



Guelph Musicfest

at the Guelph Youth Music Centre

guelphmusicfest.ca

20th
anniversary
season

Festival Trio

Sadie Fields violin
Katie Schlaikjer cello
Ken Gee piano

Friday May 29, 2026 at 7:30 pm
Guelph Youth Music Centre



Guelph Musicfest alumni

20 years have brought an array of fantastic performers and concerts. Thank you to all the performers who have made Guelph Musicfest a success for two decades!

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cathy Anderson (cello) | Arlen Hlusko (cello) | John Medina (baritone) |
| Roman Borys (cello) | Chiharu Iiuma (piano) | Paul Pulford (cello) |
| Sheng Cai (piano) | Anna Jennewein-Ronai (piano) | Charles Richard-Hamelin (piano) |
| Cameron Crozman (cello) | Jerzy Kaplanek (violin) | Adam Riggs (cello) |
| Glyn Evans (tenor) | Brett Kingsbury (piano) | Marion Samuel-Stevens (soprano) |
| Mark Fewer (violin) | André Laplante (piano) | William Shookhoff (piano) |
| Sadie Fields (violin) | Bénédicte Lauzière (violin) | Robert Silverman (piano) |
| Janina Fialkowska (piano) | Brandon Leis (tenor) | Theresa Thibodeau (soprano) |
| Colin Fox (actor) | Betty Maher (piano) | Valerie Tryon (piano) |
| David Gillham (violin) | Stephanie Mara (piano) | Annette-Barbara Vogel (violin) |
| Stewart Goodyear (piano) | Meredith McCallum (violin) | |

AFIARA STRING QUARTET: Valerie Li (violin), Yuri Cho (violin), David Samuel (viola) & Adrian Fung (cello)

ANAGNOSON & KINTON: James Anagnoson & Leslie Kinton (piano duo)

CECILIA DUO: Sarah Nematallah (violin), Min-Jeong Koh (violin) & Ken Gee (piano)

CECILIA STRING QUARTET: Sarah Nematallah (violin), Min-Jeong Koh (violin), Caitlin Boyle (viola) & Rebecca Wenham (cello)

CECILIA STRING QUARTET: Sarah Nematallah (violin), Min-Jeong Koh (violin), Caitlin Boyle (viola) & Rachel Desoer (cello)

ENSEMBLE MADE IN CANADA: Elissa Lee (violin), Tawnya Popoff (viola), Rachel Mercer (cello) & Angela Park (piano)

FESTIVAL QUARTET: Jerzy Kaplanek (violin), Christine Vlajk (viola), Paul Pulford (cello) & Ken Gee (piano)

FESTIVAL QUARTET: Jerzy Kaplanek (violin), Christine Vlajk (viola), Katie Schlaikjer (cello) & Ken Gee (piano)

FESTIVAL TRIO: Sadie Fields (violin), Paul Pulford (cello) & Ken Gee (piano)

FIRE & GRACE: Edwin Huizinga (violin) & William Coulter (guitar)

GRYPHON TRIO: Annalee Patipatanakoon (violin), Roman Borys (cello) & James Parker (piano)

JERZY KAPLANEK QUARTET: Jerzy Kaplanek (violin), Anthony D'Alessandro (piano), Mark Godfrey (bass) & Ethan Ardelli (drums)

MADAWASKA ENSEMBLE: Sarah Fraser Raff (violin), Anna Redekop (viola), Amber Ghent (cello) & Brett Kingsbury (piano)

MADAWASKA QUARTET: Jeewon Kim (violin), Sarah Fraser Raff (violin), Anna Redekop (viola) & Mary-Katherine Finch (cello)

PAYADORA: Rebekah Wolkstein (violin, vocals), Drew Jurecka (violin), Elbio Fernandez (vocals), Jesse Dietschi (double bass), Mark Camilleri (piano)

PENDERECKI STRING QUARTET: Jeremy Bell (violin), Jerzy Kaplanek (violin), Christine Vlajk (viola) & Simon Fryer (cello)

PENDERECKI STRING QUARTET: Jeremy Bell (violin), Jerzy Kaplanek (violin), Christine Vlajk (viola) & Katie Schlaikjer (cello)

