

Media Release

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

For immediate release: Ottawa Chamberfest Announces 2026 Summer Festival (July 23 to August 2)

Ottawa, ON – Ottawa Chamberfest announces its 2026 Summer Festival, running July 23 to August 2, featuring a wide-ranging program of international and Canadian artists, bold new music, major chamber collaborations, and free community events across 11 days in the Nation's Capital. Set against Ottawa's bicentennial year, the 2026 edition reflects a city celebrating 200 years of history, growth, and cultural expression.

At its core, the festival invites audiences to step away from the everyday and experience music as it happens: live, shared, and authentic.

Chamberfest's wide-ranging lineup of international and Canadian artists presents programs that span from baroque opera and large-scale collaborations to intimate recitals, genre-crossing performances, and free community events. Events are curated within Chamberfest's Signature Series, Marina Kun Series, Chamberfringe, New Music Now, and more.

"In a world that rarely pauses, live music asks us to listen," says Artistic Director Carissa Klopoushak. "At Chamberfest 2026, internationally renowned artists and emerging voices from across Canada and around the globe come together in a festival that is expansive, forward-thinking, and alive, balancing cherished traditions with bold new perspectives. We look forward to welcoming you to venues across the city for a festival grounded in presence, discovery, and the shared experience of live music."

The festival opens with a semi-staged presentation of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, created in collaboration with Toronto's Opera Atelier and featuring a cast that includes Measha Brueggergosman-Lee. The festival's rich mix of programming includes the Ottawa debut of the Poiesis String Quartet (winners of the 2025 Banff International String Quartet Competition), the North American debut of Ukraine's celebrated festival Odessa Classics, which brings Ukrainian artists to Ottawa in a powerful statement of cultural resilience, and the Ottawa debut of Council, the indie-classical project of violinist Pekka Kuusisto and singer-songwriter Gabriel Kahane.

The festival also highlights major Canadian artists, including pianist Jon Kimura Parker in a wide-ranging solo recital from Mozart to Oscar Peterson, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, the Gryphon Trio, and pianists Philip Chiu and Janelle Fung in a two-piano tour de force anchored by *The Rite of Spring*, as well as a celebration of composer John Estacio's 60th birthday. Ottawa's Ironwood Quartet are featured in multiple festival performances, including with Honens Gold Laureate Élisabeth Pion and in */ finite*, a concert which explores the meditative music of Arvo Pärt in dialogue with Schubert's famous "Death and the Maiden" Quartet.

New to Chamberfest 2026, the Chamberfest Camerata is a conductorless ensemble of leading chamber players created to explore both favourite and boundary-pushing works for strings. At the heart of its debut programme is Beethoven's Op. 95 String Quartet in a striking version for chamber orchestra.

New Music Now returns with programs of contemporary works from emerging composers to boundary-pushing ensembles, including four world premieres. Our popular Chamberfringe series is back at the Great Canadian Theatre Company, pushing the boundaries of chamber music with late-night cross-genre performances including JUNO Award-winning collectif9 with Ronny Desinor, Tamar Ilana & Ventanas, Angelique Francis, Persian virtuoso Amir Amiri, a complete performance of Elvis Costello's The Juliet Letters, and Daughters of Donbas, a music and human rights project led by Ukrainian-Canadian artist Marichka.

Additional information on free community programming will be available to view on the Chamberfest website on Tuesday, May 12. This includes popular Yoga + Cello, Bring the Kids! concerts, Adaptive Concerts, Masterclasses, Chamber Chats, pop-up events at The Record Centre and the NAC, and outdoor performances at Rideau Hall.

New in 2026: A full day of FREE community celebration at Head Street Square (Zibi) includes Yoga + Cello, Bring the Kids!, pop-up performances with True North Brass and Raphael Weinrothe-Browne. The day culminates in a mass performance of Terry Riley's In C – a community-led collective music-making experience.

For full programming details and ticket information, visit www.chamberfest.com

Interviews with 2026 Artists and with Chamberfest Artistic Director available upon request.

Complete list of programming and ticketing information follows.

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Ticketing Information:**Early Bird Pricing (Available April 21 to May 12)**

Includes Pass Prime, Festival Pass, Pass Two, Curiosity Pass (13–30), and Signature Series single tickets

Regular Pricing (Available as of May 12)

Includes Pass Prime, Festival Pass, 3 Day Pass, PIXSIX, Curiosity Pass (13–30) and all single tickets

Tickets & Passes:**Pass Prime**

Early Bird: \$485 / Regular: \$585 (Limited availability)

Full-festival access with premium benefits, priority seating, exclusive concert series access, Signature Series tickets, and presale opportunities.

