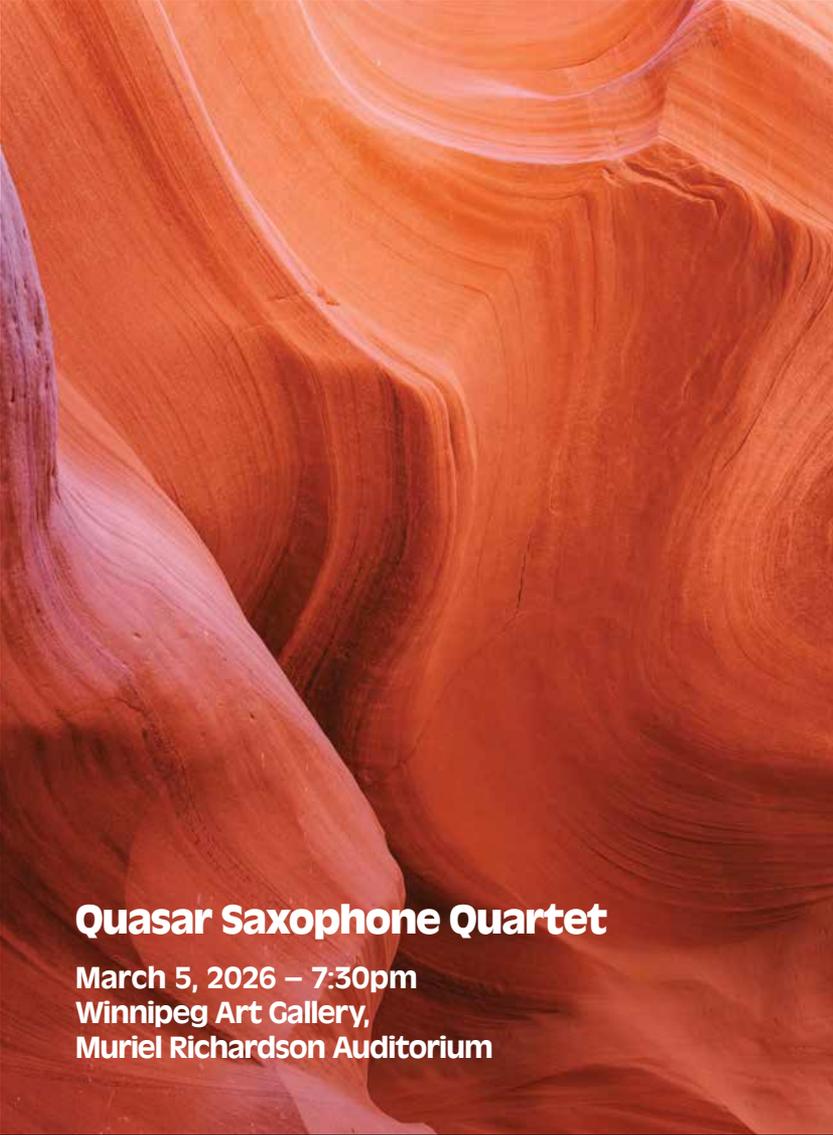
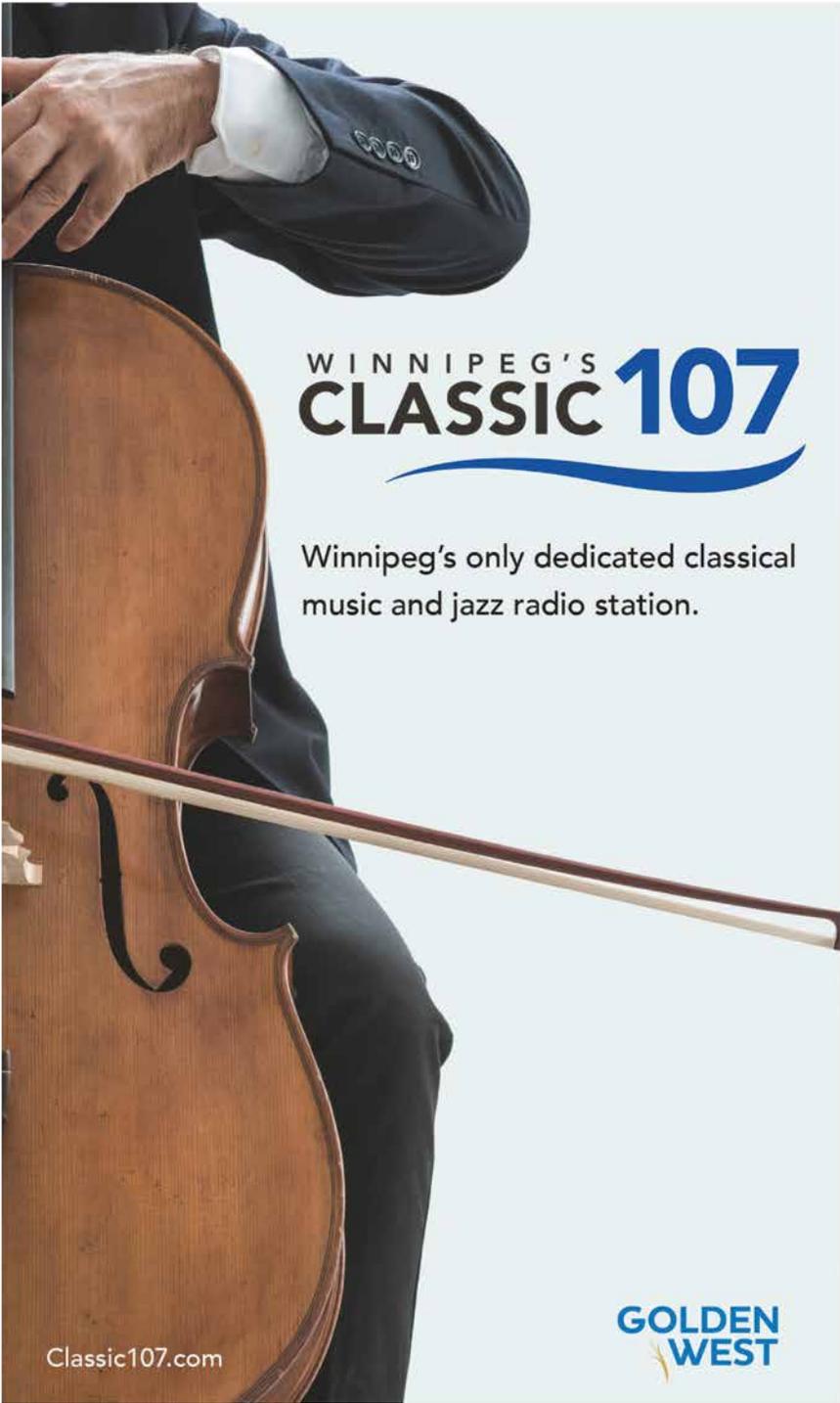


