

# SOUNDSTREAMS

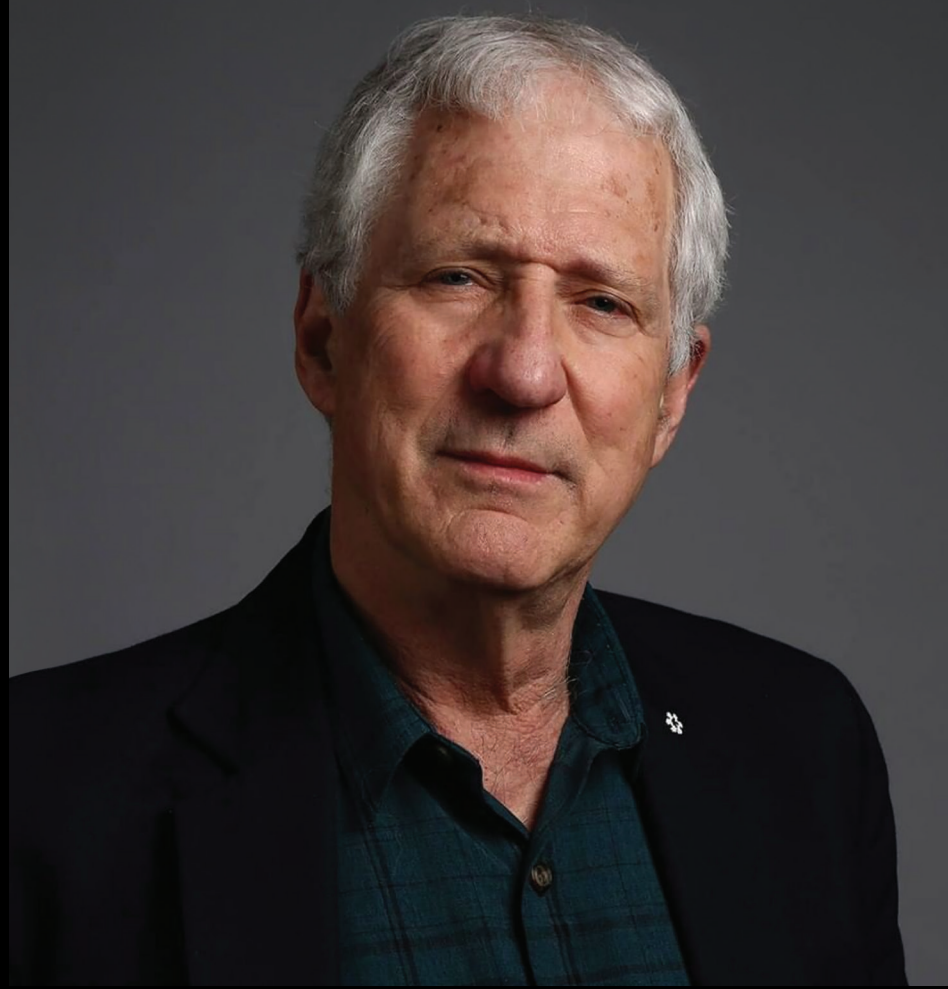


# ELECTRIC MESSIAH

**DECEMBER 14 – 17, 2023**

THEATRE PASSE MURAILLE

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# FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**O**ur Electric Messiah differs from traditional productions of Handel's Messiah: we deliberately reimagine its music through the lens of our time and place.

Genres as diverse as electronica, jazz, hip-hop, R&B and classical breathe new life into the original arias and choruses. If he'd heard electronica, Handel, too, would have jumped at the chance to use it!

In an increasingly polarized world, it's more important than ever to find ways to bridge the differences among us. Engaging with music can't necessarily save the world, but it can bring us together in unexpected ways. How else can we account for the fact that people who aren't believers, or those with roots in other spiritual belief systems, are nevertheless drawn to Handel's Messiah, the embodiment of a story at the very heart of Christianity? And while the music may be gorgeous, compelling and timeless, something bigger must be going on. Messiah speaks to universal human values and emotions to which we can all relate: love, loss, betrayal, sacrifice, joy, redemption.

