



ELEKTRA  
WOMEN'S CHOIR

creating • exploring • celebrating

Elektra's mandate is *to inspire and lead in the choral art form through excellence in performance and through the creation, exploration, and celebration of women's repertoire.*

## 30th Anniversary Gala Concert

# Listener's Guide

by Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director

<http://elektra.ca/concerts-events/galaconcert/>

March 8, 2017 (Chan Centre for the Performing Arts, Vancouver)

Performers:

Elektra Women's Choir

Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director

Stephen Smith, piano

with special guests

soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian

cellist Rebecca Wenham

percussionist Robin Reid

Welcome! This "Listener's Guide" is meant to give you insight into Elektra's season programming and to make the concert experience richer and more meaningful. I'll be sharing my thoughts on the music we're singing, our guest artists, and the thinking behind the program as a whole. Here you'll also find full texts and translations for the music.

In 2015 I made the acquaintance of soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian and her husband, pianist and composer Serouj Kradjian. I had seen her perform with the Vancouver Symphony a few years earlier, and now had enjoyed the two of them performing art song, presented by Music in the Morning. Included in the program were some

Armenian songs, and she explained from the stage about the couple's shared Armenian heritage and deep connection to its music. Listening to her sing, and to her artistry which is at the same time intimate and commanding, I immediately began to wish there could be a way to collaborate. A few hours later, we were at a dinner party in their honour and, when I introduced myself, she mentioned the suite of Armenian hymns that we will be performing in the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert. They were arranged by Serouj for Isabel, cello, and women's choir and recorded with cellist Ani Aznavoorian and Coro Vox Aeterna directed by Anna Hamre. Now, you have to understand how rare it is to find out that someone has written a new work specifically for women's choir. Most composers write for mixed choir (soprano, alto, tenor, bass – usually men and women together), because there are many more such ensembles in the world. (A big part of what Elektra has been doing for the last 30 years is increasing and improving the body of repertoire for women's choirs, but that's another whole topic that I'll have to get to another time!) As you can tell, our conversation immediately went to how we might perform these hymns together, and the result is the concert we'll present at the Chan Centre on International Women's Day, March 8, 2017, in which six of the hymns play a prominent part.

Programming a concert is completely subjective. It's both the best and worst part of my job, and it takes grit, time, experience, and trust. I'm a big believer in a messy beginning to the process. I've never measured how many hours I spend planning the music for a concert. But what I know is that it is and must be an open-ended process to which one can't apply a deadline and get the best results. One has to have access to a lot of repertoire (my choral library, other peoples' recordings and live concerts, the internet, recommendations from colleagues) and a lot of time. I find that I have to allow myself both to look for the things that I know are there (this piece by Rachmaninoff would work well alongside this other piece) and be distracted and led astray by enticing discoveries. I have to have far too much music in front of me and come back to it over many sessions, exploring the direction a commissioned work might take, rejecting something and adding something else each time until I know/feel the program is just right. The program could have taken a hundred other satisfying directions in the course of that process, but where it has landed is the right one for this occasion. In the middle of it, it's a mess, and at the end, I've learned to trust my sense that it's finished.

So here I was at the messy, challenging beginning of programming a concert in which some people would have come to hear Isabel Bayrakdarian and some to hear Elektra. I wanted them all to leave satisfied, and all to have been shown the world of the other.

We open with simplicity, with Elektra alone on stage with our wonderful pianist Stephen Smith and with the world premiere of *To Timarion* by Toronto composer Sheldon Rose (b. 1962). Sheldon is a musician's musician, a thoughtful and skilled writer for voice, and someone whose works (*In the Gardens of Shushan* and *Stars*) we have performed and recorded in the past. The singers and I always love learning and performing his music. With its humble and emotional poem, I felt *To Timarion* would break down any barrier between the choir and audience, drawing the listener into its English language text and creating an expectation of what was to follow. It opens with a soprano solo and, while I could have asked Isabel to sing this, I felt it was too soon in the concert to introduce her. Elektra singer Holly Kennedy ably takes the part.