QUARTETTO GELATO: Colin Maier (oboe), Adam Diderrich (violin), Matti Pulkki (accordian) & Kirk Starkey (cello)

RIDGE TRIO: David Gillham (violin), Thomas Landschoot (cello) & Chiharu Iiuma (piano)

ROLSTON STRING QUARTET: Luri Lee (violin), Emily Kruspe (violin), Hezekiah Leung (viola) & Jonathan Lo (cello)

SCHMALTZ & PEPPER: Eric Abramovitz (clarinet), Rebekah Wolkstein (violin/vocals), Drew Jureka (arranger, multi-instrumentalist), Jeremy Ledbetter (piano), Michael Herring (bass)

SLIDE BY SLIDE: John Monkhouse, Dave Davidson, Jim Edwards & Susan Follows (trombone)

ST. PETERSBURG STRING QUARTET: Alla Aranovskaya (violin), Alla Krolevich (violin), Boris Vayner (viola) & Leonid Shukayev (cello)

TACTUS VOCAL ENSEMBLE: Stephanie Kramer (soprano), Catherine Robertson (artistic director, soprano), Valerie Nunn (alto), Daniel Cabena (countertenor), Glenn Peirson (tenor), Marcus Kramer (tenor), Gordon Burnett (bass), Neil McLaren (bass)

TRIO CONCERTANTE: Nancy Dahn (violin), Simon Fryer (cello) & Timothy Steeves (piano)

ZEMLINSKY QUARTET: František Souček (violin), Petr Štřížek (violin), Petr Holman (viola) & Vladimir Fortin (cello)

Many thanks to Guelph Musicfest supporters

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Guelph Musicfest is grateful for the support from members of the audience.

This season is dedicated to the late **Diana Philbrick**, who supported Guelph Musicfest from 2021 to 2024.

Guelph Musicfest continues

RESERVED SEATING FOR REMAINING CONCERTS IS SOLD OUT *

Friday June 5... STEWART GOODYEAR

J.S. Bach, Goldberg Variations

Friday June 12... GRYPHON TRIO

Annalee Patipatanakoon violin, Roman Borys cello, Jamie Parker piano

Friday June 19... PENDERECKI QUARTET with Ken Gee piano

Jerzy Kaplanek violin, Jeremy Bell violin, Christine Vlajk viola, Katie Schlaikjer cello

*** STANDBY SEATS ARE AVAILABLE — email ken@guelphmusicfest.ca**

TICKETS FOR ONLINE VIEWING — musicfest-tickets.square.site/s/shop



REPEAT PERFORMANCE

Sunday May 31 at 7 pm

Kitchener-Waterloo

Chamber Music Society

Maureen Forrester Recital Hall

Laurier University, Music Faculty

75 University Ave W, Waterloo, ON N2L 3C5

TICKETS: ticketscene.ca/events/57976

Festival Trio

Sadie Fields violin
Katie Schlaikjer cello
Ken Gee piano

Friday May 29, 2026 at 7:30 pm
Guelph Youth Music Centre, Recital Hall

Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 1, No. 3Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

1. *Allegro con brio*
2. *Andante cantabile con Variazioni*
3. *Menuetto & Trio*
4. *Finale: Prestissimo*

Trio for Violin, Cello & Piano, Op. 145Michael Conway Baker (1937–2025)

1. *Part I*
2. *Part II*

— intermission —

Piano Trio No. 1 in B major, Op. 8 (revised version, 1889)Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

1. *Allegro con brio*
2. *Scherzo: Allegro molto*
3. *Adagio*
4. *Allegro*

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Extended Notes & Bios



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Program notes

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 1, No. 3

When a twenty-five-year-old composer stamps "Opus 1" on a set of pieces, he is making a declaration — this is who I am. Beethoven's three Piano Trios, published in 1795 and dedicated to his Viennese patron Prince Karl von Lichnowsky, were precisely that kind of public statement. Despite the label, these weren't his very first compositions; Beethoven deliberately chose them as the works bold and substantial enough to introduce his musical voice to the world. Of the three, the C minor Trio was the controversial one: Haydn, after hearing it at a private performance at Lichnowsky's house, advised Beethoven not to publish it. Beethoven, convinced his teacher was simply jealous, ignored the advice entirely. The public proved him right — it was a sensation.

