

A young woman with dark hair, wearing an orange t-shirt, is clapping her hands and looking upwards with an expression of joy and anticipation. In the foreground, a man with a beard, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt, is seated and playing a violin. He is looking towards the woman. In the background, a woman with glasses is holding up a smartphone to take a photo or video. Other people are visible in the background, some blurred, suggesting a public event or concert. The setting appears to be an indoor space with large windows.

Access for All!

Xenia Concerts is leading the way to a more accessible and inclusive future in the Canadian performing arts.



Our National Mandate

Mission

Xenia Concerts works with the neurodiversity and disability communities to create exceptional, accessible performing arts experiences that embrace differences and promote inclusion.

Vision

To serve as Canada's leading resource for the creation and promotion of family-friendly, accessible, and inclusive performing arts experiences for neurodiverse and disabled audiences.



Why Xenia Concerts?

We use **inclusive co-design*** to work **with, not for**, the neurodiversity and disability communities.

We put **accessibility first** to ensure a sense of belonging for our audiences.

We **train artists across Canada** to design and present accessible concerts.

*Inclusive co-design involves working directly with people with lived experience to reduce barriers to inclusion. See Appendix I for examples.

Key Facts

- Our primary focus is accessibility and inclusion
- We present 25-30 concerts to over 1,300 attendees per year
- We're rooted in community consultation and co-design
- We celebrate Canada's rich cultural and artistic diversity
- We constantly examine, refine, and expand our accessibility practices
- Our artists are among the finest musicians in Canada
- We employ neurodivergent and disabled artists and advisors
- We pay our artists healthy fees to help ensure their wellbeing





“This is the **only** concert series in Toronto that I can bring my grandchildren to.”

-Caregiver attendee

What Makes Xenia Concerts Different?

- 🎵 All ages and expressions welcome
- 🎵 PDF Venue Guides (Visual Stories)
- 🎵 Accessible e-programs
- 🎵 Sensory supports provided
- 🎵 Movement activities and stretch breaks
- 🎵 Natural lighting and flexible seating
- 🎵 Wheelchair-accessible venues
- 🎵 No financial barriers
- 🎵 Musical ASL interpretation



Training a Generation of Artists

To equip artists and arts organizations across Canada to deliver accessible programming, Xenia shares knowledge through workshops, presentations, and our one-of-a-kind Artist Training Program.

The **Xenia Artist Training Program*** provides musicians with 5 hours of intensive instruction on how to design and present neurodiversity-friendly concerts.

We regularly deliver **workshops on inclusive concert design and accessibility** at some of Canada's top training academies and universities, including Scotia Festival, Toronto Summer Music, Western University, and University of Toronto.

We share our work at **national and international conferences** so that other organizations can build on our work and improve their accessibility practices.

*See Part 2 of Appendix I for full program description.



“It was great to be able
to go out and be
accepted and be part
of a community.”

-Caregiver Attendee

In Their Own Words

“Amazing to bring three generations of neuro-spiciness together. Thank you!”

–Adaptive Concert attendee, 2023

“It felt amazing to plan an outing centered around our kiddo.”

–Adaptive Concert attendee, 2023

“This was the first time my son had coordination between his ears and eyes. He looked and watched as he listened. Thank you!”

–Adaptive Concert attendee, 2022

“We really were happy to know we can [...] attend a performance and not have to worry about not being accepted or not being welcomed.”

