

FIRELIGHT

CINEMATIC. ATMOSPHERIC. UNFORGETTABLE.

JULY 6 | ARTS & CULTURE CENTRE, GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR

JULY 9 | PRINCESS SHEILA NAGEIRA THEATRE, CARBONEAR

JULY 11 | TRINITY HALL, WINTERTON

JULY 15 | THE CAPE, CAPE BROYLE

JULY 17 | THEATRE HILL, ST. JOHN'S



PHOENIX
— ENSEMBLE —



ARTSNL
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ARTS COUNCIL

MUSICNL

MEMORIAL
UNIVERSITY

**Newfoundland
Labrador**



PHOENIX
ENSEMBLE



FIRELIGHT

Music for Trumpet, Trombone, and Piano

Alan Klaus • Serhii Tsymbal • Daryna Holius

Agave Circles	Derrick Skye
Azure Dawn	Frank Gulino
A Letter Of Love With No Words	Jordi Forniés
Carmen Fantasy	Georges Bizet
<i>IV. Habanera</i>	arr. Ekljær
First Impressions	Edgar Meyer
FinisterAI	Ricardo Mollá
<i>I. On the Top of Cape Finisterre</i>	

INTERMISSION

Golden Hour	Cait Nishimura
Daybreak	Nicola Ferro
Ritual Fire Dance	Manuel de Falla
Unbroken	Madeline A. Lee
Fantango	Kevin McKee

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Firelight explores the remarkable expressive range of trumpet, trombone, and piano through music that is lyrical, virtuosic, and deeply evocative. Spanning contemporary works, beloved classics, and imaginative new arrangements, the program moves between moments of intimacy, brilliance, reflection, and celebration. Together, these works invite audiences into an evening of warmth, colour, and storytelling through chamber music.

PHOENIX ENSEMBLE

Phoenix Ensemble is a chamber music collective based in Newfoundland and Labrador, founded by Artistic Director Alan Klaus. Inspired by the phoenix as a symbol of renewal and transformation, the ensemble brings together musicians in different combinations, allowing its instrumentation and programming to adapt to the unique artistic vision of each project. Built on longstanding collaborations and new artistic partnerships, Phoenix Ensemble creates thoughtfully curated programs that invite audiences of all musical backgrounds to experience the richness, intimacy, and versatility of chamber music.



ALAN KLAUS is a Canadian trumpeter, recording artist, educator, and artistic director whose work brings together performers, composers, and audiences through recordings, commissions, and collaborative chamber music projects. Praised for his "exquisite" tone, he has appeared as a soloist, chamber musician, orchestral performer, and masterclass presenter throughout North America, with additional performances in Europe and Asia.

Alan is the Founder and Artistic Director of Phoenix Ensemble and a founding member of Tephra Collective, an international chamber ensemble dedicated to expanding the repertoire for brass through commissions, arrangements, and performance.

His debut solo album, *First Light* (Centrediscs), features six award-winning Canadian composers, including four commissioned works. The album's opening track, *Song of Hope*, was described by Radio-Canada as "trumpet at its finest," while the *International Trumpet Guild Journal* praised Klaus' "commanding presence" across tone palette, lyricism, phrasing, range, and technique.



As a featured soloist, Alan has appeared with the PEI Symphony Orchestra and at the Atlantic Band Festival. His orchestral performances include the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, Opera on the Avalon, the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, the Bozeman Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra London Canada, and additional national and international ensemble appearances.

Alan holds a Doctor of Music degree from Florida State University and is Associate Professor of Trumpet at Memorial University's School of Music, where he has taught since 2012 following faculty appointments at Montana State University and Mount Allison University.

SERHII TSYMBAL is a trombonist, educator, and former member of the Kharkiv National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre in Ukraine. He holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music from the Kharkiv I.P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts, where he also taught trombone and jazz ensemble.

