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Da
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Camera
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Dingers
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Laura Hawley, Artistic Director
Kim Cousineau, Pianist

word painters

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2026 | 3 PM

St. Andrew's United Church | 9915 148 Street NW

with guests

Archbishop Jordan High School Choir

Jolaine Kerley, Conductor

and

Live Painting

Katie Tilbury, local artist



TREATY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity, and truth, we honour and acknowledge that the traditional land on which we reside is in Treaty Six Territory.

We would like to thank the diverse Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked and cared for this territory for generations, such as nêhiyaw (Cree), Denesuliné (Dene), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Nakota Isga, Nakota Sioux (Stoney), and Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) peoples.

We also acknowledge this as the Métis' homeland and the home of one of the largest communities of Inuit south of the 60th parallel.

We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us.

In lieu of a spoken land acknowledgement, a small group from Da Camera Singers will open with "Here, This Place."

This musical offering reflects our choir's ongoing commitment to building a path toward reconciliation.

It serves as a moment of reflection to honour our connection with the land and to celebrate the rich Indigenous history here in this place - amiskwacîwâskahikan (Edmonton) - and throughout Alberta and the rest of Canada.

No applause is necessary.

PROGRAM

Glory to God

Text: Luke 2:14

George Frederic Handel
(1685-1759)

As Vesta Was

Text: Anonymous

Thomas Weelkes
(1576-1623)


To Sit and Dream

Text: from "To You" by Langston Hughes (1901-1967)

Rosephanye Powell
living composer

Yukon Time

Poet: Clea Roberts (living poet)

laura hawley 
living composer

Song for Snow

Text: Elizabeth Coatsworth (1893-1986)

Florence Price
(1887-1953)

Let My Love Be Heard

Text: Alfred Noyes (1880-1958)

Jake Runestadt
living composer

The Word was God

Text: John 1:1-3

Rosephanye Powell
living composer

INTERMISSION

Il est bel et bon

Pierre Passereau
(1490-1553)

Songbird

Text: Sarah Quartel

arr. Sarah Quartel 
living composer

Where the Light Begins


Text: Jan Richardson (living poet)

monologue: Maya Mendez-Freer

Susan LaBarr
living composer

White Birds

Poet: W.B. Yeats (1865-1939)

laura hawley 
living composer

El Grillo

Text: Anonymous

Josquin des Prez
(1450/55-1521)

Dirait-on

Poet: Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)

monologue: Callista Bizuk

Morten Lauridsen
living composer

 denotes Canadian composer

LAURA HAWLEY

Artistic Director



Laura Hawley is a Canadian conductor, composer, pianist, and educator known for her creative musical leadership and artistic programming, community engagement, distinctive compositional style, and passionate advocacy for Canadian choral art.

She is the artistic director of Da Camera Singers (Edmonton), conductor of Chandra Tala (Edmonton), and founding conductor of the Diocese of Edmonton Children's Choir. She is also founding artistic director of Hypatia's Voice Women's Choir (Ottawa, 2015-2019), was pianist/singer with the Canadian Chamber Choir (2018-2022), and co-founder of the Sonic Timelapse Project, an innovative crowdfunding initiative that commissioned ten new Canadian choral works and established an online platform of supports for choirs during the COVID-19 pandemic. An active clinician throughout North America, Laura has worked with a wide variety of community-based choral and orchestral ensembles from sea to sea to sea, including CAMMAC, Music & Beyond (Ottawa), Choral Canada, and the provincial choral organizations. She is a founding pianist and associate conductor of the Cantiamo Choirs of Ottawa, and was their composer-in-residence from 2003-2017. From 2007 to 2018 she was Director of Music at St. John's South March Anglican Church, leading the adult choir and establishing a thriving parish youth choir.

Laura has been steeped in choral art since childhood, and her compositional output demonstrates an ongoing interest in writing for all artists from the developing chorister's voice to the professional choral ensemble. Her works have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by many fine choirs including Canadian Chamber Choir, Pro Coro Canada, Elektra Women's Choir, Vancouver Youth Choir, Cantiamo Choirs, and Toronto Children's Chorus. She was appointed the first composer-in-residence with Halifax Camerata Singers (2020-2022) and is composer-in-residence with Vancouver Chamber Choir (2024-2025). Laura's works are published by Oxford University Press, Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Rhythmic

Trident Music Publishing, Cypress Choral music, Silent Dawn Music Publishing, Beckenhorst Press, and on www.laurahawley.ca.

