

LAKES AREA MUSIC FESTIVAL

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VIDEO:

<https://vimeo.com/reviews/66ae88d0-d1d6-40d7-93a7-0d8f8a196445/videos/1217762035>

18th Lakes Area Music Festival Season Breaks Records, Fuels Excitement with Special Announcement

When Scott Lykins and friends founded the [Lakes Area Music Festival](#) in 2009, they had a vision: bring the nation's top classical music performers to his hometown of Brainerd, Minnesota. (And maybe have a little fun in the process.) Scott was just 22 years old and knew he couldn't do it alone.

Others quickly stepped in to help over the years. Internationally conductor, [music director, Christian Reif](#), who flies in with his family from Germany every summer. Music educator, Marc Harroo, who ensures private lessons and experiences reach more than 2,000 K-12 youth in the area. The hundreds of volunteers who house, provide their cars, feed and greet more than 200 musicians who descend upon central Minnesota for the 60+ events each July and August. The private home in Minneapolis who opens their doors for an intimate winter series. And, of course, the thousands who attend all the concerts that are offered on a pay as you are able basis; those who cannot afford it, attend free of charge.

They did - and do – believe Lakes Area Music Festival is something special.

But no one saw Sunday's news coming. When Scott took the stage immediately after the sold-out August 16 matinee performance of the opera *Carmen*, featuring [Grammy winner Julia Bullock](#) in the title role, it was a moment years on the making. He announced that LAMF's original vision now had an even more promising future to build upon, thanks to a **new \$2 million endowment** from Dave and Marlys Thies. By far the largest gift the organization has ever received, funds for the nonprofit will be invested to provide benefits for years to come.

"We are very pleased to support the Lakes Area Music Festival and make a difference with this donation. We want this to be a catalyst and hope it leads to more people discovering the talent that these people have. It truly is something to behold," said Dave and Marlys Thies in a statement regarding their gift.

Scott Lykins agrees. "A gift of this size is incredibly meaningful for an organization like ours. First, knowing that someone in our community would see the value of our mission, and the impact in the community and be moved to support it like this; and second, in consideration of what it means for our future. Our board and artistic teams were already in discussions for innovative programming in the upcoming seasons to pave the

way for a sustainable future. This generous gift from Dave and Marlys turns what might have been a long-term dream into a reality.”

One of the country’s fastest growing organizations of its kind, the Lakes Area Music Festival is Minnesota’s summer home for world-class opera, orchestra, and chamber music. Musicians and vocalists from the nation’s top orchestras and opera companies are currently presenting a jammed-packed concert, education, and community outreach schedule this July and August in Brainerd. For more information on the Festival, visit www.lakesareamusic.org.