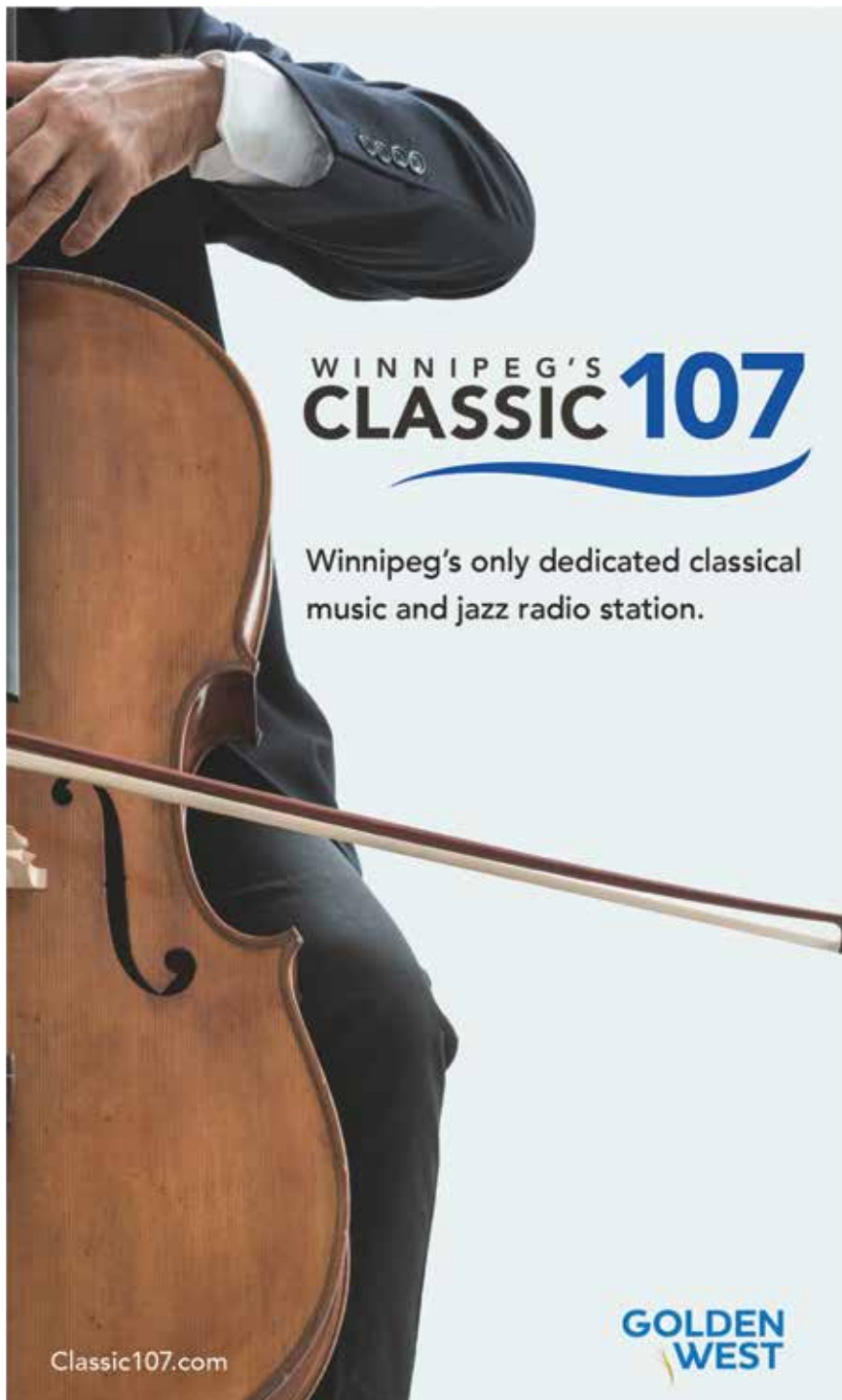




GS2: North/south

November 25, 2025 – 7:00pm
Winnipeg Art Gallery: Qaumajuq



Curator's Message

GroundSwell is very excited to be working with the Winnipeg Art Gallery-Qaumajuq on this event!

