



# PERFORMER BIOS

ALPHABETICAL

## PERFORMER BIOS

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### **AARON GOLDSTEIN (HE/HIM/HIS)**

#### **TIME FADES AWAY: NEIL YOUNG @ 80**

Noted Canadian performer and producer Aaron Goldstein (Kathleen Edwards, Junkhouse, Cowboy Junkies, City And Colour, Daniel Romano) reprises his role as musical director for this celebration of Neil Young’s 80th birthday - mirroring the acclaimed sold-out concert staged at Massey Hall on Young’s birthday last Fall. Goldstein brings with him a cast of some of the country’s most in-demand players and the set will showcase guest performances from a select few of our festival’s featured performers.

### **ABSOLUTE LOSERS**

#### **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND – ROCK**

Out of Charlottetown, P.E.I. comes Absolute Losers, a rock trio uniting brothers Sam and Josh Langille with longtime friend Daniel Hartinger. Known for their wiry guitar work, laid-back vocals, and danceable interweaving drums and bass, they bring undeniable energy to their live shows, building a well-deserved reputation as a must-see act. Released in fall 2025, their sophomore effort, *In The Crowd*, showcases the band’s knack for sharp, straight-to-the-point songwriting without losing the raw edge that’s made them stand out.

### **ADAM BALDWIN (HE/HIM/HIS)**

#### **NOVA SCOTIA – FOLK, ROOTS, SINGER-SONGWRITER**

A mainstay of the Atlantic Canada music scene for over a decade, singer-songwriter Adam Baldwin has steadily evolved his sound since breaking out with his award-winning, self-titled solo debut EP. In *Concertos & Serenades*, he offers an East Coast testimony through masterful indie rock yarns that bear witness and pay tribute to a tradition of desperation: sinners and losers, perpetual failures, and down-and-out phantoms that haunt his home’s coastlines and back roads—without a passing judgment. Through his lyrical storytelling, he’ll draw you in so completely that if you close your eyes, it feels as though you’re standing in the Maritimes yourself.

### **AHMED MONEKA (HE/HIM/HIS)**

#### **IRAQ/ONTARIO – ARABIC, FOLK, JAZZ**

Drawing on his Afro-Sufi-Iraqi musical heritage, Juno-nominated Ahmed Moneka presents a joyful and transcendent fusion of African rhythms and Arabic folk melodies, enriched by contemporary influences of funk, soul, and jazz. Reflecting on his personal journey as an artist, actor, and activist who came from Baghdad to Toronto, Moneka, alongside his global ensemble, invites listeners to a jubilant celebration of life. His music explores love in all its forms while evoking a deep sense of longing for one’s homeland, all through original compositions and timeless Middle Eastern classics. His sophomore album, *Kanzafula*, is the first Canadian-Iraqi record to be nominated for a Juno Award.

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### ALEX AMEN (HE/HIM/HIS)

#### TEXAS - FOLK

At 18, Alex Amen left Texas with California on his mind. He found himself on the Dittman family commune, known for its ties to the countercultural movements of the '60s. There, he formed his first band; when it broke up, he retreated to an island in Washington's Puget Sound, spending the next three years in near isolation. The pull of the Golden State eventually drew him back, where he recorded *The Zorthian Tapes*, his debut EP in a self-built studio at the historic Zorthian Ranch. Now based in Los Angeles, he's carving out his place in the folk/Americana/country scene, channeling his experiences and deep sense of place into songs that feel lived-in, with comparisons to John Denver.

### AMOS THE KID (HE/HIM/HIS)

#### MANITOBA – INDIE COUNTRY

Exclaim! described Amos the Kid's debut album *Enough as it Was* as one of the "greatest Canadian albums you might have missed in 2023." Part indie, part country, part grunge—and entirely its own—the album is a compelling introduction to the band behind it. As the group begins crafting its next era, the heart of the project remains namesake Amos Nadlersmith's singular approach to songwriting. He blends plainspoken prose with disarming emotional turns, atop music rooted as much in country tradition as it is in indie rock, unafraid of abrasion, experimentation, and noise.

### THE ANDREW COLLINS TRIO

#### ONTARIO – ACOUSTIC ROOTS FUSION

After co-founding bands like the Creaking Tree String Quartet and Foggy Hogtown Boys, Mando maestro Andrew Collins is zeroing in on his genre-bending efforts with his namesake trio, who received much acclaim for their 2024 release, *The Rule of Three*. With fellow string guru Adam Shier, whose versatility shines through on guitar, mandolin, and vocals, and James McEleney holding it down on the bass, mandocello, and vocals, the musical shape-shifters collide bluegrass, folk, jazz, classical, and Celtic styles, landing them somewhere between the reimagined worlds of Béla Fleck and Newgrass invader David Grisman.

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### ANGINE DE POITRINE

#### QUÉBEC – MATH ROCK

If you've never experienced Angine de Poitrine live, you may do a double take when the microtonal math-rockers hit the stage. The polka-dot-clad duo from Québec prefer to keep their identities under wraps, performing in oversized papier-mâché masks. Under their pseudonyms Khn de Poitrine (microtonal guitar/bass) and Klek de Poitrine (drums), the two channel their creativity and serious technical skill into a hypnotic, energizing mix of experimental rock and performance art. Step into their world to feel your pulse quicken as you surrender to the beat.

### ANNA TIVEL (SHE/HER/HERS)

#### OREGON – SINGER-SONGWRITER

A keen observer, Anna Tivel has a gift for capturing the quiet stories of everyday life and struggle in her folk compositions. Recorded live in a circle with her friends, her latest release, *Animal Poem*, was made in conversation as they listened and responded in real time. You can hear it all: ghost notes in the high register of the piano, melodic guitar and bass lines briefly interwoven, even Tivel's dog barking. That same unguarded intimacy filters down into the Portland-based singer-songwriter's live performances, her gentle voice and poetic storytelling settling deep within your soul.

