

FCMF National Music Festival // *Case for Support*



This is the Moment

Countless hours practicing. Private tutoring. Preparing for recitals. Rehearsing. Performing. Trying. Failing. Rising up. Wanting more. It all leads to this: the FCMF National Music Festival, one of Canada's top classical music competitions.

David Liam Roberts remembers the moment before his Grand Award-winning performance at the 2018 festival. "I distinctly remember being dialed in before getting on stage. I was imagining my piece and focusing on what I wanted to communicate," he says. "I was right in the moment." Of course, he had been preparing for it his whole life.

A Métis-Canadian cellist from Winnipeg, Manitoba, David Liam started performing at the Winnipeg Music Festival at age six. Now in his early 20s, he is quickly establishing himself as one of the most exciting and promising instrumentalists of his generation. He has performed as principal cellist with the Royal Conservatory Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, a soloist with the Winnipeg Symphony, and as a regular sub with the Toronto Symphony since the 2021-22 season.

David Liam is just one of many young musicians the Federation of Canadian Music Festivals has catapulted to a career in performing arts.

Curtain Call

David Liam Roberts won both first prize in strings and the Grand Award at the 2018 National Music Festival. He was named one of Canada's "30 Hot Classical Musicians under 30" by the CBC in 2019.



*When the
curtain rises,
we'll be ready.*

Supporting Canada's Brightest Young Stars

David Liam performed annually at the Winnipeg Music Festival (his home festival) for 12 years, each time relishing the opportunity to receive critical feedback from industry-leading professionals. Like many young musicians, the local festival was the only competition David Liam participated in during the year, and his only opportunity to perform for a public audience.

In that time, he captured the attention of Yuri Hooker, principal cellist of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, and Bryan Epperson, former principal cellist of the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra—two of his most formative mentors. He now studies with Hans Jørgen Jensen and Andrés Díaz at the Glenn Gould School (GGS) of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, Ontario.

For David Liam, participating in music festivals at local, provincial, and national levels has been life-changing. The training, professional development, and career support he received was unlike anywhere else. And he's certainly not alone. Over 25,000 competitors benefit from participating in FCMF-affiliated festivals every year.

Lynda Sharpe has seen the impact of music festivals on emerging young musicians like David Liam first-hand. She's watched countless young stars pursue their passions—and professional careers in the arts—for 18 years as a volunteer with the Federation of Canadian Music Festivals.

"It's pretty exciting to see where they've come from and where they're going," says Lynda, one of 649 volunteers committed to organizing festivals in communities across Canada. "The number of kids who have gone on to stellar musical careers is amazing."

How it Works

Those students participating in an FCMF-affiliated local music festival may be recommended by the adjudicator to advance to the Provincial and/or Local Stream Qualifying Round of competition. From there, outstanding competitors may be recommended to participate in the FCMF National Music Festival.

Setting the Stage

The FCMF National Music Festival is a premiere celebration of Canadian musicianship from coast to coast to coast. Held annually, the festival provides meaningful opportunities for young musicians from across the country to share their skills and showcase their talents on a national stage.

For over 50 years, the festival has attracted the highest calibre competitors from communities far and wide. Thanks to personalized coaching and masterclasses with the industry's best classically-trained musicians and music educators, they're given the courage and conviction to pursue their passions.

"It's a good performance opportunity, but more importantly, the National Music Festival is an opportunity to connect with high level musicians from across the country," says David Liam. "Getting to know your peers and professionals in the music community is so important. Usually, those relationships will last a lifetime."

Lynda agrees. "It's the experience of a lifetime for the competitors," she says. "Music opens the doors for lots of learning and builds

confidence that carries over into other areas. The opportunity to hear from experts and others in the music field opens their eyes to new ideas and opportunities of which they were unaware."

Nearly two decades after his debut at the Winnipeg Music Festival, David Liam is still reaping the rewards of his hard work and dedication. "In the past two years I've had the opportunity to make debuts in Manitoba and Nova Scotia and perform as soloist with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. [Winning the Grand Award] has definitely helped build my resume and profile with concert presenters."

The prize money has helped too. "It can be hard for classical musicians to build a performing career because application and tuition fees for masterclass programs or educational opportunities cost a lot," he says. "By winning competitions and getting scholarships, they're able to pay for these opportunities, and every opportunity will lead to more."

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Building Community

The FCMF National Music Festival is more than a competition, it's a community of like-minded professionals and volunteers committed to advancing the art of classical music. Your financial support will help the Federation of Canadian Music Festivals build on 50+ years of exceptional music-making by elevating the festival experience for competitors, adjudicators, and audience members alike.

This includes:

- Attracting brilliant young musicians from communities across Canada by adding classes for students studying at the intermediate and junior levels, as well as composition classes.
- Increasing the visibility of all our participants—those who place and those who don't—by creating opportunities to share their performances online.
- Increasing exposure to industry professionals, including concert presenters, managers, and broadcasters.
- Identifying new and innovative ways to receive feedback in real time from our internationally-respected adjudicators.
- Improving support for current and prospective festivals at local and provincial levels.

With your support, we will reach more people in more places than ever before, and ensure that travel time and cost are no longer barriers to participating in the National Music Festival.

“I’ve experienced firsthand how important the support of donors is for musicians. I’m really thankful to have a huge support system in the arts community in Canada.”

— David Liam Roberts





The Federation of Canadian Music Festivals is
*a volunteer-run charitable organization committed to
celebrating the diversity of Canada's classical music scene
and developing the next generation of performing artists.*

*Our strength is our community. We need your help to
continue our work. Please donate by visiting **CanadaHelps.org**
or contacting Barbara Long to discuss specific opportunities
to fund an award or program.*

For more information, please contact:

Barbara Long
Executive Director
1-506-245-1689
1-866-245-1680 (Toll Free)
info@fcmf.org

www.fcmf.org

Charitable registration no. 118 913 946 RR0001



@nationalmusicfestival



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