–Dementia-friendly concert attendee, 2023





Artists' Thoughts

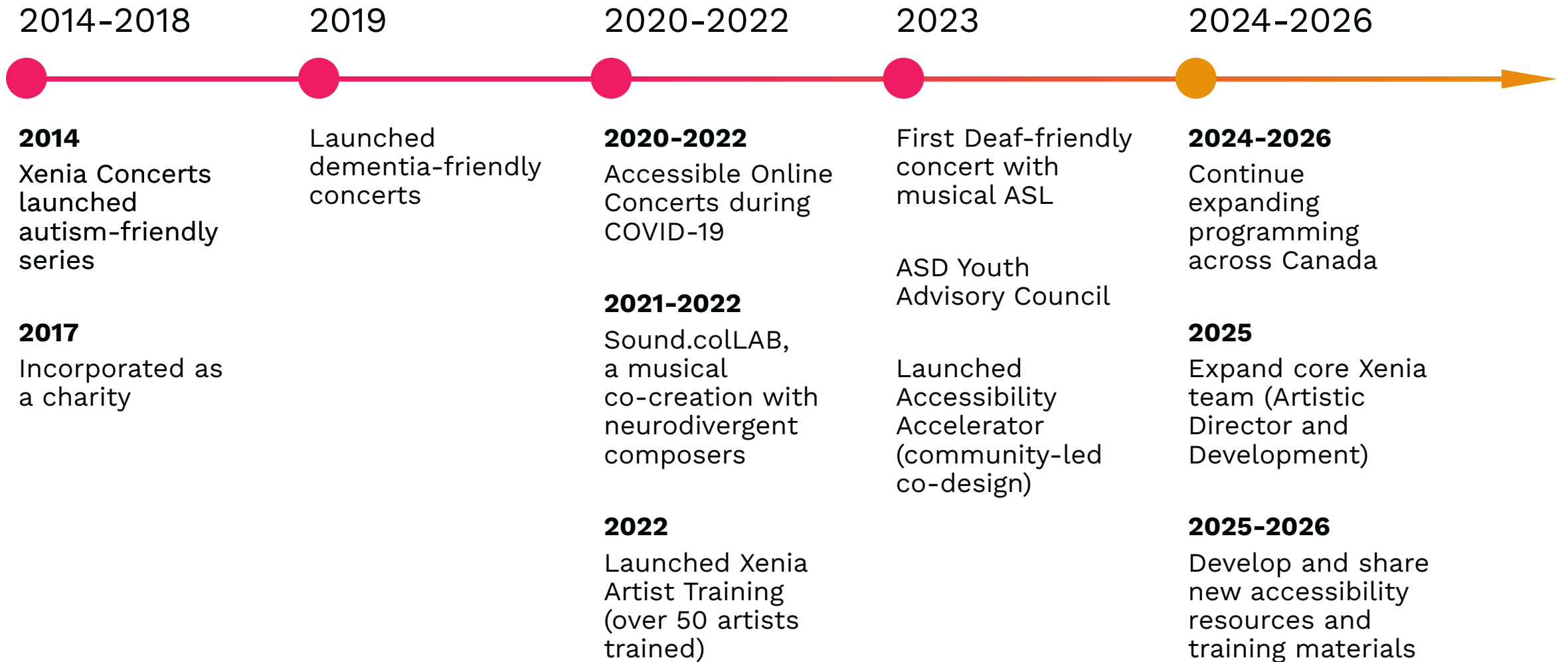
“I am truly impressed with the care and thought invested into the Xenia Concerts training program. The training provided scientific and real-life insights into understanding the neurodiverse community. [...] I hope to continue to apply my learning into other aspects of my life. Thank you!”

–Clara Kim, violinist, Tesla Quartet

“It is hard to put into words the profound experience of performing for Xenia audiences. It was an uplifting and heartwarming day sharing in the joy of music. Xenia treats their performers and audiences with a high level of respect.”

–Emili Losier, singer

Milestones and Future Goals



Sustaining Our Growth

From 2024-2026, we will:

Expand our concert series and develop presenting partnerships across Canada.

2026 Goal: 40 concerts and 2,800 attendees.

Invest in community consultation and co-design through the Accessibility Accelerator.*

2026 Goal: Shift from project-based funding to long-term sustained funding.

Expand training for artists and arts administrators across Canada. We have already trained over 50 artists in designing neurodiversity-friendly concerts.

2026 Goal: Train 150 artists and 20 arts administrators.

Help other organizations improve their accessibility practices. We've soft launched consulting and coaching services, which we will expand.

2026 Goal: Consult for at least five organizations.

Increase representation of disabled and neurodivergent artists on stage.

2026 Goal: At least 50% of Xenia Concerts will feature at least one neurodivergent or disabled performer.

*See Appendix I for program summary

As Xenia continues to lead the way in neurodiversity- and disability-friendly concert design, the demand on our resources continues to grow. **We are seeking long-term partnerships with committed supporters** to sustain this growth and meet the needs of our community.

Budget

	2023-2024	2024-2025*	2025-2026**
Number of Concerts	29	32	40
Artistic Expenses	\$111,000	\$122,000	\$182,500
Production and Marketing	\$88,000	\$96,800	\$121,000
Accessibility and Community Engagement	\$60,900	\$67,000	\$83,750
Operations and Administration	\$107,750	\$118,300	\$141,500
Development	\$18,500	\$20,500	\$32,000
Total	\$386,150	\$424,600	\$560,750

*Develop new training resources through Accessibility Accelerator

**Artistic Director and Development Officer added to team to support expansion of programming



Rory McLeod
Executive and Artistic Director



Kayla Carter
Accessibility Coordinator



Evan Lamberton
Lead, Marketing and
Community Partnerships



Paolo Griffin
Managing Director

Our Team

Our team uses our knowledge of music, Inclusive Design, disability justice, and community engagement to create welcoming concert experiences that inspire our audiences while supporting their needs.