This concert/exhibition, co-presented by GroundSwell and the Winnipeg Art Gallery (WAG)-Qaumajuq, will be a confluence of cultures, exploring connections between the North and South of Canada through the voices of Inuit, First Nations and non-Indigenous musicians and creators, alongside a series of Inuit artworks; seven in all chosen from the recent WAG-Qaumajuq exhibition Inuit Sanaugangit: Art Across Time. The artworks will be displayed on pedestals in the WAG Main Hall, alternating around the walls of the space with works from the exhibition A View from Here by artist Wanda Koop. You'll hear throat songs by Caramello and Chasity Swan, and several exciting improvisations by violists Melody McKiver and Jennifer Thiessen, joined in some by percussionist Ben Reimer and throat singers Caramello and Chasity Swan. These involve

violas, foot-pedals, computers and amplifiers, and originate from new explorations of duos for viola-related instruments by McKiver and Reimer. These improvisations will be inspired by the seven Inuit artworks which surround you. They're listed below; please see them before and after the concert. We'll also hear Reckoning for solo viola and electronics composed and played by Melody McKiver, as well as a new piece of mine for viola and percussion, Tundra, played by Jennifer Thiessen and Ben Reimer, also known as Park Sounds. You're also invited to visit the Qaumajuq's three-story glass Visible Vault of Inuit Art before and after the concert. This will be a real meeting of cultures and an amazing evening of new sounds, contrasts, surprises, and inspiring artworks.

Jim Hiscott

Land Acknowledgement

GroundSwell is proud to exist on Treaty 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and on the homeland of the Metis Nation. We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories and acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past. We are committed to honouring the land on which we create and share music and dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

GroundSwell and the WAG-Qaumajuq present:

GS2: North/South

Dedicated to our friend and colleague, Ian Fillingham.

Throat Song Set 1

composer/performers:
Chasity Swan,
Caramello Swan

Tundra for viola and percussion*

composer:
Jim Hiscott
performers:
Jennifer Thiessen,
Ben Reimer

Duo Improvisation 1 for two violas and electronics

composer/performers:
Melody McKiver,
Jennifer Thiessen

INTERMISSION

New Throat Song Set 2

composer/performers:
Chasity Swan,
Caramello Swan

* World Premiere

MUSICIANS AND CREDITS:

Caramello Swan, throat singer
Chasity Swan, throat singer
Melody McKiver, viola and electronics
Jennifer Thiessen, viola and electronics
Ben Reimer, percussion

Reckoning for solo viola and electronics

composer/performer:
Melody McKiver

Duo Improvisation 2 for two violas and electronics*

composer/performers:
Melody McKiver,
Jennifer Thiessen

Trio Improvisation for two violas with electronics and percussion*

composer/performers:
Melody McKiver,
Jennifer Thiessen,
Ben Reimer

Group Improvisation for two violas with electronics, percussion and two throat singers*

composer/performers:
Melody McKiver,
Jennifer Thiessen,
Ben Reimer,
Caramello Swan,
Chasity Swan



Jim Hiscott, curator

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Artworks by Inuit and Non-Indigenous artists from WAG-Qaumajuq collections:

The Endurance Game, 2016

Michael Massie

People in a Boat, 2006
green/brown stone; wood

Jonasie Faber

Horned Owl, 1967
clay

Prime Okalik

Aura, 1996
Brazilian soapstone; steel

David Ruben Piqtouken

Winged Shaman Dancer, 1990
whale bone; antler; stone

Charlie Ugyuk

Bird Shaman, c. 1975
caribou antler; stone; caribou skin; metal

Luke Iksiktaaryuk

Drum Dancer, c. 2003
Serpentine stone; caribou antler

Aqjangajuk Shaa

Wanda Koop: A View From Here
(selections)

Wanda Koop

Inuit Artwork exhibit curated by Rachel Baerg, Head of Education & Public Programs, WAG-Qaumajuq

Stage Manager: Paul Virluan

Audio Technician: Lloyd Peterson

Video Crew: Compass Digital Media

Winnipeg Art Gallery technician: Evan Williams

Winnipeg Art Gallery staff whose support, production and help
in many ways made this concert possible.



Programme Notes

Tundra

Jim Hiscott

Tundra is inspired by a walk on the open tundra outside Baker Lake, Nunavut in the late nineties. What I saw was an uninterrupted expanse of low rolling hills, stretching off to the horizon. There was hardly a tree to be seen. The ground was covered with myriad low plants of all types – mosses, lichens, wildflowers, grasses, and many wild berries such as ground juniper, crowberry, and cloudberry. It was September, on a fall day with mixed sun and clouds, and the landscape as far as the eye could see was alive with bright colours – reds, yellows, oranges the tiny fall leaves of the ground plants. It was overwhelming and majestic.

In this piece I try to express the wonder I felt at this amazing environment – bliss for the eyes and mind. This feeling goes through stages from single notes to complex textures, with shifting moods. But there is also an underlying disquiet, caused by the concern of the impact of climate change on these plants. Some species are taking over from others; plants are growing taller and flowering faster.

