

# Hear Together

2021/22 Season



EDMONTON  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

# RIVERS WIDE:

## FROM SWANEE TO SÎPIY (ᐱᐱ)

Wednesday, October 27 • 7:30 PM

Friday, October 29 • 7:30 PM

Saturday, October 30 • 2:30 PM

Saturday, October 30 • 7:30 PM



# Land Acknowledgement

The Winspear Centre and Edmonton Symphony Orchestra would like to acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 Territory, a traditional meeting ground, gathering place, and traveling route for many Indigenous Peoples. We honour and recognize the rich artistic, cultural, and musical traditions of the Cree, Nakota Sioux, Metis, Dene, Saulteaux, and the many more Indigenous communities that call this land we share, home.



# RIVERS WIDE: FROM SWANEE TO SÎPIY (ᐱᐱ+)

October 27 – 30



## FEATURED ARTISTS:



**Lucas Waldin**  
Conductor



**Brandon Wint**  
Spoken Word



**Daniel Gervais**  
Fiddle

<b>Ohio Riverboat</b>	HENRY MANCINI
<b><i>On the Beautiful Blue Danube</i></b>	JOHANN STRAUSS II (adapted by Lucas Waldin)
<b>Love at First Sight</b> (from <i>Fireweeds</i> )	CATHY ELLIOT (arranged by Lucas Waldin)
<b>“Love Survives” / “I Had a Dream for Us”</b>	BRANDON WINT / REBECCA PARSONS (arranged by Lucas Waldin)
<b>Kiwetin-acahocs (North Star): Fanfare for the Peoples of the North</b>	ANDREW BALFOUR
<b>Moon River</b>	HENRY MANCINI
<b>Métis Dance Medley</b>	CALVIN VOLLRATH (arranged by John McPherson)
<b>Shenandoah</b>	TRADITIONAL (arranged by Bob Krogstad)
<b>Swanee</b>	IRVING CAESAR / GEORGE GERSHWIN (arranged by Joe Bellini)
<b>Largo from <i>The New World Symphony</i>  (“Song of Hiawatha”)</b>	ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (arranged by Lucas Waldin)
<b>“All the Gods I Cannot Name”</b>	BRANDON WINT / ADAM SAIKALEY (arranged by Lucas Waldin)
<b>Ko’jua Dance Medley</b>	TRADITIONAL (arranged by Becca Pellett)

Whether going somewhere or staying put, rivers are essential to humanity's survival. They are passageways – it is not for nothing that the flow of a river is a metaphor for the flow of blood which keeps us alive – but whenever people have gathered to stay in one spot and create a community, it is most often at a propitious point along a river.

“Rivers, all types of water, have always been important: community, culture, well-being – the whole ‘rivers of life,’ that kind of thing,” says Lucas Waldin.

“So I did some poking around, and I found a lot of music inspired by waterways – living by rivers, getting our sustenance from rivers – but so much more.

Music and culture travel by river as much as goods.”

And that was the inspiration for our Pops program, “**Rivers Wide – From Swanee to Sîpiy (ᐅᐱ+)**.” Waldin, former Assistant Conductor with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and now an in-demand pops specialist, has crafted this unique program which melds well-known classical works, popular standards, and key works by Canadian indigenous creators that demonstrate the truly global importance of rivers in our culture.

Two **Henry Mancini** tunes – the lesser-known “**Ohio Riverboat**” (composed in 1975), and the evergreen “**Moon River**” (from the 1961 film *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*) are certainly pops standards, as are the famous American songs “**Swanee**” (George Gershwin’s first major hit as a songwriter, dating from

102 years ago), and one of the most enduring folk melodies from the U.S., “**Shenandoah.**” “Swanee,” by the way, was inspired by the Suwanee River of northern Florida and southern Georgia, while the Shenandoah threads its way through America’s tobacco crops in Virginia and West Virginia.

