

# LAKES AREA MUSIC FESTIVAL

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## Lakes Area Music Festival's Prelude Series Brings Free Concerts Across Central Minnesota

### Thalea String Quartet Performs in Five Cities July 12–19

**Brainerd, MN (July 1, 2025)** – The Lakes Area Music Festival (LAMF) kicks off its 2025 season with the Prelude Series, a beloved tradition that brings inspiring chamber music directly to communities across central Minnesota. From July 12 to 19, the acclaimed Thalea String Quartet will present five free concerts in Aitkin, Nisswa, Bemidji, Brainerd, and St. Cloud. No tickets are required, and all performances are open to the public with free-will donations accepted.

“These concerts are an incredible way to warm up to the mainstage season while engaging with communities throughout the region,” said Scott Lykins, LAMF Founder and Artistic & Executive Director. “Whether you’re a lifelong fan of chamber music or new to classical performance, these programs are designed to connect, inspire, and welcome all.”

### Prelude Series Dates and Locations

- **AITKIN** – Saturday, July 12 at 7:30 p.m. | Ripple Center (301 Minnesota Ave N)
- **NISSWA** – Sunday, July 13 at 2:00 p.m. | Lutheran Church of the Cross (5064 County Rd 13)
- **BEMIDJI** – Sunday, July 13 at 7:30 p.m. | First Lutheran Church (505 Bemidji Ave N)
- **BRAINERD** – Friday, July 18 at 7:30 p.m. | Lyman P. White Amphitheater (484 E River Rd)
- **ST. CLOUD** – Saturday, July 19 at 2 p.m. | Great River Regional Library (1300 W St. Germain St)

Winners of the 2021 Ann Divine Educator Award from the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, the Thalea String Quartet brings vibrancy and emotional commitment to every performance. Their programs reflect the past, present, and future of the string quartet repertoire, while celebrating diverse musical traditions from around the world.

Formed by violinists Christopher Whitley and Kumiko Sakamoto, violist Lauren Spaulding, and cellist Alex Cox, the quartet has performed at venues across North America, Europe, and China, including the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and Massey Hall. They have shared the stage with renowned artists like Pulitzer Prize-winner Caroline Shaw and violist Lawrence Power, and have premiered dozens of new works by living composers.

In addition to performing, the Thalea Quartet is deeply engaged in education and community outreach, having led programs at Berklee College of Music, the University of Miami, and Wayne State Medical School, among others. They currently serve as the Doctoral Fellowship Quartet at the University of Maryland.

This July, their musical journey continues through Minnesota's heartland—inviting audiences of all ages to gather, listen, and connect through the power of chamber music. In addition to these performances, the quartet will carry out numerous community outreach activities, including concerts in eldercare facilities, libraries, shelters, and the Crow Wing County Jail.

To learn more about the Prelude Series and see all upcoming LAMF events, visit [lakesareamusic.org](https://lakesareamusic.org).

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### **About the Lakes Area Music Festival**

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. Founded in 2009, the Lakes Area Music Festival sparks connections between its central Minnesota community and the nation's top classical performers to create transformative musical experiences. The Lakes Area Music Festival is a 501c3 non-profit based in Brainerd, MN. To find out more visit [lakesareamusic.org](https://lakesareamusic.org) or call 218-ASK-LAMF (218-275-5263).