Festival Pass

Early Bird: \$285 / Regular: \$585

General admission access to Chamberfest 2026 events, plus discounts on select Signature Series tickets.

Pass Two (Early Bird only)

\$430

Flexible access to general admission events over any three days of the festival, plus discounts on select Signature Series tickets.

NEW: Curiosity Pass (Ages 13 to 30)

Early Bird: \$55 / Regular: \$75

Youth pass offering access to a selection of general admission concerts, plus discounts on select Signature Series tickets.

COMPLETE LISTING OF 2026 TICKETED PROGRAMMING:**SIGNATURE SERIES****Opening Night Opera: Dido and Aeneas**

Thursday, July 23, 7:00 PM — Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

Toronto's Opera Atelier presents Henry Purcell's beloved opera Dido and Aeneas, launching Chamberfest 2026 with Baroque splendour, dancers, choir, and early music ensemble. The work tells the story of Dido and Aeneas, culminating in the iconic aria Dido's Lament.

Odessa Classics: Festival in Exile

Saturday, July 25, 7:00 PM — Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

North American debut of Odessa Classics, featuring Ukrainian and Canadian artists in a cross-border celebration of Ukrainian musical culture. The programme includes works by Silvestrov, Barvinsky, Karamanov, Poleva, and Skoryk, culminating in a powerful closing tribute to Ukraine's enduring artistic spirit.

Pekka Kuusisto & Gabriel Kahane: Council

Tuesday, July 28, 7:00 PM — Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

Kuusisto and Kahane present Council, a collaborative programme of chamber music and songs shaped through creative retreats in Northern Karelia and Portland. The work explores memory, grief, friendship, and the search for shared meaning in a complex world.

Jon Kimura Parker: Mozart to Oscar Peterson

Friday, July 31, 7:00 PM — Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

Jon Kimura Parker returns with a solo piano programme spanning Mozart, Beethoven, Ravel, Chick Corea, Oscar Peterson, and more. The recital traces a vivid journey across classical and jazz traditions.

MARINA KUN SERIES**Philip Chiu and Janelle Fung: Return of the Light**

Friday, July 24, 7:00 PM — Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

Piano duo Philip Chiu and Janelle Fung debut at Chamberfest with works by Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky, Bax, and Ian Cusson's Return of the Light. The programme explores renewal, nature, and transformation through sound.

Schmaltz & Pepper

Saturday, July 25, 1:00 PM — Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

Schmaltz & Pepper return with their signature "classy Klezmer," blending chamber music and jazz-inflected energy in a vibrant afternoon performance.

National Youth Orchestra of Canada: Canadiana Tour

Sunday, July 26, 7:00 PM — Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

The National Youth Orchestra of Canada performs works by Anna Clyne, Lili Boulanger, William Grant Still, and Richard Strauss, led by Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser in a wide-ranging orchestral programme.

Élisabeth Pion with Ironwood Quartet

Monday, July 27, 7:00 PM — Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

Honens Gold Laureate Élisabeth Pion makes her Chamberfest debut with the Ironwood Quartet in works by Liszt, Kapustin, Franck, and her own compositions.

Poesis Quartet at the OAG: A Better World

Wednesday, July 29, 7:00 PM — Ottawa Art Gallery

The Poesis Quartet presents a bold programme featuring works by Wiancko, Perkinson, Jeff Scott, and Kevin Lau, highlighting socially engaged contemporary string quartet repertoire.

in / finite: Arvo Pärt · Death and the Maiden

Thursday, July 30, 7:00 PM — Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

An evening contrasting the meditative works of Arvo Pärt with Schubert's Death and the Maiden, exploring themes of eternity, mortality, and transcendence.

The Forest: Carson Becke, Allyson McHardy, Meghan Lindsay

Saturday, August 1, 1:00 PM — Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

A programme rooted in Canadian landscape and identity featuring song cycles by Robert Rival and Carson Becke, performed by leading Canadian vocalists.

Introducing Chamberfest Camerata

Saturday, August 1, 7:00 PM — Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

Making its first appearance at Chamberfest 2026, the Chamberfest Camerata unites leading string players in a new conductorless ensemble devoted to both cutting-edge and much-loved string chamber repertoire. At the heart of its debut programme is Beethoven's Op. 95 String Quartet in a striking version for chamber orchestra.

