

Elektra Women's Choir • Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director Stephen Smith, Piano • Lorna McGhee, Flute





With a mandate to inspire and lead in the choral art form through excellence in performance and through the creation, exploration and celebration of women's repertoire, Vancouver's renowned **ELEKTRA WOMEN'S CHOIR** has taken a leadership role in the international classical women's choir movement. The choir has commissioned and premiered over 60 new works, many of which have gone on to become standards of women's choral literature. Elektra is a multiple winner in both the women's choirs and contemporary music categories of the National Competition for Canadian Amateur Choirs. Elektra is frequently heard on CBC radio broadcasts and on NPR in the United States, and collaborates regularly with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, MusicFest Vancouver, and other talented musicians. The choir's first CD was nominated for a JUNO award and its recordings are in constant demand locally, nationally, and internationally. In addition to its concerts and recordings, the choir is proud to offer ongoing programs that encourage and train young singers, conductors, and composers. Elektra was founded in 1987 by co-conductors **MORNA EDMUNDSON** and **DIANE LOOMER, C.M**. In 2009 Diane Loomer, C.M. became Conductor Emerita arc Morna Edmundson was appointed Artistic Director.

# Thank you

for picking up this CD and exploring what it has to offer. As I write, it the spring of 2012 and Elektra Women's Choir is half-way through its 25th anniversary season. A recording like this has two intended audiences: one of listeners who are attracted to the exhilarating and moving sounds of fine choral music, and another of choral conductors who are looking to discover new repertoire for their own ensembles. I hope you all find something of beauty and value on these tracks. They represent highlights from several seasons of Elektra programming, and pieces that I feel are worthy of being heard and appreciated far and wide. All but three of the composers and arrangers are alive and well today, most of them Canadians, and their presence on this recording signifies my true respect for the beautiful work they do creating unique and engaging works for women's voices. Composer—performer—listener—the circle is incomplete without all of us.

Again, thank you for reaching out to discover this music. I hope you will find a joyful and meaningful listening experience ahead of you.

Close your eyes, open your ears, and take a deep breath of Pure Elektra.



# Artist Bios



MORNA EDMUNDSON is one of Canada's best-known choral conductors with a strong reputation for excellence. Passionate since childhood about choral singing, she obtained degrees and diplomas in vocal music in Vancouver, Bellingham, and Stockholm, Sweden, where her teachers included Eric Ericson. In 1987, she cofounded Elektra Women's Choir with Diane Loomer, a treasured partnership that lasted 22 years. In 2009, Morna became Elektra's sole Artistic Director, continuing the choir's strong leadership role in concert presentation, commissioning, recording, and mentorship. For 14 years Morna shared her love of quality repertoire with a new generation of singers in her role as Associate Artistic Director of Coastal Sound Music Academy, where she was Music Director of the mixed-voice Youth Chamber Choir. She has adjudicated in North America and Asia, conducted honour choirs in several states, co-directed the American Choral Directors Association National Women's Honour Choir, and gives frequent workshops with choirs of all ages. Ms. Edmundson has given lectures on her work at local, national, and international meetings of choral professionals. In February 2009 Morna was a recipient of the BC Community Achievement Award, which recognized her gifted organizational talent, leadership by example, and her encouragement of others to pursue their musical and choral goals. In May 2011 Morna received a YWCA Woman of Distinction award in recognition of her work with Elektra.



**STEPHEN SMITH** grew up in rural Nova Scotia, where he sang and played the piano from an early age. After initial studies in his home province in both piano and organ, he attended the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. While there, he participated in national and international competitions and won numerous awards and distinctions. Since 1990, Stephen has lived in Vancouver, obtaining his doctoral degree in piano performance from the University of British Columbia, and contributing to the musical life of the city as a performer, teacher, conductor, composer and arranger.

Central to Stephen's career is his long-standing relationship with some of Vancouver's finest choral groups. In addition to his work with Elektra (which he has accompanied since 2001), he is also resident accompanist of the Vancouver Men's Chorus and director of their a cappella ensemble, Synergy; pianist for the Vancouver Bach Choir; and a frequent collaborator with Chor Leoni, the Vancouver Chamber Choir, and many other ensembles. Stephen's work as both accompanist and composer can be heard on dozens of CDs in commercial release, and his 1997 solo CD of classical piano miniatures, entitled Kaleidoscope, is currently available on iTunes.