This piece was inspired by travels on traditional lands of the Inuit people of Nunavut.



In memory of Ian Fillingham,
*a wonderful colleague whose
contributions to GroundSwell
and the Winnipeg arts community
were enormous.*

Reckoning

Melody McKiver

Melody McKiver's *Reckoning* originated as part of a theatrical presentation of the same name produced by the Indigenous activist arts organization Article 11. A triptych in movement, video and text, this incendiary work traces three separate experiences with Indian Residential Schools, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the fallout that has already reverberated across the country. The first section of this production, entitled *Witness*, follows a first-generation Canadian reviewing claims made by residential school survivors to the Truth and

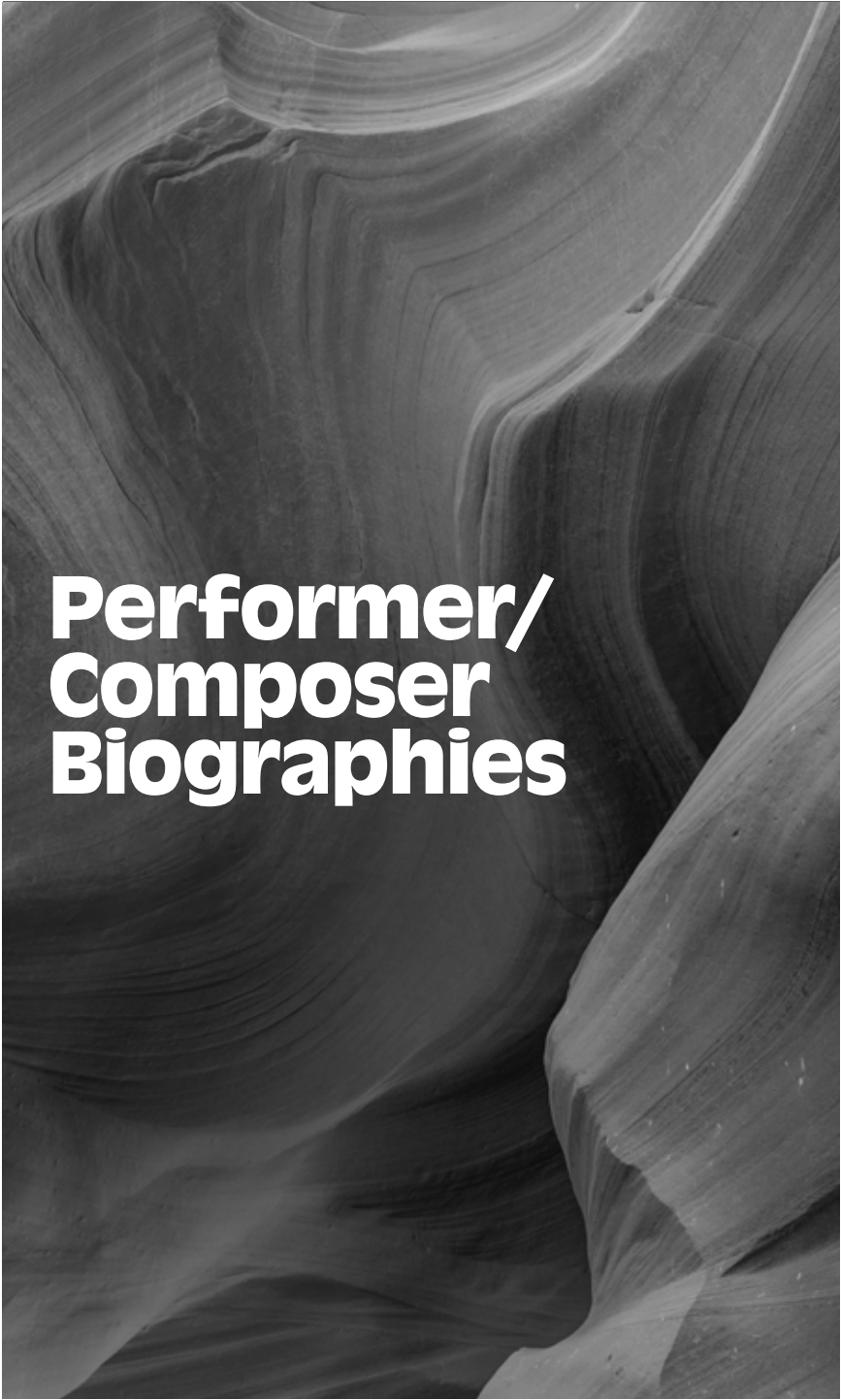
Improvisations:

Once upon a 2022, two violists with pedal boards found themselves living in the same city. Melody McKiver and Jennifer Thiessen met through a shared fascination for rare and interesting violas, sweeping soundscapes created with strings and live electronics, and free

Reconciliation Commission and emotionally processing those traumas experienced by children.

