

# LAKES AREA MUSIC FESTIVAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## LAKES AREA MUSIC FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES ITS 2025 SEASON: MYTHS AND MAGIC

**July 25–August 17, 2025 | Brainerd, MN**

**Brainerd, MN (March 11, 2025)** – The Lakes Area Music Festival (LAMF) is proud to unveil its 2025 season, *MYTHS AND MAGIC*, bringing world-class orchestra, opera, and chamber music to central Minnesota from July 25 to August 17, 2025. This year’s festival will transport audiences to enchanted realms, where fairy tales, legends, and epic sagas come to life through the power of music, with fairy-tale favorites like *Hänsel & Gretel* and *The Nightingale*, alongside epic sagas including *The Lord of the Rings* and Wagner’s *Ring Without Words*.

“We are thrilled to return with a season that celebrates the transformative magic of music,” said Scott Lykins, Artistic & Executive Director. “This summer’s programming will explore myths, folklore and legendary storytelling, featuring works that highlight the supernatural and the sublime. As hundreds of artists from around the globe return to their summer home for music-making, we’ll be reminded of the enchanting experiences that bring them back year after year: sharing laughter, reuniting with friends, and—of course—creating unforgettable music.”

The Lakes Area Music Festival is Minnesota’s summer home for world-class opera, orchestra, and chamber music. Celebrating its 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary season, more than 200 artists from the nation’s top orchestras and opera companies will present 60 concert, education, and community outreach activities this July and August. Under the leadership of Executive and Artistic Director Scott Lykins, Artistic Director John Taylor Ward, and Music Director Christian Reif, LAMF continues its meteoric rise as one of the nation’s fastest-growing classical music organizations. The festival’s hallmark is its vibrant community of internationally acclaimed musicians who return each summer.

LAMF partners with the Minnesota Orchestra for ticketing services. Tickets are available online at [minnesotaorchestra.org/LakesAreaMusic](https://minnesotaorchestra.org/LakesAreaMusic) and by phone by calling the Minnesota Orchestra Box Office at 612-371-5656 (Tuesday–Friday, 10am–5pm).

## 2025 Festival Season

### MAINSTAGE CONCERTS

SYMPHONY

**Symphonie Fantastique**

Sunday, July 27 at 3 p.m.  
Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts

*The Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Paul Dukas  
*Femmes de légende (Legendary Women)* by Mel Bonis  
*Symphonie fantastique* by Hector Berlioz

Christian Reif, conductor

**An impassioned artist, legendary women, and a wizard in training.** Rich with magical characters and riveting storytelling, our season opens with two of the most spellbinding orchestral works of all time. Enchanted broomsticks spiral into chaos in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, bringing whimsical mischief to life. Hector Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique* sweeps us into a vivid opium-fueled hallucination, journeying from the heights of unrequited love to the depths of a fiery inferno. Let your imagination run wild as our all-star orchestra conjures its musical sorcery.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

### **The Nightingale**

Wednesday, July 30 at 7:30pm  
Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts

"Aviary" from *Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns  
*Le Merle noir (The Blackbird)* by Olivier Messiaen  
*The Nightingale* by Kevin Lau  
Concerto for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet by Ernest Chausson

Grace Park, violin  
Adam Golka, piano  
Karuna, narrator  
Thalea String Quartet

**Take flight in a musical fairy tale.** This enchanting chamber music concert celebrates the elegance and charm of our feathered friends. Loki Karuna brings Hans Christian Andersen's *The Nightingale* to life with a newly composed musical narration. Camille Saint-Saëns and Olivier Messiaen capture the magic of birdsong, while Ernest Chausson's groundbreaking Concerto for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet unveils graceful, soaring soundscapes.

## SYMPHONY

### **A Night at the Opera**

Friday, August 1 at 7:30 p.m.  
Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts

Members of the Lakes Area Music Festival Resident Artist program  
Christian Reif, conductor  
José Luis Gutiérrez, conductor

**Witness the fusion of music and drama.** Perfect for opera fans of all ages, this concert showcases the stars of tomorrow and the LAMF Symphony Orchestra in excerpts from opera's most famous and fascinating stories.

## FAMILY CONCERT

### **Magical Keys**

Sunday, August 3 at 1 p.m.  
Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts

Igor Lipinski, pianist and magician  
Christian Reif, conductor

**Presto chango!** Prepare to be amazed as music and magic come together with award-winning pianist and master illusionist Igor Lipinski. The entire family will marvel by dazzling sleight-of-hand, suspenseful storytelling, and breathtaking piano virtuosity. From the brilliance of Sergei Rachmaninov's radiant rhapsody to the sparkle of George Gershwin's gleaming concerto, the magic of music shines through in this transformational program for kids of all ages.

## DOWNTOWN BRAINERD

### **Block Party**

Wednesday, August 6 at 7:30 p.m.  
Mississippi Landing Amphitheater at Lyman P. White Park

**Familiar hits at the river's edge.** Join LAMF for an outdoor celebration at the picturesque Mississippi Landing Amphitheater in downtown Brainerd. Enjoy a perfect blend of pop hits and classical favorites, all set against a beautiful summer backdrop. With food trucks, a beer tent, and a lively atmosphere, it's the ideal way to spend a summer evening. Bring a lawn chair, a friend, and your love for music!