An accomplished soloist, orchestral musician, and chamber performer, Serhii received top prizes at numerous national brass competitions in Ukraine and performed with the Youth Academic Symphony Orchestra "Slobozhansky" before joining the Kharkiv National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre, where he toured extensively throughout Europe. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, he participated in benefit concerts across Europe in support of his home country.



Since relocating to St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Serhii has become an active member of the province's musical community. He has appeared as a soloist at Memorial United Church and has performed with Jazz East, Cabot Power, Brass on the Rock, the Jacob Slous Quintet, the Florian Hoefner Trio, De La Paz Latin Music, and a variety of chamber music collaborations. He has also performed with Memorial University's Chamber Orchestra, Jazz Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, and Concert Winds.

DARYNA HOLIUS was born and raised in Kharkiv, Ukraine. She began studying piano at an early age and pursued professional music training from childhood.

Daryna holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music from the Kharkiv I.P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts. She completed the Piano and Organ program, earning professional qualifications as a chamber musician, collaborative pianist, researcher, and lecturer in higher education (piano). During her Master's studies, Daryna taught piano and served as a piano

instructor and staff accompanist at the Kharkiv State Music Lyceum, where she collaborated closely with students and faculty in performance preparation and educational programming.



Since relocating to St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador in 2024, Daryna has appeared on Memorial University's Music @ Memorial concert series with Tephra Collective and has performed in a variety of chamber music settings throughout the province. She currently teaches piano at Frequency Music Studios, working with students of all ages and experience levels. In spring 2026, she served as an adjudicator for the Gander Kiwanis Music Festival, reflecting her growing recognition as a performer and educator in Newfoundland and Labrador.

PROGRAM NOTES: Part One

AGAVE CIRCLES ✧ **Derrick Skye**

Commissioned by Tephra Collective, *Agave Circles* opens the program with rhythmic vitality and vibrant colour. The work is inspired by the agave plant, native to the southern and western United States and South America. Its broad, fleshy leaves radiate outward from a compact centre, ending in sharp points that create its distinctive silhouette. Rather than depicting the plant literally, Skye translates its form into music through interlocking rhythmic patterns, layered melodies, and shifting harmonic centres. Drawing on musical influences from around the world, his distinctive compositional language creates a work that is energetic, organic, and constantly evolving.

AZURE DAWN ✧ **Frank Gulino**

The title evokes the rich blue sky that emerges as dawn begins to break, capturing the quiet beauty of a world gradually awakening. Lush lyricism, luminous harmonies, and spacious melodic lines allow each instrument to shine while revealing the warm, distinctive blend of flugelhorn, rather than the original horn, with trombone and piano. Following the rhythmic energy of the opening work, *Azure Dawn* offers a moment of reflection, warmth, and stillness.

A LETTER OF LOVE WITH NO WORDS ✧ **Jordi Forniés**

Spanish composer, pianist, and visual artist Jordi Forniés describes this intimate piano work as a reflection on "those amazing moments in life when love is expressed without needing a single word." Simple, sincere, and deeply personal, the music unfolds with quiet elegance, reminding us that some of life's most meaningful conversations take place beyond language.

Habanera from **CARMEN FANTASY** ✧ **Georges Bizet, arr. Elkjær**

Drawn from Bizet's beloved opera *Carmen*, the famous *Habanera* is one of the most recognizable melodies in classical music. In this movement from Elkjær's *Carmen Fantasy*, the familiar aria becomes a virtuosic showcase for trombone and piano. The unmistakable dance rhythm and expressive flair of Bizet's original remain at its heart, while the arrangement highlights the trombone's agility, warmth, and dramatic range.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS ✧ **Edgar Meyer**

Originally written for violin, cello, and piano, First Impressions reflects Edgar Meyer's uniquely American musical voice, where classical tradition meets the warmth and spontaneity of folk and bluegrass. Known for his collaborations with Yo-Yo Ma and many of today's leading musicians, Meyer creates music that feels both sophisticated and inviting. Like the first moments of a new acquaintance, the work unfolds with a sense of curiosity, warmth, and possibility, capturing the excitement of discovering where a musical conversation might lead.

