



Pride
TORONTO

2026 AFFILIATE EVENT



**COUNTERPOINT
COMMUNITY
ORCHESTRA**

FOUNDED 1984

**Guest Conductor
Isaac Page**



SINGULAR SENSATION

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2026, 7:30pm EASTMINSTER CHURCH 310 DANFORTH TORONTO

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We are grateful to the care-takers of this land and grateful to live and perform music here.

COUNTERPOINT COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA

PRESENTS

SINGULAR SENSATION

Guest Conductor

Isaac Page

Violin Soloist

Gemma Donn

Paul Willis Concertmaster Chair

Gemma Donn

Concert Emcee

Enza Anderson

Programme

ETHEL SMYTH, *The Wreckers* [1904]

FELIX MENDELSSOHN, *Violin Concerto In E Minor, Op. 64* [1844],
Gemma Donn, Soloist

Intermission

Refreshments available in back lobby.
No food permitted in the Sanctuary please.

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY, *Waltz from Eugene Onegin, Op. 24* [1878]

ANDREW BALFOUR, *Pyotr's Dream* [2019]
performance dedicated to Cris Derksen

FRANZ BERWALD, *Symphony No. 3 'Sinfonie Singulière'* [1845]

**SAVE THE DATE: CCO Nuit Rose concert "Village in Variations"
7:30 - 8:30pm Saturday June 20 at The 519 Community Centre**



COUNTERPOINT COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA

FOUNDED 1984

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Tonight marks the end of Counterpoint's 43rd season, and we hope you find this concert sensational!

The concert title, *Singular Sensation*, was proposed by Guest Conductor, Isaac Page, and enthusiastically adopted for several reasons: Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* is a truly sensational piece of music; we are performing Berwald's *Symphonie Singulière*; and who would not enjoy a reminder of the hit song "One" from that popular 1975 musical *A Chorus Line*? In addition, everyone involved with the CCO knows that our concertmaster, Gemma Donn, will perform Mendelssohn's difficult and emotional work sensationally. And, of course, all of our composers have remarkable and interesting lives, as our Programme Notes explain.

This concert concludes the CCO's Year of Guests. We have had an extraordinary season of rehearsing and performing under the batons of three very talented Guest Conductors, each lending us their special skills for a full concert cycle. This summer, the CCO will select only one of these candidates to be our long-term Music Director /Conductor, although we feel the orchestra made three sensational musical friends through this process.

Recently, on a sad note, the Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, and musical communities tragically lost a major contributor, Cris Derksen, a brilliant cellist and composer. The CCO is dedicating its performance tonight of Andrew Balfour's *Pyotor's Dream* to Cris Derksen and extends deepest sympathies to her family, friends, and nation.

The CCO's summer plans include a free performance at The 519 Community Centre, 7:30pm June 20, our contribution to *Nuit Rose*, the newly revived arts festival in the Church-Wellesley Village. It will be followed by other performers and artists. In August, we will once again host an outdoor concert in Allan Gardens Park. The CCO's website contains more details. It would be sensational if you could join us for these community events.

2025-2026 Board of Directors

Elizabeth Michell, Chair
Kevin Seymour, Treasurer
David Brownstone
Hanna Brown
CCO Librarian Mario Lo Monaco

Daniel Payne, Vice Chair
Jessica Fernando, Secretary
Lee-Ann Ngu
Matias Espinoza

Violin I	Gemma Donn*, Joana Angeles, Jenny Hwang**, Jessica Fernando, Raymond Fung, Will Scargill, Pona Tran
Violin II	Chris Yoshida*, Katya Applegath, Rick Fraser, Heather Huynh, Elizabeth Mitchell, Ricky Tsai, Hannah-Maria Viola, Finnagen Nam Vū
Viola	David Brownstone*, Hannah Brown, Jenny Shaw, Erick Oliver Wawrzkiwicz+, Paul Barna+
Cello	Daniel Payne*, KJ Aitken, Mimian Cheng, Matias Espinoza, Chloe Hsu, Terry Jackman, Mario Lo Monaco, Kai Torres-Salbach, Russell Westkirk
Double Bass	Jude Littlefield Buschlen*#, Ted Cabanes
Flute & Piccolo	Tetsuya Kobayashi*, Tai Chan, Troy Whynot+
Oboe	Abigail de Niverville*, Catherine Bouchard
Clarinet	Daniel Choi+, Alex Püttner
Bassoon	Kevin Seymour*, Emily Kessler
Contrabassoon	Kevin Seymour*
Trumpet	Tyler Peck*, Katherine Brown
English Horn	Catherine Bouchard
French Horn	Toby Milton*, Caroline Spearing*, Debbie Partch, Steven Vande Moortele
Trombone	Jeffrey Buchyns, Martin Hubel+, Tyson Quinlan
Percussion	Brad Kilpatrick+, Phil Yetman+,

