert performance remains a strong focus. Recordings include the ECMA-nominated Schubert Orchestrations with Symphony Nova Scotia, Responsio, by Peter Anthony Togni, Galicians II with The Ukrainian Art Song Project, ATMA label recording of Ana Sokolovic's Sirens, and the UK Chandos recording of Thais: Grand Opera in Concert, with the TSO and TMC, under the direction of Sir Andrew Davis. Andrea is also in demand as a vocal coach and clinician. She is a vocal coach with the Ukrainian Art Song Project Summer Institute and has given masterclasses at Luther College High School in Regina, The King's University in Edmonton, the University of Regina and to the Opera Division of the Fountain School of Performing Arts at Dalhousie University. Andrea also accompanies and coaches student choirs in group settings.



Antoine Malette-Chénier A creative and innovative harpist, Antoine Malette-Chénier plays a repertoire ranging from the Renaissance and the Baroque, on period instruments, to contemporary music. Described as a "brilliant soloist", he is principal harp with the Orchestre symphonique de Trois-Rivières. A musician sought after for his versatility, he has performed in Canada and abroad as a soloist, chamber musician and continuo player with a number of ensembles, including the Orchestre Métropolitain, Les Violons du Roy and Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne. He is the recipient of the 2014 Michael Measures Prize from the Canada Council for the Arts and 1st Prize at the 2013 OSM Competition. A graduate of the Yale School of Music, McGill University and the Université de Montréal, Antoine also holds a master's degree in historical harps from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Lyon. His first solo album Consolations, released by ATMA Classique, is available everywhere.



Baritone **Peter McGillivray** has been celebrated in the press as "a gifted comic actor," with a "rich, flexible and strong voice." In recent seasons he has been seen on opera and concert stages from coast to coast, specializing in comic roles such as Don Magnifico in La Cenerentola, Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Sir Joseph Porter in H.M.S. Pinafore, and Stubb in Moby Dick. He also excels in interpreting more dramatic fare such as Sharpless in Madama Butterfly, Don Pizarro in Fidelio, and concert performances of Handel's Messiah, Mahler's Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen, Haydn's Creation, Mendelssohn's Elijah, and Orff's Carmina Burana. Recent and upcoming seasons include appearances with the Elmer Iseler Singers performing Handel's Messiah, a recital with Visual and Performing Arts Newmarket, a reprisal of Dr. Bartolo in Barber of Seville with Vancouver Opera, and Handel's Messiah with the Peterborough Singers. McGillivray has appeared with many prestigious ensembles in concert, among them, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Orchestra symphonique de Québec, Royal Liverpool, Oslo and Calgary Philharmonics, and symphony orchestras in Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Windsor and Montreal.



Ménestrel is a Canadian early music ensemble co-founded by Janelle Lucyk and Kerry Bursey, mixing ancient repertoire with Canadian oral folk traditions. Janelle Lucyk is a singer and producer among an emerging generation of Canadian artists specializing in old music and historically informed performance, taking ideas from conception to the stage. Kerry Bursey is a tenor and plucked string instrumentalist whose voice is appreciated for its luminous quality and as a sought-after lutenist, is also invested in the rare practice of self-accompaniment, in early and folk music of northwestern traditions. Ménestrel has given performances and collaborated with singers and choirs in all Canada's 13 provinces and territories. Since 2022, their "Messiah-on-the-go!" production congregates 20 emerging performers from across Canada to be featured in historic Nova Scotian venues. Their debut Leaf Music album was released in March 2026. Their concerts aim to demystify early music, juxtaposing it next to folk songs, which are songs of the people. Ménestrel has been active across Canada since 2019.