Music from *Witness* evolved into *Reckoning EP*, an album of solo viola and live electronics captured by McKiver in a single take. On tonight's concert, McKiver will perform their concert arrangement of the movements from this album. *Reckoning* is dedicated to the memory of Melody McKiver's late grandmother Waa'oo Kathleen Bunting-iban, a survivor of Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School in Kenora, Ontario.

improvisation as a creative practice. For this North/South program, they will share spontaneous sonic stories as a duo and in conversation with throat singers Chasity and Caramello Swan, percussionist Ben Reimer, and the seven Inuit artworks circling the room.



Performer/ Composer Biographies

Caramello Swan

Caramello Swan is an Inuit and Ojibway woman whose leadership, cultural pride, and creative spirit have made her a powerful voice in her community.

She currently works as the Youth Manager at Tunngasugit, where she supports and empowers Inuit Youth through culturally grounded programming and advocacy. Deeply connected to her roots, Caramello actively contributes to indigenous representation and decision making as a member of multiple advisory

boards across Canada. Her deep work consistently reflects a deep commitment to uplifting the voices of her people and fostering spaces where indigenous youth can thrive. Beyond her leadership roles Caramello is a gifted throat singer and heartfelt music performer, known for sharing traditional Inuit music with grace, authenticity, and emotion. Her artistry and dedication to cultural preservation continues to inspire many within the Inuit community.

Chasity Swan

Chasity Swan is a 23-year-old Inuit woman from Winnipeg, Manitoba. Chasity is the Adult Program Coordinator to Tunngasugit, Western Canada's first Inuit Resource Centre located in Winnipeg. Chasity is an active member with the Inuit

community in Winnipeg and uses her throat singing to demonstrate and teach about Inuit culture. Chasity has performed at various events and festivals. Such as, Indigenous day live, Sakihwe Festival, and for WASAC night.

Melody McKiver

Melody McKiver's (they/them, do not use any other pronouns) musical work integrates electronics with Western classical music to shape a new genre of Anishinaabe compositions. A proud member of Obishikokaang Lac Seul First Nation, Melody is currently Assistant Professor of Indigenous Music (tenure-track) with the Desautels Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba and a member of the Mizi'iwe Aana Kwat (LGBTQ2S+ Council) within the Anishinaabe

Nation of Treaty #3. They are the 2020 recipient of the Canada Council's Robert Fleming Prize awarded annually to an exceptionally talented young Canadian composer, and a recurring invited participant in the Banff Centre for the Arts' Indigenous Classical Music gatherings.

A frequent performer across Turtle Island, Melody has performed at the National Arts Centre, Luminato Festival, Vancouver's Western Front,

and the Toronto International Film Festival. They have shared stages with Polaris Prize winners Lido Pimienta, Tanya Tagaq, and Jeremy Dutcher, and performed with acclaimed filmmaker and musician Alanis Obomsawin. As a composer, Melody has a growing body of chamber and choral works. Notably, they were commissioned by Soundstreams and Jumbles Theatre to compose *Odaabaanag*, a string quartet responding to Steve Reich's *Different Trains*, drawing on interviews conducted with Anishinaabe elders from Melody's First Nation. Melody has scored several films and was invited to the Berlinale Talents Sound Studio as a music and composition mentor for the

2020 Berlin International Film Festival. Additional commissions have included Cluster Festival, Marina Thibeault, Duo AIRS, Brandon University, Megumi Masaki, Carnegie Mellon University, and TORQ Percussion with the Elora Singers. Upcoming projects include a setting of Métis author Katherena Vermette's poem *river woman* for the Elora Singers and TORQ Percussion Quartet, and a full-length album. Melody holds an MA in Ethnomusicology from Memorial University and a BFA in Music and Indigenous Studies from York University.