In Electric Messiah, no matter the diverse musical influences on those arias and choruses, they all continue to probe, just as did Handel, the deepest of human emotions and values in ways that are as thought-provoking as they are magical.

Almost a decade ago, Electric Messiah was born and raised in the Drake Underground. Even though we've now moved above ground to the historic Theatre Passe Muraille, it continues to surprise and delight. Four of this year's five singers have never performed in it before, with the promise of even more thrilling surprises in what we know will be another uplifting and exhilarating experience. Enjoy!

– **LAWRENCE CHERNEY,**  
Founding Artistic Director

## Land Acknowledgement

Soundstreams wishes to acknowledge that this production is presented on the traditional land of the Wendat, Anishinabek, Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the Credit River First Nation. This land is the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, and we encourage you to learn about your responsibilities to this treaty. Today, this meeting place is the home of many Indigenous people and Soundstreams is grateful to have the opportunity to collaborate and create alongside them.

## ABOUT SOUNDSTREAMS

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**S**oundstreams is celebrating its 41<sup>st</sup> season under the leadership of Founding Artistic Director Lawrence Cherney. Since 1982, **Soundstreams** has evolved to become the largest global producer of new Canadian music and one of the world's leading companies fostering the music of our time. A dedicated **Soundstreams** team led by Executive Director Beth Brown realizes a broad spectrum of activities, with a focus on innovative thematic and experiential programming to create a legacy for Canadian music.

**Soundstreams** serves a broad community of music lovers through our Main Stage ticketed subscription series, as well as our free *TD Encounters* outreach and education programs including the *New Voices* curator mentorship program and the *RBC Bridges* program for emerging composers.

By intention, **Soundstreams** has no resident ensemble, leaving us free to prioritize telling stories that speak to diverse Canadian identities and perspectives. Rooted in significant themes like social justice, these diverse outlooks enable us to produce programming that resonates regionally, nationally, and internationally, making **Soundstreams** uniquely qualified to bring this programming to the world stage.

These opportunities have garnered us increased recognition from the national and international press. In recent seasons, we've had high praise from *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Los Angeles Times*. Enhancing the profile of Canadian music, **Soundstreams** was the linchpin in a major festival at London's prestigious Southbank Centre (UK) in May 2022, celebrating the late legendary Québec composer Claude Vivier.

**Soundstreams'** continued success on the national and international stage is a result of our efforts to promote cultural exchange, creating a global network and enabling artists to tell their stories to our audiences. Over the last 30 years, **Soundstreams** has brought nearly 1,500 international artists to Toronto to perform music written by Canadian composers and/or perform alongside Canadian artists. These connections have been forged with Latin America, the Far East, Europe, the USA, and Australia, attracting significantly broader audiences. Most recently appearing as part of our Main Stage series, *Two Odysseys: Pimootewin/Gállábártnit* has been invited to tour in the Nordic region in 2026, showcasing the world's first operas sung in the Indigenous languages of both Cree and Sámi.