On the Top of Cape Finisterre from **FINISTERRAI** ✧ **Ricardo Mollá**

Originally composed as a concerto for trumpet, trombone, and orchestra, *FinisterrAI* celebrates both an extraordinary landscape and an enduring friendship. This performance features the concerto's opening movement in a chamber arrangement for trumpet, trombone, and piano. Cape Finisterre, on Spain's Atlantic coast, was once believed to be the edge of the known world. Standing on Newfoundland's eastern shore, audiences may recognize a similar feeling, gazing across the same Atlantic Ocean toward distant horizons. Against this dramatic setting, Mollá weaves together moments of brilliance, reflection, and majestic beauty.

PROGRAM NOTES: Part Two

GOLDEN HOUR ✧ **Cait Nishimura**

The "golden hour" is the fleeting period just before sunset when the landscape is bathed in warm, glowing light. Cait Nishimura composed *Golden Hour* after witnessing unforgettable sunsets in upstate New York and Yosemite National Park, capturing their beauty through luminous harmonies and soaring melodic lines. Featured on Alan Klaus' debut solo album, *First Light*, the work has become one of his favourite pieces to perform. Its balance of accessibility and emotional depth, combined with its long, singing lines, creates a deeply expressive musical experience that continues to resonate with audiences and performers alike.

DAYBREAK ✧ **Nicola Ferro**

As its title suggests, *Daybreak* traces the gradual arrival of morning, beginning in quiet stillness before unfolding into music of increasing warmth and brilliance. Originally written for trombone and piano, the work highlights the instrument's lyrical voice through expressive melodies supported by shimmering piano textures. The result is a work that emphasizes musical storytelling as much as technical artistry, revealing the trombone's remarkable ability to sing.

RITUAL FIRE DANCE ✧ **Manuel de Falla**

Originally composed for the ballet *El amor brujo* (Love, the Magician), *Ritual Fire Dance* has become one of Manuel de Falla's best known and most frequently performed works. It accompanies a ritual intended to drive away the ghost of Candela's unfaithful lover, building through hypnotic rhythms and unmistakable Spanish dance influences before racing toward its exhilarating conclusion. Its irresistible energy and vivid colours have made it one of the defining works of the Spanish orchestral repertoire.

UNBROKEN ✧ **Madeline A. Lee**

Originally composed in 2024 for oboe, English horn, and piano, *Unbroken* explores resilience in the face of adversity. The composer describes the work as expressing the possibility of finding strength even when we feel pushed to our limits. Through moments of tension, vulnerability, and renewal, the music reminds us that resilience is found not in avoiding struggle, but in continuing through it.

FANTANGO ✧ **Kevin McKee**

Fantango is a fantasy on the tango's unmistakable sensuality, elegance, and rhythmic vitality. The original virtuosic horn part is adapted here for trombone, demanding exceptional agility, range, and musical versatility. Soaring melodies and dazzling virtuosity build with irresistible momentum toward a fiery conclusion, bringing *Firelight* to an exhilarating close.

Phoenix Ensemble acknowledges that these performances take place on the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador. We honour the enduring relationships that Indigenous communities have with these lands and waters and recognize their histories, cultures, and contributions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you for joining us for *Firelight*. Your presence and support make live music possible, and we are grateful to share these performances with audiences across Newfoundland and Labrador.

Phoenix Ensemble extends sincere thanks to our presenting venues, staff, volunteers, and community partners for their generosity, hospitality, and commitment to the arts.

We also thank Cam Bursey for photography and videography documentation.



We are deeply grateful for ArtsNL's support of the *Firelight* tour. Last year, ArtsNL invested \$5.3 million to foster and promote the creation and enjoyment of the arts for the benefit of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.



Thank you to MusicNL and the government of Newfoundland and Labrador for their support through travel funding for the *Firelight* tour.



Learn more about the Phoenix Ensemble at:
phoenixensemble.ca