Jennifer Thiessen

Jennifer Thiessen has performed and recorded extensively as a solo and collaborative artist in Canadian music communities. Her work as a classical and creative viola and viola d'amore player has been presented by No Hay Banda, Innovations en Concert, Ottawa New Music Creators, send+receive, GroundSwell, suddenlyLISTEN, Cluster Festival, Festival Montréal Baroque, Lamèque International Baroque Festival, Oakville Chamber Orchestra, and Rosamunde Festival. She writes music for viola, voice, and electronics as Daily Alice, and with her JUNO-nominated duo Toninato & Thiessen whose sophomore album *Dream of Heat* will be released in February 2026 (Ambiances Magnétiques). Based in Montreal for two decades, Jennifer

was a core member of Ensemble Caprice, collectif9, Ensemble SuperMusique, La La La Human Steps and many other groups for concerts, recordings, and international tours. Since returning to Manitoba, she plays with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, at the Winnipeg Baroque Festival, and a variety of other musical adventures. Jennifer writes music journalism for Musicworks Magazine and poetry for her personal projects. She curated and directed three diverse seasons of internationally acclaimed chamber music as Artistic Director of Virtuosi Concerts from 2021 to 2025. Within a multiplicity of artistic adventures, she is grounded in a passion to create meaningful experiences for herself and her listeners.

Ben Reimer

Ben Reimer has been called a “genre-bending wiz” (PuSh) and a performer of “stunning virtuosity” (Ludwig-Van Mtl). He has been a guest soloist in the CBC JUNO Showcase, the Bang On A Can Marathon, Roulette Concert Series NYC, Winnipeg New Music Festival, Edmonton New Music, Calgary New Music, Music on Main, Luminato Festival, Tapestry Opera, Open Ears Festival and others. Ben has performed with such ensembles as Paramirabo, the Australian Art Orchestra, Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec, Collectif9, Standing Wave,

Land’s End Ensemble, Architek Percussion and TorQ Percussion. He holds a Doctor of Music from McGill University and is a contributing author to the Cambridge Companion to the Drumkit. His debut album *Katana of Choice: Music for Drumset Soloist* is described as “an exhilarating musical ride” (Wholenote). Ben is the Acting Principal Percussionist of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and is a Sabian Cymbals, Yamaha Canada and Vic Firth artist.

Park Sounds

Park Sounds (Ben Reimer & Jennifer Thiessen) premiered their program *Root Systems* in 2019 (GroundSwell, Canada Council for the Arts) featuring commissions by Karen Sunabacka, Michael Matthews, Marielle Groven and Dan Morphy alongside pieces by Luciano Berio, Tigran Mansurian and Greg Lowe for viola/viola d’amore and percussion. In 2021, they collaborated with pianist Natsuki Hiratsuka on the program *Scenes & Formations* (Innovations en Concert, Le Vivier, Festival Accès Asie), including the premiere of Vincent Ho’s *Kickin’ It 2.0* for viola,

piano and drumkit and works by Toru Takemitsu and Tigran Mansurian. In 2022, the duo composed *Time Piece* for GroundSwell’s *Linked* series. In this 15-minute audio/video piece for drum kit, viola and field recordings, thunderous drum beats and processed viola loops interact with the sounds and sights of Jennifer’s father’s clock repair shop in an ambient exploration of time. *Time Piece* inspired a full program of original works for drumkit and viola interspersed with Canadian compositions, presented by Ottawa New Music Creators in 2023.

Jim Hiscott

Jim Hiscott’s music has been performed across North America, in Europe and Asia by many artists including the Hilliard Ensemble, the St. Lawrence String Quartet, the Molinari String Quartet, James Campbell, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the Edmonton Symphony, the CBC Radio Orchestra, Vancouver New Music, Orquesta Joven de Andalusia, Festa Musica Nova Ensemble (São Paulo) and Philadelphia’s Relâche. In addition to works for instruments and voices in the European classical tradition, he has written for Balinese gender wayang quartet, diatonic button accordion, dizi, erhu, zheng, tabla, and Latin band. He has performed on button accordion and Balinese gender across Canada and in the U.S., including in the WSO New Music Festival and the Vancouver Folk Music Festival, and as soloist with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. Recent premieres include *Lucioles* for brass quintet (Northern Brassworks), *Skin* for string quartet (Quatuor Bozzini), *Midnight Strut* [Clarinet

version] (James Campbell); *Turning* for piano quartet (The Winnipeg Chamber Music Society), *The Milky Dust of Stars* (Sarah Jo Kirsch, soprano and Yuri Hooker, cello); *Water Circle* (The Frontier Fiddlers and the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra); *Quintet for Zheng and String Quartet* (Geling Jiang, VICO String Quartet); and *Far Heavens* for dizi and string orchestra (Xiao-Nan Wang / Manitoba Chamber Orchestra / Judith Yan). Hiscott’s CDs include “Spirit Reel”, “Norte Tropical” and “Blue Ocean” (nominated for Outstanding Classical Composition, Western Canadian Music Awards). His music has also been featured on releases by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Rivka Golani, Shawn Mativetsky and the Jennifer Cooper/Amy Hamilton flute duo.

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