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Export date: Mon Sep 7 0:00:47 2026 / +0000 GMT

Caledon Music Festival to showcase transformative storytelling through music

By Constance Scrafield

?Transformation ? it's how music tells stories, how narratives are expressed in music, in all different forms that could mean a lot of different things and transform into these wonderful concerts that we present,? says Terry Lim, Founder of the Caledon Music Festival.

The Caledon Music Festival 2026 returns from August 1 to 23, bringing talented musicians to Caledon for three weeks of inspiring concerts.

This year's presentation of three fabulous concerts is, as he said, ?an exploration into the depth of storytelling, how music tells stories and can transport audiences to fantastical and otherworldly places.?

The first concert of the festival takes place on Saturday, August 1, beginning at 7 p.m., at the Davis Family Farm.

Lim describes it as ?Opera Fantasy.?

?Audiences will experience a unique ambiance of the sunflower farm, [a] beautiful summer evening and enchanting operatic melodies as they enjoy a selection of beverages,? he said.

?Bring your lawn chair and friends to one of the most picturesque outdoor concert venues in Caledon East, overlooking the beautiful Davis Family Farm.?

Many of the stories are based on tales from operas, most famously Puccini's Turandot, Verdi's Rigoletto, Saint-Saëns' Samson et Dalila, Puccini's La Bohème, and others, Lim promised.

Sunday, August 16 sees the second concert, which is very near to the hearts of the performers, the audiences and Lim himself.

Set at the wonderful Alton Mill Arts Centre, this annual ?Side by Side? program is an opportunity for young artists and festival artists to collaborate. Each year, a selected number of top Canadian young artists are paired with the festival artists.

The young artists sit alongside the festival artists during rehearsals and a dedicated concert.

?The highlight of this experience is the Side-by-Side concert,? Lim explained. ?Here, the collective effort is showcased, demonstrating how well they can create music as a unified team?

Defining the depth of joy for one and all, he added, ?Beyond the technical aspects of playing instruments, the program emphasizes mentorship and a comprehensive learning experience that goes beyond the rehearsals.

?The concert becomes a platform to witness the harmonious blend of musicians, illustrating the power of collaboration and a shared passion for music,? Lim said.

On Sunday, August 23, at 3 p.m., Westminster United Church in Orangeville will host ?The Grand Finale.?

?The summer festival comes to a close with a celebratory concert that will send you out into the end of summer on a positive and wonderful note,? Lim said.

He added they are bringing back ?by popular demand? an evening of ?musical brilliance? featuring violinist Luri Lee, clarinetist

Eric Abramovitz and pianist Joonghun Cho.

?Delve into the depths of chamber music as these remarkable artists unveil the mysteries of their craft with an enchanting concert,? Lim said.

In other years, there have been more than three concerts for this festival, but this year has seen grants to the arts significantly slashed. There have been donations, and Lim puts that money aside in case grants are tight.

?I am always excited to play,? said Lim, who is himself a flutist. ?The audiences are really important. Many of the same people come, and they say that this festival is the highlight of their season. They know the players are the best of the best [that] are coming.?

As the Alton Mill is such a perfect setting for the concerts and is always included in the programs, co-founder and owner of the Mill, Jeremy Grant, took a pause to talk to the Citizen about the Caledon Music Festival at the Mill.

?It's a beautiful experience,? he said. ?Being able to attend as an audience member to see a combination of things ? being outdoors for the fresh air, the heritage ambiance; feeling like you have something fantastic, from the perspective of the chance to be there. It's a great sense of pride to be a host and to support the arts.?

?It is a beautiful experience: when I was young and travelling in Europe, sometimes, just by chance, I would happen on a concert to hear classical music that was being performed in an ancient ruin or a Roman amphitheatre,?' he continued. ?Similar to here ? it sets the right mood to let go and just soak it in.?

So, with Terry Lim and Eric Abramovitz, together, they bring the talented musicians to Caledon to create and stage unique concerts at singular and very special venues.

With over three weeks of performances featuring renowned artists worldwide, there's something for everyone. Single tickets, family passes and festival passes are sold exclusively through their website at www.caledonmusicfest.ca.