Laura has taught theory, conducting, and composition at the university level. She holds an ARCT from the Royal Conservatory of Music and a BMus and MA at University of Ottawa. She studied piano with Sandra Webster, conducting with Wayne Toews, the late Prof. Morihiro Okabe, Michael Zaugg, and Lone Larsen, composition with Stephen Gellman, Ugis Praulins, and Prof. Allan Bell, and voice with Elizabeth Turnbull.

KIM COUSINEAU

Pianist



Kim received a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Victoria, and studied privately with Anna Cal, student of Russian pianist Pavel Egorov. He is an alumnus of Opera Nuova's collaborative pianist program and has studied at the Franz Schubert Institute in Baden, Austria. Kim has worked as a répétiteur and music director for numerous organizations including Pacific Opera Victoria, Opera Nuova, Mercury Opera, Mayfield Dinner Theatre, MacEwan Theatre, and Concordia University of Edmonton. He is in high demand as a choral accompanist, collaborating with many groups including Da Camera Singers, Chronos Vocal Ensemble, Vocal Alchemy, Joyful Noise, Ante Meridiem, and student ensembles at both Concordia University and The King's University. In 2012, Kim was the recipient of the BC Choral Federation's Joyce O. Maguire Award for outstanding long-term service as a choral accompanist. In addition to his work with choirs, Kim freelances as a vocal coach and studio pianist in the Edmonton area.

JOLAINE KERLEY

Conductor



Edmonton based soprano and conductor, Jolaine Kerley is active as a soloist, voice instructor, choral conductor, adjudicator, and clinician. She is currently Associate Professor of Music at Concordia University of Edmonton as well as artistic director of Ariose Choir, and conductor of the Archbishop Jordan High School Choir. Jolaine holds graduate degrees in vocal performance and choral conducting from the University of Alberta and the Early Music Institute at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music.

Jolaine has been heard frequently as soprano soloist with choruses and orchestras throughout North America including the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, the Alberta Baroque Orchestra, Richard Eaton Singers, Luminous Voices, and Pro Coro Canada. Recent solo engagements include *The Music of Vaughan Williams* with the Richard Eaton Singers and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, *Singing Sirens of the Seicento* with Early Music Alberta, Alan Bevan's *Nou Goth Sonne Under Wode* at Carnegie Hall in New York City, Bach's *Johannes Passion* with Calgary's Professional vocal ensemble Luminous Voices, Bach's *BWV 36* with the Alberta Baroque Orchestra and *Faure's Requiem* and Goodall's *Eternal Light* with Da Camera Singers. Jolaine performs solo recitals throughout the Edmonton area and is frequently heard performing events with Concerts in Care, Health Arts Society of Alberta and Early Music Alberta Society.

Jolaine has been conductor of the award winning Archbishop Jordan High School Choir since 2007. Working with these talented young musicians is a highlight of her week.

KATIE TILBURY

Pianist, Artist



Katie Tilbury is a professional artist originally from Lacombe, Alberta. Now living in Edmonton, she thrives painting modern landscapes in watercolor, acrylic or mixed media that are inspired by the Albertan landscape around her. Known for her vivid use of color, Katie produces bright, cheerful paintings hoping to inspire joy in her viewers. Her use of unexpected hues juxtaposed by familiar landscapes allows Katie's work to create a sense of grounding in the present and a hope in the future. Katie spends most of her time working as a collaborative pianist with choirs, university students and her own private students. She takes every opportunity to fuse aural and visual traditions resulting in unique contrasts, textures, story-telling and flowing lines in her work. She believes that both facets of the arts can be a beautiful expression of exploring identity and strives to lift audiences' spirits with her work

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DA CAMERA SINGERS

Established in 1961, we are Edmonton's longest-standing chamber choir and a pillar of our artistic community for over sixty years. Under Artistic Director Laura Hawley, we perform diverse repertoire from the Renaissance to the present, with a dedicated focus on commissioning new works by Canadian and local composers.

