



Local Arts / Entertainment

## Vancouver Classical Guitar Festival has a little something for everyone

*Luis Angel Medina stresses that the subtext of the Vancouver Classical Guitar Festival is community, a community of players, aficionados, and music lovers. There is lots for players to do, including not just individual lessons but also Medina's ensemble.*

**David Gordon Duke**

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## Vancouver Classical Guitar Festival

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**Where:** Vancouver Academy of Music and Deer Lake Gallery

**When:** July 16–21

**Tickets:** [vancouverguitar.org](http://vancouverguitar.org)

Vancouver's classical music scene seems almost to have established a summer residency in Burnaby this July.

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra has resumed its summer practice of a free concert at Deer Lake Park on Saturday, July 16. The following day, Vancouver



of the Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra, Jonathan Darlington.

There's another new event this month, the Vancouver Classical Guitar Festival, running July 16–21 in two locales: the Vancouver Academy of Music at Vanier Park and the Deer Lake Gallery in Burnaby.

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The festival began online two summers ago, and was deemed so successful that it's now blossomed into an in-person proposition, though those who can't make it to town can still live-stream events.





Vancouver Classical Guitar Festival Artistic Director Daniel Bolshoy. PHOTO BY JULIEN FAGUERE /jpg

What's involved? A very full week of master classes and workshops, ensemble playing, and even a luthiers' demonstration where players can touch and even try out instruments. Participating students at every level can look forward to sessions with guest faculty, including Rene Izquierdo, Daniel Bolshoy, and Luis Angel Medina. There is a musicianship option with Lucina Zhao, guitar



And that's just for players. What about the legions of fans who often find guitar-focused music events thin on the ground during the regular season? The festival has three concert events offering multiple performers in a rich blend of repertoire. The VCGFest Opening Concert is on Saturday July 16 at 7 p.m. at the Vancouver Academy of Music and features Medina, Alec Pearson, and Cuban-born Rene Izquierdo. On Sunday afternoon, July 17, a 2:30 p.m. matinee includes performances by Louise Southwood, Hanh Nguyen, and Bolshoy.

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Festivals require a great deal of work and considerable planning if they are to succeed. That this is the third iteration of the VCGF — which actually launched during the extra-difficult pandemic seasons — speaks to its appeal and effectiveness.

Outreach program coordinator and ensemble director Medina explains, “I started the Festival because I wanted the local guitar community to have a place to come together.”

Born in Mexico, Medina moved to Vancouver just over a decade ago. He completed his undergraduate degree at the University of British Columbia during the brief time festival Artistic Director Bolshoy taught there. When



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Medina stresses that the subtext of the festival is community, a community of players, aficionados, and music lovers. There is lots for players to do, including not just individual lessons but also Medina's ensemble.

"A guitar orchestra is a very rare chance to blend and be part of something beyond yourself," he explains. "The guitar is a solo instrument, so you don't often get a chance to hang out with your peers. The idea is to come together with everyone interested in guitar music. For me, attending festivals is above all an opportunity to grow, to meet great people and be inspired by them."

The festival's final event is all about seeing how that inspiration and growth pay off. A final participants' concert will be assembled as the festival unfolds, with selected participants performing in a Participants' Closing Concert, on Thursday, July 21, at 5:30 p.m. at the Deer Lake Gallery in Burnaby.

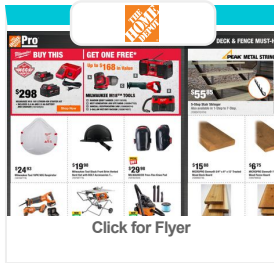
For further information, visit [medinaguitar.com/vcgfest](http://medinaguitar.com/vcgfest).

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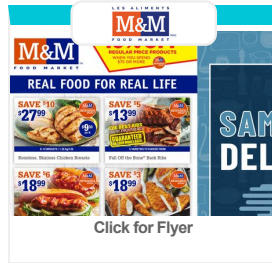
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