We build strong relationships with partners, artists, community members, and other stakeholders while continually reimagining what an accessible concert experience can be.

Together, we are leading the way to a more inclusive future in the performing arts.

Board of Directors

Gillian Story, President and Chair

Robert Williams, Vice-chair

Jesse Rosensweet, Treasurer

Amanda Smith, Secretary

David Guiney, Director

Jenna Richards, Director

Sarah Nematallah, Director

David Visentin, Director



Current Funders & Donors

\$20,000+

The Government of Canada
Canada Council for the Arts
Toronto Arts Council
Unity for Autism
The Azrieli Foundation
The George C. Hunt Family
Foundation
In Honour of RS Williams and
Sons Ltd.

\$5,000–19,999

Ontario Arts Council
Anonymous

\$500–4,999

Ruth Gransden
Hiroko Kagawa & David Visentin
Jesse Rosensweet
Gillian Story
Anonymous

\$100 to \$499

Nicole Balm
Shelley Brown
Sarah Cassidy
Jonathan Krehm
Maggie Lau
Breda Mizerit-Matejcek
Carole Matthijsse
Hanna Matthijsse
Kirstie McLeod
Phyllis Moore
Linda Moore
Sarah Nematallah
Wayne Pommen
Jenna Richards
Amanda Smith
Muriel Smith
Stephen and Jane Smith
Lyndsey Stevenato





Your Donation Makes an Impact

\$51-100 – Send a child or an older adult to a concert with their caregiver

\$101-250 – Help us design and distribute an accessible e-program for one concert

\$251-500 – Fund one artist's participation in the Xenia Concerts Artist Training Program

\$501-1000 – Support one artist's performance at a Xenia Concert

\$1001-5000 – Provide musical ASL and other accessibility supports at one Xenia Concert

\$5001-15,000 – Fund an Adaptive Concert

\$15,001 and up – Transformative gifts help us:

- Establish new partnerships
- Bring Xenia Concerts to new communities
- Develop and deliver new training materials



Access is a **Human** Right

“Everyone has the right freely to **participate in the cultural life** of the community, to **enjoy the arts** and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.”

–Article 27, UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights



Will **you** help Xenia
build an **inclusive**
and **accessible**
future in the
performing arts?



Contact our Executive and Artistic Director:

rory.mcleod@xeniaconcerts.com

Learn more: XeniaConcerts.com

Donate: XeniaConcerts.com/Donate

§ Appendix

Appendix I: Programming Profile



1. Adaptive Concerts

Objective: Design and present exceptional family-friendly concerts that embrace and support neurodiversity and disability.

Result: A series of 25-30 artistically exceptional concerts, mostly in the GTA, designed to be welcoming and inclusive for neurodivergent and disabled children and youth, and their families. A selection of these concerts is inclusive of older adults with dementia and their caregivers.

Timeline: 2015–present (ongoing)

Summary: Adaptive Concerts are family-friendly events that embrace neurodiversity and disability. We work with our artists to design concerts that are fun and casual, and we transform the listening environment to be welcoming and inclusive for children and families who experience systemic and social barriers to inclusion at typical events. These concerts combine innovative programming with a suite of accessibility features, all presented by some of Canada's finest musicians. Above all, Xenia's adaptive concerts are inspiring experiences where audience members can be themselves, together.

2. Xenia Artist Training Program

Objective: Train artists to design and present neurodiversity-friendly concerts

Result: Since launching the program in September 2022, we have trained over 50 musicians, including university students, JUNO-winners, and

Timeline: September 2022–present (ongoing)

Summary: In partnership with The Lotus Centre for Special Music and Education and Autism Canada, Xenia trains musicians across Canada to design and deliver adaptive concert experiences. The training helps artists understand a diverse spectrum of abilities and sensory experiences so that they can design events that are inclusive and welcoming for neurodiverse audiences.

Using pre-recorded webinars, a programming guidebook, and an expert-led online discussion, the training explores:

- Barriers to inclusion
- Language choice and disability
- Common diagnoses
- Communicating with clarity
- Creating a supportive sensory environment
- The social model of disability
- The neurodiversity paradigm



3. ASD Youth Advisory Council

Objective: Use Inclusive Design to invite Autistic youth to have their say in Xenia's accessibility practices.

