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MUSIC








21C Music

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BRING US FRESH NEW

SOUNDS AND IDEAS




#21Cmusic / 6 CONCERTS / 7+ PREMIERES

Please include in your listings/announcements

13TH EDITION OF 21C MUSIC LINE-UP ANNOUNCED

Toronto, ON, November 11, 2025 – This season the **21C Music** series, now in its 13th edition, includes **five concerts in late January and an additional one in May 2026**. The series features music composed mostly during the 21st century, which often crosses boundaries and genres. With this newly-minted music, audiences have an opportunity to experience fresh new sounds and ideas from the greatest musical minds of today and experience works by Canadian as well as international composers, and musicians who are mining new musical territories, breaking down barriers, and introducing us to new virtuosic music creations.

In total, the Festival will include more than **7 premieres**: **2 world** (Alison Yun-Fei Jiang's *Shan Shui* [山水] and Christopher Mayo's Concerto for Saxophone), **2 world premieres of new arrangements** (*Mille Regretz* by Nicolas Gombert and *Missa de Mille Regretz: Agnus Dei* by Cristóbal de Morales), **1 Canadian** (Katharine Petkovski's *Above*), **2 Ontario** (selections from *The Twelve Chinese Zodiac Animals* by Vincent Ho and Osvaldo Golijov's *Tintype*), and several pieces performed by Brad Mehldau with Kirill Gerstein. Works by **5 Canadian composers** will be featured (Katharine Petkovski's *Above*, excerpts from Ana Sokolović's *Dawn Always Begins in the Bones*, selections from *The Twelve Chinese Zodiac Animals* by Vincent Ho, Alison Yun-Fei Jiang's *Shan Shui* (山水), and Christopher Mayo's Concerto for Saxophone) and more than **9 Canadian artists and ensembles** (violinist Barry Shiffman, pianist Tony Yike Yang, flutist Dora Wong, guzheng player Cynthia Qin, conductor Brian Current, The Happenstancers, Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble, musicians from The Glenn Gould School and The Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists, and more) will participate in the Festival.

Mervon Mehta, Executive Director of Performing Arts at **The Royal Conservatory**, said: “The RCM’s commitment to new composers, new artists, and new sounds remains steadfast. From world premieres which obliterate musical boundaries to beloved artists enlarging their own palettes, we bring voracious Toronto audiences music that will “stretch their ears,” as Charles Ives famously said over a century ago. We are particularly thrilled to be presenting so many current students and recent graduates on four of the six evenings. We invite you to take a risk with us and to jump in with both feet!”

The Happenstancers: *Always Darkest ... Dawn Always*

Performed by “Toronto’s best young chamber musicians” (*Bachtrack*), this unique program charts a course across a single night, framing the emotional apotheosis within Arnold Schoenberg’s *Transfigured Night*, and its depiction of the tension between and reconciliation of two lovers. This program on [January 16](#) juxtaposes three settings of Josquin de Prez’s Renaissance song *Mille Regretz* (1000 Regrets) with contemporary chamber works and reimagining each work as a time and corresponding emotional state over the course of the night, concluding with dawn and the lovers’ renewal.

Gabriela Montero

Gabriela Montero’s concert on [January 18](#), which is also part of Piano Recitals series, will be an exploration of the westward migration of Eastern European composers to Los Angeles for work in the film industry in the early 20th century, coupled with the delight and buoyancy of the pianist’s classical improvisations for which she is famous, this time accompanying Charlie Chaplin’s film *The Immigrant*. The first half will include works by Russian composers who all journeyed to Hollywood – Prokofiev, Rachmaninov, and Stravinsky. Montero’s visionary interpretations and unique compositional gifts have garnered her critical acclaim and a devoted following on the world stage. Celebrated for her exceptional musicality and ability to improvise, Montero is a frequent recitalist and chamber musician, having performed at such distinguished venues as Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall, Vienna Konzerthaus, Sydney Opera House, and the National Concert Hall in Taipei. “Montero’s playing had everything: crackling rhythmic brio, subtle shadings, steely power ... soulful lyricism ... unsentimental expressivity,” said *The New York Times*.