### THE BARR BROTHERS

#### QUEBEC - FOLK

It's been eight years since Montreal's The Barr Brothers released a full-length album. In that time, life pulled them in new directions—personally and professionally—altering the way they make music together. Their fourth studio album, 2025's *Let it Hiss*, marked a pivotal shift for the band: a pause for reflection, a reckoning with vulnerability, and a reconnection between the two brothers who've spent over three decades jamming side by side. The Barr Brothers fuse styles of folk with experimental textures to carve out a style that's all their own. With a reputation for intricate musicianship and emotional depth, they've built a global fanbase along with nods of approval from industry giants (and audiences who can't help but groove along).

### BELLS LARSEN (HE/HIM/HIS)

#### QUÉBEC – FOLK, INDIE, SINGER-SONGWRITER

Oscillating between lo-fi '90s indie and searing folk ballads, Bells Larsen's sophomore album *Blurring Time* (2025) features the haunting accompaniment of voices suspended in time, with layered vocals intentionally designed to align with the timeline of his gender transition. Drawing on his own experiences as a transgender man, the Montreal-via-Toronto songwriter weaves stirring, cathartic verses with intricately crafted acoustic arrangements, inviting audiences to both sway to the melodies and slow down to reflect on their own stories and identities.

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### **BILLY BRAGG (HE/HIM/HIS)**

#### **ENGLAND – INDIE FOLK**

An artist who hardly needs an introduction, Billy Bragg is celebrating more than 40 remarkable years as Britain’s favourite folk singer, songwriter, and campaigner. Galvanised in the late ‘70s by The Clash and an aversion to the austere policies of Margaret Thatcher, he set out to inspire political engagement and empathy in his work. Over the course of his career, he’s released 11 solo studio albums, along with a host of memorable collaborations. On stage, he’s as much a storyteller as a musician, with sharp political commentary and social reflection peppered between songs that make you think, feel, and occasionally want to punch the air (sometimes all at once).

### **BIM (BÉNIN INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL)**

#### **BÉNIN – VODOO ROCK**

A dynamic new force on the African and global music scenes, BIM (Bénin International Musical) brings together five musician-vocalists in a powerful celebration of the African continent and its history, while showcasing its culture and the voodoo tradition. After a debut album that took the band to the four corners of the world, BIM returns with innovative new release Positive Vodoun. Featuring powerful rock anthems, sharp rap flows, deep polyphonies, and hypnotic voodoo rhythms, their songs paint a vibrant portrait of contemporary Beninese music. Bringing rock and rap back to their voodoo roots, BIM transforms each performance into a contemporary ceremony for an unforgettable experience not to be missed.

### **BLACK COUNTRY, NEW ROAD**

#### **ENGLAND - ROCK**

Few contemporary bands can reinvent their sound as consistently (and successfully) as Black Country, New Road. On their third studio album, Forever Howlong, the experimental rock band from England once again tears up the blueprint, stitching together elements from folk to prog via baroque pop and touches of alt rock. Refusing to be boxed into a specific genre or scene, the multi-instrumentalists blend their mix of classical training and self-taught grit into a sound that’s unmistakably theirs. With their distinct voices and styles coalescing into an electrifying collective sound, they’ve crafted something truly fresh that leaves audiences wanting more.

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### **BRÌGHDE CHAIMBEUL (SHE/HER/HERS)**

#### **SCOTLAND - FOLK**

An experimental folk artist and master of the Scottish smallpipes—the mellower, more emotive cousin to the Highland bagpipes—Brìghde Chaimbeul brings a one-of-a-kind sound to the global stage. A Gaelic speaker from the Isle of Skye, she roots her music in her language and culture, blending traditional and modern sounds and emphasizing the instrument’s rich textural drones. Winner of BBC’s Young Folk Award, this understatedly virtuosic performer is transforming and redefining Scottish folk in the 21st century, her recent album also bringing in influence from ambient, avant-garde, and electronic music.

### **BROTHER WALLACE (HE/HIM/HIS)**

#### **GEORGIA - SOUL**

Brother Wallace was born to make music that ignites pure joy, even in the darkest of moments. Since getting his start playing piano in church at age 11, the Georgia-bred artist has followed his lifelong passion down an extraordinary path that spans sharing the stage with gospel legend Kirk Franklin to performing at historic venues like Madison Square Garden as a background vocalist for rock band The Heavy. With a debut album on the horizon, this soulful talent delivers a high-energy revival of old-school Southern soul that will have you dancing from the first note.

### **THE BRUDI BROTHERS**

#### **WASHINGTON – AMERICANA, FOLK**

Often hailed as Seattle’s favourite buskers and street poets, the Brudi Brothers are known for their raucous performances and distinctive old-world soul that stands out in the world of modern music. Their sound is a blend of old-school folk, country, and rock-and-roll feel, their inimitable musical and performance dynamic replete with wit and humour. The three multi-instrumentalist brothers have been playing together since they were kids, and whether on a street corner or a festival stage, their playful harmonies and electrifying chemistry make them a must-see act.

### **CAT CLYDE (SHE/HER/HERS)**

#### **ONTARIO – INDIE FOLK**

“Where is my love?” Cat Clyde howls, opening her new album *Mud Blood Bone* with abandon. It’s not the somber lament of a longing woman, but a feral eruption, the roar of an animal on the edge. The Canadian indie-folk songwriter’s fourth full-length release finds her at a point of personal evolution, and the result is uninhibited, raw, and pure. Drenched in roots influences like rock and the blues, she also stirs in elements from soul, jazz, and even swing. On her latest tracks, audiences can expect a bit of a sonic overlap, where the raw energy of rockabilly grit collides with vulnerable, folk rock volatility.

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### CHICHA LIBRE

#### NEW YORK/PERU – PSYCHEDELIC CUMBIA

Chicha Libre are back and making up for lost time. After a hiatus, the Brooklyn-based band—who sparked a Chicha and psychedelic cumbia wave in North America with their 2008 debut—is lighting up stages once again with songs from their 2024 EP *Tequila y Aguardiente*. Hailing from Mexico, Venezuela, France, and the U.S., the musicians’ diverse backgrounds contribute to their freeform approach to the tropical genre. Like its mentors, Chicha Libre uses surf guitar, organ sounds, and Latin percussion to play a mixture of borrowed and homegrown sounds—but the music is a freeform reinvention, not an exercise in nostalgia.