After 13 years as a treasured member of the Vancouver music scene, Scottish-born flutist **LORNA MCGHEE** was recently awarded the principal flute position with the Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra. She was formerly co-principal flute of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. She has performed as guest principal with many leading orchestras including the London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Academy of St-Martin-in-the-Fields, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Chicago Symphony, and Minnesota Orchestra. As a soloist, she has given concerto performances with the London Symphony, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, as well as orchestras in the United States and Canada. Most notably, she performed Penderecki's flute concerto with the Oregon Bach Festival Orchestra under the baton of Krzysztof Penderecki himself in 2004. The same year, she performed Mozart's flute & harp concerto with Heidi Krutzen at the National Flute Association Convention.



day job of wrangling teenagers in English classes, with concert performances, random commercials, tiny movie roles, and guest spots on really short-lived TV shows. A proud Elektrolyte for the past twelve soul-stirring, musically-challenging years, she has also soloed with Chor Leoni and Timbre, the VSO and Symphonia. On the musical theatre stage, Grace has run Nonnberg Abbey in "The Sound of Music", and the Palace of Siam in "The King and I", in a half dozen productions; she recently oppressed the entire peasant population of China as the maniacal, deadly fan-wielding Empress in "The Forbidden Phoenix". To sing the "Magnificat" is a privilege and a pleasure; this recording has been a long journey and all the sweeter for what it took to complete it. Thanks to Morna and Diane for their gracious leadership and their precious friendship.



#### 1) DA PACEM

Music Jeffrey Ends • Text Bible Publisher: Cypress Choral Music CP 1151

Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris. Give peace in our time, O Lord.

# 2) AVE REGINA COELORUM

Music: Giovanni Legrenzi Publisher: Prima La Musica LEG6004

Ave, Regina Coelorum, Ave, Domina Angelorum: Salve, radix, salve, porta Ex qua mundo lux est orta: Gaude, Virgo gloriosa, Super omnes speciosa, Vale, o valde decora,

Et pro nobis Christum exora.

Hail. O Queen of Heaven. Hail, O Lady of Angels. Hail! Thou root, hail! Thou gate

from whom unto the world, a light has arisen:

Rejoice, O glorious Virgin, Lovely beyond all others,

Farewell, most beautiful maiden

And pray for us to Christ.

# 3) LAUDA SION

Music: György Orbán Publisher. Edition Ferramontana EF 1860

Lauda Sion Salvatorem Lauda ducem et pastorem In hymnis et canticis.

Quantum potes, tantum aude:

Quia major omni laude, Nec laudare sufficis.

Laudis thema specialis, Panis vivus et vitalis,

Hodie proponitur.

Quem in sacræ mensa cœnæ,

Turbæ fratrum duodenæ

Datum non ambigitur.

Sit laus plena, sit sonora,

Sit jucunda, sit decora

Mentis jubilatio.

Dies enim solemnis agitur, In qua mensæ prima recolitur

Huius institutio.

Sion, lift up thy voice and sing: Praise thy Savior and thy King, Praise with hymns thy shepherd true. All thou canst, do thou endeavour: Yet thy praise can equal never Such as merits thy great King. See today before us laid The living and life-giving Bread, Theme for praise and joy profound.

The same which at the sacred board

Was, by our incarnate Lord, Giv'n to His Apostles round.

Let the praise be loud and high: Sweet and tranquil be the joy

Felt today in every breast.

On this festival divine

Which records the origin

Of the glorious Eucharist.

#### 4) IN THE GARDENS OF SHUSHAN

Music: Sheldon Rose • Text: Marjorie Pickthall • Publisher: Rhythmic Trident Music Publishing RTCA-024 • Soloist: Margrét Ásgeirsdóttir, soprano

Of this piece, Toronto composer Rose writes "It is written in the Book of Esther, that King Ahasuerus presided over a great feast at the palace of Shushan. It was on the 7th day, after much revelry and wine it is assumed, that he called upon the chamberlains to fetch his Queen, Vashti, from the royal gardens to appear before him and his guests to "display her beauty" (often translated and interpreted to mean "appear without clothing"). Vashti refused. Fearful that her actions would arouse the disobedience of other women toward their husbands (and upon suffering his own royal embarrassment) the King had Vashti exiled or possibly even executed. Today, her name stands for many as a symbol of resistance to gender tyranny and exploitation."

Be pitiful! Her lips have touched this cool Clear stream that sets the long green leaves astir. The very doves that dream beside the pool Sang their soft notes to her.

For her these doors that claim the amorous south, Bound in red bronze and stayed with cedar-wood. And here the bees sought honey from her mouth, So like a flower she stood.