Series generously supported by Michael Foulkes & Linda Brennan and an anonymous donor

Concert generously supported by an anonymous donor

With generous additional support provided from The Michael and Sonja Koerner Fund for Classical Programming

Tony Yike Yang and Friends Celebrate Chinese New Year

Hailed by *CBC Music* as one of Canada’s finest young musicians, pianist **Tony Yike Yang** first rose to international acclaim at the age of 16 after becoming the youngest-ever laureate in the history of the International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw, winning the 5th prize in 2015. The alumnus of the RCM’s Taylor Academy has also performed for dozens of royalty, dignitaries, and ambassadors such as HRH Camilla, the Queen Consort of the United Kingdom, HRH Queen Mathilde of Belgium, former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, former Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah, and Polish President Andrzej Duda, among others. The program on [January 23](#) includes the Ontario premieres of selections from Vincent Ho’s *The Twelve Chinese Zodiac Animals, Book 2: Preludes and Fugues*, works by Scriabin and Kapustin, as well as traditional Chinese songs with **Dora Wong** on bamboo flute and **Cynthia Qin** on guzheng.

21C Afterhours: GGS New Music Ensemble

On [January 24](#), the **GGS New Music Ensemble** presents a late-night journey into bold new sound worlds, curated and conducted by **Brian Current**. *The Broken Mirrors of Time* brings together a powerful trio of works that reflect the evolving face of contemporary music. Alison Yun-Fei Jiang unveils a brand-new piano concerto, *Shan Shui* (山水), commissioned by The Glenn Gould School with support from The Canada Council for the Arts and Christopher Mayo’s Concerto for Saxophone, commissioned in partnership with the Riot Ensemble, UK, receives its world premiere with explosive energy. Anchoring the program is *The Broken Mirrors of Time* by acclaimed South African composer Andile Khumalo – a work of haunted elegance and layered resonance.

New Worlds: Music of Golijov

Associate Dean of The Glenn Gould School and Director of The Taylor Academy, **Barry Shiffman** leads a concert of works by celebrated Argentine-American composer Osvaldo Golijov, “a musical alchemist (who) conjures up new

worlds” according to *The New York Times* on [January 25](#). Among other works, the program includes *Tintype*, a new work co-commissioned by 21C Music for viola and string quintet.

Commission of Tintype generously supported by Judith Gelber

With generous additional support provided from The Michael and Sonja Koerner Fund for Classical Programming

Brad Mehldau with Kirill Gerstein

Classical music and jazz collide on [May 8](#) as two of today’s most prolific and compelling pianists join forces to create a unique program featuring jazz exploration, classical romanticism, and pop allure. **Brad Mehldau**, the Grammy Award-winning American pianist and composer, has long been celebrated for his ability to bridge musical worlds. Since the early 1990s, he has shaped modern jazz through his deeply expressive playing, which combines spontaneous invention with a fascination for musical structure. His performances are both intimate and unpredictable – a meeting of intellect and emotion, form and freedom. **Kirill Gerstein**, a pianist equally at home in classical and jazz idioms, is known for his dynamic artistry and wide-ranging curiosity. Born in the former Soviet Union and trained in the USA, Gerstein brings a rare versatility to his performances. His repertoire spans from Bach and Liszt to contemporary composers and new commissions, reflecting his passion for connecting diverse musical voices. Their collaboration grew from a shared fascination with the space between composition and improvisation. As Gerstein recalls: “I felt an immediate, visceral pull to his musical language ... Our friendship has deepened, as have our shared explorations of the porous border between written and improvised music.” Mehldau shares: “He is a virtuoso with an astoundingly large and varied repertoire, but he is much more than that ... Kirill and I have been exploring ways to combine written music and improvisation, and the program we put together will reflect that.”