### DUG

#### IRELAND – AMERICANA, FOLK

There’s a natural magnetism to DUG’s folk brew. The duo, made up of Conor (Lorkin) O’Reilly and Jonny Pickett, are gearing up for the release of their debut album, but you’d be forgiven for believing they’ve been writing together for a lifetime. Their music draws on traditions from both sides of the pond. Resonator guitar and banjo, the building blocks of their arrangements, lick and spin, and their lyrics catch you off guard, eliciting a chuckle in a moment of levity. There’s a bona fide warmth in their unique take on folk storytelling, which also includes allusions to darker moments. Taking the heavy with the light, and being able to translate it into a foot-tapping, infectious contemporary folk sound, is what the duo does best.

### EMPANADAS ILEGALES

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA – TROPICAL PSYCHODELIA

A Vancouver-based psychedelic cumbia and salsa ensemble, Empanadas Ilegales serves up genre-bending compositions and kinetic live performances. Formed by musicians with roots in Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, and Canada, the group merges Latin American traditions with surf rock, free jazz, and experimental psychedelia. In 2024, they took their bold nod to cumbia classics, 2022’s *Creepy Mambo*, to new heights, recording live from the rooftop of Vancouver’s Warrington Art Collective. Onstage, they mash up cultures, sounds, and generations into rhythm-forward stories you can’t help but move to, igniting dance floors during their incomparable live sets.

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### **FATHER JOHN MISTY (HE/HIM/HIS)**

#### **CALIFORNIA – SINGER-SONGWRITER**

Heavy topics? For Father John Misty, that’s prime songwriting fuel. Behind the moniker is indie-rock singer-songwriter Josh Tillman, known for his razor-sharp satirical lyrics and eccentric performance style. His latest release, Mahashmashana—Sanskrit for “great cremation ground”—has received acclaim for its bracing honesty, adding to a musical catalogue celebrated for its clever lyricism and a sound that refuses to be fully defined. Self-aware to the core, he tackles life’s heaviest themes with a wink, layering biting sarcasm over genuine vulnerability. And if the recordings feel tongue-in-cheek, the live show pushes it even further.

### **FISH IN A BIRDCAGE (HE/HIM/HIS)**

#### **ALBERTA – ALTERNATIVE, INDIE**

Lines like “If we can change a life, or open someone’s eyes, if we can save a life, I will feel complete” capture the essence of Calgary musician Dusty Townsend. With a bow in his right hand and an ebony fretboard clutched in his left, Townsend ventures far and wide to share his message of love as Fish in a Birdcage. Hauling a guitar, cello, banjo, accordion, washboard, belt of harmonicas, and shoebouline everywhere he goes hasn’t been easy, but has been crucial to shaping his repertoire. Every note he plays reflects his wide range of influences, from folk strings to electronica, and audiences can’t help but get swept up.

### **FONTINE (SHE/HER/HERS/THEY/THEM/THEIRS)**

#### **MANITOBA – INDIE ROCK**

Queer Cree songwriter and vocalist FONTINE grew up on rock radio, and echoes of that soundtrack pulse through her first full-length release, Good Buddy. While her breakout EP leaned folk, her new album marks a step toward her earlier rock star aspirations: a bit grittier, yet still letting her powerhouse voice and tender sensitivity shine. After working on other musicians’ albums, she has once again stepped into the spotlight as a solo artist whose songs are rooted in a real sense of place. Her raw, honest songwriting style and magnetic voice pull audiences in—whatever they need that day, they can find it in FONTINE’s music.

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### GOAT

#### SWEDEN – PSYCHEDELIC ROCK

Legend has it that for centuries, the inhabitants of a small, remote village in Sweden were dedicated to the worship and practices of voodoo. From that mysterious place comes GOAT, whose music—they claim—still carries the echo of a voodoo curse. The enigmatic experimental psychedelic rock collective stays anonymous behind masks and elaborate costumes, adding another layer of mystery to their performances. With influences all over the map, it's hard to pin down the origins of their sound. One thing's for sure, though: no matter how you classify their hypnotic rhythms, you won't find anything quite like GOAT.

### GORDON GRDINA'S HARAM

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA – ARABIC AVANT-GARDE

Since its founding in 2008 by Juno Award-winner Gordon Grdina, this large ensemble vehicle has lovingly reinterpreted classic Arabic repertoire. The genre-defying ensemble kicked off their time together by honouring Iraqi folk music and the great era of Egyptian radio music, and has since expanded their explorations to include classic Sudanese and Persian works. Half studied in the tradition and half in avant-garde improvisation, Haram balances a sense of respect and homage while being explosively self-expressive, putting on spirited performances that will captivate audiences across genres.

### GREEN FOOLS THEATRE

#### ALBERTA - FAMILY

Step right up and enter a world where imagination takes centre stage. At the heart of Green Fools Theatre is a collective of passionate, seasoned artists who live and breathe creativity. Founded in 1991, Calgary-based organization transforms artistry, play, and connection into unforgettable experiences that captivate audiences of all ages through circus, theatre, and visual arts. Wherever they go, fun and whimsy are sure to follow.

### GWENIFER RAYMOND (SHE/HER/HERS)

#### ENGLAND/WALES – PRIMITIVE WELSH FOLK

Wales-born, Brighton-based instrumentalist Gwenifer Raymond is a celebrated champion of the finger-picked guitar. She has drawn international acclaim for her repurposing of Mississippi blues and John Fahey's intricate Americana to create something all her own—a sound that embodies her roots in rural South Wales and her interests in folk horror and the avant garde, inventing a new form dubbed Welsh Primitive. In 2025, Raymond released her third studio album, *Last Night I Heard the Dog Star Bark*, a follow-up to Welsh Music Prize-nominated *Strange Lights Over Garth Mountain*. Her raw talent and intense musicality will leave audiences in awe.

