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Ravinia hosts Black Moon Trio's premiere of multi-dimensional piece using Lake Michigan as a muse



Black Moon Trio during their performance of Lakenotes: Seasons of Lake Michigan, at Ravinia on August 2, 2026, a multi-dimensional performance created in tribute to the mystery and majesty of Lake Michigan performed through music, verse, and videography. From left: Black Moon Trio, Jeremy Vigil on piano, Khelsey Zarraga on violin, Parker Nelson on horn. (Gina Grillo/ for the Pioneer Press)

By [Gina Grillo](#) | For the Chicago Tribune
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Lake Michigan as a muse has inspired artists working in a multitude of disciplines from visual art to music to the written word.

In this artistic tradition, Black Moon Trio premiered Lakenotes: Seasons of Lake Michigan at Ravinia on Sunday, a multi-dimensional performance created in tribute to the mystery and majesty of Lake Michigan performed through music, verse, and videography.



Lakenotes: Seasons of Lake Michigan, at Ravinia on August 2, 2026, a multi-dimensional performance created in tribute to the mystery and majesty of Lake Michigan performed through music, verse, and videography. From left: visual artist Lincoln Schatz, video editor Dylan Connell, composer Stacy Garrop, poet Kathryn Haydon, on piano Jeremy Vigil, on violin Khelsey Zarraga, and on horn Parker Nelson. (Gina Grillo/ for the Pioneer Press)

Erik Soderstrom, senior director of programming at Ravinia, says Lakenotes takes us on a journey of the ever-changing lake, not just on a seasonal basis, but weekly, daily, and by the hour.

“It’s stunning to see the lake reflected in music, word, and image, and it reminds us that the lake becomes a part of all of us who live around it,” Soderstrom said.

The August 2 Ravinia program describes Lakenotes as a unique artistic journey and the result of a collaboration between three artists, each creating through a distinct creative lens – poet Kathryn Haydon who gives lyricism to the lake’s many moods, visual artist Lincoln Schatz who captures the lake’s vast palette through sweeping videography and photography, and composer Stacy Garrop’s contemporary chamber piece, reflecting the natural rhythms and textured soundscape of the seasons.

This contemporary collaboration offers musical artistry and a cutting-edge multi-tiered sensory performance filled with all the poetic contradictions of the lake itself.

Parker Nelson, director of arts and administration for Black Moon Trio, says the trio- Khelsey Zarraga on violin, Nelson on horn, and Jeremy Vigil on piano- performs the music and essentially curated and built the musical program, combining elements from all collaborators.

“After recent Ravinia renovations, the Sandra K. Crown Theater has become an exciting multimedia performance venue, a space just right for us to explore and create an immersive experience for our audience,” Nelson said.

Stacy Garrop’s *Tracing Waves Across a Year*, the core musical piece co-commissioned for the Lakenotes concert by Ravinia and Black Moon Trio, was performed along with other musical works: *Mainframe Tropics* by Mason Bates Horn Trio by Carson Cooman and Probuzeñí Perel (*Awakening of Pearls*), by Jiří Pazour.

Garrop says it was Kathryn Haydon’s book, *Unsalted Blue Sunrise: Poems of Lake Michigan* (2023), that inspired her musical composition.

“The form of the poems helped me create forms in music – autumn clouds in a brooding sky, uneasy churning waves translated into sound, just as the lake freezing up in winter became slow slides in the strings surrounded by silence,” Garrop said.

Joanna Rolek, executive director of the Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Chamber of Commerce, attended the Sunday afternoon performance of Lakenotes.

“I was surprised by the impact this performance had on me, and fascinated by how the ripple and rhythm of water finds its way into the music,” Rolek said

Nelson says that in the blending of auditory and visual, the emotional and the ecological, the concert also included musical improvisation actually taking place on stage.



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“This spontaneous sequence gave us the opportunity to improvise directly off of Schatz’s photographs,” Nelson said.

According to Haydon, for all of us living in Chicago, and especially on the north shore, Lake Michigan has become part of our sense of place and we come alive with our memories of living near it.

That connection to the wildness of the lake can’t help but change you, Schatz says, and at some point becomes more than a visual touchstone.

“You realize that rather than remaining a subject, the lake has become a partner, a participant in the conversation,” Schatz said.

Gina Grillo is a freelancer for Pioneer Press.