Vestigial Structures



Quasar Saxophone Quartet

March 5, 2026 – 7:30pm
Winnipeg Art Gallery,
Muriel Richardson Auditorium



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GS3: **Vestigial Structures** Quasar Saxophone Quartet

Azaya (2024)

Egidija Medekšaitė

Bug (2024)

Bekah Simms

Super Colliders II (2026)

Takuto Fukuda

INTERMISSION

CITIES (2026)

An original composition written and performed by
the students of Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau—
Brady Gill, conductor;
Kenley Kristofferson, mentor composer

Engrammes (2020)

Örjan Sandred

liminal spaces: a study in five acts (2026)

Gordon Fitzell

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 Métis 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.

Programme Notes

Egidija Medekšaitė, *Azaya* (2024)

Commissioned by Lithuanian Composers' Union

In a world where nature loses its power through the negligence of humans; where the world is filled with tremendous stress and anxiety; where humanity is overshadowed by anger and the power to reign, frightening buzzing sounds and sonic violence become a new norm in our daily life. In this piece, music is a manifesto of lost peace and harmony. A single sound, reminiscent of bumblebees, is divided into microtones; as the piece progresses, this sound is

transformed into sonic warfare. The video, created by Lukas Miceika, is based on the electronic motor found in a predator drone engine. Throughout the piece, it multiplies and morphes into unmanned aerial aircraft. The piece was premiered by Quasar saxophone quartet on October 9, 2024 at the Energy and Technology Museum in Vilnius, Lithuania. *Azaya* is dedicated to my daughter.

Bekah Simms, *Bug* (2024)

Commissioned by Quasar

Lofi, glitch, and dreamy brokenness permeate: a hazy and smally kinetic computer-saxophone hybrid.