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### HANNAH COHEN (SHE/HER/HERS)

#### NEW YORK - AMERICANA

Hannah Cohen's latest release is an ode to curiosity. On her fourth full-length album, *Earthstar Mountain*, the folk singer-songwriter asks what it means to live a life: how do we decide which direction to take? How do we stay there? And what happens when the rug is pulled from under our feet? Once again working with partner and collaborator Sam Evian at their recording studio, *Earthstar Mountain* is a keepsake of Cohen's time in the Catskills from 2020 to 2024, each note a love letter to the land that inspired it. Audiences will find themselves spellbound by her ethereal vocals and poetic storytelling.

### HORSE LORDS

#### MARYLAND - ROCK

As experimental as it is fun: Horse Lords' fifth album, 2022's *Comradely Objects*, builds on the rock quartet's signature instrumental sound (crafted by Andrew Bernstein, Max Eilbacher, Owen Gardner, and Sam Haberman), reflecting familiar elements of their established palette while pushing it into thrilling new territory. At different times, the songs veer closer to free jazz than anything else in the band's catalog, channel spectral electroacoustic tones, and throb with unexpected synth. Fueled with dizzying obsessive rhythmic energy, they've cemented their reputation among the foremost smugglers of radical musical and political ideas into contemporary music that also happens to rock.

### ILLITERATE LIGHT

#### VIRGINIA - ROCK

It's dangerous to put Illiterate Light in a box, especially with their 2024 album, *Arches*. Are they a guitar-driven indie-rock duo? Kaleidoscopic neo-psychedelia? Synth-kissed, harmony-laden folk? Singer-guitarist Jeff Gorman and drummer Jake Cochran have always been musical shape-shifters, and the farmers-turned-rockers have captured the energy of their live shows—fans crowd-surfing, moshing, crying, and crooning—and infused it into their latest release. Expect to see Gorman on one foot, hammering bass on a foot-pedal synth, shredding guitar riffs, and spitting out song after song while Cochran matches him harmony for harmony, dancing with his standing drum kit and teetering on the edge of the stage.

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### **INSUN PARK & GENERALS** **SOUTH KOREA – K-FOLK, ROCK**

Insun Park & Generals will transport you back centuries but will also keep you grounded in the present. Insun Park stands at the centre of this cultural fusion, her voice carrying the weight of generations before her. Park is a rarity—one of the few female masters of the Gangnyeong Mask Dance, a tradition long dominated by men. Renowned for her innovative spirit, Park reimagines age-old songs and performance styles to connect with today’s audiences. Insun Park & Generals push into new territory, keeping Korea’s cultural heritage not only as a foundation but also making it the star, supported by modern influences. Their music sparks something ancient, pulling it to the fore and making it come alive before your eyes.

### **JACOB BRODOVSKY (HE/HIM/HIS)** **MANITOBA – INDIE FOLK**

Award-winning Winnipeg indie-folk standout Jacob Brodovsky writes songs about feelings, the people who have them, the places that create them, and the fears we carry about them. In the tradition of prairie songwriters, his songs are humble yet intricate, as humorous as they are heartbreaking. His sophomore LP *Tell The Kids We Tried* (available July 10) is a stirring contemporary folk record that tugs at the heartstrings while recounting Brodovsky’s steadfastly hopeful approach to losing the community he’d known his whole life.

### **JAMES CULLETON SUPERFUN (HE/HIM/HIS)** **MANITOBA - FAMILY**

Canadian multimedia artist and musician James Culleton throws out the rulebook with his Superfun Show, a rollicking mix of songs about science, art, and music, plus hands-on tips for making your own creative magic. Driven by curiosity, compassion, and pure joy, Culleton’s energy is downright contagious. The Winnipeg-based artist’s latest of 12 albums, *Superfolk*, turns the Superfun Show into a bluegrass adventure. This year’s all-star show lineup—featuring Grant Siemens, Damon Mitchell, and John Scoles—promises a guaranteed superfun time.

### **JAMIE WEBSTER (HE/HIM/HIS)** **ENGLAND – ALTERNATIVE FOLK**

Folk troubadour Jamie Webster burst onto the scene in 2020 with a bang, hitting number one on the UK folk charts with choruses so catchy they echo far beyond Liverpool. Known for balancing warm acoustics with sharp lyrics, his folk-inspired tunes turn real-life experiences into anthems of unity. His third album, *2024’s 10 For The People*, doubles down on that mission, blending folk and rock riffs to champion the working class—and inspire audiences globally. With storytelling this powerful, every show feels like a joyful celebration of community.

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### **JESSE WELLES (HE/HIM/HIS)**

#### **ARKANSAS – SINGER-SONGWRITER**

No, you haven't stumbled into a time machine. With a voice and presence older than his years—33, for the record—Jesse Welles is preserving the heart and soul of American folk while becoming a defining voice of the genre. His output is prolific (multiple records in a year, thank you very much); his poetic lyrics, fearless and unflinching (with a streak of wry humour); and his guitar firmly in hand. If you're craving a fresh take on traditional American folk, this Arkansas singer-songwriter delivers, drawing comparisons to Bob Dylan and Woody Guthrie while sounding unmistakably like himself.

### **JOBİ RICCIO (SHE/HER/HERS)**

#### **TENNESSEE – AMERICANA, INDIE ROCK**

Country, bluegrass, and folk songwriters like John Prine and Joni Mitchell—all of them held sway as Nashville-via-Colorado musician Jobi Riccio fine-tuned her own sound. Her debut, *Whiplash*, existed between worlds, marrying the classic craftsmanship of Riccio's songwriting with modern indie-leaning production to forge a lush, expansive sound that felt traditional and experimental all at once. In her latest release, *Face the Feeling*, she reaches beyond folk and country to find a new, more electric path, blending the introspective storytelling of Americana with the restless pulse of indie rock to create a sound that will draw you in immediately.