Andy Milne For over 30 years, two-time Juno Award-winning pianist/composer Andy Milne has demonstrated boundless versatility, collaborating with dancers, filmmakers, visual artists, poets, and musicians spanning multiple genres. He has released 12 recordings, composes for orchestra, chamber ensembles, film and TV, and is a former student of Oscar Peterson. A respected voice at the heart of New York's creative jazz scene, Milne has recorded and toured globally with Ravi Coltrane, Ralph Alessi, Carla Cook, and Steve Coleman. He has collaborated with a range of artists including Andrew Cyrille, Sekou Sundiata, Avery Brooks, Cassandra Wilson, and Jen Shyu. Milne composed the score for *True North,* the latest film from Emmy-winning director Michèle Stephenson, which premiered at TIFF in 2025. His score for Stephenson's episode of the CBC series *Black Life – Untold Stories* was nominated for a 2024 Canadian Screen Music Award. In 2024, the Toronto Symphony with saxophonist Joe Lovano premiered select Milne orchestral arrangements for the *John Coltrane: Legacy for Orchestra* project, also performed by the BBC Concert Orchestra and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Another 2024 highlight included the premiere of a piano quintet, commissioned by the Banff International String Quartet Competition. Several of Milne's projects merge senses and cultures. *Strings & Serpents*, which premiered at Lincoln Center in 2014, synthesized the improvisational language and rhythm of Japanese and Western structures. In 2007, with choreographer Heather Cornell, he created *Finding Synesthesia*, combining an inventive range of sounds.

Biographies



Julia Mirzoev: Toronto native Julia Mirzoev is noted for her "warm tone, grace, and fierce attack" (*California Music Center*). Recognized as one of CBC's "Top 30 Classical Musicians Under 30," her accolades include top prizes at the Michael Hill, Irving M. Klein, and OSM competitions, and the Golden Violin grand prize from McGill. An internationally recognized soloist, Julia has performed at Carnegie Hall, Koerner Hall, and the Banff Centre. She has appeared with the Toronto Symphony, Sinfonia Toronto, and the Montréal Bach Festival Orchestra. A passionate chamber musician and winner of the Yale Chamber Music competition, she is a founding member of the Myriade String Quartet and has collaborated with artists such as Anthony Marwood and the Gryphon Trio's Annalee Patipatanakoon. Recent highlights include appearances with Ottawa Chamberfest and Stratford Summer Music. Upcoming engagements feature Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole* with the Newfoundland Symphony and recitals at Pro Musica. A graduate of the University of Toronto, McGill, and Yale, Julia's mentors include Andrew Wan and Ani Kavafian. Deeply committed to pedagogy, she coaches at the Royal Conservatory's Taylor Academy and L'Orchestre des Jeunes du Mont-Royal. A Rebanks Fellowship alumna, Julia performs on the 1747 "Palmason" Janarius Gagliano, generously on loan from the Canada Council for the Arts Musical Instrument Bank.



Daniel Morphy graduated from the University of Toronto and Glenn Gould School at the Royal Conservatory of Music, and now performs with some of Toronto's most well known and respected ensembles. An avid orchestral and chamber musician, Daniel frequently performs with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Esprit Orchestra, the Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan, and the Big Zang Collective. Other performances include concertos with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Wind Orchestra. Always busy with new and exciting projects, Daniel is currently developing a solo repertoire with guidance from master percussionist Ray Dillard. Future projects include "Marimba +", a program of repertoire for solo marimba and one other element (small percussion, tape, electronics, etc). Daniel has attendedthe Aspen Summer Music Festival and School (2008) and Steve Schick's "Roots and Rhizomes" percussion workshop at the Banff Centre for the Arts (2010). Daniel can also be heard on CBC, NAXOS, Centrediscs, and TSO live recordings.



Nhapitapi – a Shona word meaning sweet sounds — is a dynamic, six-piece ensemble of Zimbabwe musicians, singers, dancers and performers who expertly weave ancestral rhythms and melodies with contemporary African diasporic flavours, conjuring musical magic in their midst. Nhapitapi's music is a kaleidoscopic journey through space and time. Their sound takes root in the old voices of the African continent, and travels seamlessly towards its modern progeny of Afro-jazz, funk, rock, reggae and ska, all the while holding fast to the sacred spirit of ceremony. To those who know it well and those newly acquainted alike, many have found in this creation the quality of universal appeal. Nhapitapi's magnetic performances open with the healing serenity of mbira and marimba, both grounding and energizing. Vocals, shakers, hand drum, guitar, bass and drum set are then introduced, producing playful and complex layers of auditory enchantment. Once audiences have fully surrendered to this soaring soundscape, a deft duo of dancers hits the floor with unparalleled vigor and bold flirtation, drawing onlookers in to join the outburst of cathartic joy.