Takuto Fukuda, *Super Colliders II* (2026)

Commissioned work – winner of GroundSwell's 2025-26 Emerging Composers Competition

Super Colliders II, for four pitched instruments and a gamified screen-score, is a digital gameful composition commissioned by GroundSwell and written for the Canadian saxophone quartet Quasar in 2025 and 2026. The composition seeks to translate the affective engagement of gameplay into a musical performance context by integrating game mechanics, such as competition and cooperation, and game elements, including avatars and life points. These components are designed to foster immersive, real-time interactions between the performers and a computer system during performance. Four musicians

control their avatars such that they collide with obstacles, which represent MIDI notes on a screen-score. The musicians compete with each other to hit the most obstacle MIDI notes while fighting against a computer that generates numerous obstacle MIDI notes as challenges. The more an avatar collides with the obstacles, the more life points the player earns. The more an avatar misses the obstacles, the more life points the player loses. Which musician earns the most points? Or do they all die?

CITIES (2026)

An original composition written and performed by the students of Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau—Brady Gill, conductor; Kenley Kristofferson, mentor composer

This is the culmination of a long-term project wherein students of the local high school Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau, led by conductor Brady Gill, composed a brand-new work for concert band to be premiered at tonight's concert. The creation of the new work was facilitated by composer Kenley Kristofferson, who served as a mentor for the project.

Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau is a French Immersion High School in Transcona. Over a third of the school's 420 students participate in CPET's music program, which offers concert band, jazz band, and choir for grade 9-12 students. We feel fortunate to have been selected to participate in this music composition experience with Kenley Kristofferson and greatly appreciate the support of GroundSwell to initiate and fund the project.

Students in this ensemble were selected based on their desire to participate in the composition process, as well as their willingness to support and perform works of their peers. Students were led through a creative journey with the goal of creating a new work to be performed at tonight's concert. The parameters of the project allowed students to work in small groups or individually, and to collaborate and comment on their work throughout the creative process.

Tonight's performance is the culmination of 10 hours of work with composer/facilitator Kenley Kristofferson, plus countless hours of the students' own time preparing the music. The participants chose "CITIES" as the theme to explore with their individual vignettes.

The music is based on a quartertone harmony. The computer listens to the performers and extends the chords they play, based on the pitches it detects. In some sections, the micro-intonation in the live electronic part

is closely conducted by the saxophones' performance. All electronic sounds are generated through sound synthesis.

Gordon Fitzell, *liminal spaces: a study in five acts* (2026)

Commissioned by Quasar with support from the Manitoba Arts Council and the Winnipeg Arts Council

liminal spaces: a study in five acts (2026) is a mixed media work featuring saxophone quartet, immersive audio, synchronized video, and an array of found objects. The objects—all small, iconic "retro" devices from the twentieth century, such as walkie-talkies and a rotary-dial telephone—contribute to a nostalgic element integral to the central concept of liminality.

Liminality refers to a place or experience that is transitional in nature, on the threshold of something different. Beyond this general meaning, the concept of liminality applies specifically to the more recent internet aesthetic wherein empty or abandoned places appear not only

transitional, but also eerie, forlorn, surreal, and nostalgic. In blending the four saxophones with old and new technology, I seek to express broad notions of liminality and the emotional states associated with it.

liminal spaces comprises five movements, each referring to one type of liminal space: i. airports; ii. malls; iii. hospitals; iv. parking lots; v. heterotopia. The audio-visual element of the piece features manipulated audio and video recordings associated with each of the five spaces. The work is dedicated to the Quasar Saxophone Quartet.

Örjan Sandred, *Engrammes* (2020)

Commissioned by Quasar with support from the Quasar Creative Fund

An engram is the trace of a memory in the brain. Engrams exist physically through the constellation of interconnected neurons. Engrams and our ability to memorize – and to forget – is central in music. We understand a musical event in relation to events that existed earlier in the composition and now only survive in our memory.

Engrammes for saxophone quartet and live electronics begins with a forceful 2-minute ending. The music continues however, and most of the piece paints how the impact of these 2 minutes exists in our memory, and how the impression transforms and fades away.