### Special Thanks

- Tapestry Opera
- SoloTech
- Crow's Theatre
- Canadian Opera Company

# CREATIVE TEAM

Music Director/ Sound Designer/  
Electric Bass

**Adam Scime**

Stage Director

**Chelsea Dab Hilke**

Lighting Designer

**Echo Zhou 周芷會**

Audio Engineer

**Richard Feren**

Design Assistant

**Becky Gold**

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# PERFORMERS

Soprano

**Midori Marsh**

Mezzo-soprano

**Rebecca Cuddy**

Vocals/ Keyboard

**Elizabeth Shepherd**

Countertenor/ Vielle

**Daniel Cabena**

Baritone

**Korin Thomas-Smith**

Electric Cello

**Amahl Arulanandam**

Harpsichord/ Ondes Martenot

**Wesley Shen**

Electric/ Acoustic Guitar

**Luan Phung**

Electric Organ

**Joel Visentin**

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Stage Manager

**Lesley Abarquez**

# CONCERT PROGRAM

## Electric Messiah

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OVERTURE/ SOUNDSCAPE

**Adam Scime** (Composer)

COMFORT YE

**Handel, arr. Kyle Brenders**

HYMN Corde natus ex parentis/  
Of the Father's love begotten

**Aurelius Prudentius** (Hymn Text)

EV'RY VALLEY

**Handel, arr. Daniel Cabena, Wesley Shen,  
Joel Visentin, Luan Phung  
and Adam Scime**

NONE IS RIGHTEOUS

**Emily Hiemstra** (Composer)

O DEATH, O GRAVE

**Ian Cusson** (Composer)

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

**Handel, arr. Kyle Brenders**

LION'S DEN

**Elizabeth Shepherd** (Composer)

HE WAS DESPISED

**Handel, arr. Elizabeth Shepherd**

CORPUS CHRISTI CAROL

**Benjamin Britten** (Composer)  
**arr. Jeff Buckley**

INTERLUDE

**Luan Phung** (Composer)

HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET

**Handel, arr. Christopher Bagan**

SINCE BY MAN CAME DEATH

**Handel, arr. Kyle Brenders**

ALL WE LIKE SHEEP

**Adam Scime** (Composer)

VARIED THRUSH

**Anna Höstman** (Composer)

THE PEOPLE THAT WALKED IN  
DARKNESS/ QUIA FECIT MIHI MAGNA

**Handel/ Bach**

I KNOW MY REDEEMER LIVETH

**Handel, arr. Midori Marsh, Wesley Shen,  
Luan Phung, Joel Visentin, Amahl  
Arulanandam, and Adam Scime**

LITTLE BLUE

**Jacob Collier** (Composer)  
**arr. Luan Phung**

HALLELUJAH INTRODUCTION

**Adam Scime** (Composer)

HALLELUJAH CHORUS

**Handel, arr. Kyle Brenders**

# ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

## CREATIVE TEAM

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## George Frideric Handel

### COMPOSER

The son of a barber-surgeon, German-born British composer George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) showed a marked gift for music during studies in organ, violin, and composition. He moved to Hamburg in 1703 and played in the opera orchestra under Reinhard Keiser, and his first opera was produced there in 1705. A Medici prince invited him to Florence; there and in Rome, patronized by cardinals and nobility, he wrote oratorios, cantatas, and more operas. Hired as kapellmeister by the elector at Hannover in 1710, he asked permission to visit London before assuming his responsibilities. There his opera *Rinaldo* (1711) immediately made his name; forsaking Hannover, he remained in England for the rest of his life. In 1714, the German elector was made George I of England. Any annoyance at Handel's defection dissipated, and the king became one of his patrons. Handel was appointed musical director of the new Royal Academy of Music, an opera house that thrived until the public taste shifted away from Italian opera. In 1732, Handel revised his oratorio *Esther* for the first public oratorio performance in English history. Its success was followed by many more English-language oratorios, including his great *Messiah* (1741). By this time, Handel had made oratorio and large-scale choral works the most popular musical forms in England. He was renowned as virtually the greatest organist and harpsichordist in the world. Handel wrote about 45 Italian operas, including *Giulio Cesare* (1723), *Orlando* (1733), and *Alcina* (1735). His oratorios include *Israel in Egypt* (1739), *Saul* (1739), and *Jephtha* (1752). His church music includes the *Chandos Anthems* (1718) and *Coronation Anthems* (1727). Though the bulk of his music was vocal, he composed a number of great orchestral works, such as the famous *Water Music* (1717) and *Royal Fireworks Music* (1749).



## Ian Cusson

### COMPOSER

Ian Cusson is a composer of art song, opera and orchestral work. Of Métis (Georgian Bay Métis Community) and French Canadian descent, his work explores Canadian Indigenous

experience including the history of the Métis people, the hybridity of mixed-racial identity, and the intersection of Western and Indigenous cultures.

He studied composition with Jake Heggie (San Francisco) and Samuel Dolin, and piano with James Anagnoson at the Glenn Gould School. He is the recipient of the Chalmers Professional Development Grant, and grants through the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, the Canada Council, Ontario Arts Council and the Toronto Arts Council.