Jamie Parker's achievements are both lengthy and impressive. His musical roots can be traced to the Vancouver Academy of Music and University of British Columbia, where he studied with Lee Kum Sing. He then went on to complete his master's and doctorate with Adele Marcus at The Juilliard School. Jamie continues the teaching tradition as the Rupert E. Edwards Chair in Piano Performance at University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Beginning in 1984 with a first prize at the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition, Jamie served notice that he was a rising star. The CBC concurred, selecting him winner of the 25th National Competition for Young Performers. The Virginia P. Moore Prize (known today as the Virginia Parker Prize) soon followed, further solidifying Jamie's place as one of Canada's best young classical musicians. On-air programs repeatedly seek out his performances. Jamie has made frequent appearances on CBC, Bravo, Global Television Network, Much, and media platforms around the world. Jamie's style has earned The Globe and Mail's praise as "one of the most searching musical intellects and 10 of the nimblest fingers in the business." He has enthralled audiences in North America and Europe, counting diplomats and dignitaries among his rapt listeners. A consummate professional, Jamie is critically acclaimed as both a soloist and as a chamber musician. He tours as the pianist for Canada's foremost chamber ensemble, Gryphon Trio, and performs with major Canadian and international symphony orchestras. With three JUNO recording awards and many other nominations from his vast discography, Jamie Parker continues to graciously strive to do it all.



Annalee Patipatanakoon is one of Canada's most respected performing artists. A graduate of Indiana University and the Curtis Institute of Music, Annalee is a laureate of the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels, and a first prize winner of both the Canadian Music Competition and Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition. Annalee is a founding member of three-time Juno Award-winning Gryphon Trio. She can be heard on 22 recordings on Analekta, Naxos, and other labels. Annalee maintains a busy touring schedule across North America and Europe. From 2007 to 2020, she served as Artistic Advisor to the Ottawa Chamber Music Society. Annalee is currently Associate Professor of Violin and Performance Area Chair of Strings at University of Toronto Faculty of Music. She and Gryphon Trio members Roman Borys and Jamie Parker are ensemble-in-residence at the Isabel Bader Centre for Performing Arts in Kingston, Ontario and artists- in-residence at Trinity College, University of Toronto. Equally in demand as a teacher of violin and chamber music, Annalee has conducted masterclasses at Rice University, Stanford University, Royal Conservatory of Music, Hochschule für Musik Mainz, Domaine Forget, Orford Music Academy, Tuckamore Festival and School, Mount Royal University, and many more. With Gryphon Trio members Roman Borys and Jamie Parker, Annalee leads educational projects in music schools and communities across the country. These include the ensemble's flagship Listen Up! arts outreach program, with permanent hubs in Ottawa and Etobicoke; Orford Music Academy's Piano Trio Workshop; and the Classical Music Summer Programs at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.



Louise Pitre – Receiving a Tony nomination for her Broadway debut in the smash hit Mamma Mia! was a highlight for Louise Pitre, Canada's first lady of musical theatre, in a career that spans theatre, television and concert stages across North America and Europe. Known for signature performances as Fantine in Les Misérables, the title character in Edith Piaf, and Mama Rose in Gypsy, Louise has headlined major productions of Annie Get Your Gun, Blood Brothers, and Company. In 2018, she starred in the North American premiere of The Angel & the Sparrow (later retitled Piaf/Dietrich), earning acclaim as the world's foremost interpreter of Piaf. Recent credits include Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812, The Inheritance, and the title role in Kimberly Akimbo.Her international reach includes a Carnegie Hall debut in ABBA's Kristina, which she reprised at Royal Albert Hall. On screen, Louise played Thérèse Dion in the CBC biopic Céline and appeared in Flashpoint and Pretty Hard Cases. She also served as a judge on Andrew Lloyd Webber's Over The Rainbow. A prolific recording artist, Louise has released five solo CDs, including La Vie En Rouge. Her honors include a New York Theatre World Award, four Dora Mavor Moore Awards, and honorary doctorates from the University of Western Ontario and the Royal Conservatory of Music. Whether performing her self-penned show On The Rocks or guesting with major orchestras, Louise Pitre remains a defining force in North American entertainment