We strive to cultivate empathy and pluralism through meaningful collaboration. Notable projects include commissioning queer composer Stuart Beatch for our 60th anniversary and participating in an Indigenous music-making workshop led by Cree-Dene composer Sherryl Sewepagaham.

Our passion for choral art fuels innovative projects and workshops that energize our three-concert season. We value our place in Edmonton's artistic ecosystem, frequently collaborating with ensembles such as the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and Pro Coro Canada. Nationally broadcast on CBC, we have toured extensively across Canada, the United States, and Europe.

SOPRANO 1

Clair Gibson
Carla Stolte
Eliza Onizaki
*Juliet Bryce
Sabrina Perez

ALTO 1

Cathy Grant
*Elize Erasmus
Ellen Stolte
Kerry Vanderwekken
Michelle Andrews
*Susan Doyle

TENOR 1

Sam Tang
Sean Gleason
Tim Wong

BASS 1

Adrian Wong
Alto Lo
Gary Krueger
Jim McDonald

SOPRANO 2

Dawson Andrews
Elizabeth Stolte
Kathena Lin
*Wendy Legaarden
Wendy Vanderwel

ALTO 2

Barb Sabo
*Cara Robertson
Erin iampen
Guylaine
Lefebvre-Maunder
Maria Rosvick

TENOR 2

Ashe Stolte
Russ Wilkinson

BASS 2

Alexander Haugen
Frank Thede
Gord McCrostie
*Werner Erasmus

** Not performing in this concert*



ARCHBISHOP JORDAN HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR

The Archbishop Jordan choral program, led by conductors Jolaine Kerley and Nevada Moes, with pianist Katie Tilbury, consists of three ensembles; two non-auditioned groups, the Concert Choir and the Treble Choir, and an auditioned Jazz Choir. These ensembles perform regularly and have earned recognition for choral excellence locally, nationally, and internationally.

The Concert and Treble Choirs were recently acknowledged for their success at the 2025 Provincial Music Festival and were invited to perform at the *Raising Voices: ACC & AYC Showcase Concert* in February 2026. The choir just returned from Montreal and Quebec City where they performed at the Rhythms Festival in April.

The singers of the Archbishop Jordan Choral program are honoured to share the stage with the Da Camera Singers this afternoon.

SOPRANO 1

Amelia Abercrombie
Lisa Aleksandrova
Sasha Antipova
Brynn Coles
Bethany Cooke
Jennifer Gartner
Kaye Gaviola
Mariia Hurzhii
Francesca LaCara
Paige Lind-Avcil
Angela Magbanua
Kiss Montoya
Quinn Normandeau
Brianna Salvador
Engelica Sanchez
Juliana Schlak
Precious Villardo

SOPRANO 2

Callista Bizuk
Avery Day
Ella Day
Princess Duque
Nora Kovacs
Jermaine Lamoste
Alixia Masikep
Bianca Nopies
Leonice Sayago
Alaina Skitsko
Emma Vera
Chelsea Yu

ALTO

Kim Alcid
Alexiah Cunanan
Julianne Jao
Kayden Lynch
Calleigh Martin
Lilian McClennon
Maya Mendez-Freer
Gabrielle Pasqual
Nora Pratt
Brianna Salvador
Lucy Smits
Alejandra Vasquez-Pina
Sarah Weigel
Nikita Weller

TENOR

Leo Gastilo
Nohl McDonald
Jackson Machalka
Lily McCue

BASS

Louvic Desullan
Liam Hazzard
Malakai Holm



TEXTS, TRANSLATIONS AND PROGRAM NOTES

Glory to God (from *Messiah*)

George Frederic Handel | Text: Luke 2:14

Handel's Messiah is filled with vivid imagery, but **Glory to God** stands out for its clever use of registral word painting—using the high and low ranges of the ensemble to separate the celestial from the terrestrial.

The movement opens with the higher voices alone (soprano, alto and tenor), omitting the bass section to create a sonic representation of the 'highest' heavens. This light, upward-reaching texture, supported by the piano, mimics the ethereal presence of an angelic host.

In a sudden and dramatic shift, the Basses enter for the first time on the line "And peace on earth." Handel moves the music into a lower, more grounded register and a smoother, more lyrical style. He physically descends from the sky to the earth, painting the arrival of peace in the human realm with a sudden sense of weight and stability.