CHAMBERFRINGE**collectif9 + Ronny Desinor**

Friday, July 24, 9:30 PM — GCTC

Genre-blending collaboration combining chamber music with jazz, soul, and folk influences.

Elvis Costello's Juliet Letters

Saturday, July 25, 9:30 PM — GCTC

A performance of The Juliet Letters for voice and string quartet, reimagining Elvis Costello's iconic song cycle.

Mativetsky, Amiri & Pagé

Sunday, July 26, 9:30 PM — GCTC

A cross-cultural trio blending tabla, santur, and harp into immersive rhythmic and improvisatory sound worlds.

Tamar Ilana & Ventanas

Thursday, July 30, 9:30 PM — GCTC

Flamenco-Mediterranean fusion ensemble exploring global musical traditions.

Daughters of Donbas: Songs of Stolen Children

Friday, July 31, 9:30 PM — GCTC

A Ukrainian-Canadian project combining folk traditions and contemporary storytelling focused on displaced children of war.

Angelique Francis Band

Saturday, August 1, 9:30 PM — GCTC

Ottawa's Angelique Francis closes Chamberfringe with a high-energy genre-blending performance.

NEW MUSIC NOW**NMN I: John Estacio at 60**

Friday, July 24, 12:00 PM — CDCC

A celebration of John Estacio featuring chamber works and excerpts performed by leading Canadian musicians.

NMN II: Fresh Ink

Sunday, July 26, 2:30 PM — GCTC

Four world premieres by emerging composers in a programme of bold new contemporary works.

NMN III: The Happenstancers

Sunday, July 26, 4:00 PM — GCTC

The Happenstancers present a programme bridging early music and contemporary works including Judith Weir's King Harald's Saga.

MIDDAY MATINÉES**Rising Stars Showcase 2026**

Monday, July 27, 12:00 PM — CDCC

An annual showcase of the region's most promising emerging musicians, selected through competitive auditions and adjudicated by a panel of Chamberfest artists.

Dear Jeanne: A Tribute to Jeanne Lamon

Wednesday, July 29, 12:00 PM — Ottawa Art Gallery

A tribute to Jeanne Lamon featuring Baroque trios and the film The Immortal Serafin, honouring her legacy as a performer and leader.

Poiesis & Jon Kimura Parker: Perkinson, Smith, Hailstork, and Brahms

Thursday, July 30, 12:00 PM — CDCC

Members of the Poiesis Quartet join pianist Jon Kimura Parker in works by Perkinson, Smith, Hailstork, and Brahms.

uOttawa Nicole Senécal Prize Winner

Friday, July 31, 12:00 PM — CDCC

A performance by the 2026 recipient of the Nicole Senécal Emerging Artist Award from the University of Ottawa.

BEECHWOOD SERIES**Yolanda Bruno & Michael Bridge: It's a Girl!**

Sunday, July 26, 11:00 AM — Beechwood Cemetery Sacred Space

Violinist Yolanda Bruno and accordionist Michael Bridge, a powerhouse duo on and off stage, share a program shaped by a very personal new chapter in their lives: the birth of their daughter.

Isaac Chalk & Mélisande McNabney

Sunday, August 2, 11:00 AM — Beechwood Cemetery Sacred Space

Principal violist of Les Violons du Roi Isaac Chalk and celebrated harpsichordist Mélisande McNabney, partners in life as well as music, share a warm and elegant hour of Baroque chamber music.

PRIME TIME SERIES

The Prime Time Series offers a deeper connection to festival artists through intimate performances in special listening spaces. Available exclusively to Pass Prime holders, these concerts invite audiences into a musical experience with meaningful proximity to the artists. Full details of the 2026 Prime Time Series will be announced in early May, ahead of the close of Early Bird pricing on May 11.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING**Chamberfest at Zibi**

Sunday, August 2, 12:00 PM — Zibi

A free outdoor community celebration closing Chamberfest 2026 with music, gathering, and community-led performance.

Additional free community programming, including our popular Yoga + Cello, Bring the Kids! concerts, Adaptive Concerts, Masterclasses, Chamber Chats, pop-up events at The Record Centre and the NAC, and outdoor performances at Rideau Hall, will be available to view on our website by Tuesday, May 12.