For her the globed pomegranates grew, and all Sweet savoury fruits rose perfect from their flower.

Here has her soul known silence and the fall of each enchanted hour.

Under her feet all beauty was laid low, In her deep eyes all beauty was made clear. When the king called her through the evening glow,

"O Vashti, I am here!"
Still the sweet wells return to me her face,
Still her lost name on every wind is blown.
The shadows and the silence of this place

Are hers alone.

# 5) CEDIT, HYEMS (BE GONE, WINTER!)

Music: Abbie Betinis • Text Public domain: Prudentius (348 - ca. 410) "Hymnus Matutinus," lines 1-4 from Cathemerinon II, translated by Stephen Self (2006) • Anonymous (14th Century) Manuscript of Benedictbeuern (Carmina Burana), translated by Helen Waddell (1929) • Publisher: G. Schirmer, Inc. • Distributed by Hal Leonard HL 50490336

Nox et tenebrae et nubila, confusa mundi et turbida, lux intrat, albescit polus: Christus venit; discedite.

Night - confused, disordered. Disturbed darkness of the world Light breaks in, the heavens grow bright, Christ has come! Depart! Cedit, hyems, tua durities, frigor abiit; rigor et glacies brumalis et feritas, rabies, torpor et improba segnities, pallor et ira, dolor et macies.

Now, Winter, yield all thy dreariness, The cold is over, all thy frozenness, All frost and fog, and wind's untowardness.

All sullenness, uncomely sluggishness, Paleness and anger, grief and haggardness.

Nunc amor aureus advenies, indomitos tibi subjicies, tendo manus....

Now Love, all golden, comest thou to me, Bowing the tameless 'neath thine empery. I stretch my hands...

# 6) MAGNIFICAT

Music: Christine Donkin • Text: Luke 1:46-55 • Publisher: Treble Clef Publishing TC-287 • Soloist: Grace Fatkin

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.

Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:

ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est:

et sanctum nomen ejus.

Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in bracchio suo:

dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes.

Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae.

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini ejus in saecula.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum, Amen.



My soul magnifies the Lord.

And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he who is mighty has done great things for me; and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud, even the arrogant of heart.

He has deposed the mighty from their seats, and exalted the humble.

The hungry he has filled with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy. As it was spoken to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed forever. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.

#### 7) EARLY SPRING

Music: Traditional Newfoundland folk song, arr. Kathleen Allan • Publisher: Cypress Choral Music CP 1142

Early spring when I was young, The birds so merrily have sung; Was there ever a bird so happy as I When my young sailor lad was nigh? 'Tis six long months since I've been wed,

The times so merrily have fled;

But tomorrow morning by the dawning of the day,

The ocean presses my love away.
The eastern star is shining clear,
The day o'er-breaks on the ocean near;
The sailor leaved his lonely bride,
A-weeping by the ocean-side.

The time rolled on and he came no more To see his bride on the ocean shore; His ship went down by the rolling of the storm,

And in the deep my love doth mourn.

I wish I were a-sleeping, too,

In the arms of my true love in the ocean blue; My soul to my God and my body in the sea,

And the white waves rolling over me. The eastern star is shining clear, The day o'er-breaks on the ocean near;

The sailor lies low and his lovely bride,

Is weeping by the ocean-side.

#### 8) I AM NOT YOURS

Music: Stephen Chatman • Text: Sara Teasdale • Publisher: E.C. Schirmer Music Company; Boston: Highgate Press, ECS Publishing, 2010

I am not yours, not lost in you, Not lost, although I long to be Lost as a candle lit at noon, Lost as a snowflake in the sea.

You love me, and I find you still A spirit beautiful and bright, Yet I am I, who long to be Lost as a light is lost in light. Oh plunge me deep in love—put out My senses, leave me deaf and blind, Swept by the tempest of your love, A taper in a rushing wind.

# 9) JOY

Music: Kathleen Allan • Text: Sara Teasdale • Publisher: manuscript
This work was commissioned with financial assistance from the Diane Loomer Commissioning Fund for Elektra Women's Choir

I am wild, I will sing to the trees, I will sing to the stars in the sky, I love, I am loved, he is mine, Now at last I can die! I am sandaled with wind and with flame, I have heart-fire and singing to give, I can tread on the grass or the stars, Now at last I can live!