When the text shifts to "Goodwill toward men," Handel employs a fugal, overlapping texture. The melody enters in one voice and is quickly passed to the next, painting the idea of goodwill spreading horizontally from person to person across the globe.

Perhaps the most famous bit of painting occurs in the final bars. As the angels depart, the accompaniment becomes increasingly thin and quiet, while the final "spark" seems to evaporate upward. Handel paints the physical retreat of the angels into the distance, leaving the world in a state of quiet wonder.

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace on earth, goodwill toward men.



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As Vesta Was

Thomas Weelkes | text: anonymous

Thomas Weelkes' **As Vesta Was from Latmos Hill Descending** is essentially the poster child for the *Word Painters* theme. Written for *The Triumphs of Oriana* (1601) to honour Queen Elizabeth I, it contains more instances of literal word painting per measure than almost any other madrigal in history.

In this work, Weelkes isn't just setting a pastoral scene - he is painting a choreography of gods, goddesses, and mountain landscapes:

The Vertical Landscape: When the text describes Vesta descending the hill, the vocal lines tumble downward in rapid scales. Conversely, when the maiden queen is seen "ascending," the melodies climb upward, physically lifting the listener's ear to the peak of the mountain.

Numerical Painting: Weelkes uses the number of singers to illustrate the lyrics. When the text says "First two by two," only two voices sing; "then three by three together" brings in a trio; and when they all arrive "all together," the full six-part ensemble bursts into sound.

The Loneliness of the Solo: In one of the most famous musical jokes of the era, the phrase "all alone" is sung by a single, solitary voice, surrounded by silence from the rest of the choir.

Eternal Royalty: The final section, "Long live fair Oriana," features a massive, overlapping series of entries (a canon) that repeats over and over. This creates a sonic "infinite loop," painting the wish for the Queen's reign and legacy to endure forever. This section also takes up almost half of the entire piece.

As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending,
she spied a maiden Queen the same ascending,
attended on by all the shepherds' swain,
to whom Diana's darlings came running down amain,
first two by two, then three by three together,
leaving their goddess all alone hasted thither;
and mingling with the shepherds of her train,
with mirthful tunes her presence entertain.
Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana,
long live fair Oriana!

To Sit and Dream

Rosephanye Powell | text: from “To You” by Langston Hughes (1901 - 1967)

Library donation: Sean Gleason

To all the writers and artists who bring us hope and respite in uncertain times

Langston Hughes was an American activist, poet, novelist, and playwright who was an important figure in the Harlem Renaissance – the cultural center for black intellectuals and artists in Harlem, New York, in the 1920s. In his writings, Hughes sought to express the hopes and often dismaying realities of black life in America. A lover of jazz and blues, Hughes’s writings were strongly influenced by these styles of music and the settings in which they were performed. As a jazz poet, Hughes had a proclivity for writing poetry that fused lyrical lines with syncopated rhythms, and phrasing which could mimic the feel of improvisation.

Of this piece, composer Rosephanye Powell says: “I sought to musically paint Hughes’s poignant poetry with jazz harmonic colors, rhythmic syncopation, and improvised speech. The song begins with a piano introduction comprised of a simple ‘quiet’ motive which depicts Hughes’s placidity as the voices enter in unison, representing Hughes’s inner voice, as he lays the paper in his lap, deep in thought.”

Other word painting moments the composer shares include:

- The dream-like trance at the words ‘outside our world’ as the ‘dream’ motive appears in the piano.*
- Architectural soundscapes on ‘vast horizons’ as singers move higher into their range.*
- Freedom of improv where improvisatory sung-speech style imitates the free-style speech of jazz poetry at the words ‘unfettered, free. Help me, help me’.*
- The growing crowd at the words ‘I reach out my hand to you,’ Powell musically depicts a scene of Hughes reaching out his hand to a growing crowd of anyone who will join him to ‘create a new world characterized by love, peace, equality, and justice for all’.*

To sit and dream, to sit and read,
To sit and learn about the world
Outside our world of here and now —
Our problem world —
To dream of vast horizons of the soul
Of dreams made whole,
Unfettered, free — help me!
All you who are dreamers too,
Help me to make our world anew.
I reach out my hands to you.

