

# GRAND ONSTAGE PLAYBILL



INDIGENOUS COLLABORATIONS  
WITH SULTANS OF STRING

# WALKING THROUGH THE FIRE



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The City of Kingston acknowledges that we are  
on the traditional homeland of the  
Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and the Huron-  
Wendat, and thanks these nations for their care  
and stewardship over this shared land.

# ABOUT SULTANS OF STRING

3x JUNO Award nominees  
and New York Times  
feature pick Sultans of  
String creates "Energetic  
and exciting music from a  
band with talent to burn!"  
(UK's Maverick Magazine).

Thrilling their audiences  
with their genre - hopping  
passport of flamenco, Celtic  
reels, roots and Cuban  
rhythms, the group  
celebrates musical fusion  
and human creativity with  
warmth and virtuosity. Fiery  
violin dances with rumba -  
flamenco guitar, while bass  
lays down unstoppable  
grooves. Acoustic strings  
meet with electronic  
wizardry to create layers  
and depth of sound, while  
world rhythms excite  
audiences to their feet with  
the irresistible need to  
dance.

Sultans of String has  
recorded and performed  
with several jazz, world, folk  
and pop artists including,  
Béla Fleck, the Chieftains,  
Pavlo, Amanda Martinez,  
Richard Bona, Ruben  
Blades, Yasmin Levy, and  
Nikki Yanofsky. Equally at  
home in a concert hall or  
festival setting, the Sultans  
have gigged at the  
legendary club Birdland  
NYC, the renowned U.K.'s  
Celtic Connections Festival,  
and the San Jose Jazz  
Festival. They have  
performed with  
symphonies across North  
America, and played live on  
BBC TV, Irish National  
Radio, World Cafe and  
SiriusXM in Washington.  
They just released their  
feature length film Refuge -  
Visual Album at a dozen  
film festivals worldwide.

# ARTISTS

## Sultans of String

**Chris McKhool** violin, vocals

**Drew Birston** bass, vocals

**Kevin Laliberté** guitar, vocals

## Indigenous Artists

**Marc Meriläinen (Nadjiwan)** Ojibwe

Guitarist, singer

**Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuk** (Métis Fiddler Quartet), Métis Violist, singer

**Shannon Thunderbird** Ts'msyen Singer, drummer

**The North Sound, (Forrest Eaglespeaker**

– Blackfoot singer, and **Nevada**

**Eaglespeaker**, singer)

**John Hupfield** – dancer

## Virtual guests

**Dr. Duke Redbird**

Chippewa/Anishinaabe Elder

**Northern Cree** Pow-Wow group

**Kendra Tagoona & Tracy Sarazin**, Inuit singers

**Leela Gilday & Leanne Taneton** Dene vocals & spoken word



# ARTIST BIOS

## Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuk



Born in Winnipeg, Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuk has completed a doctorate in classical and fiddle music traditions on the viola at the Université de Montréal. Upon learning about her Red River Métis roots, she discovered the old native and Métis style of fiddling traditions. Alyssa's mentorship with Ojibwe elder fiddler Lawrence "Teddy Boy" Houle led her to collaborate with his brother, James Flett, in creating Oméigwessi, Reel Métis: A Tribute to Walter Flett, which won Best Fiddle and Best Instrumental Album at the 2008 Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards. She is also a member of the Métis Fiddler Quartet. Their release, North West Voyage, received the Best Traditional Album award at the 2012 Canadian Folk Music Awards. Alyssa's passion for access to arts education has led her to develop innovative Indigenous inspired methodologies that integrate teachings of Métis history, music and culture with movement and dance. She has led her workshops at the Art Gallery of Ontario and Royal Ontario Museum. Most recently, Alyssa was selected as the Indigenous representative and artistic producer of Kuné: Canada's Global Orchestra, a project incubated by the Royal Conservatory of Music in 2017.

# ARTIST BIOS

## Marc Meriläinen



Born in Lynn Lake, Manitoba and raised in Thunder Bay, Marc Meriläinen's heritage can be traced to the Chippewas of Nawash, Cape Croker. Transforming the sound and image of Indigenous music has been one of Marc Meriläinen's goals from the very beginning, and his prodigious output has been recognized in many corners, including the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, the Native American Music Awards, the Indigenous Music Awards, and Toronto's Dora Mavor Moore Awards for the Performing Arts, along with invitations to perform at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and the 2015 Pan-Am Games in Toronto. From his early days as creator and performer of the multi-award nominated contemporary indigenous rock project NADJIWAN to currently producing the next wave of Indigenous musical artists, Marc has worked with numerous artists to help launch and further their career development. In addition to writing and producing acts Marc has also promoted and produced various live shows and events including Planet IndigenUs at Harbourfront Centre and the Original People, Original Songs concert series