Gino Quilico's career spans more than forty years and is characterized by his remarkable career. Mr. Quilico has performed more than thirty roles at the opera and on all the most prestigious opera stages in the world: Metropolitan Opera (New York), La Scala (Milan), the Paris Opera, to name a few. than the most important. It goes without saying that Gino Quilico has sung under the direction of the greatest conductors of the symphonic world: Herbert Von Karajan, Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa and of course Kent Nagano and Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Mr. Quilico has participated in more than thirty opera recordings. In 1995, he received a Grammy Award for his participation in Berlioz's Les Troyens with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. Gino Quilico has also performed with great success in musicals including Notre-Dame de Paris, by Plamondon-Cocciante where he played the role of "Quasimodo" and the role of "Jean Valjean" in Les Misérables. Mr. Quilico's involvement is not entirely devoted to opera and music. In 1990, he was one of the few Canadians to be appointed Goodwill Ambassador to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Gino Quilico has always had the promotion of lyrical art at heart while being a worthy representative of Canadian culture. This involvement was highlighted when he was awarded the title of Officer of the Order of Canada in recognition of his talent and dedication to this cause.

Biographies



Humberto Ramirez holds a Master's Degree in Violin Performance and a Performer Diploma from the *Jacobs School of Music* at Indiana University (Bloomington) and an undergraduate degree from *Juan N. Corpas University* in Bogotá. He is currently pursuing a DMA in Violin Performance at the *University of Toronto*, studying with Jonathan Crow, concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and with Mark Fewer. Humberto served as Director/Dean of the Music Department at *Universidad del Norte*, coordinating the *Barranquilla International Chamber Music Festival* and the *EuroCaribe Concert of Cátedra Europa*, collaborating with artists such as *Carlos Vives* and the *National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia*. He is committed to inspiring students as they develop both their musical artistry and personal growth, creating a supportive and motivating environment in which each student can thrive.



Les Rugissants – Innovation, Excellence, and Wonder. These are the watchwords of Les Rugissants (the Roarers), a professional vocal ensemble based in Montreal. Founded by its conductor and artistic director Xavier Brossard-Ménard, the ensemble deploys projects that explore current themes and new formats for vocal and choral art. For Les Rugissants, music knows no limits and they rejoice to sing classical, folk, and popular works. All this to account for the world in which we live! Les Rugissants love to incorporate other disciplines (dance, theatre, architecture, culinary arts) and a variety of cultures (Spanish, Italian, Ukrainian, Jewish) in their performances. They also love to forge alliances and partnerships (FIFA, the Canadian International Organ Competition, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal Museum of the Hospitallers, Casa d'Italia, Italian Cultural Institute of Montreal). In May 2017, Les Rugissants made their first appearance during the Festival Classica at the Westmount Victoria Hall, in an a cappella project inspired by the letter B. Voces de España, the second project of the group, first took shape in December 2018, and reappeared in the Festival Classica in 2019 as well as a 10-show tour during winter 2022, in the middle of the pandemic! In December 2020 and 2021, the ensemble performed Haendel's Messiah with the Orchestre classique of Montreal at Saint Joseph's Oratory. In 2021, the ensemble launched their series ARCHES which adjoins music and architecture. Between 2021 and 2023, more than twenty video capsules and no less than 15 ambulatories saw the light of day, covering geographical locations such as the city of Westmount, the South-West borough and downtown Montreal, or cultural communities such as italo-montrealers and their built heritage. In 2022, Les Rugissants create their first theatrical production, (nu.e.s), a contemporary exploration of vulnerability, intimacy, and sexuality. Inspring of 2023, the ensemble presented Égéries, a program for women's choir and string quartet, as well as performing Fauré and Duruflé's Requiems at the Festival Classica.