### **JOCE REYOME (SHE/HER/HERS)**

#### **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND – BLUES, FOLK, ROCK**

Old-school vibes, meet the present. Blues sensation Joice Reyome has been honing their distinctive sound, a blend of classic blues grit with raw, soulful vocals, and a throwback to the rich origins of uninhibited rock. Infused with inspiration from the likes of Etta James, Janis Joplin, and Tracy Chapman, they've been captivating audiences across Atlantic Canada with their sense of genuine authenticity and electrifying stage presence. When they perform, they're not just playing music, but turning the audience into active participants in a journey of heartbreak (with a dash of humour thrown in, for good measure).

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### JOE NOLAN (HE/HIM/HIS)

#### ALBERTA - AMERICANA

Luv in the New World is poised to make Joe Nolan a name everyone will be talking about. Hailed by The Globe and Mail as “an Americana wunderkind to watch out for,” he is proving that praise well-deserved. A virtuoso guitarist, elusive poet, and all-around musical chameleon, the Alberta-raised Nolan has always been a hard one to pin down, continuing to break genres and defy labels. Known for his scrappy solo shows and arresting stage presence, he’s been dazzling fans across North America and Europe with his powerful melodies and old-soul lyrics. Wherever he goes, you’ll likely find him accompanied by his trusty parlour guitar (and 2003 Dodge Caravan named Rocco).

### KATHLEEN EDWARDS (SHE/HER/HERS)

#### ONTARIO - AMERICANA

Acclaimed Canadian singer-songwriter Kathleen Edwards has been a cornerstone of North American roots music for decades. Since her 2002 debut *Failure*, she’s spent the 21st century occupying the grey area between genres, swirling together her own rousing mix of alt-country, folk, and heartland rock-and-roll that’s earned her Top 40 success on both sides of the border. Now in her third decade as an artist and celebrating her sixth studio album, *Billionaire*, Edwards is lighting a path for others with her edgy Americana sound, inspiring a new generation of artists ready to blur boundaries between genre and generation.

### KATIE TUPPER (SHE/HER/HERS)

#### SASKATCHEWAN – R&B

Katie Tupper has not-so-quietly become one of Canada’s most compelling new voices. Across her two EPs of heartland soul, she amassed 22 million streams worldwide, her deep alto voice anchoring a blend of soul, indie, alternative, and R&B. Her debut album, *Greyhound*, feels like a homecoming: a return to her roots sharpened by years of new experiences. The songs unfold like having a drink with your best friend, pointing fingers, admitting guilt, dissecting feelings and situations from the heart. It’s nuanced and honest, but doesn’t take itself too seriously. It’s Tupper metaphorically riding out into the sunset on horseback—a sonic ode to the Saskatchewan plains that shaped her.

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### **KELLY BADO (SHE/HER/HERS)**

#### **MANITOBA - AFRICAN**

Kelly Bado is redefining borders in music, soaking up the beauty of different languages and rhythms and letting that vibe shine through in her artistry. Originally from Côte d'Ivoire and now based in Manitoba, she's an ambassador for musical diversity with her distinctive sound (think Afro-pop mixed with soul) and uplifting melodies, bridging generations, geographies, and genres with every note. With her English debut EP set for 2026, listeners continue to embrace 2025's *Belles Âmes*, a stunning fusion of Angélique Kidjo's African rhythm, Yuna's soulful serenity, and Corneille's pop vibe. Even if you don't speak a word of French, the feeling is universal—expect an electrifying performance that will have you moving in your seat.

### **KEN POMEROY (SHE/HER/HERS)**

#### **OKLAHOMA – INDIE FOLK**

Ken Pomeroy will break your heart. She'll do it with a single line—sometimes, just one word. The pain begins as an empathetic ache. Then, as Pomeroy sings her stories, you begin to see yourself in her hurt and hope. A deft guitarist, she opts for beds of rootsy strings that can soothe or haunt—but it's her writing that really shines. (You may recognize some of her tunes from the *Twisters* and *Reservation Dogs* soundtracks!) From Moore, Oklahoma, Pomeroy effortlessly channels the ancestral wisdom of her Cherokee elders and her lived experience through her lyrical and instrumental composition. Her new indie-folk collection, *Cruel Joke*, creates a wild but safe space of Pomeroy's own—a space that, like Pomeroy herself, is brutally honest, proudly Native American, and undeniably brilliant.

### **KILLABEATMAKER**

#### **COLUMBIA - ELECTRONIC**

We dare you to try to stand still during one of Killabeatmaker's shows. With nearly two decades in the industry, the genre-bending producer whips up a heady mix of Colombian rhythms, Afrobeats, Amapiano, and Cumbia, mixing global rhythms with urban beats and deep bass. Drawing on his knowledge of South American traditional Indigenous music and fusing it with the pulse of global club culture, he doesn't stop at the DJ booth. He ignites stages with a vibrant live band, layering percussion, Colombian gaita, and vocals with his own beatboxing, rapping, and vocal talents, all powered by electrifying beats that will have you grooving in no time.

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### **LOGAN RICHARD (HE/HIM/HIS) PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND – FOLK POP**

Logan Richard is one of music’s rarest creatures—a compelling and diverse songwriter who also shreds. The P.E.I.-born-and-based artist has been sharpening both skills since he first picked up the guitar as a pre-teen, building a reputation as a deft, genre-fluid songsmith and hired gun for some of Canada’s most exciting musicians. But his new full-length, *Character Traits*, collects the undeniable evidence of Richard’s talents under his own name as he navigates slick pop, modern R&B, and soulful folk. Get ready for a live show that’s as easy to vibe with as it is full of personality.

### **LUCY DACUS (SHE/HER/HERS) CALIFORNIA – INDIE FOLK**

Three-time GRAMMY® award winner Lucy Dacus is a musician, performer, storyteller, and widely regarded as one of the best songwriters of her generation. On her fourth studio release, the acoustic guitar takes on a central role, perfectly complementing the album’s lighter sound and more introspective, intimate material. Coming on the heels of a career-defining year with *boygenius*, her group with Phoebe Bridgers and Julien Baker, *Forever Is A Feeling* is raw and utterly un-missable—and witnessing this acclaimed indie rock performer command the stage live is just as essential.