#### 10) CHANGED FOREVER

Music: Shari Ulrich, arr. Kate MacColl • Text: Shari Ulrich • Publisher: katemaccoll.com

Forty years by her side
To have and to hold
All their lives
They raised up the kids
The best they knew how
Buried the youngest
And carried on somehow

Now he works in the yard
The children are grown
Till the day that she died
He was never alone
He keeps himself busy
The best he knows how
Buries the past
And carries on somehow

In the wind that blows west In a loved one's last breath In a moment Lives change forever Oh with fire or a fist Or a lover's last kiss Changed forever

He tells stories of war
He turns down the bed
And hard lessons learned
When his friends flew without him
And never returned
Of the day that they met
And the night he came home
With his lifetime of memories
He carries on alone



In the wind that blows west
In a loved one's last breath
In a moment
Lives change forever
Oh with fire or a fist
Or a lover's last kiss
Changed forever

Turns out the light
Talks to his daughter
And he talks to his wife
He says "I'm getting along
The best I know how
I feel you there with me
And carry on somehow."

#### 11) UN CANADIEN ERRANT

Music: traditional Quebecois folk song, arr. Mark Sirett • Publisher: Kelman Hall Publishing 09/20MMP29

Distributed by Music Plus Corporation, 5 Michael Street, Kitchener ON N2G 1L7

Un Canadien errant Once a Canadian lad,

Banni des ses foyers,
Parcourait en pleurant
Des pays etrangers.
Exiled from hearth and home,
Wandered, alone and sad,
Through alien lands unknown.

Un jour, triste et pensif,

Assis au bond des flots,

Au courant fugitive

Down by a rushing stream,

Thoughtful and sad one day

He watched the water pass

Il adressa ces mots: And to it he did say:

"Si tu vois mon pays, "If you should reach my land,

Mon pays malheureux, My most unhappy land,

Va dire a mes amis Please speak to all my friends

Que je me souviens d'eux.
O jours si pleins d'appas,
Vous êtes disparus...
So they will understand.
Tell them how much I wish

That I could be once more Et ma patrie, helas!

Je ne la verrai plus! In my beloved land That I will see no more.

Non, mais en expirant,
O mon cher Canada!

My own beloved land
I'll not forget till death,

Mon regard languissant And I will speak of her

Vers toi se portera." With my last dying breath."

# 12) THE GARDEN OF DREAMS

Music: Timothy Corlis • Text: Bliss Carman (1861-1929) Publisher: silentdawn.ca

My heart is a garden of dreams
Where you walk when day is done,
Fair as the royal flowers,
Calm as the lingering sun.

Never a drouth comes there,

Nor any frost that mars,
Only the wind of love Under the early stars,
—The living breath that moves
Whispering to and fro,
Like the voice of God in the dusk



#### 13) SOLITUDE

Music: Stephen Smith • Text: Loma Crozier • Publisher : stephensmithmusic.com

Sometimes the dark's so dark nothing can move through it.
Even the wind, even the geese who just an hour ago charcoaled their journey from star to star. You love the lake at night because water keeps its distance yet carries sound, crackled and clear

from the farthest shore. Sometimes the hard notes of a party drift through the screen from cabins on the southern spit. You said nothing moves through this dark. But music does, and voices, and you go on.

#### 14) LE RUISSEAU

Music Gabriel Fauré • Text unidentified poet • Publisher Alfonse Leduc HA09261 Soloist: Margret Asgeirsdottir, soprano

Au bord du clair ruisseau croît la fleur solitaire, dont la corolle brille au milieu des roseaux: Pensive, elle s'incline et son ombre légère Se berce mollement sur la moire des eaux.

Ô fleur, ô doux parfum, lui dit le flot qui passé, À mes tenders accents ta tristesse repond! À mon suave élan viens marier ta grâce. Laisse-moi t'entrainer verse l'Océan profond!

Mais il l'éntoure en vain de sa douce caresse, Cette flottante image aux incertains contours, Se dérobe au baiser humide qui l'oppresse, Et le flot éploré tristernent suit son cours! Beside a clear stream a solitary flower grows, Whose bloom radiates in the midst of the reeds: Pensively she leans out and her light shadow Rocks softly on the surface of the water.

O flower, o sweet perfume, the stream says to her, Let your sadness respond to my tender words! Come join your grace to my melodious briskness. Let me take you away to the deep ocean!

But in vain he enfolds her in his sweet touch, This floating, shifting vision, She evades his oppressive, moist kisses, And the stream sadly continues on his way.