Ian was an inaugural Carrefour Composer-in-Residence with the National Arts Centre Orchestra for 2017–2019 and was Composer-in-Residence for the Canadian Opera Company for 2019–2021.. He was Co-artistic Director of Opera in the 21st Century at the Banff Centre and the recipient of the 2021 Jan V. Matejcek Classical Music Award from SOCAN and the 2021 Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize. Ian is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre and a member of the Canadian League of Composers.

He lives in Collingwood with his wife and four children.



# Adam Scime

## **MUSIC DIRECTOR / SOUND DESIGNER**

Adam Scime is a composer, performer, writer, and educator, living in Toronto/Tkarón:to who works in varying collaborative environments related to opera, theatre, music, and sound. Adam's work is rooted in learning from his collaborators so that open, safe, and supportive environments are created collectively and in tandem with the evolving needs of individual artists and the wider community. Adam's music has been performed widely across Canada, Europe, and Asia and described as "Astounding, the musical result was incredible" ([icareifyoulisten.com](http://icareifyoulisten.com)) and "a fantastic success" (CBC). He is regularly hired as a music director, composer, and performer to work with some of the most notable organizations, ensembles, and soloists in the classical and contemporary arts landscapes. As Music Director of FAWN Chamber Creative, Adam enjoys the ongoing collaborative journey to foster new experimental Canadian opera. At FAWN, he works together with artistic teams toward collective innovation in anti-hierarchical creation processes. Adam has completed the Dandelion Initiative Equity and Anti-Harassment Program; the Certificate in Leadership and Inclusion from the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion; the Non-Profit Leadership for Impact Professional Certificate from The University of Toronto; and the Narratives of Memory, Xenophobia and Migration in the European Union and Canada field study from The University of Victoria; in addition to holding a Doctorate of Music, from University of Toronto.



# Chelsea Dab Hilke

## STAGE DIRECTOR

Chelsea Dab Hilke is a director, dramaturg, and producer based in Montréal. She is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada's Directing program and holds a Masters in Theatre and Performance Studies from York University. In her work, Chelsea is interested in investigating gender, medical systems, mothers, grief, jewish-ness, memory, and the precariousness of idenstage directortity...in no particular order. Her work has been seen on stages in Montréal, Toronto, Ottawa, and St. John's, and spans genres, including new and experimental plays, children's theatre, and Opera. Chelsea is co-Artistic Director and 1/3 of Scaredy Cat Theatre, an emerging performing arts collective dedicated to presenting contemporary work that leans into the fear and joy of taking aesthetic and narrative risks.

Website: [www.chelseadabhilke.com](http://www.chelseadabhilke.com)



# Echo

## Zhou 周芷會

## LIGHTING DESIGNER

Echo is an award-winning, proud Chinese immigrant, Tkaronto-based scenographer. In her professional career, she is focused on IBPOC and queer storytelling and making live performances as accessible as possible. She has designed for the National Arts Centre, Tapestry Opera, Tarragon Theatre, Studio 180, Buddies in the Bad Times, Theatre Passe Muraille, Thousand Island Playhouse, The Theatre Centre, and many live performance festivals nationwide. Her design works have been presented in Japan and China as well. Her favourite recent credits are Rocking Horse Winner (Tapestry Opera), A Poem for Rabia (Tarragon Theatre), Dragon's Tale (Tapestry Opera), The Chinese Lady (Studio 180); Benevolence (Benevolence Collective); Between a Wok and a Hotpot (Cahoots Theatre); The Year of the Cello (Theatre Passe Muraille); HMS Pinafore (Vancouver Opera); Every Brilliant Thing (Thousand Island Playhouse); White Girls in Moccasins (Manidoons Collective); Mr. Shi and His Lover, and I Swallowed Moon Made of Iron (Music Picnic). Echo is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada.