From the very first phrase, the music announces something new and unsettling. The three instruments launch together in unison, and then, just seven notes in, the theme suddenly slips up a half-step. That single destabilizing shift sets the emotional tone for everything that follows: impassioned, turbulent, and searching. This is unmistakably C-minor Beethoven — the same dark, driven world he would later inhabit in the *Pathétique* Sonata and, years later, the Fifth Symphony. The first movement unfolds with intense urgency, its passages of warmth and momentary sweetness always circling back into doubt and conflict.

The second movement offers a welcome breath of warmth. Cast in the sunny key of E-flat major, it presents a beautiful singing theme followed by five variations — each creating its own distinct mood and character while remaining rooted in the same material. Beethoven was fascinated by variation form throughout his life, and even here, early in his career, he deploys it with remarkable imagination. It is music of elegance and quiet grace, a calm centre at the heart of an otherwise stormy work.

The third movement is a Minuet — the only one of the three Op. 1 trios to use a minuet here rather than a more modern scherzo — carrying a deliberate, almost ponderous weight in its outer sections, contrasted by a more flowing, lyrical middle portion. Then the finale unleashes the tension held in reserve throughout: the closing *Prestissimo* explodes with hammered chords and relentless, driving energy that rivals the first movement's intensity. Beethoven saves his most cunning surprise for the very end — just when the music seems to be settling into C minor for a grand conclusion, it takes a sudden detour through the utterly unexpected key of B minor before winding its way back with gleeful inevitability. Even the final bars refuse to be predictable. This is a young composer already showing the mischievous brilliance and raw power that would define one of the greatest careers in music history.

Michael Conway Baker (1937–2025)

Trio for Violin, Cello & Piano, Op. 145

Michael Conway Baker was one of the most renowned and prolific composers in Canadian history. Born in West Palm Beach, Florida in 1937, he made Canada his permanent home from 1958, and went on to build an extraordinary career spanning both the concert hall and the screen. He first gained wide prominence in 1986 with works composed for World Expo '86 in Vancouver, and in 1991 received a Juno Award for Best Classical Music Composition for his Piano Concerto. Over his career he earned six film and television awards, including three Genies and an ACTRA Award for Best Score for David Suzuki's *A Planet for the Taking*. He was invested with the Order of British Columbia in 1997, received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, and was inducted into the BC Entertainment Hall of Fame in 2006. His catalogue ultimately encompassed over 180 concert works and more than 250 film and television scores — among them beloved series such as *Road to Avonlea*, *The Nature of Things*, and *The Beachcombers*.

Baker described his music as essentially tonal, reflecting traditional elements of the past while employing 21st-century techniques. He rarely used key signatures, owing to his music's constantly shifting tonal centres. He wrote, above all, music that convinced him — insisting that true conviction is the only source of genuinely convincing art, and urging young composers to follow their personal muse rather than the dictates of others or passing fashions.

Program notes continued

In his chamber works, Baker combined tonal clarity with fresh harmonic colour, crafting long-breathed, songlike melodies that feel immediately communicative while retaining depth and sophistication. In a piano trio, listeners can expect the piano to introduce central ideas or harmonic landscapes while the violin and cello share in the melodic storytelling — sometimes in close dialogue, sometimes in poignant solo moments. Tender, introspective sections give way to more animated episodes, creating a sense of journey and emotional range.