* Principal | + Guest musician | # Bill McQueen Scholarship recipient



Isaac Page

Guest Conductor

Isaac Page is a Toronto-based composer, conductor, and curator. He is the resident conductor of Flute Street, Toronto's professional flute choir, a position he's held since 2022. He is the founding artistic director of The Stacks, an ensemble dedicated to performing the unknown and unheard works of the 20th century.

Isaac has previously appeared as a guest conductor with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, Bowling Green Opera Theatre, and at the Open Ears Festival. He has had the opportunity to perform alongside many musicians and composers, including Robert Aitken, Barbara Assiginaak, the Penderecki String Quartet, and James Campbell.

Isaac has degrees in composition from Wilfrid Laurier University, and orchestral conducting from Bowling Green State University. His primary conducting teachers are Dr. Emily Freeman Brown and Dr. Jessica Kun, and he has received additional mentorship from Carl Topilow, Mark Gibson, Apo Hsu, Matthew Jones, and Dr. Mark Hopkins.

As a composer, Isaac's works have been performed by ensembles across Canada, including the Acadia Wind Ensemble, Voces Boreales, musica intima, and Standing Wave. He was awarded a SOCAN Foundation Young Composers Award in 2017. His primary composition mentors include Gregory Lee Newsome, and Linda Catlin Smith. He has attended masterclasses and workshops led by Anna Höstman, James Rolfe, and Vivian Fung.

When not composing or performing, Isaac enjoys urban exploration as a way to discover new craft breweries and used bookstores. After years as a dedicated IPA enthusiast, he has recently become devoted to the pursuit of finding a crisp, crushable pilsner.



Gemma Donn

Violin Soloist

Gemma Donn is a freelance violinist and educator based in Toronto, Ontario. Originally from Vancouver Island, Gemma started playing violin at age four and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in violin performance from the University of Toronto in 2019. As a freelancer, Gemma frequently performs with the North Bay Symphony, Niagara Symphony, Kingston Symphony, Windsor Symphony, the

Hamilton Philharmonic, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, the National Academy Orchestra of Canada and Esprit Orchestra. Gemma has served as the concertmaster for The Counterpoint Community Orchestra's since 2016.

Gemma has performed in orchestra pits with the Bravo Academy for the Performing Arts, Talk is Free Theatre, Sheridan College Theatre, Toronto Fringe Festival, Toronto Operetta Theatre and Theatre Under the Stars Vancouver.



Symphony No. 3 'Sinfonie Singulière' **[1845], *Franz Berwald***

Franz Berwald (1796-1868) was a Swedish composer and violinist. Born into a musical family, Berwald fell on tough economic times after the death of his father and made his living primarily as an orthopedist. His clinic became widely recognized and successful, to the point that he was able to provide services free of charge for those who could not afford them. He composed throughout his almost 100-year long

life though few of his pieces were performed or favorably reviewed during his lifetime.

His third symphony, nicknamed the Singulière, was one such piece that was not premiered until decades after Berwald's death in 1905. Characteristic of his oeuvre, this symphony includes many surprising twists and turns of traditional forms. The second movement, in particular, is almost interrupted by a sudden fiery scherzo amidst its lyrical, almost pastoral adagio melodies. Highly unusual for symphonies is also the minor key of the final movement, which weaves in thematic material from the other movements, another novel technique.



Violin Concerto In E Minor, Op. 64 [1844] *Mendelssohn*

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) was a German composer, conductor, and pianist lauded as a key figure in the early Romantic era. Growing up in an intellectually and politically active family, Felix and siblings (including his sister Fanny) were introduced to music at a young age. Mendelssohn became known as a child prodigy, notably impressing German literary giant Goethe at only twelve years of age. Throughout his career, Mendelssohn became well-respected as a conductor and editor, particularly of J.S. Bach, as well as a concert pianist and composer of over 120 published works.