Result: The ASD Youth Advisory Council designed a pair of concerts specifically for Autistic youth and young adults, which Xenia Concerts will present in Toronto and Kingston in 2024.

Timeline: May 2023–June 2024

Summary: There are 3 guiding principles of this project:

- 1.The opinions of young people are valuable and important
- 2.Lived experience = expertise
- 3.The best way to improve accessibility and inclusion is through dialogue and collaboration

Xenia Concerts launched the ASD Youth Advisory Council (“YAC”) in 2023 to connect directly with Autistic youth, identify barriers to inclusion, and co-design autism-friendly concert experiences. The goal of this project is to integrate the voices of young Autistic music-lovers into the design and creation of Xenia Concerts’ programming, and to integrate their insights into Xenia’s artist training resources. The five-member YAC is led by a Council Chair who self-identifies as Autistic, with support from Xenia Concerts staff. With the support of Xenia Concerts staff and Alexandra Prefasi of the ASO (formerly Asperger’s Society of Ontario), the council designed two Xenia Concerts that will be presented in 2024: one in Kingston and one in Toronto.

4. Accessibility Accelerator

Objective: Engage in co-design with a diverse council of disabled and neurodivergent arts workers to inform Xenia's accessibility practices and develop shareable resources for the broader arts community

Expected Results: The co-design team will develop a toolkit of resources that help artists and arts organizations better understand and support the needs of disabled and neurodivergent artists, audiences, and colleagues.

Timeline: October 2023–April 2025 (Phase 2 starts in 2025)

The Details: The Xenia Concerts Accessibility Accelerator is a launchpad to a more inclusive future in the Canadian performing arts scene. With the help of Xenia Concerts' Accessibility Coordinator Kayla Carter, Xenia has built a diverse panel of paid neurodiversity and disability advisors that will work together with Xenia Concerts to develop design solutions that address remaining barriers to access in our concert programming. Xenia Concerts will incorporate resulting design recommendations into our Artist Training Program, which uses recorded webinars, a guidebook, an accessible website, and synchronous online discussions to teach performing artists and arts organizations how to create inclusive, accessible events. The co-design team will also develop accessible, shareable resources that will support other arts professionals in creating accessible, inclusive spaces that take disability, neurodiversity, and intersectionality into account.





5. sound.colLAB (complete)

Objective: Give a small group of neurodivergent and/or disabled community members, including several youth, an opportunity to explore their creative voices through musical composition.


Result: The creation and multiple performances of seven short pieces for string quartet and electronics, written by seven first-time composers who all identify as neurodivergent or having a disability.


Timeline: January 2021–July 2023


The Details: The motivation behind sound.colLAB was simple: everyone is musical, but not everyone has the opportunity to explore their musical voice. In 2021, in partnership with the National accessArts Centre (“NaAC”), Xenia Concerts set about to give creative musical opportunities for people who might not otherwise have had the chance. After consulting with a group of artists from NaAC and a group of professional musicians, we developed and executed a series of workshops that supported seven artists in the creation of original pieces of music. Four of these participants were youth and young adults based in Toronto.


Through three workshops with composer Bekah Simms and the Rolston String Quartet, participants were introduced to the sounds of the string quartet. At the end of these workshops, each participant had developed text scores about a sound or sounds that they had recorded, and Bekah arranged these text scores into pieces of music for the Rolston String Quartet. All seven participants’ pieces were then premiered on the Xenia Concerts stage as part of their Adaptive Concert series. Throughout 2022 and 2023, they presented *Seven Miniatures* across Canada and beyond, with performances in Ottawa, Seoul, Calgary and Toronto by The Rolston Quartet, The Thalea Quartet, and Quatuor Despax.


Appendix II: Our Values


 **Enrichment** – Xenia Concerts Inc. understands that music, the arts, and the opportunity to express oneself artistically improves the quality of life of all people.

 **Inclusion** – Xenia Concerts Inc. believes that all persons have the right to experience, create, and otherwise express themselves through artistic endeavours.

 **Excellence** – Xenia Concerts Inc. creates and presents programs, concerts, and other artistic productions of high professional quality.

 **Inspiration** – Xenia Concerts Inc. seeks to inspire creators, artists, and audiences through arts experiences.

 **Community** – Xenia Concerts Inc. promotes and nurtures social development and creates community cohesion through accessible and inclusive artistic events.

 **Sustainability** – Xenia Concerts Inc. achieves its mission and vision through adherence to its values while always being fiscally responsible.



“Wonderful event for the whole family. Just be yourself!”
–Caregiver attendee