

# FREE CONCERT SERIES IN THE RICHARD BRADSHAW AMPHITHEATRE

PRESENTED BY



TD READY  
COMMITMENT

JAZZ SERIES

November 15, 2023, 12 p.m.

## *Global Jazz with AVATAAR*

### AVATAAR

Felicity Williams, voice  
Sundar Viswanathan, saxophone/flute  
Michael Occhipinti, guitar  
Ravi Naimpally, tabla  
Tyler Emond, bass  
Max Senitt, drums

### THE PROGRAM

Worldview was released in 2021 to critical acclaim, and won a 2022 JUNO Award for Best Jazz Album (Group). The music is inspired by the deep musical traditions of India, Africa, and Brazil, rooted within the framework of modern jazz.

In an innovative marriage of ancient and modern, this performance will feature driving grooves intersecting with cinematic atmospheres and soaring melodies, creating a fresh, emotive sonic experience. Audience members can expect to hear selections from the following works, written by Sundar Viswanathan:

*A Safe Space for Children*

*Worldview*

*Chrysalis*

*Innocents*

*Blue as it Ever Was*

*Little Kurdi*

*Song Song*

*Ekkriis Spirito*

Photography, video, and audio recording are strictly prohibited during the performance.  
You are welcome to take photos before and after the performance and are encouraged to share with us on:



@CanadianOpera

#FreeConcertSeries

Programming is subject to change. For complete up-to-date listings, and to sign up for email updates, visit [coc.ca/FreeConcerts](http://coc.ca/FreeConcerts).

## COMING UP NEXT AT THE FREE CONCERT SERIES

### INSTRUMENTAL SERIES

Tue. Nov. 21, 2023, 12–1 p.m.

Gene Hotta, viola

*Golden Violin Award Winner 22/23*

Violist and winner of the Schulich School of Music's 2022/2023 Golden Violin Award, Gene Hotta offers a collection of lyrical and complex works by Brahms, Bach, and Garth Knox.

### INSTRUMENTAL SERIES

Wed. Nov. 22, 2023, 12–1 p.m.

Schulich School of Music, Early Music Ensemble

*Abbandonata e condotta a morire*

Handel takes center stage with celebrated musicians Dominique Labelle (soprano), Dorian Komanoff Bandy (baroque violin), and Elizaveta Miller (harpsichord). Schulich School of Music students join their professors for a selection of cantatas, sonatas, and more.

## YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE...

### JAZZ SERIES

Wed. Jan. 10, 2024, 12–1 p.m.

David Zucchi, saxophone

Adam Sherkin, piano

*Songs and Shouts*

Saxophonist David Zucchi and pianist Adam Sherkin explore the rich world of classical-jazz crossover. From Gershwin's own elaborate arrangements of his wildly popular songs, to the modern and free jazz-influenced British composers Mark-Anthony Turnage and Alex Paxton, this program is sure to show you a side of the saxophone you have never seen before.

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FOUR SEASONS CENTRE  
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Avataar is a world-jazz group led by saxophonist/flutist/vocalist Sundar Viswanathan. Earmarked by JAZZ.FM91 as one of the “Best 25 Albums of 2021,” the band’s sophomore album *Worldview* won the 2022 JUNO Award for Best Jazz Album (Group). The music is inspired by the deep musical traditions of India, Africa, and Brazil, rooted within the framework of modern jazz. In an innovative marriage of ancient and modern, driving grooves intersect with cinematic atmospheres and soaring melodies, creating a fresh, emotive sonic experience. Band members share an eclectic range of musical expertise—hardbop, pop, rock, electronica, free improvisation, world, and R&B/soul filter into the interpretations of the tunes. Avataar features Felicity Williams (vocals), Michael Occhipinti (guitar), Tyler Emond (bass), Max Senitt (drums) and Ravi Naimpally (tabla).

Both *Worldview* and *Petal* (Avataar’s 2016 debut CD) received critical acclaim internationally from publications including DOWNBEAT, JAZZIZ, allaboutjazz, Jazz Weekly, and worldmusiccentral.com. Production of both albums and upcoming live video was generously supported with grants from Ontario and Canada Arts Councils.

Avataar has been making original music together for over 10 years, and continues to grow its reputation around the world. The band’s performance record includes the Toronto, Guelph, Sudbury, Markham, and Brampton Jazz Festivals, Lula Lounge, Trane Studio, several universities and colleges in Ontario, Hugh’s Room, the Small World Centre, the Emmett Ray, the Jazz Room (Waterloo) and other venues. In 2018, Avataar successfully toured South Africa, playing in venues ranging from intimate jazz clubs to universities and concert halls. This tour took the band through Cape Town, Kalk Bay, Durban, Johannesburg and

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Pretoria. Most recently, a tour of Western Canada helped develop a national profile through performances to enthusiastic audiences in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The band's original compositions are informed by artists including Shakti, Jarrett, Oregon, Jan Garbarek, AC Jobim, Robert Glasper, Snarky Puppy, Kenny Garrett and Ornette Coleman, and at their core are imbued with an intent toward political and social change and a spiritual focus that transcends the sound. While Avataar's debut album *Petal* explored the evanescence of human life and was a call for a return to spiritual connectedness, *Worldview* attempts to also present a musical commentary on the state of our world, on the pandemic and on the inability of our leaders to lead with integrity, honesty and compassion. While the actions of our leaders affected so many, some of the songs started as gut responses to the treatment of children, our most valuable and vulnerable citizens, and act as vehicles of catharsis for the composer.

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