In 1838, while he was the principal conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig, Mendelssohn expressed interest in composing a violin concerto to be played by his childhood friend and concertmaster Ferdinand David. The two worked together closely on the piece for the next six years, with David providing technical and aesthetic advice. The work is in a standard three movement fast-slow-fast form, with the first movement in sonata form, but it contains several unique characteristics for its time. The violin enters almost immediately and introduces the first theme, which inverts the usual sonata-form practice of having the orchestra introduce the theme before the soloist begins. Two other elements of the piece that were very novel to audiences at the time of its premiere are the continuity of the movements (audiences then were accustomed to applauding between movements) and the fact that the violin sometimes acts as an accompaniment to the orchestra. The concerto premiered in 1845, with Ferdinand David as the soloist, and was an instant success. It remains one of the most highly regarded violin concertos in history, and is Mendelssohn's last concerto.

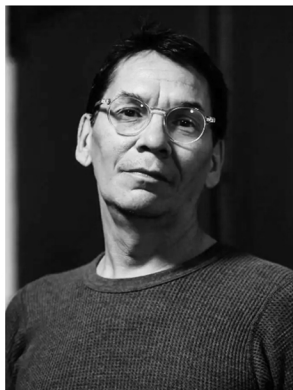


Waltz from Eugene Onegin, Op. 24 [1878]

P.I. Tchaikovsky

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) was a Russian Romantic composer who composed some of the most famous works of 19th century, including *Swan Lake*, *1812 Overture*, and *The Nutcracker*. Compared to other eminent Russian composers of his time such as Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky (part of a group known as “The Five”), Tchaikovsky’s style was more flavoured by the Western European tradition, and he went to great lengths to blend Russian and Western musical elements. A key strength of his compositions is his attention to lyricism and melody, creating lines which range from Russian folk-inflected to strongly French or Germanic in character.

Eugene Onegin, based on the Alexander Pushkin novel of the same name, is an opera with a libretto by Tchaikovsky himself where he aimed to maintain much of the poetic content of the original. The story follows the titular character, a “superfluous man” who is a wealthy and self-absorbed dandy uninterested in the greater good. After rebuffing the advances of Tatyana, the sister-in-law of his friend Lensky, Onegin is invited to her name-day party, where he dances with Lensky’s wife out of spite. Lensky then challenges Onegin to a duel. As neither man is willing to back down, Onegin reluctantly kills Lensky. Years later, Onegin meets an incredibly beautiful woman, who turns out to be Tatyana, now married and unwilling to pursue him. The famous waltz is heard during the scene at Tatyana’s party, just prior to the tragic duel.



Pyotr's Dream [2019] *Andrew Balfour*

Andrew Balfour (1967-) is a Cree composer from the Fisher River Cree Nation in Manitoba. Balfour was taken from his family and adopted by a white settler family as part of the Sixties Scoop, a group of policies enacted by the Canadian government to remove Indigenous children from their families and lands. Balfour's compositions span choral, orchestral, and electroacoustic works, and have been performed by the likes of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Tafelmusik, and the Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra. A key figure in Indigenous music, Balfour has acted as curator and composer-in-residence for the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's Indigenous Festival and as a participant and co-leader of the Banff Indigenous Classical Music Summit.

Pyotr's Dream was commissioned by Tafelmusik for their "Tafelmusik meets Tchaikovsky" program in 2019. The piece is based on Tchaikovsky's Hymn of the Cherubim, which was composed in 1878. This hymn is taken from the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, one of the most celebrated of the Eucharistic services of the Eastern Orthodox Church. In his own words, Balfour describes the piece as "expand[ing] beyond the particular beauty of choral music in church and embraces an appreciation of music as a spiritual truth."

IN MEMORIAM

It is with profound sadness that CCO commemorates the passing of Cris Derksen, a Juno-nominated Two-Spirit, Cree cellist and composer. She was internationally renowned for genre-defying music that bridged traditional and contemporary. Hailing from Treaty 8 territory, Derksen came from a lineage of chiefs from the NorthTall Cree Reserve and Mennonite homesteaders. She left an indelible legacy for the 2SLGBTQIA+ arts community. We dedicate our performance of Andrew Balfour's *Pyotr's Dream* to honour her invaluable contribution to Canadian culture. We mourn the loss of all the musical innovations she would have created, but cherish the many gifts she left behind. We acknowledge she has passed the torch to a new generation of composers and performers who will ensure Indigenous voices are heard in Canadian music.