### **MAMA CUTSWORTH’S FAMILY DANCE PARTY (SHE/HER/HERS) MANITOBA - FAMILY**

Spreading good vibes across the Prairies and beyond, Winnipeg’s own Sarah Michaelson, aka Mama Cutsworth, gives all of her energy to get the party going no matter where she’s spinning. As a DJ, dance party curator and music educator since 2004, she’s carved out a well-deserved rep for her almost encyclopedic knowledge of beats that lives far outside the mainstream club scene. She’s spun stages around the globe and opened for legends like Salt-N-Pepa, Boney M., and Naughty By Nature. Her sets are a joyful whirlwind—one moment you’re grooving to soul, the next you’re salsa-ing or pulsing to house—all mashed together in the kind of mix that keeps you guessing (and dancing) from start to finish.

## PERFORMER BIOS

*Pronouns have been provided, but it is always best practice to ask.*



### **MIKO MARKS (SHE/HER/HERS)**

#### **CALIFORNIA – AMERICANA, BLUES**

Finding freedom through music is something that Miko Marks knows all too well. After living what feels like multiple lives over, she’s finally stepped into the life she was born to live—and is more than ready to live it to the fullest. After taking a break from music to focus on raising her family, Marks’ return has taken the industry by storm, her sound blending country, blues, roots, southern rock, and even gospel into performances that literally bring audiences to their feet. Her latest, *Feel Like Going Home*, captures both where the Michigan-born singer-songwriter has been and where she is going, inviting listeners into her world.

### **MON ROVÍA (HE/HIM/HIS)**

#### **LIBERIA/TENNESSEE – INDIE FOLK**

Born in Liberia, Afro-Appalachian folk artist Mon Rovía—his stage name taken from the country’s capital city—creates soul-stirring music that reaches beyond borders. Escaping the war-torn country and life as a child soldier, the singer-songwriter was rescued by missionaries and raised in the U.S. What followed were developmental years moving between places while navigating life as a transracially adopted refugee. Indie-folk with tinges of other global textures, his songs carry both the weight of his history and the lift of hope. His debut album *Bloodline* chronicles his journey through hypnotic rhythms and lyrics that are raw, reflective, and invite others to feel deeply—and maybe even heal together.

### **NAT MYERS (HE/HIM/HIS)**

#### **KENTUCKY - BLUES**

Nat Myers might call Kentucky home, but his travels, literal and figurative, seep into his songwriting. The Korean-American country-blues artist carries the spirit of old-school Delta blues into today, and his 2023 acoustic release, *Yellow Peril*, is packed with foot-stomping, back-to-basics tunes. Full of intelligence and soul, contradiction and nuance, and drawn from Myers’ love of history and poetry, the album climbed to #1 on the Billboard Blues charts—no surprise given his soul-soaked vocals, guitar picking abilities, and lyrics that hit hard and linger long after the last chord fades.

## PERFORMER BIOS

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### **NICOLAS PELLERIN & LES GRANDS HURLEURS**

#### **QUEBEC - TRADITIONAL**

Nicolas Pellerin & Les Grands Hurleurs have been sweeping Quebec—and audiences far beyond—off their feet with traditional music that’s been joyfully reimagined. Drawing on folk and classic bluegrass influences, the band has skillfully combined their distinct influences into a rather eclectic result that will both surprise and move festivalgoers. Fiddles, mandolin, guitar, double bass, foot percussion, and rich vocal harmonies... all of it comes together to produce a high-energy ride through a spectrum of emotions, guaranteed to have audiences tapping their feet to the beat.

### **OF MONSTERS AND MEN**

#### **ICELAND – INDIE FOLK**

It’s almost surreal to think of a time when Of Monsters and Men were considered up-and-comers. Since their 2011 breakout, the indie-folk icons and festival favourites have grown into international chart-toppers echoing far beyond Iceland. The band’s first full-length album in six years, *All Is Love and Pain in the Mouse Parade*, draws from their personal lives, community, and the generations that came before them for their most intimate, emotional songs to date. While cinephiles may recognize their sound from films and television shows, it’s onstage that Of Monsters and Men ignite. This is a band best experienced live, belting along while shoulder-to-shoulder with fellow festivalgoers.

### **OH CLEMENTINE**

#### **BRITISH COLUMBIA - FAMILY**

A heartwarming family-friendly folk band that brings a little magic to any stage, Oh Clementine sees their enchanting melodies resonating with listeners of all ages. Through glimmering lyrics, they celebrate the beauty of togetherness and the journey of life as a family. With rich folk arrangements that evoke heartfelt moments, they transport audiences into a realm of childhood wonder and the splendor of the natural world. You and your child(ren) will be clapping along and humming the songs all day (and into those sometimes-sleepless nights).

## PERFORMER BIOS

*Pronouns have been provided, but it is always best practice to ask.*



### **OLIVE KLUG (THEY/THEM/THEIRS)**

#### **OREGON – FOLK, SINGER-SONGWRITER**

While it's only been a relatively short time since the van-dwelling singer-songwriter Olive Klug has fully pursued the non-traditional life of a touring musician, their sophomore album *Lost Dog* finds them contemplating a propensity for adventure. Influenced by artists from Joni Mitchell to Kimya Dawson, they show an unarguably talented ability to voice deeply honest emotions through captivating storytelling, their folk songs all rich with unfiltered vulnerability, whether a lively full-band romp about neurodivergence or a ballad that lays bare their experience with loss. No matter the tune, each song pulls audiences in deeply.

### **THE PAIRS**

#### **ONTARIO - FOLK**

Plot twist: The Pairs is actually a trio. The London, Ontario-based folk band of celebrated songwriters greet every stage with a genuine, quirky presence and unbottled chemistry. Their sibling harmonies and familial banter draws audiences in, and the classically trained vocalists make it their mission to employ three-part harmony and honest storytelling as the mighty tools that soften and connect us. Their fourth studio album, 2025's *Together on a Rock*, marks a return to their folk roots and encapsulates the authentic, minimalistic, acoustic-style performances that's become their signature.