To Timarion

Marjorie Pickthall, *The Woodcarver's Wife*, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1922, p. 18

HAD I the thrush's throat, I could not sing you  
Songs sweeter than his own.  
And I'm too poor  
To lay the gifts that other lovers bring you  
Low at your silver door.  
Such as I have, I give.  
See, for your taking  
Tired hands are here, and feet grown dark with dust.  
Here's a lost hope, and here a heart whose aching  
Grows greater than its trust.  
Sleep on, you will not hear me.  
But to-morrow  
You will remember in your fragrant ways,  
Finding the voice of twilight and my sorrow  
Lovelier than all men's praise.

Here's what Sheldon has to say about this short, intimate gem:

*Marjorie Pickthall's poetry is so inherently lyrical, musical, and evokes timeless beauty. Viola Whitney, class of 1913 at Victoria College at the University of Toronto wrote, "When one tries to classify, analyse or criticize her individual poems, one comes completely to a standstill. Each one is so beautiful that vivisection seems sacrilegious, and quotation seems hopeless unless nothing is omitted. Almost every line is so full of music that it haunts our waking hours, mingles its melodies in our dreams, and at*

*last becomes a part of our immortal selves.” p334, Acta Victoriana Vol XXXIX No. 1 (1914). Years later, Arthur MacMechan would be quoted, writing, “Her death means the silencing of the truest, sweetest singing voice ever heard in Canada”. Marjorie’s was a life of devotion to her art. Never once in her catalogue of letters was there uncodified documentation of a romantic entanglement of any kind. And while this perhaps not noteworthy today, in the early part of the 20th Century, in pre-suffrage Canada, such a condition may have aroused social suspicion. There are examples, however, where Marjorie daringly reveals a deeper yearning, as evidenced here in To Timarion. We never learn whether Timarion is an iconic substitute for a living person, or whether it is simply the poetess symbolically illuminating the forgotten woman from the shadows of a patriarchal literary past. Regardless, Timarion is beautifully enlivened here once again in Marjorie’s own immortal words.*

Not every composer would be able to articulate his/her compositional thought process the way Sheldon does, and I thought you would enjoy his line-by-line explanation:

Had I the thrush's throat, I could not sing (to) you songs sweeter than his (its) own.

*Few vocalizations are sweeter than that of the variety of songbird thrushes, common throughout Eurasia, and of which England-born MLCP would have been familiar. This line is an exquisite profession of intimate love. I changed “his” to “its” to de-genderize the bird and to draw more attention to gender considerations presented later in the poem. This line, and the next, felt best as a soprano solo in a high register with the addition of slight vocal embellishments. The heptatonic phrygian major scale upon which the piece is built is I-b II-III-IV-V-b VI-b VII, with an alluring occasional raised 7<sup>th</sup> presented in the soprano solo.*

And I'm too poor to lay the gifts that other lovers bring (to) you low at your silver door.

*“Poor” here might mean in material possession when paired with “gifts”, or may also mean in status when paired with the word “low” and “silver door” (which would have been indicative of subservience to a figure of stature who lives in a palatial building – bronze walls, golden portals and silver doors being common images in Greek epics). It also suggests that MLCP identifies as one of these “other lovers”.*

Such as I have, I give.

*A beautiful line – a complete offering of oneself. It is set as 4-part harmony immediately after the soprano solo, and has no initial accompaniment which gives it space to breathe on its own.*

See, for your taking tired hands are here, and feet grown dark with dust.

*This offering includes an aspect of physical-ness.*

Here's a lost hope, and here a heart whose aching grows greater than its trust.

*This love appears to be unrecognized. The phrase “grows greater than it trust” may refer to MLCP being unable to confidently express this ardour.*

Sleep on, you will not hear me.