Yukon Time (second movement: Bright Seed)

laura hawley | Text: Clea Roberts

This piece was written for Elektra (Vancouver, BC) commissioned in memory of Amanda Taylor, the sister of one Elektra's singers. Amanda, who passed away at age 33, lived in the Yukon and was a very active outdoors person, and so nature and the seasons are important themes in the piece. Elektra commissioned Yukon poet Clea Roberts to create new poetry for the work. About her approach to the two poems she composed, Clea says:

"I received some wonderful stories from Kim, Amanda's sister, that really helped inform the scaffolding of the poem with the sense of curiosity, adventure, generosity and community for which Amanda was known. The title, Yukon Time, is a play on the local saying that time passes differently in the territory than elsewhere but also a nod that the Yukon was a time in Amanda's life that was significant to her. The poem is written in two parts but runs the full cycle of a Yukon year. My intent was to impart a sense of connectedness to the landscape and climate in the poems, throughout the seasons, though the focus is on winter (winter being very long in Yukon). I chose to write the poems with a seasonal thread running through them because I find the metaphor of time passing in nature to be a nice opening to consider our finite, unique presence in the world."

The second movement, Bright Seed, begins with the sound of the river in the piano, punctuated by a bright gesture of the last glint of ice disappearing into spring just before the singers enter. As the piece progresses we hear:

- The opening section paints the propulsion of spring exploding into life and indeed bringing US to life with its verdant energy.*
- The sopranos gently singing "beckoned" over and over beckon us up the trail, and we hear the rest of the choir climbing solemnly up the trail to the cave with a sense of sacredness and ritual.*
- Bright chords as we exit the cave into the bright day.*
- An extended passage on the poem's final words "its last bright seed floats away" gives space both for the grief that lives in the poem, as well as the time for that final breath of life to become absorbed into the oneness of everything, moving through harmonic complexity and ending in purity on a simple open fifth chord.*

Ice was a memory
the river chattered to the shore.

Here a green verge,
there a brown bear.

When the trees came into leaf
the mountain softened, beckoned us

up a trail to a small cave—
we brought our whispers,
traded them in the mineral dark.

The stone listened so deeply
we left parts of us behind
for safekeeping

and crawled out blinking
into the day that waited for us

as it waits for the fireweed to bloom,
from stem to tip, keeping time

the whole summer
until its last bright seed
floats away.

Song for Snow

Florence Price | Text: Elizabeth Coatsworth (1893–1986)

In Elizabeth Coatsworth's poem, snow is a transformative force that hushes the world, blurring the lines of the landscape until everything is folded into a quiet, white unity. For decades, a similar silence hung over the legacy of the composer, Florence Price. Despite being the first Black woman to have a symphony performed by a major American orchestra in 1933, much of Price's vast catalog, including her choral works, slipped into obscurity after her death. It wasn't until 2009, when a trove of her manuscripts was discovered in a dilapidated, abandoned summer house in Illinois, that the world truly began to unfold the brilliance of her music once again.

Song for Snow (1942) is a masterclass in atmospheric writing. Price uses a playful, canonic opening to mimic the drifting, unpredictable path of falling snowflakes. As the voices layer and weave, she captures both the chill and the cozy domesticity of a winter day. By performing this piece today, we aren't just celebrating the season; we are participating in the un-hushing of an under-recognized African American woman's musical voice, ensuring that her music finally belongs exactly where she intended: in the hearts of a listening community.

The earth is lighter than the sky,
the world is wider than in spring.

Along white roads the sleighs go by,
icily sweet, the sleighbells ring.

The birds are gone into the south.
The leaves are fallen to the ground.

But singing shakes.
Each sleighbell's mouth and leaf-like ears,
turn to the sound.

Let My Love Be Heard

Jake Runestadt | text: Alfred Noyes (1880-1958)

Library donation: Carla Stolte

This piece is dedicated to all those who have experienced the loss of a child. In the silence and deep despair that follows, music often finds the words that remain out of reach.

For me, Runestadt's arrangement speaks to a truth of grief that no words can describe.

