



Media Release: 11 Classical Music Festivals Collaborate on One Extraordinary Project

July in January features 11 Festivals and 11 Concerts

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PARRY SOUND – During the summer of 2021, two of Canada’s most recognized and respected musicians spoke about the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, and brainstormed ways arts organizations could continue to connect to audiences amidst the uncertainty. Violinist Mark Fewer (Artistic Director of Stratford Summer Music Festival) and clarinetist James Campbell (Artistic Director of Festival of the Sound) wondered if there was a way festivals could join together for an off-season event, as a way to connect and build community. This conversation led to the founding of Classical Music Festivals of Canada (CMFC), a collaboration between eleven Ontario festivals, and the creation of July in January, an online event featuring live music shared by each organization.

"Our thinking was to find a way to give the gift of music as a thank you to our supporters by bringing their favourite summer festivals into their home during the coldest, most isolating months of the year," said Campbell from his home in Parry Sound, Ontario, the home of Festival of the Sound, now in its 43rd year. "July in January takes music lovers on a summer trip across Ontario without leaving the comfort of their home. The enthusiastic response we received from our colleagues about this project proves yet again how the power of great music unites us in challenging times."

Throughout the pandemic, artists and organizations around the world embraced online media to stay in touch with audiences. Festivals invested in state-of-the-art audio-video recording to share livestream performances and artists became increasingly comfortable with the virtual venue. With cameras zoomed in on the musicians and the action on stage, audiences discovered a surprisingly intimate experience – a front-row seat, right from the comfort of their living rooms.

Fewer adds, "Nothing will replace the live concert experience, but streaming does give the music community a great way to stay connected, as well as offer others the opportunity to see what our individual festivals are all about. These are 11 unique festivals, highlighting the breadth of what Ontario has to offer in the summer. I’m very excited about Classical Music Festivals Canada, and our inaugural July in January project. It’s a way for us to reach our audience during the off-season that also allows us to reach classical music fans in new communities, both in Ontario, and beyond."

July in January launches January 28th alongside www.classicalmusicfestivals.ca, and features performances shared by eleven festival organizations, alongside conversations between the artistic directors and host Eric Friesen, whom audiences know well from his many years as host and producer for CBC and NPR public radio. Viewers will be treated to live music from:

Festival of the Sound (Parry Sound, Artistic Director: James Campbell)

Collingwood Summer Music Festival (Collingwood, Artistic Director: Daniel Vnukowski)

Elora Festival (Elora, Artistic Director: Mark Vuorinen)



Music Niagara Festival (Niagara-on-the-Lake, Artistic Director: Atis Bankas)
Ottawa Chamberfest (Ottawa, Artistic Director: Carissa Klopoushak)
Prince Edward County Chamber Music Festival (Picton, Artistic Directors: The New Orford String Quartet)
Stratford Summer Music (Stratford, Artistic Director: Mark Fewer)
Studio 'S' Series (Thousand Islands Playhouse, Ganonoque, Artistic Director: Eric Friesen)
Sweetwater Music Festival (Owen Sound, Artistic Director: Edwin Huizinga)
Toronto Summer Music (Toronto, Artistic Director: Jonathan Crow)
Westben (Campbellford, Artistic Director: Brian Finley)

Campbell and Fewer both expressed their pride in Canada's arts organizations, how they've risen to the pandemic challenge and continued to share top-notch performances with music-lovers across the country.

"One of the reasons the arts thrive through hard times is because we cooperate with each other," says Campbell. "That's just a part of the culture of what we do. July in January presents an opportunity to collaborate on something bigger. I'm really excited to see where this event goes, and how Classical Music Festivals Canada grows in the coming years."

CMFC's inaugural July in January is a free event open to anyone, anywhere. Viewers are encouraged to support the participating arts organizations by donating through links on the website. Visit www.classicalmusicfestivals.ca on January 28th for all concerts and information. Concerts will be available for viewing through to February 28, 2022.

About Classical Music Festivals Canada (CMFC)

Founded in 2021, Classical Music Festivals Canada is a collaboration between 11 different Ontario festivals dedicated to connecting artists, audiences, communities, and professionals from Canada's rich and diverse classical music sector. July in January, an online video chamber music festival, is CMFC's first initiative.

About July in January

Initiated by James Campbell (Artistic Director, Festival of the Sound) and Mark Fewer (Artistic Director, Stratford Summer Music Festival), July in January is an online video chamber music festival born out of the desire to connect to audiences outside of the summer festival season.

Media Contact

Michael Martyn
Executive Director
Festival of the Sound
705-746-2410
martynm@festivalofthesound.ca