*It seems that the object of affection in this poem is unable to hear for sleep, either in ignorance of because she is deceased. It is supposed here that it is the literary Timarion of the Greek Anthologies that is being referenced and not a poetic substitute for a real person.*

But to-morrow you will remember in your fragrant ways, finding the voice of twilight and my sorrow lovelier than all men's praise.

*A hope here is expressed that at a point in the near future, Timarion will come to recognize MLCP's aching in the shadows of remembrance and finally realize the sweetness of her affections. It also fitting that “all men's” praise does not refer to mankind in general, but refers instead to the specific love of a woman for another woman being extolled over that of the platitudes of males. This a particularly daring expression for MLCP to make at a time in history when any overt sentiment of this nature may have meant potential social or literary ostracization. This sentence is singled out for special musical treatment, presented on a single tone with the triplets of the accompaniment suspended to mirror its rhythmic pattern (this is also re-iterated as an echo in the piano in the final two bars). The opening phrase (simply because the words are so beautiful) is then recapitulated.*

With the rare opportunity to perform in the Chan Centre, I leapt at the chance to perform *Nigra Sum* by Barcelona native, Bernat Vivancos (b. 1973). I discovered this work when a friend sent me a link to the outstanding recording by the Latvian Radio Choir, conducted by Sigvards Klava. Another sensuous text and a compositional style that ties together old (the whole texture seems inspired by Monteverdi's madrigals)

and new (beautiful dissonances and unexpected harmonic shifts). In contrast to the brevity of Sheldon Rose's *To Timarion*, this eight-minute *a cappella* work in 8 parts, sung in Latin, unfolds and develops slowly.

Nigra Sum

from the Song of Songs or Song of Solomon

Nigra sum, sed formosa,  
filiae Jerusalem.  
Ideo dilexit me Rex,  
et introduxit me in cubiculum suum.  
Et dixit mihi:  
Surge et veni amica mea,  
jam hiems transiit,  
imber abiit et recessit.  
Flores aparuerunt in terra nostra,  
tempus putationis ad venit. Alleluia.

*I am a dark-skinned, comely daughter of Jerusalem.  
Therefore the King loved me,  
and brought me into his chamber,  
and he said to me:  
Arise, my love and come:  
for now the winter is past,  
the rain is over and gone.  
The flowers have appeared in our land,  
the time of pruning is come. Alleluia!*

Here's what Vivancos has to say about his *Nigra Sum*:

*I composed this work in Oslo, at the beginning of the Erasmus exchange that I did in 2000 between the Conservatoire de Paris and The Norwegian State Academy of Music, in order to study with the composer Lasse Thoresen. It is in this wonderful northern country where inspiration seems to become more present than ever: paradisiac landscapes, generous forests, lakes full of calm, a clear and sharp light – although short – , people are always so pleasant. This work, with a clear Scandinavian influence and color was the result of my daily walks around Songsvann Lake. Also influenced by a recent discovery of spectral harmonies, it is a work that requires a certain level of*

*interpretation. It is a love song, where I tried to describe the sensuality and beauty of the love dialogue of the biblical text Solomon Song's.*

Following the Vivancos work, we come to the six Armenian hymns that generated the whole concert: ***Mother of Light – Armenian hymns and chants in praise of Mary***, arranged by Serouj Kradjian (b. 1973). Ours will be the world premiere concert performance. I'm delighted that cellist Rebecca Wenham was available for this project. It's our first collaboration. In Isabel's words, here is the back story to these hymns:

*In 2016, I released a CD called Mother of Light, Armenian hymns and chants in praise of Mary. The idea for this project materialized during a very dark moment in my life. A couple of years previously, I had made a desperate plea to God to spare my mother's life, and in return, I promised that I would sing the praises of His mother, Mary. The recording, which includes music written from the 5th century onwards in arrangements for solo voice, women's choir, and cello by my husband, pianist and composer Serouj Kradjian, is entirely devoted to Armenian hymns dedicated to Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, and is the fulfillment of my promise.*