Biographies

Quasar

Known for its unique energy and bold innovation, Montreal's intrepid saxophone quartet Quasar has been exploring the boundaries of musical creation since its founding in 1994. The group has travelled the world and seemingly done it all—acoustic music, electroacoustic music, multimedia projects, improvisation, orchestral collaborations, and more! Quasar presents a series of concerts each season in Montreal while performing extensively across Canada, Mexico, the United States, and Europe. The quartet has been invited to various international festivals including: Busan Maru (Korea), Ars Musica (Brussels), SALT Festival (Victoria), and Tonlagen (Dresden).

Offering a highly diversified repertoire extending from classical to jazz, Quasar explores the broadest range of possibilities on the saxophone. In particular, the quartet is a driving force in musical creation, regularly working closely with composers, encouraging research, experimentation, and the cultivation of unprecedented ideas. Over the course of its thirty-two years of activity, the multiple award-winning ensemble has commissioned and premiered over 200 works by leading Canadian and international composers, recorded seven albums, and won 11 OPUS prizes awarded by the Conseil québécois de la musique, including for "Artist of the Year."

Egidija Medekšaitė

When it comes to her studies, there are at least two important facts in Egidija Medekšaitė's biography: firstly, she completed her composition studies under Rytis Mažulis at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre; secondly, she graduated in textile design from the Kaunas University of Technology. She is organically linked to her composition mentor through her research into the microdimensions of music and the 'digital' principle, pointing to both the way the compositions are calculated and the use of digital media, while

her textile studies have given a strong ideological and structural impulse to her music. The structures of Indian music often find their way into Medekšaitė's post-minimalist work. All the same, in listening to her music it does not seem that it is constructed on strict structuralist principles, rather, it sounds like an hypnotic, ambient flow of sounds, flowing through forms in space.

(Asta Pakarklytė)

Bekah Simms

JUNO award-winning composer Bekah Simms hails from St. John's, Newfoundland and is currently based in Glasgow after nine years living and working in Toronto. Their varied musical output has been heralded as "cacophonous, jarring, oppressive — and totally engrossing!" (*CBC Music*), "visceral contemporary music that enfolds external inspirations with dazzling rigor and logic" (*Peter Margasak*), and lauded for its "sheer range of ingenious material, expressive range and sonic complexity" (*The Journal of Music*.) Propelled equally by fascination and terror toward the universe, Bekah's work is often filtered through the personal lens of their anxiety, resulting in nervous, messy, and frequently heavy electroacoustic musical landscapes. Recent interests in just intonation and virtual instruments have resulted in increasingly lush and strange harmonic environments.

Bekah's music has been widely performed across North America and Europe including at the Gaudeamus Festival, Wien Modern, TIME:SPANS, Music on Main, ACHT BRÜCKEN, and New Music Dublin. She has worked with some of the top interpreters of contemporary music internationally, including *Crash Ensemble* (with whom she was *artist-in-residence* from 2022-2024), *Nikel*, *Riot Ensemble*, *Quatuor Bozzini*, *Eighth Blackbird*, the *Zöllner-Roche Duo*, and *Nouvel Ensemble Moderne*. Bekah has also been the recipient of over 40 awards, competitive selections, nominations, and prizes, including a 2024 Guggenheim Fellowship, the 2019 Barlow Prize, and the 2023 JUNO Award for Classical Composition of the Year. In 2016 the CBC included her among their annual 30 hot classical musicians under 30.

Takuto Fukuda

Takuto Fukuda is a composer, multimedia artist, and gestural controller performer. Viewing art as a medium for insight-sharing, he uses music technologies to question preconceived boundaries of human conditions, such as those between human and non-human, normal and abnormal, and able and disabled. His creative practice spans a wide range of media and styles: from mixed media compositions integrating audiovisual content and live performers, to gamified works enabling real-time, interactive, and chance-based music-

making, as well as music for digital musical instruments like the T-Stick.

Fukuda's work has been recognized internationally with accolades from the GroundSwell Composer Competition 2025 (Canada), the ICU International Composers Contest (Ukraine), and ISMIR 2020 (Canada). His compositions have been performed by leading ensembles such as *Ensemble Intercontemporain* (France), *Vertixe Sonora Ensemble* (Spain), *Ensemble Paramirabo* (Canada), and the *Ligeti Quartet* (UK), and featured at major

festivals including *Ars Electronica* (Austria), *ISCM World Music Days* (South Korea), and *ICMC* (Slovenia, Greece, USA), among others. He holds a Doctor of Music in Composition from McGill University and is currently

a postdoctoral fellow at Concordia University, where he is developing a Mixed Reality system for his opera on neurodiversity.