For Canadian audiences, this Piano Trio carries an additional resonance: it reflects a homegrown voice within a tradition largely shaped in Europe. Heard between Beethoven and Brahms, Baker's work bridges Romantic warmth and a 20th/21st-century sensibility — speaking in a musical language that is at once familiar and freshly personal. Tonight it carries still another layer of meaning, serving as a tribute to a composer we lost just recently. The work is in two movements: Part 1 and Part 2.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Piano Trio No. 1 in B major, Op. 8 (revised version, 1889)

This is a work born twice. Brahms first wrote this trio in 1854, at the age of twenty-one, in a rush of youthful passion that followed his electrifying introduction to Robert and Clara Schumann. He set it aside for thirty-five years — then, in the summer of 1889, did something almost no major composer had ever attempted: he rewrote it from the ground up. The revision was thorough and deliberate, cutting the work down by nearly a third, tightening its architecture, and replacing the extravagant emotional outpourings of youth with the concentrated craft of a master at the height of his powers. Brahms described the revision with characteristic self-deprecating wit, telling a friend he had merely “combed and arranged its hair a little” — but make no mistake, this is essentially a new composition built on the bones of the old one.

The first movement opens with a gesture of disarming simplicity: the piano alone intones a long, warmly arching melody in its rich middle register, as though thinking aloud. In the revision, Brahms stripped away sprawling, episodic passages and replaced them with tighter, more purposeful transitions. The result breathes more naturally — surges of passion feel more inevitable, and moments of tender repose more deeply earned. Where the young Brahms had written at full volume for much of the movement, the older Brahms knew how much more powerful a whisper can be.

The Scherzo remains almost exactly as Brahms wrote it at twenty-one — the single movement he trusted enough to leave alone. Its pouncing, hunting-call theme, tossed between the three instruments in vigorous dialogue, crackles with exactly the kind of unbridled energy that the revisions elsewhere reined in, and the lush, glowing trio section provides a moment of lyrical contrast before the opening hunt resumes. That Brahms preserved this movement intact speaks volumes: even the seasoned master recognized that some spontaneity is irreplaceable.

The slow movement, the Adagio, carries the most significant gift of the revision. The hushed, chorale-like opening — piano moving in slow, solemn block chords, almost motionless — was retained from the original and evokes something timeless and contemplative. But the breathtaking centrepiece, a long-breathed, aching cello melody of almost unbearable tenderness, was newly composed in 1889. This is the mature Brahms at his most intimate and searching, the melody unfolding over a quietly rocking piano accompaniment before the violin gently takes it up in turn — one of the most poignant passages in all of Brahms's chamber music.

The finale is where the revisions are felt most dramatically. Leaner and more driven than the original, it is a brooding, storm-swept movement in B minor that presses forward with relentless rhythmic urgency. The folk-inflected main theme, with its Hungarian rhythmic edge, suggests both the violin music Brahms had loved since his early touring days and the darker emotional undercurrents of his later years. The work refuses a triumphant conclusion: the B major promised at the outset never fully reclaims the final pages, and the last bars close firmly and defiantly in B minor — the honest, unresolved ending of a composer who had learned, over a long creative life, that a little darkness left unresolved can be the most truthful thing of all.

Guelph Musicfest ENCORE



Friday October 30...

ZEMLINSKY QUARTET

František Souček violin

Petr Střížek violin

Petr Holman viola

Vladimír Fortin cello

program tba

This wonderful ensemble from Prague makes a return visit to the GYMC.



Friday November 6...

FESTIVAL DUO

Sadie Fields violin

Ken Gee piano

program tba

Sadie returns from Edinburgh, Scotland, to perform a solo recital in Guelph.



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Ken Gee founder/artistic director

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Recital Hall Revitalization: Many Hands, One Hall

The Guelph Youth Music Centre has entered a new and exciting chapter, and it is asking our community to help take the next step.

The GYMC has launched a \$50,000 Recital Hall Campaign to outfit the Recital Hall with the sound, lighting, and presentation technology it needs to become the fully-equipped community performance space Guelph deserves. The goal is to introduce professional sound, dynamic lighting, and video presentation technology to a hall that already serves students, artists, non-profits, grassroots arts groups, and **Guelph Musicfest**.

If the Recital Hall and Guelph Musicfest have been meaningful to you, please be part of this next chapter.

canadahelps.org/en/charities/guelph-youth-music-centre

SELECT: Recital Hall Revitalization: Many Hands, One Hall



Guelph Musicfest 2026—at the GYMC

May 22 to June 19, 2026 20th ANNIVERSARY SEASON!