Toronto-based tenor **William Salinas-Crosby** is quickly emerging as a versatile and compelling presence on the opera and concert stage. Praised for his musical sensitivity and emotionally compelling performances, he commands an expansive repertoire of art song, early music, and contemporary works spanning diverse cultures and languages. Recent engagements include performances of cantatas 91, 127, 93, and 140 with the Toronto Bach Festival, Stabat Mater (Pärt) with St. Basil's Parish, *Rejoice in the Lamb* (Britten) and *The Atonement* (Coleridge-Taylor) with the Orpheus Choir of Toronto, *Misa Criolla* (Ramírez) with Pax Christi Chorale, *Carmina Burana* (Or□) with the Stratford Summer Music Festival 2025. As a dedicated recitalist, William is especially committed to Iberian and Latin American repertoire, reflecting his cultural heritage. He has refined his craft through studies at the University of Toronto, l'Académie Francis Poulenc, Toronto Summer Music Academy, as well as masterclasses with esteemed international artists including Paul Agnew and François Le Roux.

Biographies



Emma Schmiedecke – Praised for her "huge musicality, depth of interpretation, and technical expertise" (*Manhattan International Music Competition*), cellist Emma Schmiedecke is a vibrant interpreter of both classical and contemporary repertoire. Her accolades include a Silver Medal at the 4th Manhattan International Music Competition and first prize in the Bergen Philharmonic Young Artist Competition. A staunch advocate for new music, Emma has premiered works by composers such as Joan Tower and John Corigliano, performing with the American Composers Orchestra and 21C New Music Festival. As a soloist and chamber musician, she has appeared at Ottawa Chamberfest, Stratford Summer Music, and the Banff Centre. She is a co-founder of Duo Caprice and a core member of the Lagom Music Society. Emma's orchestral experience spans the American Symphony Orchestra to the Canadian Studio Orchestra. An active educator, she has taught at the University of Toronto, the Glenn Gould School, and theTaylor Performance Academy. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Toronto, with additional degrees from McGill's Schulich School of Music and Bard College. Her primary mentors include Peter Wiley, Matt Haimovitz, and Joseph Johnson. Emma's multifaceted background also includes a degree in Art History, reflecting her broad creative perspective.



Schmaltz&Pepper This groundbreaking ensemble features the extraordinary talents of Eric Abramovitz, the principal clarinetist of the Toronto Symphony and the Grammy-nominated multi-instrumentalist and arranger, Drew Jurecka, virtuosic violinist/vocalist/composer, Rebekah Wolkstein founder/leader of the acclaimed Payadora Ensemble, Juno-nominated bassist, Michael Herring and Juno-award winning pianist, Jeremy Ledbetter. This ensemble is redefining the traditional boundaries of Yiddish music, blending classical mastery with innovative compositions and soulful arrangements. This band has an exhilarating trajectory. A mere 6 months after Abramovitz and Wolkstein came up with the idea to form a band, they had a full show of original music and inventive arrangements. Their debut performance was a live to air broadcast with a studio audience at Zoomer Hall in Toronto for Classical 96.3FM in May, 2024. Since then, they have sold out shows for Ashkenaz, Toronto Summer Music Festival, Jewish Music Week in Toronto and headlined the 'Put a Yid on it' festival in Winnipeg. They performed at many of the top chamber music festivals in Canada in 2025 — Toronto Summer Music, Ottawa Chamberfest, Stratford Summer Music, Eloria Music Festival, Tuckamore Festival in Newfoundland — and completed a sold-out 11-show tour of Florida. Their debut album is nominated for a Canadian Folk Music Award for Best Compositions 2026. In January 2027, the band returns to Florida for another tour and continues performing across Canada and the USA.