Website: [www.echozhoudesign.com](http://www.echozhoudesign.com)



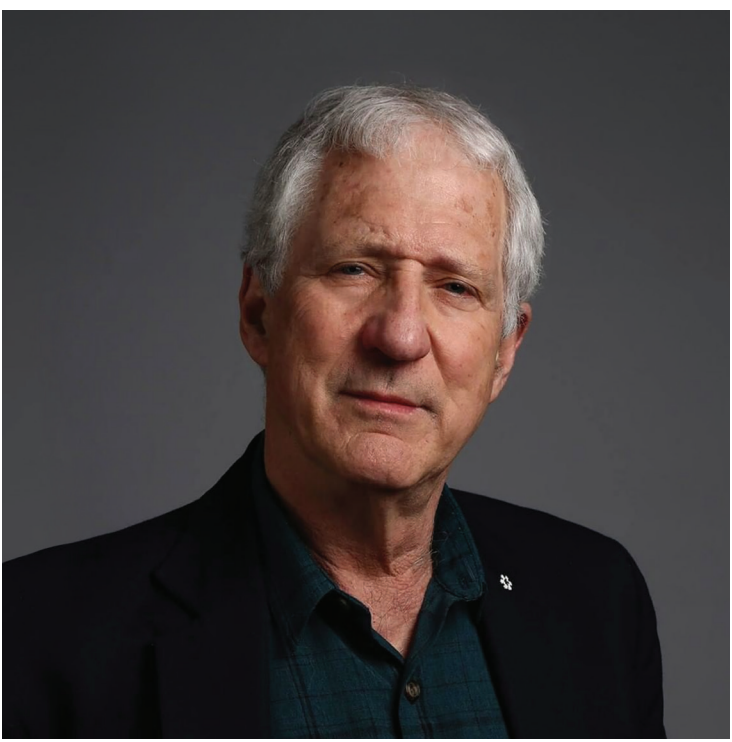


# Richard Feren

**AUDIO ENGINEER**

Richard has been creating soundscapes and music for Canadian theatre, dance and film since 1992. He has composed scores for 8 feature films and numerous shorts, along with over 150 plays. Recently, Richard has also been producing various audio dramas, podcasts, and installations. He has won seven Dora Mavor Moore Awards, the 1999 Pauline McGibbon Award, and was the first sound designer ever shortlisted for the 2012 Siminovitch Prize. Upcoming: *THE INHERITANCE* (Canadian Stage).

Website: [www.haemorrhage-music.com/richard-feren](http://www.haemorrhage-music.com/richard-feren)



# Lawrence Cherney

**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,  
SOUNDSTREAMS**

Lawrence Cherney started his career as an oboist under the baton of Igor Stravinsky in the CBC Symphony. He was a charter member of the National Arts Centre and performed as an oboe soloist and recitalist in North America, Europe and Israel. Some 150 works for the oboe were written for him. He has been called “Canada’s Ambassador of New Music”, and is the founding artistic director of Soundstreams, currently celebrating its 40th anniversary season. Under his leadership, Soundstreams has become a leading producer of new Canadian music and contemporary opera. Soundstreams is known nationally and internationally for the high quality of its innovative collaborations that cross genres, cultural traditions and disciplines. He was named to the Order of Canada in 2003, and his awards include the Muriel Sherrin Award for Outstanding Achievement (2007), the Friends of Canadian Music Award (2016), and the Toronto Musicians’ Association Lifetime Achievement Award (2019).



# Lesley Abarquez

## STAGE MANAGER

Lesley is excited to be part of the Electric Messiah team! She has been a stage manager and concert manager for over 25 years. Working primarily in opera and classical music, she has enjoyed working with the Canadian Opera Company, The Glenn Gould School, Tapestry Opera, Tafelmusik, Against the Grain Theatre, The Banff Centre, the Canadian Children's Opera Company, and the University of Toronto Opera School.