The Wreckers [1904]

Ethel Smyth

Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944) was an English composer and women's suffrage activist who was the first woman composer awarded damehood. Smyth was an accomplished pianist at a very young age and decided to pursue studying music at the age of twelve. Despite being the subject of plenty of misogynistic criticism during her life, Smyth's work was extensively performed. Until 2016, her opera *Der Wald* was the only opera composed by a woman produced by the Metropolitan Opera Company. In addition to her work as a composer, Smyth was heavily involved in the women's suffrage movement in England as part of the Women's Social and Political Union. She identified the barriers women faced in music as directly related to their lack of political power. As part of her activism, she was jailed for two months for breaking the windows of politicians who fought against women's suffrage.

The Wreckers is an opera which tells the story of Cornish villagers purposefully wrecking and plundering ships along their shores on stormy nights, a common folk story in the nineteenth century. The villagers in the story notice a downturn in wrecked ships and soon uncover that someone is setting beacons to warn ships away from the shore and determined to find the traitor in their midst. The narrative covers typical dramatic Romantic fare including doomed romance, betrayal, and death. Smyth struggled to get the opera staged in its original French until influential impresario and composer Sir Thomas Beecham championed her work. The opera remains rarely performed today, although its overture is a mainstay at the BBC proms and is regularly performed in Britain.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

SUSTAINING DONORS

The Don Middleton and Clayton Wilson Fund

The Estate of John Donat

The Estate of Paul Willis, Concertmaster Chair Trust

The Estate of Uriel Rozen

Addison Tallman for his creation of the Bill McQueen Scholarship Trust

The Margaret and Alexander Rea, Dora and Elly Ellsworth, and

Frank Lowery Charitable Fund

CONTRIBUTORS

\$1,000 and more Catherine Martin, John Todd & Jenny Ginder,
Russell Westkirk

\$500 to \$999 Terry Jackman, Robert Mansell & Elizabeth Mitchell

\$100 to \$499 John Alonso, Robert Bentley, David Brownstone,
Jessica Fernando, John Gladwell, Chris Hatley,
Daniel Manley, Mathieu Maslard, Ron Mitchell,
Eric Mykhalovskiy, Paul Rodger, Brian Terry,
Frank Testin, Katie Thomas, Dorothy Ward, Kendall
Williams, Wayne Wylie, Whitney Young

\$20 to \$99 Anonymous, Emily Elliott, Alex Puettnner, Tyson
Quinlan, Barbara Rodger



The **CCO** thanks **The 519 Community Centre** for its generous and long-standing contribution of the CCO's rehearsal space



Whiskful Thinking
Bakery

Thank you to **Whiskful Thinking Bakery** for its delicious intermission goodies. You can find more treats at **72 Wellesley Street East**.

THE CCO: A WELCOMING MUSICAL SPACE

Counterpoint Community Orchestra was founded in 1984 by musicians at the Metropolitan Community Church to create a safe, respectful and inclusive space for members of the Queer community and their allies to rehearse and perform. It became the first 2SLGBTQIA+ orchestra in Canada. Since its inception, the CCO has welcomed musicians of various skill levels from their late teens to their late 80's. During its 40th anniversary season in 2024, the Directors counted over 600 community musicians who had performed with the CCO over the years! Today, the CCO continues to honour the mission statement of its founders. It is closely tied to the 519 Community Centre and is proudly active in Pride events. The CCO contributes to its vibrant community by regularly awarding small scholarships to music students, mounting mini-concerts in Allan Gardens Park, and commissioning new works from Canadian composers that expand the musical repertoire available to all community orchestras.

The CCO welcomes new musicians and new volunteers. Volunteers work at our concerts, and serve as Directors and committee members, dealing with social media, advertising, programmes, etc. Interested? Contact us at ccorchestra.org.

DONATING TO THE CCO

Donations of \$20 and more receive a tax receipt. In addition, our supporters receive:

- Name recognition in three programmes for donations of \$20 and more
- An MP3 recording for donations of \$100 or more
- One ticket to 3 consecutive concerts for donations of \$500 to \$999
- Two tickets to 3 consecutive concerts for donations of \$1000 and over.

Please use the QR code below to make a donation. Or use canadahelps.org and get an immediate tax receipt. You can also donate by e-transfer to treasurer@ccorchestra.org, by cash or cheque at a concert, and by cheque mailed to Counterpoint Community Orchestra 20 Bloor Street East, PO Box 75134, Toronto ON M4W 3G7:



KENDALL & co.
INTERIOR DESIGN DECOR



Proudly supporting our community
since 1998

Services

- Custom Furniture
- Reupholstery
- Wallpaper
- Wool Rugs
- Lighting
- Window Shades
- Drapery
- Home Decor

Visit us at 514 Parliament St., Cabbagetown 416.363.9914