*American composer Jake Runestad has become one of the most performed choral voices of the 21st century, largely due to his ability to tackle deep emotional truths with a lush, cinematic harmonic language. **Let My Love Be Heard** is perhaps his most iconic work, serving as an anthem of solace for communities around the world.*

The piece took on a global significance in 2015 when it was performed by the California State University, Long Beach University Choir in memory of Nohemi Gonzalez, a student killed in the Paris terror attacks. Since then, it has become a staple for choirs seeking to express the power of music in times of collective loss.

Runestad uses the human voice to create a literal wall of sound that builds from a hushed, intimate prayer into a soaring, desperate cry. The middle section features a series of cascading vocal entries that mimic the feeling of a soul trying to fly toward a loved one who is no longer there, the layers also expressing the mounting grief.

Angels, where you soar
Up to God's own light,
Take my own lost bird
On your hearts tonight;
And as grief once more
Mounts to heaven and sings,
Let my love be heard
Whispering in your wings.



The Word Was God

Rosephanye Powell | text: John 1:1-3

In this setting of the opening of the Gospel of John, Dr. Rosephanye Powell uses rhythm as her primary “brush.” Rather than a complex melodic journey, the piece is a masterclass in rhythmic declamation and textural accumulation, using these musical tools to paint the velocity of creation.

The word painting here is found in the physical weight of the voices. The piece is built on a relentless rhythmic ostinato. By repeating the phrase ‘In the beginning’ with a percussive, grounded pulse, Powell paints a picture of a world that is steady, eternal, and foundational as creation unfolds. As the voices enter one by one, the musical painting becomes more vibrant. This incremental layering represents the act of creation itself—moving from a single, whispered thought into a broad, multi-layered reality.

Powell uses dynamic contrast to paint the significance of the text. When the choir moves from a hushed, driving piano into a sudden, resonant forte on the word ‘God’, it illustrates a moment of divine revelation. The music doesn’t just describe the Word; it gives the Word a physical, vibrating presence in the room.

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.
All things were made that have been made
Nothing was made, He has not made
All things were made by Him.

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Il est bel et bon

Pierre Passereau

Il est bel et bon is a lively French chanson by Pierre Passereau, written in the early 16th century. It's famous for its playful, almost comedic character: two women gossip about their husbands, with one bragging that hers is handsome and kind. This chanson is often referred to as a patter song with the rapid repeated syllables creating a patter-like effect. Word painting is one of the most prominent features in this piece. The “co co co co” section imitates the clucking of chickens (gossiping women) and the quick rhythms imitate laughter and chatter.

Il est bel et bon, bon, bon, commère,
mon mari.

He is handsome and good,
my husband.

Il était deux femmes toutes d'un pays,
disant l'une à l'autre:
“Avez bon mari?”

There were two women of the country,
saying to one another:
“Do you have a good husband?”

Il ne me courroucé ne me bat aussi.

He doesn't get angry at me
or beat me either.

Il fait le ménage, il donne aux poulailles,
et je prends mes plaisirs.

He does the chores, he feeds the
chickens, and I take my pleasure.

Commère ç'est pour rire quand les
poulailles crient: “Co co dae”
Petite coquette, qu'est ceci?

Friend, it is funny when the chickens
call out: “Co co dae”
Little chick, what is this?

Songbird

Sarah Quartel | Text: Sarah Quartel

Songbird by Canadian composer, Sarah Quartel, is a playful piece that sets a descriptive text portraying how songbirds spin tunes into gold. The melody and storyline is passed from one voice to another throughout the piece. Accompanying voices often sing scat-like passages depicting the singing of the birds. The piece ends with a light canonic dance-like section, one that truly feels like the songbirds are spinning tunes. If you close your eyes, you hear these tunes emerging from all sections of the choir throughout the piece.

I am a Songbird; I will sing anything. Give me a tune, I will spin you gold.
Closer you come to the Songbird weaving, stronger the thread of the music's hold,

Feel in the breeze a breath, a soaring song to you, and hear me say:
'I am a Songbird; I will sing anything. Follow the breeze and come my way!'

One little bird on a branch sits fanning amber wings to the passers by.
Two little birds in flight are threading webs of gold in an endless sky.

Three little birds with brushes painting moonlit sighs in the heart of day.
Four little birds with voices gleaming breathe to the wind singing 'come my way!'