“This is a program I’m really proud of, honestly,” Mr. Waldin feels. “I specialize in pops now, so the things that draw regular pops audiences – the Henry Mancini stuff, the George Gershwin stuff – it’s there and we’re really happy to play it. At the same time, we’re not just a world-class orchestra, we’re a local class orchestra. It’s our local community that supports us, so why not celebrate our community in a pops concert? And that means culturally as well.”

To that end, Lucas has invited spoken-word artist **Brandon Wint**, who spent seven months of 2020 as the inaugural artist-in-residence at The Gateway Association of Edmonton, a partnership between the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Arts Council, embedding local artists into departments and local service agencies to engage with citizens, employees, clients and community. Two of his works have been adapted by Canadian composers, and arranged for this concert by Lucas Waldin. “I heard of him through this residency, and then I listened to his stuff,” Lucas explains. “I didn’t know him personally, however what’s funny is that some of his music was (composed) in collaboration with **Rebecca Parsons**, who was the Youth Orchestra of Northern Alberta (YONA-Sistema) choral conductor. So he had



collaborated with her and a few YONA musicians that actually recorded and played with him on some of his works. I didn't know that – I just heard his stuff and a lot of it was musical.”

Mr. Wint will speak the words for two pieces in the “Rivers Wide” program: “**Love Survives/I Had a Dream for Us**” with music by Rebecca Parsons, and “**All the Gods I Cannot Name,**” with music by **Adam Sikailey**, an Ottawa-based composer.

Exploring Canada's rich indigenous traditions is also a vital part of the program – something Lucas Waldin has explored extensively before putting this concert together. “A lot of the indigenous content I had created for other programs along the way,” Mr.

Waldin notes, “and I was aware of how important waterways are. A lot of indigenous musicians and community members that I’ve talked to over the years, they consider themselves – and rightly so – as stewards of our lands and waterways.”

A couple of the pieces from indigenous sources are works that some ESO audiences may have heard before. One is the popular **Métis Dance Medley** compiled by Alberta fiddler **Calvin Vollrath** and arranged for the ESO by Principal Trombone and former Composer in Residence **John McPherson**. Another is the song “**Love at First Sight**,” written by **Cathy Elliott** as part of a 1993 musical theatre work, *Fireweeds*. “Cathy Elliott’s music could exist in any Broadway musical,” says Lucas of the talent of the

late Mi'kmaq musician, whose life was tragically cut short in a highway accident in 2017. "And 'Love at First Sight,' it's all about the Yukon and up north."

A set of traditional **Ko'jua dances**, arranged by Becca Pellett originally for Jeremy Dutcher, a member of the Tobique First Nation of New Brunswick, and a work by Winnipeg composer **Andrew Balfour**, of Cree descent, called **Kiwetin-acahocs (North Star): Fanfare for the Peoples of the North**, are also featured in "Rivers Wide."

"The artists of today, I think, have an important place in pops," Waldin says, fully aware that this innovative concert is not your typical orchestral pops. "I think what's popular now is important, and I think it's

important for orchestras to be flexible. The other thing that's important to me, as a Canadian, is that I've seen a lot of pops concerts come through, and there isn't a lot of Canadian content, quite frankly. We live in Canada, we have incredible talent here, and there's no reason why it shouldn't be featured among the more standard pops repertoire."

When he came to America to head up the first national conservatory of music, the noted Czech composer **Antonín Dvořák** advised his American counterparts to look to the music of its native peoples. Dvořák had himself, been inspired by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous poem of **Hiawatha**, which many scholars link to the famous melody in the slow movement of the "***New World***" ***Symphony***.

Uniting the indigenous and the classical, Lucas has adapted that melody for this concert.

But if any piece of music about a river brings an orchestra to mind, it is certainly the single most famous waltz ever written. The thing is, the Danube is not blue. Nevertheless, **Johann Strauss II's** immortal favourite, ***On the Beautiful Blue Danube***, is etched as much in people's hearts as it is in the orchestral canon – and an orchestra concert about rivers without it would be truly lacking.

“So those are all the ingredients,” says Lucas Waldin of his unique take on the Pops, “and I’m proud to bring them all together into a compelling and entertaining program.”

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