### **REAL ESTATE**

#### **NEW JERSEY – INDIE ROCK**

Real Estate isn't afraid of a little reinvention. Since a group of childhood friends came together to form the band in New Jersey in 2008, the indie rockers have grown and evolved, navigating lineup changes and exploring new musical directions, maturing without losing their signature charm. Known for their breezy melodies and winsome songwriting, their mellow, sun-soaked songs feel like a warm hug of nostalgia. Now based in Brooklyn, the band recently released *The Wee Small Hours*, a compilation of B-sides and non-album tracks that showcase the depth and breadth of their sound (and career).

## PERFORMER BIOS

*Pronouns have been provided, but it is always best practice to ask.*



### RED RIVER RAMBLER (HE/HIM/HIS)

#### ONTARIO – METIS FIDDLE MUSIC

Toes tap, hands clap—and before you know it, everyone’s on their feet, caught up in the infectious energy of Métis composer and storyteller Red River Rambler. Rooted in deep respect for the Métis fiddle tradition, his original compositions blend history and contemporary Métis life into vivid musical narratives. In his 2023 Juno-nominated album *Reverie*, he tells these stories through immersive soundscapes drawn from his Métis heritage and own lived experience. On stage, he joins forces with musicians from across Canada, interweaving instrumentals with captivating stories to create a cultural experience that both entertains and enlightens.

### RENÉE REED (SHE/HER/HERS)

#### LOUISIANA – FANTASY FOLK

Growing up in the heart of Louisiana’s music scene, Renée Reed picked up the fiddle and guitar at a young age, singing traditional songs long before she found her own sound. Self-described as fantasy folk, her music—a blend of traditional Cajun with folk and pop influences—explores memory, love, ancestry, and the honest expression of emotions. Her self-titled debut album, recorded at home with her guitar on a cassette four-track, received accolades for its intimate and haunting atmosphere, drawing comparisons to Jessica Pratt and Mazzy Star.

### REUBEN AND THE DARK X THE BULLHORN SINGERS

#### ALBERTA – INDIE ROCK/INDIGENOUS

Multifaceted artist Reuben Bullock is a man of many talents, and it’s as the lead vocalist and songwriter of acclaimed indie-folk band Reuben and the Dark that he’s made a lasting mark on Canada’s music scene. Captivating audiences around the world with their raw energy, charisma, and emotive storytelling, Reuben and the Dark dishes out soaring instrumentals with lyrics that hit straight to the heart. Reuben and the Dark has teamed up with The Bullhorn Singers, a powwow drumming and singing group from the Kainai Nation Blood Tribe. This collaboration led to a six-song EP titled *All These Roads*.

### RIBBON SKIRT

#### QUEBEC – POST PUNK

Often tagged as post-punk, Ribbon Skirt’s sound is far too broad to be shoehorned into a singular label. The Montreal-based band, led by Anishinaabe musician Tashiina Buswa and guitarist Billy Riley, channels angular guitars and driving rhythms. Beneath that urgency lies lyrical threads that explore memory, love, grief, and Buswa’s relationship with her Indigenous heritage. Shortlisted for the 2025 Polaris Music Prize, their acclaimed debut, 2025’s *Bite Down*, introduced Ribbon Skirt to the masses and quickly established them as one of the most compelling new voices in indie music.

## PERFORMER BIOS

*Pronouns have been provided, but it is always best practice to ask.*



### **RUPLoops (HE/HIM/HIS)**

#### **BRITISH COLUMBIA - FAMILY**

When it comes to entertaining audiences of all ages, RupLoops has the job on lock. The brainchild of Vancouver-based Ruby Singh, RupLoops is known for delivering interactive experiences using vocal percussion, rhythmic rhymes, live looping, and an arsenal of eclectic instruments. He entertains audiences around the globe through his passion for blending and amplifying intercultural sounds using sounds from all around us, from the whirling planets and stars of distant galaxies to percussion of an umbrella under coastal rains. The result? A highly engaging show unlike any other!

### **SAHRA HALGAN (SHE/HER/HERS)**

#### **FANCE/SOMALILAND – SOMALILAND ROCK**

During a time of war in the '80s, iconic Somaliland artist Sahra Halgan earned the nickname “Halgan”—the fighter—and her songs won the hearts of an entire people. Eventually exiled to France, she formed a band with Aymeric Krol, Maël Salètes, and Régis Monte. Her third album, *Hiddo Dhawr*, is the fruit of a sincere search for authenticity and innovation, an unprecedented alliance between Somali song and original rock. Poetry from centuries past; songs of celebration, dance, and love; political demands: Halgan’s voice conveys it all, bolstered by earthy, abrasive guitar riffs and solar drum grooves whose timbres combine tradition and modernity.

### **THE SECRET BEACH**

#### **MANITOBA – ALTERNATIVE, FOLK**

The collaborative project centred around Winnipeg songwriter Micah Erenberg (aka Karima Micah), The Secret Beach focuses on making laidback songs that drift between country, folk, and slacker rock—buoyed by thoughtful slice-of-life lyricism that oscillates between sweet, sad, and funny. Think somewhere between a campfire jam and *The White Album*. Alongside Micah, the fluid project currently includes two collaborators: Daniel Diamond and Kacy Lee Anderson. On stage, The Secret Beach may appear as a full band, a duo, or a solo performance, but no matter its form, the live experience carries the same spontaneity, warmth, and casual camaraderie found on the recordings.

## PERFORMER BIOS

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### SHISHI

#### LITHUANIA – RIOT GIRL POST PUNK

shishi is what surf music would sound like if it was made in the dark near the frozen shores of the Baltic Sea—because it was. Benadetta, Victoria, and Teresa (definitely not their real names) are a trio of Lithuanian self-proclaimed mermaids who create “zero-waste trash music,” singing about how it feels to be living in times when nothing makes sense anymore. Genre-wise, shishi takes the sugar, spice, and everything nice from surf rock and blends it with a chemical formula distilled from the raw sounds of the best riot-girl and punk bands. The result is a beautifully awkward vibe reminiscent of indie surf frontrunners like La Luz or Tennis, smashing into the powerful femininity of bands like Hole, Kleenex, and Delta 5.