Brady Gill

Brady Gill has been the band, jazz band, and choral teacher at Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau since 2005. He holds degrees in music and education from McGill University, University of Windsor, and Mohawk College. He has directed the Manitoba Honour Jazz Band, RETSD Divisional Band, Canadian Mennonite University Jazz

ensemble, Westside Jazz Band, and instructed at the University of Manitoba Jazz and Manitoba Band Association (MBA) Summer Band Camps. Brady has composed and arranged music for the Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra and studied composition with David Braid and Mike Malone.

Kenley Kristofferson

Kenley Kristofferson is a composer for concert band, concert choir, symphony orchestra, and video games. Growing up as a euphonium player in Gimli, Manitoba, he later went on to complete his B.Mus. and B.Ed. degrees from the University of Manitoba and became one of the instrumental music educators at Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School in Selkirk, Manitoba. In 2019, he completed his Master of Music in Composition from Brandon University, studying under Dr. T. Patrick Carrabré.

Two of his pieces, *Prairie Sunset* and *Icelandic Folk Song Suite No. 2*, won WASBE's Composition Competition IV (2023) in the Level 1-2 and Level 3-4, respectively. His work *The Meeting Place* won the 2016 Canadian Band

Association Composition Competition (now the Howard Cable Memorial Prize in Composition). His band music has been recorded by the Arizona State University Wind Orchestra, Barrett Choir, and Choral Union, the University of Northern Colorado Wind Ensemble, the Cleveland Symphonic Winds, the Washington Winds, the Metropolitan Winds of Toronto, the University of Manitoba Wind Ensemble, and the Winnipeg Wind Ensemble. He has written commercial work for video game franchises such as *Betty Boop*, *Disney's DuckTales*, *KRE-O* and *Warhammer 40,000*. The score for his short film on the early life of astronomer Carl Sagan, *Star Stuff*, was nominated for Best Original Score in the "Short" category in the 2016 International Sound and Film Music Festival in Croatia.

Kristofferson currently lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. When not writing concert music, he is spending time with his wife and two kids, digging

into retro video games, woodworking, or running outside. His music and his writing can be found on his website at <http://www.kenleykristofferson.com>

Örjan Sandred

Örjan Sandred is a Swedish-Canadian composer and is since 2005 a Professor of Composition at the University of Manitoba in Canada where he founded Studio FLAT – a studio for Computer Music research and production. He taught composition at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm 1998-2005. In 2016 he was a DAAD visiting professor at Hochschule für Musik Detmold in Germany. He was awarded a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation in 2022. In 2023 he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Sandred has composed a series of pieces for live electronics and instruments, including solo parts for voice, percussion, oboe, saxophones, violin, cello and piano, as well as music for symphony orchestra and chamber ensemble constellations. Recently he has also worked with multimedia installations. His works are performed and exhibited worldwide.

Sandred's music is available on the CDs "Sonic Trails" and "Cracks and Corrosion".

Gordon Fitzell

Gordon Fitzell is a Canadian composer, improviser, and sound artist. His music, described as "eerie, throbbing and trancelike" (*The New York Times*), tends to explore peculiar points of connection between classical and popular elements of culture, freely inhabiting acoustic, electroacoustic, and interdisciplinary performance environments. He has worked with a wide range of international artists including BIT20 Ensemble (Norway), eighth blackbird (USA), ensemble mosaik (Germany), and PianOrquestra (Brazil), as well as Canada's Ensemble contemporain de Montréal, Ensemble Paramirabo, Standing Wave Ensemble, and Trio Fibonacci. His compositions, conducted by Robert

Aitken, Daniel Kawka, Véronique Lacroix, Reinbert de Leeuw, and Bramwell Tovey, have been performed at international festivals such as the Darmstädter Ferienkurse (Germany), the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (England), and the Tanglewood Music Festival (USA).

Fitzell's work is featured on GRAMMY-winning, Opus Award-winning, JUNO-nominated, and West Coast Music Award-nominated recordings. He is a professor of composition at the University of Manitoba Desautels Faculty of Music and an artistic co-director of the Winnipeg new music organization GroundSwell.

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