*I grew up singing in the Armenian Apostolic Church. My mother was the choir director, and she often let me join the adult choir, even though I was too young to contribute effectively. That particular music, with its exotic melismas, Eastern melodies, and long legatos, formed the early foundation for my musical education, and continues to be my inner compass, by which I find and stay on my personal path in life.*

*Researching the repertoire for this recording yielded an exciting discovery of rare gems and a treasure trove of hymns dedicated to Mary. In Armenian Church doctrine, Mary has a primary place of honor, because it was of her and by the Holy Spirit that God became incarnate. She is seen as the image of humanity fully obedient to God, and she's ultimately sanctified by accomplishing God's will.*

*For tonight's Canadian premiere of these settings, I have chosen six of the eighteen hymns on the recording. They represent three types of hymns in the Armenian sacred music tradition: "sharagan" (hymn), "dagh" (ode) and "megheti" (canticle). Sharagan refers to a sacred hymn sung during liturgy, having specific musical patterns and restrictions. Sharagans are distinguishable by the specific musical keys in which they're written, referred to here as modes unique to the ancient traditional Armenian singing system. Dagh and megheti are sacred songs, which have been accepted as additions to the sung liturgical repertoire, further enriching an already-rich tradition. The long*

*melismatic vocal lines and brevity of text characteristic of megheti further distinguishes it from dagh.*

*It is no coincidence that our performing musical forces are women: what better way to use the collective feminine power to exalt the virtues, sorrows, beauty, and glory of Mary, the most celebrated woman of all time.*

**Khngi Dzarin** (*Frankincense Tree*) is a dagh, which is sung on the Feast of Assumption of Mary, during the Divine Liturgy, or “Badarak.”

Khngi dzarin nman es,  
Bdough tu kaghtsraham es,  
Zpari bdough peryal es,  
Asdvadzadzin megha kez.

Tu hoghanyout srovpe es,  
Harsn i hergre hergins es,  
zAsdvadz marmnov dznyal es,  
Asdvadzadzin megha kez.  
Tu hortarad aghpyour es,  
Dzaravelots arpoumn es,  
Meghavorats kavitch es,  
Asdvadzadzin megha kez.

Tu looseghen dadjar es,  
Vosgiabad khoran es,  
Tu markarid, ankin es,  
Asdvadzadzin megha kez.

*You are like the frankincense tree,  
You are a sweet-tasting fruit,  
You bore the good fruit,  
Mother of God, I have sinned before you.*

*You are an earthly seraph,  
Earth’s bride to Heaven,  
You gave birth to God in the flesh,  
Mother of God, I have sinned before you.*



*You are like an overflowing spring,  
You quench those who are thirsty,  
You are atonement for the sinful,  
Mother of God, I have sinned before you.*

*You are a temple of light,  
You are a golden tabernacle,  
You are a priceless pearl,  
Mother of God, I have sinned before you.*

**Zartir Nazeli**, also a dagh, declares love and devotion to Mary. It was written by Baghdasar Tbir, who was a late medieval poet–musician (born in Constantinople in the 17th century). This hymn resembles a troubadour song in its character and style.

Ee nnchmanet arkayagan  
Zartir, nazeli im, zartir,  
nshouyln arekagan,  
Zartir, nazeli im, zartir.

*From your royal slumber  
Arise, my graceful one, arise  
The sun's ray has arrived,  
Arise, my beloved, arise.*

**Mayr Yev Gouys** is a sharagan, written in mode 6, that is sung at the Morning Hour service. It was harmonized by the French Armenian composer Ara Barteavian.

Mayr yev gouys,  
Aghakhin Krisdosi,  
Vor parekhos es mishd ashkhhi,  
Kez yeranen amenayn azink.

Makoor aghavni  
Yev harsn yergnits Mariyam,  
Dadjar yev ator Asdoudzo Panin,  
kez yeranen amenayn azink.

