

Guitar Adjudicator – Joel Saunders

With a fingerstyle technique that mesmerizes audiences and a talent for reimagining classics, Joel Saunders is a standout guitarist and singer/songwriter based in Guelph, Ontario. Blending intricate fingerstyle artistry with jazz training and pop sensibilities, Joel creates music that is both explorative and timeless, featuring original compositions and a repertoire of covers spanning nearly a century.

Joel's career is marked by numerous accolades, including winning two music scholarships, earning a degree in music from the University of Guelph, and securing 4th and 3rd place finishes at the prestigious Canadian International Fingerstyle Competition in 2016 and 2017, respectively. He has received a grant from the Ontario Arts Council for music composition, been featured by the acclaimed label Candyrat Records, and highlighted in music blogs and podcasts such as *Minor 7th*.

As a versatile artist, Joel performs regularly throughout the GTA as a solo musician and with various ensembles. When not on stage, he teaches music online and works as an audio and video producer from his home studio in Guelph.