## PERFORMERS

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# Midori Marsh

## SOPRANO

Midori Marsh is an American-Canadian soprano, hailing from Cleveland, Ohio. She received her Bachelors of Music at Wilfrid Laurier in 2017 and her Masters of Music in Opera at the University of Toronto in 2020. In fall 2019 she took home both first prize and audience choice award at the Canadian Opera Company's Centre Stage competition and recently completed her third year with the COC's young artist ensemble. While at the COC she was seen as Nella in *Gianni Schicchi*, the soprano soloist in Mozart's *Requiem*, Annina in *La Traviata*, Papagena in *Die Zauberflote* and Frasquita in *Carmen*. A "polished and poised performer", with "a truly gorgeous, expressive sound" she is a known quantity in the Canadian Opera scene, performing with Tapestry Opera, Against the Grain Theatre, the TSO, the National Arts Centre and more. In 2020 she was named one of the CBC's "30 hot Classical Musicians under 30" and in 2022 she was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for her portrayal of Papagena in the COC's 2022 production of *The Magic Flute*. She took first prize at the 2023 Quilico awards, was a semifinalist in the Metropolitan Opera's 2023 Laffont competition and a 2023 Lotte Lenya finalist. Recently she took home both first prize and audience choice award at the Mildred Miller International Voice Competition.



# Rebecca Cuddy

## MEZZO-SOPRANO

Métis mezzo-soprano Rebecca Cuddy is acknowledged as “the next generation who are going to do incredible things” (The Whole Note, 2019). This season Rebecca will appear with Soundstreams, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Symphony New Brunswick and as a member of The IndigiDivas with Allegra Chamber Orchestra and Calgary Philharmonic. She will premiere *Bulrusher* with West Edge Opera in Cincinnati and makes her Manitoba Opera debut in *Li Keur: Riel’s Heart of the North*.

Last season, Rebecca returned to Pacific Opera Victoria for Braunfels’ *Die Vögel*. In concert she appeared with Soundstreams (premiere – Frehner’s L.E.X.), the New Orford String Quartet, the Toronto Consort, and performed with members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Jeremy Dutcher and Yo-Yo Ma in support of Toronto’s CAMH Centre.

Rebecca attended Western University and the Royal Academy of Music for voice studies. She is the 2022 graduate of the Indigenous Artist Residency at the National Theatre School of Canada.

Website: [www.rebeccacuddy.com](http://www.rebeccacuddy.com)



# Elizabeth Shepherd

## VOCALS

Velvety-voiced pianist Elizabeth Shepherd arrived on the international scene in 2006 when her debut album *Start To Move* was voted one of the top albums of the year by the listeners of the influential Gilles Peterson Show on BBC Radio Worldwide. Since then, the Quebec-based soul-jazz innovator has established herself as one of the most alluring and imaginative artists on the scene today. Elizabeth has been hailed as “a jazz virtuoso blessed with a pop sensibility” and praised by critics worldwide for her arrestingly original writing and soulful delivery. The six-time Juno nominee and two-time Polaris-Prize nominee has released seven widely acclaimed records, featuring collaborations with such musicians as Lionel Loueke and UK producer Nostalgia 7. She has toured extensively in North America, Europe, Japan and Mexico, sharing the stage with such great diverse acts as Christian MacBride, Branford Marsalis, Spankie Wilson, Victor Wooten, the Quantic Soul Orchestra and Bonobo, and Jamie Cullum.

Website: [www.elizabethshepherd.com](http://www.elizabethshepherd.com)



# Daniel Cabena

## COUNTERTENOR

Daniel Cabena sings, plays, writes, and teaches. He is also a curator of texts and music, and with Luke Hathaway he shares the artistic direction of ANIMA Early Music. Together they program concerts, commission new works of text and music, and create new works for the ear and for the stage.

To his work of curation and creation, Daniel brings a background in early music and liturgical music scholarship; an interest in how music functions in different performance contexts and traditions; and a curiosity about the ‘why’ of music, as well as its ‘how’. Daniel teaches singing and historically-inspired performance at the Laurier Academy of Music & Arts (LAMA), where he also leads the Community Consort, a multi-instrumental, multidisciplinary community of practice and inquiry. Daniel’s music-making and teaching are informed by the Alexander Technique, in which field he is a teacher. He also makes music with his hands, playing modern and Baroque violin, as well as vièle, viola da gamba, and recorders.