Mayr yev gouys, harsn yernits,  
Kez yeranen amenayn aink.

*Immaculate mother and virgin,  
Servant of Christ,  
You are the constant intercessor for the world,  
all nations bless you.*

*Pure turtle-dove,  
Mary, bride of heaven,  
Temple and vessel of God's Word,  
All nations bless you.*

*Mother and virgin, bride of heaven,  
All nations bless you.*

**Diramayrn** is a dagh sung during the Feast of the Holy Cross, and it's considered an Armenian equivalent to the classic Latin *Stabat Mater*. However, only a single verse has reached us. In this arrangement, the choir sings the narration and the solo voice expresses Mary's anguish.

Diramayrn hanteb vortvouyn  
ee khatchin  
Gayr drdmakin  
Yev lselov zdzaravin  
harachmamp layr tsavakin.

Ee poosh bsagn tidelov,  
voghp, godz, vay dayr yoor antsin.  
“Achats-s louys vortyag im Hisoos  
voh yes ent kez meranim.”

*The Mother of the Lord stood before her son on the cross,  
Full of sorrow,  
And hearing the thirsty one,  
She sighed and wept painful tears.*

*Seeing the crown of thorns,  
her soul moaned, wailed, and lamented.  
"Light of my eyes, my son Jesus,  
Oh, I die with you."*

**Varaneem** is a medieval dagh. It asks for the intercession of Mary for the forgiveness of sins.

Varaneem i meghats,  
Tu azadich meghoutselouys  
Ov diramayr, voh, ov diramayr  
voh tsoghia gatil mi goosa gan zoregh genats,  
Voh zoregh genats

Him nakhgin vayelmants  
Arjanabes ardaksetsa,  
Voh yeghgelouys, voh yeghgelouys.  
Voh poosh yev dadasg poosouyts yergir voghormelouys  
Voh voghormelouys

*I'm burdened with sins,  
Only you can save me, great sinner that I am.  
Oh Mother of the Lord, Oh, Mother of the Lord.  
Oh, bedew upon me a drop of your pure and life-giving power,  
Oh, life-giving power.*

*I was rightfully expelled,  
From the honour which I enjoyed before.  
Woe to me! Oh, Woe to me.  
Oh, the ground brought forth thorns and thistles for me  
Pitiful person, that I am.*

**Oor es Mayr im** is one of the most poignant hymns of the Holy Week. It is sung during the Maundy Thursday Tenebrae service, when at midnight, the lights of the church are gradually extinguished to symbolize the darkness enveloping the hearts of humankind, and their choice to kill the Light. It is in this darkness that Jesus calls for the one person who is dearest to him: his mother.

Oor es, Mayr im, kaghtsr yev anoush  
Ser dznoghit zis ayre.

Ltsan achk im tarn ardasvok,  
Voch zok ounim vor srpe.

Tchour khntretsi, katsakh arpi  
Hanorinats tserane.

Tkin, harin, abdageysin,  
Bsag yetin ee pshe.

Azt ararek morn imo,  
Vor yes sirem ee srdes

Oor es, Mayr im, yeg zim dzarav  
Gatampt arpo kaghtsrakin.

*Where are you, my most delicate and sweet Mother?  
Your motherly love I seek fervently.*

*My eyes are full of bitter tears  
I have no one to wipe them away.*

*I asked for water, but drank vinegar  
Given to me by the wicked.*

*They slapped my face, spat at me, and beat me  
And crowned me with a crown of thorns.*

*Go tell my Mother  
That I love her with all my heart.*

*Where are you, my Mother? Please come and quench my thirst  
With your sweet motherly love.*

After intermission, Elektra takes the stage with Rebecca Wenham and percussionist Robin Reid (another first collaboration) to perform a wonderful 2007 work by

