



STRATFORD SUMMER MUSIC WELCOMES NAI CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Stratford, ON – Stratford Summer Music's Artistic Producer, **John A. Miller**, announced today that the **Nai Children's Choir**, the Canadian children's choir of Syrian refugees that declined an invitation to perform in the United States due to concerns about crossing the border, will be the opening act for the **ORIGINS** performance by the **Canadian Arabic Orchestra** on August 19th.

When asked why he invited the Nai choir to perform, Mr. Miller said, "When I heard of the disappointment that this wonderful youth choir faced at the cancellation of their trip to Washington, I was moved to welcome them to Stratford, my community, where I know people will offer the young refugees and their families a genuine experience of Canadian hospitality. Happily, it will all come to pass when the choir sings as part of the ORIGINS concert. Everyone I've told about this episode has responded so positively. Stratford and Stratford Summer Music will give the Nai children a very warm welcome, I am sure. "

The choir focuses on healing, learning and rejoicing, and has engaged over 200 refugee children since it was established in 2016. The word nai means "the sound of the flute" in Arabic, referring to Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran's belief that "singing is a fine prayer and the sound of the flute remains even after life ends." The choir has performed at a range of venues and events, including for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau outside the House of Commons.

The performance **ORIGINS** is a unique production which combines Canadian First Nations music with Arabic music and culture. It highlights the similarities between these two cultures when it comes to self-expression through the medium of music and it brings home to Canadian Arabs how their culture is an intrinsic component of Canadian heritage. Through music and dance from diverse international heritages, ORIGINS shows similarities among humans, across continents, between cultural and religious divides. In this performance, the interface is represented by the St'at'imc artist/dancer, **Laura Grizzlypaws**, from British Columbia who sings of her culture beside members of the **Canadian Arabic Orchestra**. Representatives of the mystical Turkish meditative community, **Sufi Whirling Dervishes**, will also be on stage.

To purchase tickets visit stratfordsummermusic.ca, call (519) 271-2101 or visit the Box Office at 25 Ontario Street (second floor).

Stratford Summer Music acknowledges with thanks the support of the following major sponsors.

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Major Government Sponsors: Canadian Heritage, Canada Summer Jobs, Ontario Arts Council, Province of Ontario (Celebrate Ontario) and City of Stratford

About Stratford Summer Music

Stratford Summer Music is an annual multi-week music festival in indoor and outdoor venues throughout downtown Stratford. With an artistic vision to produce, to the highest standards possible, a program of diverse and exciting musical performances by Canadian and international artists and to provide the widest possible range of musical genres on its stages. Stratford Summer Music offers audiences a standard of musical excellence and experiences difficult to find outside large urban centres. In 2017, more than 50,000 people enjoyed the music festival's ticketed or free concerts and events.

Stratford Summer Music 2018

July 16th to August 26th

Website: <https://stratfordsummermusic.ca>

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For immediate release: August 7th, 2018

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