# Korin Thomas-Smith

## BARITONE

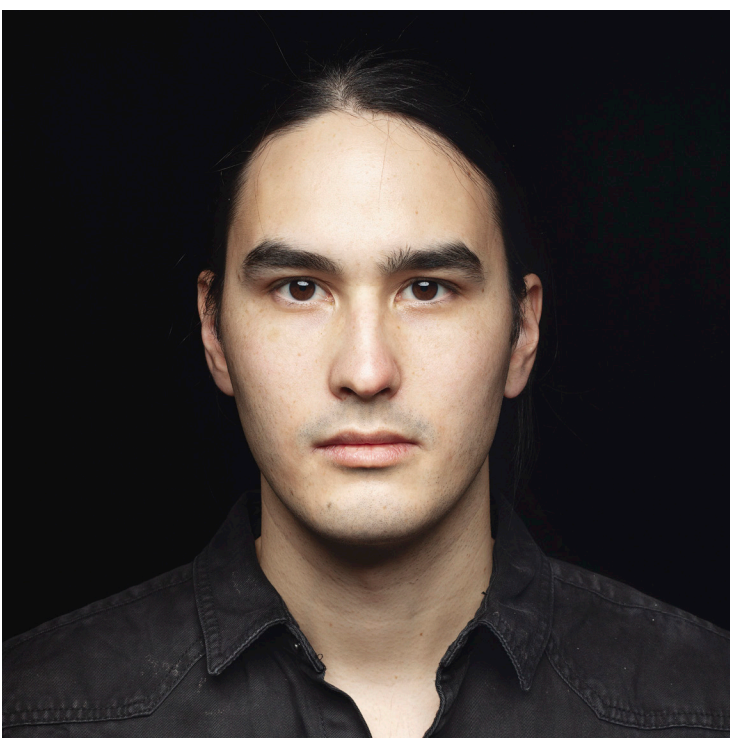
Named one of CBC Music’s 30 hot classical musicians under 30 in 2021, Canadian baritone Korin Thomas-Smith has been carving a place for himself in the North American music scene. Korin joins the Canadian Opera Company in their Ensemble Studio, making his mainstage role debut in productions of *La Boheme*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and *Don Pasquale* in the 2023/2024 season. In 2023, Korin was a Young Artist at the Glimmerglass Festival performing as Argante in Handel’s *Rinaldo* alongside countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo. Korin won Third Prize in the 2023 Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition in the Opera category, and was awarded Third Place in the New England Region of the Metropolitan Opera’s Laffont Competition. Korin has been a fellow at esteemed institutions such as the Ravinia Festival and the Music Academy of the West. Korin is an alumnus of Yale University, the Rebanks Family Fellowship and International Performance Residency Program at the Royal Conservatory of Music, and the University of Toronto Opera program.



# Amahl Arulanandam

## **ELECTRIC CELLO**

With interests from baroque to metal, Toronto cellist Amahl Arulanandam is known for his musical versatility and ability to adapt to many genres. At home in studios, clubs, and halls, Amahl hopes to convey that musical expression is beyond labels. Amahl has wholly embraced the bizarre sounds the cello has to offer and takes special pleasure in playing on areas of the instrument other than the strings.



# Wesley Shen

## **HARPSICHORD**

Wesley Shen is a Toronto-based pianist and harpsichordist specializing in the performance of contemporary music. He can be found in equal measure as a solo, chamber and orchestral musician. He regularly performs with a number of groups including Continuum New Music, New Music Concerts, Esprit Orchestra, Soundstreams, and FAWN Chamber Creative. He is also a core member of the Freesound Ensemble, one of Toronto's newest contemporary music collectives. In more traditional settings, he can be seen performing with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra.

A passionate advocate for new music, Wesley works closely with many of Canada's top composers including Linda Catlin Smith, Anna Höstman, Bekah Simms, and James O'Callaghan. He can be heard on a number of recent albums including Bekah Simms' *Bestiaries*, Monica Pearce's *Textile Fantasies*, and Sophie Dupuis' *Comme bon lui semble*. He has also received numerous grants from the Canada Council of the Arts to commission over a dozen new works for both solo harpsichord and solo piano. He continues to strive to create and contribute to these deeply fruitful collaborative relationships between performers and composers.