### SNACKTIME

#### PENNSYLVANIA – ALTERNATIVE ROCK, FUNK

Despite kicking things off only a few short years ago in 2020, SNACKTIME got their start the old-school way: by throwing free shows in Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square. After attracting massive crowds at the park, the beloved seven-piece band played their first headlining club show—and before long, they found themselves selling out shows and performing at major festivals. With influences ranging from Philly soul to funk, SNACKTIME channels the city's heartbeat into bold, brassy songs ready for a good time.

### STEPHEN WILSON, JR. (HE/HIM/HIS)

#### INDIANA – ALTERNATIVE, COUNTRY, ROCK

Rising country-rock star Stephen Wilson Jr. has had quite the journey. From the hollers of southern Indiana to Nashville, Tennessee, his career has been a winding road that's taken many detours: as a boxing championship finalist, a scientist, and a lead guitarist and songwriter in an indie rock band. After ditching his laboratory 9-to-5 and embarking as a solo artist, his alchemic songcraft (and powerful live shows) immediately made waves with listeners. Since dropping his debut double album—a heartfelt tribute to his late father—he's followed up with a deluxe edition featuring a moving interpretation of “Stand By Me” that's racked up tens of millions of streams and introduced his voice to the masses.

## PERFORMER BIOS

*Pronouns have been provided, but it is always best practice to ask.*



### SUMMER BEAR & FRIENDS

#### MANITOBA – FAMILY

The pulse of the drum. The sure steps of moccasin-clad feet. These are the rhythms and movements that have danced over Treaty One land since time immemorial, carrying the stories of their people in every beat. Now, the Summer Bear & Friends is here for the fifth time at Folk Fest, to share what those dances mean. Founded over 25 years ago by elders Barbara and Clarence Nepinak, the Summer Bear & Friends features some of Manitoba’s finest Indigenous dancers. Wearing beautiful handmade regalia, the performers whirl through intricate steps originating in the Anishinaabe, Cree, Assiniboine, and Sioux cultures, taking time to educate audiences on the history of each style. From the breathtaking shapes dancers create in the hoop dance, to the healing chimes of the women’s jingle dress dance, they infuse every performance with a spirit of welcome, inviting all to cherish the traditions that call these lands home.

### SYLVAN ESSO

#### NORTH CAROLINA - ALTERNATIVE

Get ready to move to the beat and feel all the feels. Across their career, singer Amelia Meath and producer Nick Sanborn—otherwise known as Sylvan Esso—have put out four acclaimed albums, been nominated for two GRAMMYs, and collaborated with a wide-ranging, eclectic community of artists along the way. Hailing from Durham, North Carolina, the electropop pair masterfully combines Meath’s hypnotic vocal melodies with Sanborn’s beats for a magnetic set that’s as perfect for late-night dancing as it is for sitting with life’s beautifully complicated emotions.

### TINGE (THEY/THEM/THEIRS)

#### MANITOBA – ALTERNATIVE, INDIE, ROCK

New, but not unfamiliar—listeners are transported right back to the ‘90s through heartfelt grunge and emotion. Debuting in 2023 to great acclaim, Tinge became an instant staple in the alt music landscape with their EP *Big Deep Sigh*. Led by 2-spirit Veronica Blackhawk, their Anishinaabe heritage is woven into modern concepts through songs that explore loss of culture, reclamation of identity, and breaking through difficult cycles. By fusing gritty guitar riffs with haunting vocals, they craft a sound that’s unapologetically bold and deeply personal. It’s a space where folks from all backgrounds can feel the unity, where cultural differences fade and listeners come together through a common, undeniable truth.

## PERFORMER BIOS

*Pronouns have been provided, but it is always best practice to ask.*



### THE VAUDEVILLIAN

#### ONTARIO – 1930S RAGTIME JUGBAND

The Vaudevillian are a jugband ragtime blues duo bringing the spirit of the 1930s roaring back to life. Hailing from Saugeen Shores, Ontario, this award-winning pair features old-fashioned gentleman Jitterbug James and the sweet and sassy Norah Spades. Together, they fire up stages with washboard, resonator guitar, banjo, harmonica, and musical spoons. Their high-energy vaudeville show gets audiences dancing up a storm wherever they go. In addition to performing at festivals and theatres across Canada and Europe, The Vaudevillian lead interactive washboard and musical-spoon workshops, having taught more than 4,500 participants to date. As Washboard Hank puts it, “The Vaudevillian are a sassy time warp into a rollicking hokum juke joint!”

### WOLF PARADE

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA - INDIE

Every moment spent gazing at our screens is oversaturated with content, an ever-accelerated news cycle conditioning our ever-decreasing attention spans. The struggle to stay present, and to foresee a clear, sustainable future, feels very real. Wolf Parade addresses this phenomenon head-on with *Thin Mind*, the band’s fifth full-length album. Paradoxically, their decision to forge a future-forward sound using a myriad of synthesizers—from ‘80s synths and ‘90s MiDi to more modern, kitchen-sink instruments—recalls the sonics of Wolf Parade’s earliest EPs. As one of the defining forces of 2000s indie rock, the band delivers a surge of relentless energy and cathartic choruses that hit just as hard now as they did the first time around.

### YAGÓDY

#### UKRAINE – ETHNO-DRAMA

Part concert, part theatrics, Yagódy is redefining what contemporary Ukrainian folk can be. For the past decade, the charismatic ethno-drama ensemble has reimagined traditional folk songs, breathing new life into ancestral melodies while carrying Ukrainian culture onto international stages. Their theatrical vocals and haunting harmonies turn each piece into a dramatic act, supported by the pulse of drums, bass guitar, cymbals, and accordion. Often described as rituals instead of performances, their shows invite audiences into a shared experience that reconnects each listener with their own roots (while dancing their hearts out).