Generously supported by Kris Vikmanis & Denny Creighton

[Artists' photos in dropbox](#)

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CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF EVENTS AND WORKS

The Happenstancers: *Always Darkest ... Dawn Always*

Friday, January 16, 2026 at 8pm; Temerty Theatre

Kaija Saariaho: *Oi Kuu (To the Moon)*

Josquin de Prez: *Mille Regretz*

Kaija Saariaho: *From the Grammar of Dreams*

Nicolas Gombert (after Josquin de Prez): *Mille Regretz* (world premiere of a new arrangement)

Du Yun: *Dreams-Bend*

Katharine Petkovski: *Above* (Canadian premiere)

Ana Sokolović: Excerpts from *Dawn Always Begins in the Bones*

Arnold Schoenberg: *Verklarte Nacht*

Cristóbal de Morales (after de Prez): *Missa de Mille Regretz: Agnus Dei* (world premiere of a new arrangement)

Philip Glass: "Knee Play 5" from *Einstein on the Beach*

Gabriela Montero

Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 3pm; Koerner Hall

Sergei Prokofiev: *Sarcasms*, op. 17

Sergei Prokofiev: Piano Sonata No. 2 in D Minor, op. 14

Sergei Rachmaninov: Piano Sonata No. 2 B flat Minor, op. 36

Igor Stravinsky: Piano Sonata in F sharp Minor (1924)

Charlie Chaplin: *The Immigrant*, with improvised piano score by Montero

Series generously supported by Michael Foulkes & Linda Brennan and an anonymous donor

Concert generously supported by an anonymous donor

With generous additional support provided from The Michael and Sonja Koerner Fund for Classical Programming

Tony Yike Yang and Friends Celebrate Chinese New Year

Friday, January 23, 2026 at 8pm; Koerner Hall

Vincent Ho: Selections from *The Twelve Chinese Zodiac Animals, Book 2: Preludes and Fugues* (Ontario premiere)

Xin Qiji: *The Green Jade Pedestal: The Lantern Fairs*

Alexander Scriabin: 5 Preludes, op. 16

Alexander Scriabin: Fantasy in B Minor, op. 28

Nikolai Kapustin: Eight Concert Études, op. 40

Chen Gang & He Zhanhao: *The Butterfly Lovers* (arr. Chen Gang)

Huang Yijun: *Blooming Flowers and Full Moon*

21C Afterhours: GGS New Music Ensemble

Saturday, January 24, 2026 at 10pm; Temerty Theatre

Andile Khumalo: *The Broken Mirrors of Time*

Alison Yun-Fei Jiang: *Shan Shui (山水)* (world premiere) *

Christopher Mayo: Concerto for Saxophone (world premiere) **

* Glenn Gould School commission with support from The Canada Council for the Arts

** Commissioned in partnership with the Riot Ensemble, UK

New Worlds: Music of Golijov

Sunday, January 25, 2026 at 2pm; Mazzoleni Concert Hall

The Last Round

Lua Descolorida

Tenebrae

Tintype * (Ontario premiere)

K'va Karat

Tintype co-commissioned by Music in the Morning, The Banff Centre, and The Royal Conservatory of Music

Co-commission of Tintype generously supported by Judith Gelber

With generous additional support provided from The Michael and Sonja Koerner Fund for Classical Programming

Brad Mehldau with Kirill Gerstein

Friday, May 8, 2026 at 8pm; Koerner Hall

Classical music and jazz collide as two of today's most prolific and compelling pianists join forces to create a unique program featuring jazz exploration, classical romanticism, and pop allure.

Generously supported by Kris Vikmanis & Denny Creighton



TICKETS START AT ONLY \$21!

ON SALE NOW

The Happenstancers: *Always Darkest ... Dawn Always*
[Friday, January 16, 2026 at 8pm](#); Temerty Theatre

Gabriela Montero
[Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 3pm](#); Koerner Hall

Tony Yike Yang and Friends Celebrate Chinese New Year
[Friday, January 23, 2026 at 7pm](#); Koerner Hall

21C Afterhours: GGS New Music Ensemble
[Saturday, January 24, 2026 at 10pm](#); Temerty Theatre

New Worlds: Music of Golijov
[Sunday, January 25, 2026 at 2pm](#); Mazzoleni Concert Hall

Brad Mehldau with Kirill Gerstein
[Friday, May 8, 2026 at 8pm](#); Koerner Hall

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