## OPERA

### **Hänsel & Gretel**

Saturday, August 9 at 7:30 p.m.  
Sunday, August 10 at 3 p.m.  
Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts

Music by Engelbert Humperdinck  
Libretto by Adelheid Wette  
Based on the Brothers Grimm fairy tale

Justin Lucero, stage director  
Christian Reif, conductor  
Ariana Wehr, Gretel  
Abigail Levis, Hänsel  
Sara Couden, Witch  
John Taylor Ward, Father

**A classic tale set in Minnesota's North Woods.** Get lost in the pines and lady slippers as we follow Hänsel and Gretel on their magical journey, with a luscious score by Engelbert Humperdinck and a world premiere production. Described as “a standout” by Opera News, Ariana Wehr makes her festival debut as Gretel alongside the Joy in Singing Foundation’s “Debut Artist of the Year,” Abigail Levis, as Hänsel. Children from the Northfield Youth Choirs and Brainerd’s Legacy Youth Chorale complete this heartwarming, family-friendly musical fairy tale.

#### CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

### Haydn & Shostakovich

Wednesday, August 13 at 7:30 p.m.  
Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts

*The Horses of Saint Mark* by Isidora Zebeljan  
Symphony No. 96, “Miracle” by Fran Joseph Haydn  
Symphony No. 9 by Dmitri Shostakovich

Christian Reif, conductor

**A galloping evening of music to keep you on your toes.** Did a chandelier really fall from the ceiling during the premiere of Haydn’s symphony? What ancient secrets lie behind the iconic bronze Horses of Venice’s St. Mark’s Cathedral? Join us for a lively evening where comedy, boldness, and historical intrigue converge. Haydn and Shostakovich deliver symphonies filled with humor and daring, while Serbian composer Isidora Zebeljan takes us on a vibrant journey into the myths of ancient Greece.

#### SYMPHONY

### Wagner’s Ring

Saturday, August 16 at 7:30 p.m.  
Sunday, August 17 at 3 p.m.  
Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts

*Aux confins de l’orage (At the edge of the storm)* by Camille Pépin  
Music from *The Lord of the Rings* by Howard Shore  
Ring Without Words by Richard Wagner

Christian Reif, conductor

**Three powerful scores, two mythic rings, and one concert to rule them all.** Join us for an unforgettable evening of epic music, featuring Howard Shore’s Oscar-winning score from *The Lord of the Rings* alongside Wagner’s orchestral *Ring Without Words*. A striking new work by Camille Pépin opens our season finale, which features the largest orchestra ever to appear on the Gichi-ziibi stage.

## PRESEASON EVENTS

### Thalea String Quartet

The Thalea String Quartet returns as Artists in Residence, bringing energetic and innovative programs to venues throughout the Lakes Area—from parks and churches to senior centers and the county jail. Catch them on our July PRELUDE SERIES tour of central Minnesota communities.

## **Cabaret**

Saturday, July 19 at 7:30 p.m.  
The Ripple Center, Aitkin

Sunday, July 20 at 7:30 p.m.  
Grandview Lodge, Nisswa

Experience one of the Lake Area's most elegant evenings out! Whether at the historic Aitkin Ripple Center—where Vaudeville acts graced the stage a century ago—or in the timeless charm of the Norway Center at Grand View Lodge, you'll be captivated by performances from our renowned international opera cast and talented Resident Artists. Let life be your cabaret!

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **Summer Solstice**

Sunday, June 22 at 6 p.m.  
The Pavilion at Madden's Resort

Enjoy the longest sunset of the year lakeside at Madden's with the Lakes Area Music Festival. Summer Solstice is a celebration of great food and music. This annual fundraiser—complete with raffles and auctions—benefits our youth education programs.

### **Gala: Spellbound**

Friday, July 25 at 6 p.m.  
Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts

Our largest fundraiser of the year, the Musician's Gala includes pre-concert dinner packages, a live auction, and opportunities to support the world-class professional musicians who bring their talents to the Lakes Area and spark connections through music.

## **MUSIC EDUCATION**

### **Sound Garden**

Saturday, August 2, 9 a.m.–11 a.m.

## Northland Arboretum

Venture through the scenic forest trails of the Northland Arboretum, discovering musicians from every section of the orchestra along the way!

## Explore Music

August 4–8, 9 a.m. 12 p.m. daily  
Forestview Middle School

Kids in the Lakes Area won't want to miss this action-packed, weeklong day camp brimming with fun and creativity! Each day, participants will move, dance, sing, and play instruments while flexing their imaginative muscles through exciting guided improvisation activities.

## CASUAL CLASSICS

### Yoga + Live Music

Saturday, August 9 at 10 a.m.  
Lyman P. White Park Amphitheater

Join Jennifer Smith of Nisswa Yoga for sun salutations, accompanied by a live quintet of LAMF musicians. All levels are welcome to this serene experience!

### Musicians' Night Out

Thursday, August 14 at 7 p.m.  
Roundhouse Brewery, Nisswa

Grab a pint and meet musicians from around the world between sets of informal live music outdoors at local breweries.

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