#### 15) what i want

Music: Stephen Smith • Text Pat Lowther • Publisher: Trident Music, RTCA – 026

what i want is to be blessed what i want is a cloak of air

the light entering my lungs my love entering my body the blessing descending like the sky sliding down the spectrum what i want is to be aware of the spaces between stars, to breathe continuously the sources of sky, a veined sail moving, my love never setting foot to the dark anvil of earth

# 16) ONE VOICE

Music and words: Ruth Moody • Publisher

http://www.thewailinjennys.com

Soloists: Stephanie Ching, Catherine Haebler and Carol Westdal

This is the sound of one voice one spirit, one voice
The sound of one who makes a choice
This is the sound of one voice

This is the sound of voices two
The sound of me singing with you
helping each other to make it through
This the sound of voices two

This is the sound of voices three Singing together in harmony Surrendering to the mystery This is the sound of voices three

This is the sound of all of us Singing with love and the will to trust Leave the rest behind it will turn to dust This is the sound of all of us



This is the sound of one voice One people, one voice A song for every one of us This is the sound of one voice This is the sound of one voice







# "CHEZ NOUS: CHRISTMAS WITH ELEKTRA" (EWC 1110)

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming—arr. Stephen Smith

Star Song—by Edward Henderson

Joys Seven—arr. James Laster

A Ceremony of Carols —by Benjamin Britten

Da Pacem—by Jeffrey Enns

Yorkshire Wassail—arr. Stephen Smith

December —by Robert Buckley

Three in White: a suite of songs about snow—arr. Stephen Smith

Night of Silence—by Daniel Kantor

# "ELEKTRA'S GARDEN" (EWC0901)

Scarborough Fair—arr. Stephen Smith

Five Hebrew Love Songs—by Eric Whitacre

To Morning—by Allan Bevan

Let Me Fish Off Cape St. Mary's—by Otto P. Kelland, arr. Diane Loomer

Kaipaava—arr. Wuorela and Chydenius

Historietas del Viento—by Alejandro Yagüe

Harp of Wild—by Allan Bevan

Les Angélus—by Claude Debussy, arr. Clytus Gottwald

The Lake Isle of Innisfree—by Eleanor Daley

V'la l'bon vent—arr. Allison Girvan

Love Went a-Riding—by Frank Bridge, arr. Stephen Smith

Here's to Song—by Allister MacGillivray, arr. Diane Loomer

# "SACRED PLACES" (Skylark 9601)

Mass No. 6—György Orbán

Psalm Trilogy—Srul Irving Glick

Psalm 92 / Psalm 47 / Psalm 23

Os Justi—Eleanor Daley

Durme, Durme—arranged by Alice Parker

Set Me as a Seal—Richard Nance

Miserere—Eva Ugalde

IThank You God—Gwyneth Walker





Adam Lay Ybounden—by Matthew Larkin

O My Dear Heart—by Eleanor Daley

Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day—by Malcolm V. Edwards

What Sweeter Music—by Eleanor Daley

Carol for the Animals—by Patrick Wedd

I Sing of a Maiden—by Eleanor Daley

Mary's Song—by Knut Nystedt

I Sing of a Maiden—by Patrick Hadley

How Far is it to Bethlehem?—traditional English, arr. Willcocks

In the Bleak Midwinter—by Frances McCollin

Sir Christëmas—by Derek Holman

The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy—arr. Stephen Hatfield

The Huron Carol—traditional Canadian, arr. Ed Henderson

I Saw Three Ships—traditional English, arr. Ed Henderson



#### 'LEGACY' (Centrediscs, CMC DS 6800)

Ave Maris Stella—by Chan Ka Nin

Lullaby—by Keith Hamel

Auyuittuq—by Malcolm Forsyth

Winter Sky—by Malcolm Forsyth

Salem, 1692—by Keith Hamel

Hear My Prayer—by Tobin Stokes

When You Are Old—by Peter Triggvi Bjerring

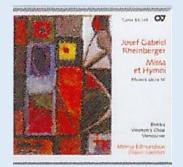
Four Mystical Songs—by Leslie Uyeda

Ave Maria—by David MacIntyre

Northern Lights—by Harry Somers

Missa Brevis—by Ramona Luengen

Celebrernus—by Ramona Luengen



# "MISSA ET HYMNI" (Carus Musica Sacra VI)

Drei lateinische Hymnen op.96

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen op.35

Missa in Es op.155

Sechs zweistimmige Hymnen op.118



www.elektra.ca





Producers and engineers:

Choir Photos:

Design:

Liz Hamel, Don Harder, Grant Rowledge, Stephen Smith

redlemonphotography and Ian MacDonald

Shannon Lythgoe, Shannanigans Art House

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