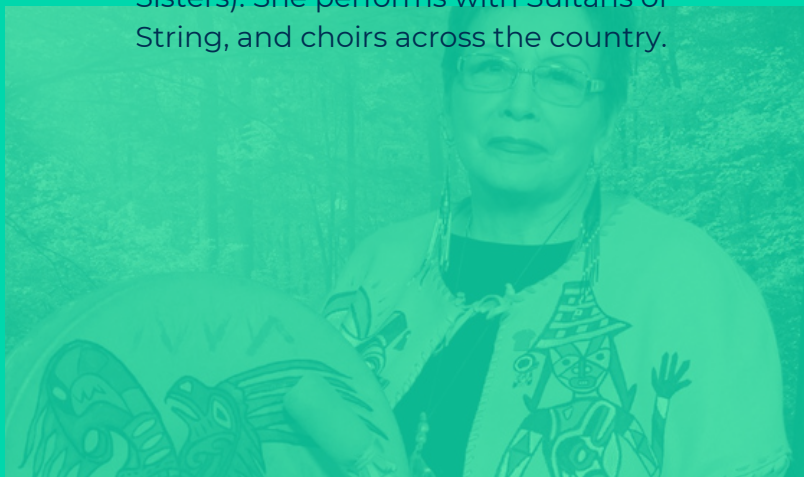


## ARTIST BIOS

### Shannon Thunderbird



Shannon Thunderbird, M.A., B.A. (Hons.), is a Ts'msyen Elder originally from the Pacific northwest coast of British Columbia: Gilut'sau Band of the Royal House of Niis'gumiik, Gispudwada (Orca) Clan. She is an international speaker, singer-songwriter, recording artist, painter, and writer. Her fireside chats, lectures, and original music open the minds and hearts of audiences to the rich culture and history of Canada's Indigenous people. She is the founder and artistic director of Teya Peya Productions, and lead vocalist with her trio, Amgan Łiklgaawks (Red Cedar Sisters). She performs with Sultans of String, and choirs across the country.



# ARTIST BIOS



## The North Sound



The North Sound is cold like a Saskatchewan winter, humid like a summer day in the streets of Montreal, and is unpredictable like the weather on a singular day in Calgary. The North Sound is ever-changing with lyrics spanning across haunting metaphors and a sound balanced between today's modern production and the era of Gram Parsons and Emmylou Harris blazing the highways. Formed in 2014 by Forrest Eaglespeaker supported by his partner Nevada Freistadt, The North Sound was created as a way to share stories in keeping true to Forrest's Blackfoot identity and traditions from Treaty 7 Territory. The North Sound has had four singles reach number one on the Indigenous Music Countdown as well as Saskatchewan's MBC Radio, has won Sask Music's Indigenous Artist of the Year award, and has received three nominations from the SCMA; Group of the Year, Roots Album of the Year, and their song "Heavy Heart" up for Producer of the Year with Jesse Wieman. Sharing the stage with the likes of Blue Rodeo, Kathleen Edwards, Eagle and Hawk, Derek Miller, Susan Aglukark, Celeigh Cardinal, Logan Staats, and many more, The North Sound has performed at multiple venues and festivals across Canada and the United States.



# ARTIST BIOS

## JOHN HUPFIELD



John Hupfield is Anishinaabe from Wasauksing First Nation. Beadworker, academic, educator, and grass dancer, Hupfield teaches powwow dance in Toronto to adults and children. He also works in the Faculty of Education at York University in the field of Indigenous education.



# ARTIST BIOS



## Chris McKhool



Bandleader Chris McKhool is a Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal recipient for his work creating community through music. He produces, composes and plays violin with Billboard charting Sultans of String, who's CDs have earned 3 JUNO Award Nominations for Instrumental and World Album of the Year, the SiriusXM World Music Award and six Canadian Folk Music Awards out of eleven nominations. His passion for exploring rhythms and melodies has led him far and wide, learning about instruments and styles from around the world. As producer he received a nomination for Producer of the Year for the 2018 CFMAs, and won Producer of the Year for the 2020 Independent Music Awards and 2023 CFMAs. He won the inaugural PIVOT AWARD from CIMA for creating the Sultans Zoom Room series, as well as the Cannes World Film Festival Award, producing a documentary called Sultans of String: The Refugee Project, based on their albums Refuge and Sanctuary.

## ARTIST BIOS

### Kevin Laliberté's



Kevin Laliberté's original compositions from his hit CDs *One*, *Sundance*, *Siesta* and *Elation* have been featured on many TV shows. They can also be heard nationwide on radio and satellite music services. They represent a meeting of many aspects of Kevin's experience as a guitarist melding flamenco rhythms, a jazz improvisational approach, and a pop melodic sensibility. Kevin grew up in an environment filled with music. Many family members played an instrument or two, and family gatherings often included some kind of impromptu jam session. His mother played accordion and taught at the Ontario Conservatory. Like many Canadian teenagers in the 1980's, Kevin played guitar in various high school rock bands, and continued his musical studies. A chance purchase of a Pat Metheny record opened his ears to the sound of jazz, and set a new direction for Kevin's musical pursuits. In addition to performing his own works, Kevin has toured around the globe with international artists Jesse Cook, the Chieftains, Sultans of String, performed on the Tonight Show with Charlotte Church, and in Beijing with Chinese recording artist Dadawa.



## ARTIST BIOS

### Drew Birston



Drew Birston is a versatile bassist and singer/songwriter living in Toronto, Canada. He is a one-of-a-kind player, with a rare gift for groove, swing, lines and melody. He has been active on the Jazz and Pop scene recording, performing and touring with a wide variety of artists for 20 years on well over a hundred sessions with a wide variety of artists in folk, jazz, songwriter and pop genres. After completing jazz studies in Antigonish, NS and Montréal, QC, the Toronto music scene was calling and he started performing with Lava Hay, The Leslie Spit Treeo, The Wild Strawberries, Melanie Doane, Chantal Kreviazuk, Justin Hines, Tomi Swick, Lily Frost and Moon V Sun. He has also had the great fortune to work with producers such as Brent Bodrug, Justin Abedin, Ron Lopata, Danny Leblanc, George Seara and Stephan Moccio and has appeared on over a hundred recordings including nine with Sultans of String.





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du Canada

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Learn more about Grand OnStage at [KingstonGrand.ca](http://KingstonGrand.ca).

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