Sing little bird so sweetly.
Drown my fears completely.

Five little birds with feathers fluffing stretch and spread in the midday sun.
Six little birds are cooing, humming, drawing the eyes of ev'ryone.

Seven little birds in fountains splashing. Droplets soar, they fawn and play.
Eight little birds raise voices higher, breathe to the wind singing, 'come my way!'

Sing little bird so sweetly.
Drown my fears completely.

Fly, little Songbirds, to the horizon. Land meets sky and sky meets sea.
Dance, little Songbirds, flick your feathers, move the current, carry me!

Sing, little Songbirds, call to your lovers. Draw them in completely.
You, little Songbirds, you can sing anything. I follow the wind and I come your way.

Where the Light Begins

Susan LaBarr | Text: Jan Richardson

*The text for **Where the Light Begins** was originally written as a blessing for Christmas, centering on themes of hope, renewal, and the search for light in darkness. LaBarr's composition is intimate and expressive, and reflects on inner growth and healing. The word painting is subtle with rising melodic lines at "crying out", and syncopated more intricate rhythms, and brighter melodic writing when the text speaks of clarity and light. LaBarr uses melody, rhythm, and harmonic writing to bring meaning and colour to the text.*

Perhaps it does not begin.

Perhaps it is always.

Perhaps it takes a lifetime to open our eyes,
to learn to see what has forever shimmered in front of us
the luminous line of the map in the dark
the vigil flame in the house of the heart,
the love so searing we cannot keep from singing,
from crying out.

Perhaps this day will be the mountain over which the dawn breaks.

Perhaps this day the light begins in us.

White Birds

laura hawley | text: W.B. Yeats (1865-1939)

Library donation: Wendy Vanderwel

I dedicate this beautiful piece of music to my "beloved" husband, Douwe.

White Birds was commissioned by New Dublin Voices – Bernie Sherlock, Artistic Director.

William Butler Yeats penned 'The White Birds' in 1892 after the first of four unsuccessful proposals to Irish actress, republican, and revolutionary, Maud Gonne. He proposed as they walked together along the cliffs of Howth in Ireland, and during this walk, Maud had declared her love of seagulls above all other birds.

I was drawn to this poem because of the imagery, and perhaps because I too love seagulls above all other birds. I have taken an optimistic approach to my setting, and have imagined this poem as a fantasy. I decided to imagine it not as a lament or an expression of unrequited love, but rather as a daydream or fantasy where the two lovers would be free and happy together, untethered by the complications of the world.

The piece expresses that happy, free-as-birds-together, playing-on-the-wind place. You'll hear this in the lilting "la de da" melodies that interweave playfully together throughout, particularly in the middle section of the piece where we really do hear the two birds playing together. The 6/8 time signature brings to mind the ocean, with its sea-chanty-like lilt.

I would that we were, my beloved, white birds on the foam of the sea!
We tire of the flame of the meteor, before it can fade and flee;
And the flame of the blue star of twilight, hung low on the rim of the sky,
Has awaked in our hearts, my beloved, a sadness that may not die.

A weariness comes from those dreamers, dew dabbled, the lily and rose;
Ah, dream not of them, my beloved, the flame of the meteor that goes,
Or the flame of the blue star that lingers hung low in the fall of the dew:
For I would we were changed to white birds on the wandering foam: I and you!

I am haunted by numberless islands, and many a Danaan shore,
Where Time would surely forget us, and Sorrow come near us no more;
Soon far from the rose and the lily, and fret of the flames would we be,
Were we only white birds, my beloved, *buoyed out on the foam of the sea!

**buoyed not included in choral composition*

El Grillo (The Cricket)

Josquin des Prez | text: anonymous

Library donation: Tammy-Jo Mortensen

I studied this piece in Renaissance music history class with Prof. Brian Harris, a wonderful teacher. He was chair of the Department of Music at the University of Alberta, when the 1978 Casavant pipe organ was installed in Convocation Hall. I dedicate this to Dr. Harris and to the Memorial Organ.