Beth Silver (M.Mus) is a Toronto-based freelancer admired for her expressive playing and ability to capture spontaneity within interactive chamber settings. A versatile musician, she is equally at home in traditional classical ensembles as she is arranging, improvising, and exploring new voices for the cello across diverse genres. Since 2018, Beth has toured extensively with the Ladom Ensemble and has maintained a long-standing duo with pianist Jenna Richards since 2013. She is also the newest member of the Eastern European polyphonic group BLISK. Her festival appearances span the globe, including the Salzburg Kammermusik Festival, Toronto Jazz Fest, Glasgow's Celtic Connections, and Ottawa Chamberfest. A prolific studio artist, Beth has arranged and recorded for Juno-nominated projects ranging from folk and funk to prog rock and flamenco. Her work also extends to soundtracks for film, television, and theatre. As a member of the Grammy-nominated Yiddish Glory, she has become a unique voice in the global klezmer community. Her deep research into Jewish and Eastern European music includes residencies in Romania to resurrect Maramureşean musical archives. The recipient of grants from the Canada Council, Beth's honors include a Canadian Folk Music Award and the Ben Steinberg Musical Legacy Award. When not performing, she enjoys painting, yoga, and life in Toronto's west end.



The Toronto Mass Choir (TMC) remains at the forefront of the Canadian gospel music scene, bringing its distinct, world-class sound to the global stage. Under the direction of Artistic Director Karen Burke, an Associate Professor of Music at York University, and Executive Producer Oswald Burke, this 40-member choir and five-piece band represent a diverse range of denominations from across the Greater Toronto Area. This collaborative spirit is the heartbeat of the ensemble, fostering a powerful unity that resonates through every performance. Known for a unique fusion of contemporary, traditional, and Caribbean influences, TMC has earned significant critical acclaim, including a Juno Award for *Contemporary Christian/Gospel Album of the Year* and a prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from the Gospel Music Association of Canada. Their artistry is defined by a soulful blending of reggae, calypso, and ska with traditional gospel foundations, creating a vibrant musical identity that is uniquely Canadian. Their storied history includes landmark collaborations with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Christian McBride, and gospel legends such as Take 6 and Tramaine Hawkins. From headlining major stages like the Ottawa Bluesfest and the Toronto Jazz Festival to international tours across Europe and the Caribbean, TMC continues to break new ground. Whether performing in grand concert halls like Roy Thomson Hall or at intimate community festivals, the choir remains dedicated to its mission of uplifting audiences through the transformative power of gospel music. As they continue to innovate, the Toronto Mass Choir stands as a premier cultural ambassador for Canada's rich choral tradition.



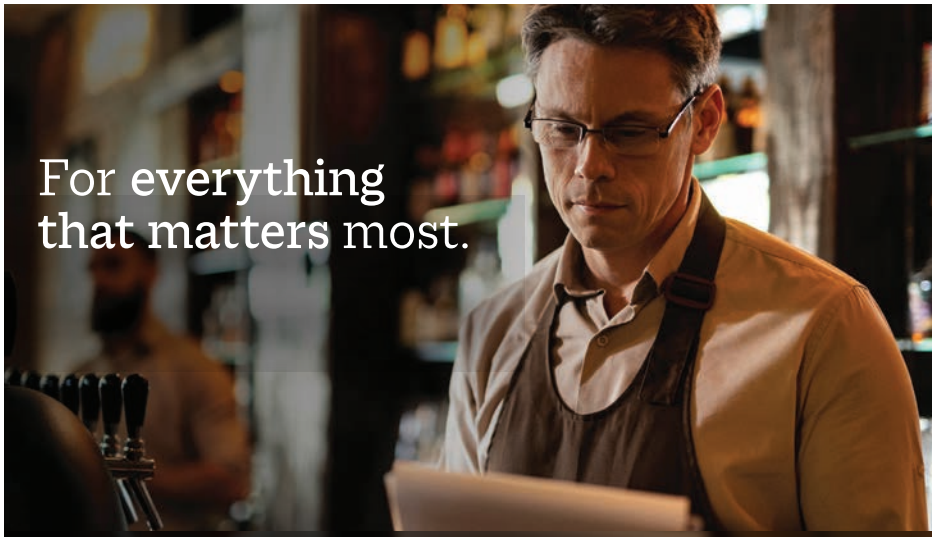
Caroline Tremblay - Native to the Côte-Nord of Quebec, recorder player Caroline Tremblay is known for her infectious love of music, combined with simmering intensity and fluid technique. Winner of the first prize in her category at the Canadian Music Competition, Caroline graduated with a Masters in Music Performance from the University of Montreal. Very active in concertwith Flûte Alors!, Caroline has also performed solo and chamber music with orchestras such as Les Violons du Roy, l'Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, l'Ensemble Caprice, I Musici, La Bande Montréal Baroque et La Chamaille. She has also appeared on several recordings with the label ATMA. Caroline is one of the music directors at the Montreal Recorder Society, the Quebec Recorder Society (SOFABEC), the Toronto Early Music Players Organization (TEMPO) and teaches at the CAMMAC Music Centre. Constantly exploring the diverse forms of the power of music, Caroline is a Music Therapist Accredited.