Minnesota composer Abbie Betinis (b. 1980), **From Behind the Caravan: Songs of Hâfez**. Not only is this a superb piece of music, but its Persian texts complement beautifully the Armenian hymns of the first half. Similarly to the sacred–secular contrast between *To Timarion* and *Nigra Sum* in the first half, we balance the Armenian hymns and these evocative Sufism–based poems also written centuries ago. The poetry this time is by Khwajeh Shams al–Din Muhammad Hâfez–e Shirazi (ca. 1320–1390). Translations below are compiled by the composer from those of Wilberforce Clarke (1891) and Michael Boylan (1988). This lively and entrancing suite of five short pieces is one of Abbie’s most often–performed pieces and a joy to sing from beginning to end. Here are Abbie’s comments on the work:

*Johann Wolfgang Goethe once wrote, “Only with you, Hâfez, do I wish to compete, for the older you get the younger you become. . . And religion is no obstacle, for the word ‘Islam’ means to submit to God, we all live and die in Islam.” Khwajeh Shams al–Din Muhammad Hâfez–e Shirazi (ca. 1320–1390) was born in Shiraz, Persia (Iran). He wrote nearly 400 lyric poems, called ghazals, and is the undisputed master of that particular poetic form. His mystical writing is based on Sufism, a tradition of Islam that is associated both with the Sunni and Shi’a denominations, as well as many other currents of Islam.*

*I was particularly drawn to these four ghazals because of the elegant way they depict longing... longing for Truth, longing for Reason, longing for Kindness, Love, and – always – longing for the Beloved. Also, as I was reading, I found that many of Hâfez’s poems seem to have in common beautiful metaphors of transience: fire, breath, breeze. Above all, I have tried desperately to remain true to the intonation of the language, and to Hâfez’s poetic instinct. Each poem unfortunately had to be shortened to create a concert piece, but I encourage anyone to seek out the original poems in their entirety. Special thanks to my friend Behrooz Alavi for his insights into Hâfez’s poetry, its pronunciation, and its rich performance practice.*

*The music is my own, and not authentically Persian. It is my interpretation of an assortment of influences, including my study of Persian speech, scales and modes, but perhaps also from my distant memory of being four years old and dancing – joyfully and tirelessly – with my Greek relatives to music that whirled feverishly around me.*

I. we have come (from #366) (soloists: Carmen Rosen, Caitlin Robinson, Amy Dawson, Grace Fatkin)

*We, to this door, seeking neither pride nor glory... we have come.  
For shelter from ill-fortune, here... we have come.*

*Traveling along love's journey, from the borders of nothingness,  
Now into states of being, all this way... we have come.*

*O ship of grace, where is thy anchor of forbearance?  
For in this ocean of generosity, immersed in sin... we have come.*

*Hâfez, throw off your woolen kherqe [Sufi cloak], for we, from  
behind the caravan, with the fire of sighing "ah!"... we have come.*

II. suffer no grief (from #255) (soloist: Amy Dawson)

*Joseph, forsaken, shall return to Canaan.  
Suffer no grief.*

*From the thorny stalks of family grief, one day, a rose garden.  
Suffer no grief...*

*If you desire the Way and plant your pilgrim foot in the desert,  
then if the mighty Arabian thorn makes reproofs,  
Suffer no grief...*

*Suffer no grief, suffer no grief, O heart.*

*Back to reason, comes this distraught head.  
Suffer no grief...*

*O heart, despairing heart, O! O! Suffer no grief...*

*There is no road that has no end.*

III. closer to the fire (from #184)

*Last night I saw the angels beating at the door of the tavern,*

*The clay of Adam they shaped, and into the mould they cast it.*

*The churches war among themselves, forgive them  
When they cannot see the truth, the door of fable they beat.  
Fire, Fire! Oh! Oh!*

*Thanks be to God, for between me and Him, peace chanced,  
Sufis, dancing, cast their cups of thankfulness!  
Fire, Fire! Oh! Oh!*

