

West Coast Youth Fiddle Summit FAQ Sheet

What is the WCYFS?

The West Coast Youth Fiddle Summit is an annual event that was started in Nanaimo BC in 2018. The event was started as a way to connect youth fiddle players from across Western Canada, and to give them the opportunity to learn from our very best ensemble directors. Summit weekend includes workshops, community performances, social activities, performance and choreography coaching, and a thrilling final concert. Summit is also growing: it started with just 56 youth and now brings over 110 youth musicians together each year.

Who is involved in organizing the WCYFS?

The three core ensembles who share planning and hosting duties are Fiddelium (Nanaimo BC), the Celtic Ensemble (Vancouver BC), and the Calgary Fiddlers Association (Calgary AB).

Who can participate?

The WCYFS is open to pre-formed youth fiddle performance ensembles of all levels. To accommodate a wide range of skill levels and delivery models, we offer two “streams”: the Hard Core stream is intended for advanced performance ensembles with a strong music reading (and memorizing) component. The Moves & Grooves stream is designed for intermediate level ensembles who may or may not use sheet music to learn their repertoire. The name of our event reflects its location on the West Coast of Canada, but we welcome groups from anywhere in North America and beyond!

Please note that individuals are not able to attend without being members of a participating ensemble.

When and where does it take place?

Hosting duties are shared among the three core ensembles. Summit has been hosted in Nanaimo (2019, 2020, 2024), Vancouver (2022, 2023), and Calgary (2025). Future dates for the WCYFS are May 2026 (UBC/Vancouver) and May 2027 (downtown Nanaimo).

Is there any preparation work required from participants?

Yes! It is expected that every student has learned and memorized the performance materials prior to arriving at Summit. Recordings and sheet music are distributed about 5 months before Summit weekend, to give everyone lots of time to memorize their notes and bowings. That way when we get together, we can focus on refinement of all the musical details as well as adding cool choreography. Teaching videos can be made available upon request.

I would like to bring my youth fiddle ensemble to Summit. How can I get involved?

We are always looking for new youth ensembles to bring into our Summit community! If you're interested in joining, we will send you an application form so you can answer a few questions about your group. We will also ask for some recent performance videos that demonstrate what your group sounds like.

What performance opportunities are included in the Summit weekend?

The WCYFS weekend typically features two main performance opportunities: a community concert where each group presents a 20-minute set, and a culminating gala concert. At the gala, each group shares a short showcase (8–15 minutes) and joins in the performance of mass ensemble pieces, as well as repertoire from the Hard Core and Moves & Grooves streams.

Does my group have to submit an arrangement?

No – all coaching and instruction is handled by the Summit's artistic team. That said, leaders are welcome to observe, assist, and learn alongside their students during sessions.

What does a typical Summit schedule look like?

Summit starts on Friday late morning and wraps up with the final concert on Sunday afternoon or evening. Each day includes a mix of large and small ensemble rehearsals, workshops, and choreography sessions, as well as social time and optional evening activities. The weekend wraps up with a public gala concert.

What is the cost to participate?

Costs vary slightly depending on the host city, but typically includes access to all workshops and activities, and registration fees, and most meals. We also try to provide negotiated rates for accommodations. Group leaders will receive a detailed cost breakdown in the application package. We also work hard to keep costs as low as possible through community partnerships, sponsorships and negotiated rates.

What kind of supervision or chaperone requirements are there?

Each ensemble is expected to provide adequate supervision for their students.