Upcoming performances include Soundstreams' Keyed Up! Festival, and Morton Feldman's *Patterns in a Chromatic Field* and Gérard Grisey's *Vortex Temporum* with the Freesound Ensemble.



# Luan Phung

## **ELECTRIC/ACOUSTIC GUITAR**

Luan Phung is a Toronto-based improviser, composer, guitarist, and teacher/clinician who works in a broad spectrum of musical idioms. A “deft touch, strong harmonic sensibility” writes *The Whole Note* magazine and described as “an impact player” who “raises the bar on so many levels”. As a young guitarist, he garnered several musical accolades in both the classical guitar and jazz realm including the CanFor scholarship award, the Galaxie Rising Star award for jazz performance, and a national finalist at the Canadian Music Competition.

Equally at home performing straight-ahead jazz, pop, and rock to free improvised music and new/contemporary classical, Luan is an in-demand person in the Canadian music scene. Luan has worked with a wide breadth of artists such as BADBADNOTGOOD, Yamantaka//Sonic Titan, Anna Sofia, Teon Gibbs, the Jeff LaRochelle Group, Luis Deniz quartet, Patrick Smith Quintet, and Adversarial Networks.



# Joel Visentin

## **ELECTRIC ORGAN**

Toronto-based pianist and composer Joel Visentin is a proud Hammond Artist who has worked with several celebrated world-class musicians including JUNO-Award winners Kelly Lee Evans, Jack Dekeyzer, and Ingrid Jensen, as well as Grammy nominee, Darryl Neudorf. More recently, he collaborated on JUNO-Award Winning Children’s album, *Heart Parade*, by Canadian darlings, *Splash & Boots*. His own band – *JV’s Boogaloo Squad* – has headlined at jazz festivals across North America, reaching #6 on US Campus Radio charts as well as #29 on *JazzWeek*. Joel’s original music has also been featured on *This American Life* and several CBC documentaries.

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exciting performances!

VISIT [SOUNDSTREAMS.CA](https://soundstreams.ca) FOR MORE DETAILS



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ST. PAUL'S BASILICA  
FEBRUARY 3, 2024

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JANE MALLET  
THEATRE

APRIL 18 - 20, 2024

KEYED UP! #1

VARIATIONS  
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VARIATIONS

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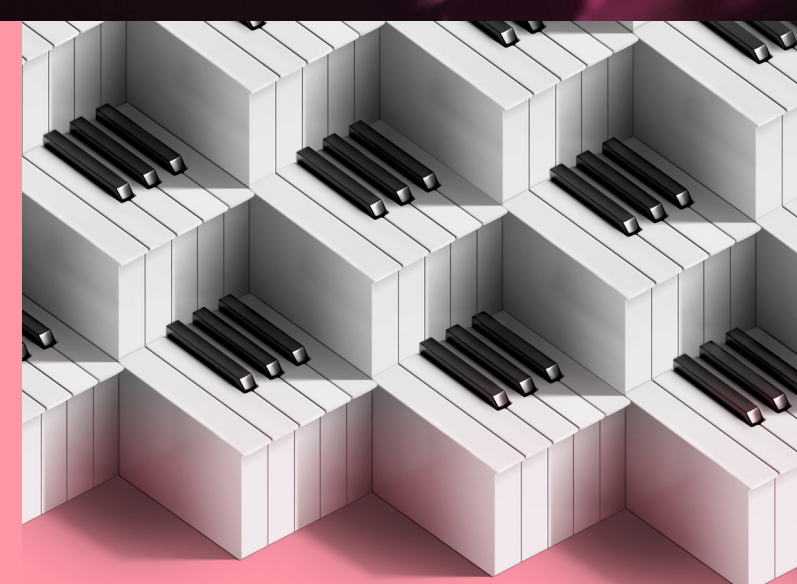
APRIL 19, 2024



KEYED UP! #3

6 PIANOS  
12 HANDS

APRIL 20, 2024



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