IV. boatpeople (from #5) (soloists: Amy Dawson, Grace Fatkin, Stephanie Ching, Holly Kennedy)

*My heart falls from grasp! Come to my cry, for God's sake;  
O the pain that Love's hidden mystery should be disclosed!  
Arise, arise... O breeze...*

*To ease the pain of the world, live by these words:  
With friends, give kindness; with enemies, courtesy.*

*Shipwrecked are we, O fair breeze, arise!  
So that, again, we may behold the face of the Beloved.  
Behold...!*

V. we have come (reprise) (from #366)

*Hâfez, throw off your woolen kherqe [Sufi cloak], for we, from  
behind the caravan, with the fire of sighing "ah!"... we have come!*

The concert closes with a piece commissioned especially for this concert: *Prayer* by Serouj Kradjian. With the Armenian hymns as the anchor that generated the concept of the concert, I knew that I also wanted to commission someone to write a brand new work for Elektra and Isabel together in the beautiful acoustics of the Chan Centre. I quickly realized that the best choice for the occasion would be Isabel's husband, pianist, musical collaborator, and Canadian composer, Serouj Kradjian. No-one could know the subtleties of her voice better. Both he and Isabel were enthusiastic, and I asked him to suggest a text. He replied that something from Gibran Khalil Gibran's *The*

*Prophet* would be his first choice. Luck was with us in that this book, although not so until 2019 in the US, is already under public domain in Canada. Quoting Wikipedia:

*Gibran is the third best-selling poet of all time, behind Shakespeare and Laozi. The Prophet is a book of 26 poetic essays written in English in 1923 by the Lebanese artist, philosopher and writer Khalil Gibran. In the book, the prophet Almustafa, who has lived in the foreign city of Orphalese for 12 years, is about to board a ship which will carry him home. He is stopped by a group of people, with whom he discusses many issues of life and the human condition. The book is divided into chapters dealing with many aspects of human life and nature.*

Both Gibran and Kradjian were born in Lebanon (Kradjian of Armenian parents) and both emigrated to North America. The connection was strong. From the book, Serouj chose an excerpt from chapter 23.

Prayer

*Speak to us of Prayer.*

*You pray in your distress and in your need; would that you might pray also in the fullness of your joy and in your days of abundance.*

*When you pray you rise to meet in the air those who are praying at that very hour, and whom save in prayer you may not meet.*

*And if you cannot but weep when your soul summons you to prayer, she should spur you again and yet again, though weeping, until you shall come laughing.*

*I cannot teach you how to pray in words.*

*God listens not to your words save when He Himself utters them through your lips.)*

*I cannot teach you the prayer of the seas and the forests and the mountains.*

*But you who are born of the mountains and the forests and the seas shall find their prayer in your heart.*

*And, if you listen, in the stillness of the night you shall hear them saying in silence,*



*“Our God, who art our winged self, it is thy will in us that willeth.*

*It is thy desire in us that desireth.*

*It is thy urge in us that would turn our nights, which are thine, into days which are thine also.*

*We cannot ask thee for aught, for thou knowest our needs before they are born in us:*

*Thou art our need; and in giving us more of thyself thou givest us all.”*

*Prayer* was commissioned with the generous support of Catherine and Roland Haebler and the Diane Loomer Commissioning Fund for Elektra Women’s Choir. The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary concert was further supported by the BC Arts Council, the Hamber Foundation, the Sonya and Charlotte Wall Arts Fund, and the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts. Our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season media sponsor is The Georgia Straight. We are grateful for the continuing Operating support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the City of Vancouver.

Thank you for reading this Listener’s Guide. There is always “so much to say” about a concert program, some of which can speak for itself, but there is always much more for those who are curious. I’m very glad for the internet and our ability to connect this way. Enjoy the concert and do let us know what you think by submitting a review on <http://elektra.ca/concerts-events/galaconcert/>. I’d also love to know if you have read this guide before or after the concert. It’s a new project for us this season.

With warmest wishes from myself and all of Elektra.



Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director  
Elektra Women’s Choir