Daniel Vnukowski – Hailed as "a pianist to watch" by New York Classical Review and "a dashing pianist" by The Sunday Times, Polish-Canadian pianist Daniel Vnukowski (pronounced Vnoo-koff'-skee) has performed throughout Europe, North America, South America and Asia in prestigious concert halls. Dedicated to giving back to the country that nurtured him as an artist, Vnukowski founded "Piano Six – New Generation" to perform outreach concerts for remote communities in Canada and the "Collingwood Summer Music Festival". Since November 1, 2021, Mr. Vnukowski has been radio announcer of the Classical Jukebox on the New Classical FM, the only fulltime classical radio station in English-speaking Canada. During the Covid-19 crisis, Vnukowski's virtual live streaming project from home has made waves internationally, reaching over half a million viewers. The livestreams have been endorsed by Fazioli Pianoforte and featured on NPR Radio, Classical FM, Ludwig Van Toronto and BBC Music Magazine playlists. The music of interwar Jewish composers also occupies a special place in Mr. Vnukowski's repertoire and during 2019 he continued to focus on the music of Karol Rathaus, performing the composer's Piano Concerto with The Orchestra Now conducted by Leon Botstein, as part of a Rathaus Festival presented by the Copland School of Music at Queens College; made his sold-out Carnegie Hall recital debut in a program that included the composer's Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 20; and released an all- Rathaus recording of solo piano music on the Toccata label. Mr. Vnukowski will be featured in a documentary on Rathaus produced by Lev Deych & Michael Haas.



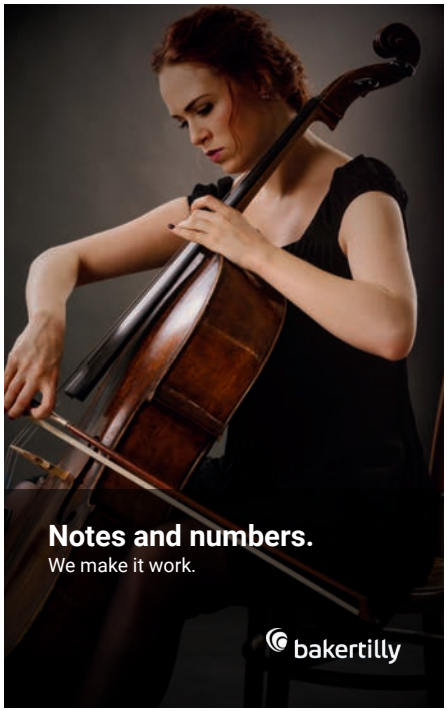
Rebekah Wolkstein is the founder and leader of the Payadora Tango Ensemble, whose album "Silent Tears: The Last Yiddish Tango" reached #1 on World Music Charts in Europe. Her work has been featured by the BBC, CTV, CBC, Bangkok Post, NPR, and RTÉ. Payadora won the German Weltmusikpreis Ruth Award in 2024 and has toured extensively across Hungary, Spain, Denmark, Brazil, Argentina, and North America, supported by grants from the Canada Council, Ontario Arts Council, and Toronto Arts Council. As a performer, Rebekah has appeared with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the National Ballet of Canada, and the Canadian Opera Company. She is the first violinist of the Venuti String Quartet and an active session musician, recording with artists including Donovan Woods, Laila Biali, Royal Wood, and Justin Gray. She holds a Doctorate in Violin Performance from the University of Toronto and degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music.