*While much of the Renaissance choral canon is defined by ethereal, sacred polyphony, Josquin des Prez was equally adept at the secular and the satirical. **El Grillo (The Cricket)** is one of the most famous examples of the frottola, a lighthearted Italian predecessor to the madrigal; we could liken it to a pop song of the late 15th century.*

You'll hear lots of word painting in this piece, most obviously, the 'chirping' effect heard in the repetitions on a single pitch—"Grillo, grillo, grillo"—capturing the rhythmic, percussive quality of an insect's song. When the text speaks of the cricket's ability to "hold a long note" (che tiene lungo verso), Josquin stretches the musical line into an unusually long, sustained tone that stands in stark contrast to the chatter around it.

There is also a subtle, clever play on the movement of birds versus the steadiness of the cricket. While the music for the other birds (altri uccelli) feels fleeting and transitional, Josquin anchors the cricket with a stubborn, repeating harmonic structure. He literally makes the music stay put (stà saldo), mirroring the cricket's loyalty.

On the surface, the piece is a charming comparison between a cricket and a songbird. However, scholars often suggest a deeper, more human "empathy" behind the notes. It is widely believed that El Grillo was a pointed musical joke aimed at one of Josquin's colleagues, a singer named Carlo Grillo. Unlike other musicians who might leave for better pay or skip rehearsals, the "cricket" Carlo was famously loyal and persistent.

By performing El Grillo, we celebrate the joy of the persistent singer—the one who sings not for status, but for the sheer necessity of the song!

El grillo è bon cantore

Che tiene longo verso.

Dale beve grillo canta.

Ma non fa como gli altri ocelli

Come li han cantato un poco,

Van de fatto in altro loco

Sempre el grillo sta pur saldo,

Quando la maggior el caldo

Alhor canta sol per amore.

The cricket is a good singer

He can sing very long

He sings all the time.

But he isn't like the other birds.

If they've sung a little bit

They go somewhere else

The cricket remains where he is

When the heat is very fierce

Then he sings only for love.

Dirait-on

Morten Lauridsen | text: Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926)

In **Dirait-on**, the word painting is less about mimicry and more about texture and light. Lauridsen uses the choir to paint the delicate, cyclical nature of a rose, which Rilke uses as a metaphor for a soul self-enclosed in its own beauty. The melody is built on a recurring, French chanson-inspired theme that constantly returns to its starting point, eventually heard in swirling canonic treatment echoing between voices. This paints the physical shape of the rose, petals folded inward upon themselves, and the poet's idea of narcissism not as vanity, but as a quiet, complete inner peace. In the harmony, Lauridsen is famous for his 'added-note chords' - by adding subtle dissonances to simple triads, he paints the shimmering quality of light hitting a flower. The music feels as though it is glowing from within, mirroring the text's description of a beauty that is self-caressing. Throughout the piece, the piano and voices engage in constant suspensions and resolutions. One note hangs on while the harmony shifts underneath it, creating a momentary tension that melts into a sweet resolution. This paints the slow, deliberate blooming of a flower, a process that cannot be rushed and is full of gentle, unfolding tension.

Abandon entouré d'abandon,
tendresse touchant aux tendresse...
C'est ton intérieur qui sans cesse
se caresse, dirait-on;
se caresse en soi-même,
par son propre reflet éclairé.
Ainsi tu inventes le thème
Du Narcisse exaucé.

Abandon surrounding abandon,
Tenderness touching tenderness...
Your oneness endlessly
Caresses itself, so they say;
Self-caressing
Through its own clear reflection.
Thus you invent the theme
Of Narcissus fulfilled.

English translation by Barbara and Erica Muhl



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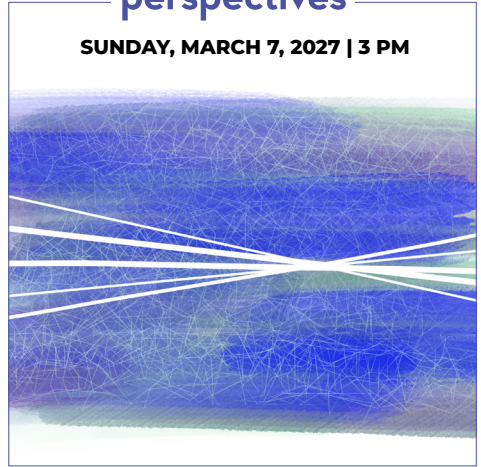
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