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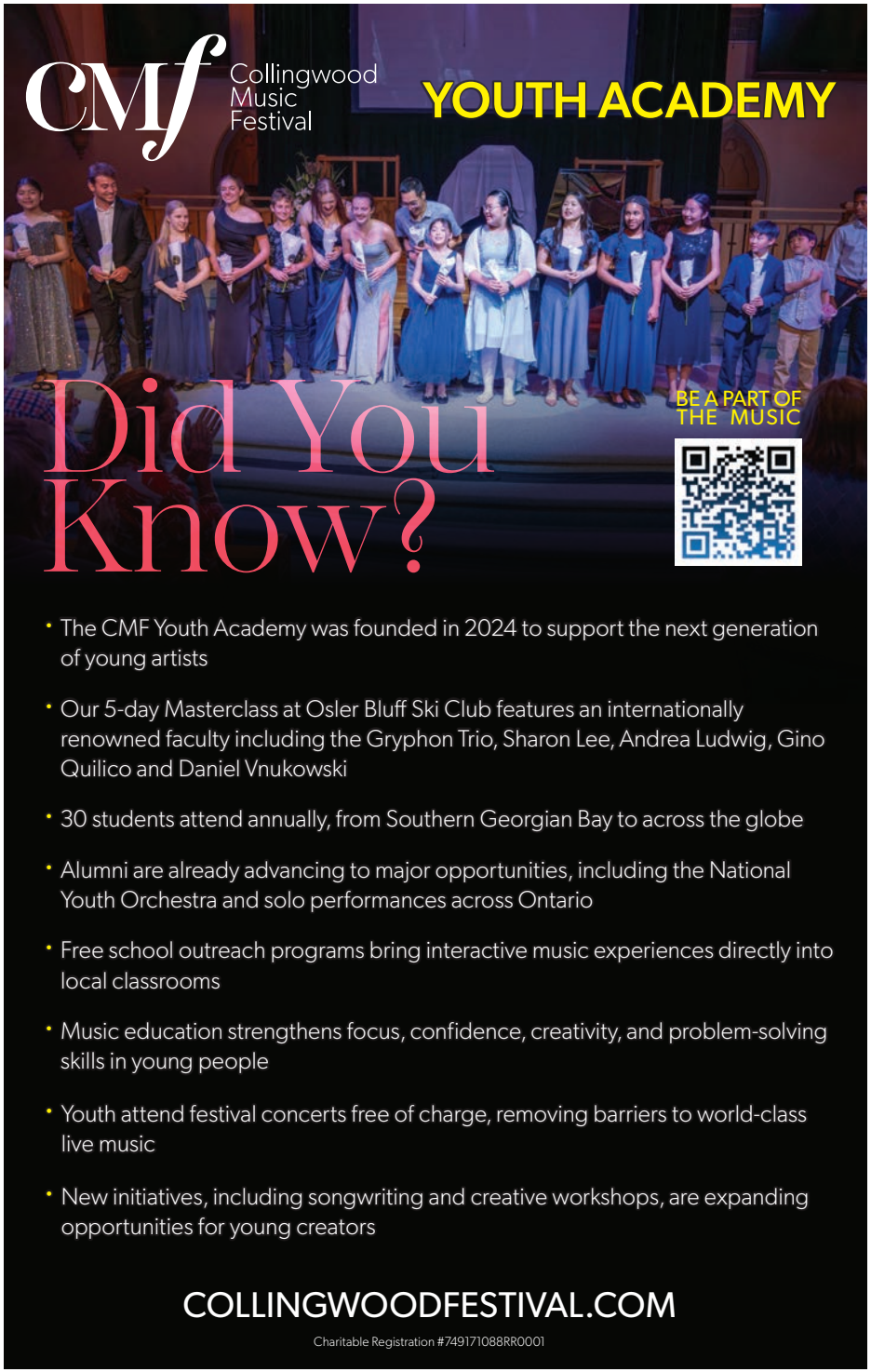
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