



ELEKTRA
WOMEN'S CHOIR

creating • exploring • celebrating

11th World Symposium on Choral Music

July 2017

TOUR PROGRAM

Elektra Women's Choir • Vancouver, Canada

elektra.ca

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Warmest greetings to all from Elektra Women's Choir and our choral community in Vancouver, Canada! We are honoured to be sharing our music with you today.

Since first attending a World Symposium on Choral Music in Stockholm/Helsinki/Tallinn in 1990, I have had my choral horizons expanded through this wonderful, convivial gathering of the International Federation for Choral Music. I have learned so much from new friends from all parts of the globe and been moved by the artistry of their ensembles. This is where I've come to understand that our roots, our language, and our surroundings shape how we make music.

Into this context, I've thought long and hard about what music Elektra should be sharing with you today. And I hope the results interest you and give you some understanding of our Canadian choral world. My guiding principles were that our program should be "grown up", not music that children would also sing, which, of course, is largely related to text. Our singers range in age from 21 to 65, and that life experience is reflected in many of our selections. I also wanted the music to have the possibility of being transformative – to open a door for a listener to experience something that was more than entertaining. And I wanted to share some Canadian composers and some women composers with you, because I believe so strongly in their creative work. Of particular note are the three works by our pianist of the last 16 years, Dr. Stephen Smith, whose choral writing for us is so superbly rooted in Elektra's sound. Thanks also to Jaakko Mäntyjärvi for his creativity in composing *Juliet November Tango* for us on this occasion, commissioned by the 11th World Symposium on Choral Music. Please be sure to read the "back story" on this funny new work on page 9!

This program contains notes, texts, and English translations for all of our repertoire, listed alphabetically by title. Please use the page numbers to find each piece. The program order is on page 5.

Our most sincere thanks to Monserrat Cadevall, President of the Federació Catalana d'Entitats Corals and all the hardworking members of her team here in Barcelona. Also to the IFCM board, staff, and Artistic Committee for their hard work over many years.

Sincerely,

Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director

P.S. We have brought 30 packets of music containing some of the Canadian repertoire on our program. Please find me after a concert if you would like to take one home.





photo: David Cooper

Elektra Women's Choir from Vancouver, Canada has been a leader among women's choirs since 1987. Under the direction of Artistic Director Morna Edmundson the 50-voice adult choir is known for its adventurous programming, seeking out music written specifically for women and frequently commissioning new works. The choir is honoured to work with an outstanding accompanist, Dr. Stephen Smith.

Elektra delivers its mandate to "inspire and lead" through an annual concert series including new and commissioned works and featuring outstanding guest artists. In addition to performing worthy repertoire from the past, Elektra has commissioned over 80 compositions and arrangements. The choir's recordings on iTunes and CD Baby extend the reach of its repertoire internationally. Elektra's 13th CD *Still* was released in October 2015 – a collection of 14 Christmas tracks including many world premiere recordings of Canadian and international works for women's voices. Elektra's website offers a permanent repertoire resource featuring all works programmed by the choir to date. Elektra's celebrated outreach programs encourage, train, and mentor the next generation of youth and adults: singers, conductors, and composers.

A multiple national prize-winning ensemble, Elektra has been honoured to perform at conferences of Choral Canada, the American Choral Directors Association, Chorus America, the International Society for Music Education, and the International Federation for Choral Music. Elektra participates enthusiastically in shared projects with other arts organizations such as the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and Chor Leoni Men's Choir, and in festivals and concert series. In June 2017, Elektra was proud to win first prize in the Women's Choir category of Choral Canada's National Competition for Canadian Amateur Choirs.

Soprano 1: Julie Edmundson, Grace Fatkin, Malaika Horswill, Danica Kell, Cassie Luftspring, Shannon Lythgoe, Janine Magaw*, Christy Mahlberg, Rachel Nelson, Amanda Randt, Jillian Schina

Soprano 2: Ann Busay, Catherine Cheneval, Sophia Fan, Patti Fletcher, Catherine Haebler, Catherine Lee, Katrin Lohuaru, Sharon Schermbrucker, Kathryn Slemko*, Kim Taylor, Allison Tremblay, Moyra Van Nus, Maggie Van Seters, Patty Wagner

Alto 1: Joanna Bevaart, Amy Dawson*, Karen Dionne, Susan Edwards, Grace Groot, Kirstin Hain, Simone Lemieux, Sheila Little, Stephanie Loo, Kate MacColl, Stephanie Mayer, Alison Stillwell, Brenda Wilson

Alto 2: Beth Busby, Stephanie Ching, Maureen Ciarniello, Elisabeth Finch, Corinne Norbraten*, Alicia O'Brien, Denise O'Brien, Caitlin Robinson, Deirdre Rogers, Carmen Rosen, Stephanie Schollen, Bernice Slemko

* *Section Leaders*



Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director

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 co-founded 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. Morna 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.

In 2000, she was presented with the Healey Willan Award for outstanding service to the BC Choral Federation, an organization she serves as a member of the President's Advisory Council. In 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 2011, Morna received a YWCA Woman of Distinction award in recognition of her work with Elektra. Since 2013, Morna has served on the board of Chorus America, the advocacy, research, and leadership development organization that gives voice to the choral field.



Stephen Smith, Accompanist

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, pianist for the Vancouver Bach Choir, and a frequent collaborator with Chor Leoni Men's Choir, the Vancouver Chamber Choir, and many other ensembles.

Stephen is also a published composer and arranger of choral music, with a long and growing list of commissions from individual choirs across North America, and from such entities as the British Columbia Choral Federation, the Women's Commissioning Consortium of the ACDA, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Stephen's work as both composer and pianist can be heard on dozens of CDs in commercial release, including a solo recording of classical piano miniatures entitled "Kaleidoscope," which is available on iTunes.



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WOMEN'S CHOIR

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Morna Edmundson,
Artistic Director

Concert Programmes (see indicated pages for full details)

Thursday, July 27 ~ Palau de la Música

Valkyrie	Kristopher Fulton (pg.12)
Nóchka	Sergei Rachmaninoff (pg.10)
Solitude	Stephen Smith (pg.12)
Cedit, Hyems	Abbie Betinis (pg.6)
Primary Colours	Kathleen Allan (pg.10)
The Circle Game	Joni Mitchell, arr. Kate MacColl (pg.7)
Juliet November Tango	Jaakko Mäntyjärvi (pg.9)

Friday, July 28 ~ Santa María de Jesùs de Gràcia

Songbird	Sarah Quartel (pg.12)
Early Spring	traditional, arr. Kathleen Allan (pg.8)
Sanctus–Benedictus (from Mass no.6)	György Orbán (pg.11)
Nóchka	Sergei Rachmaninoff (pg.10)
Consider the Lilies	Stephen Smith (pg.8)
Der 23 Psalm	Franz Schubert (pg.6)
The Valley	Jane Siberry, arr. Beth Hanson (pg.13)
The Circle Game	Joni Mitchell, arr. Kate MacColl (pg.7)

Saturday, July 29 ~ L'Auditori

Consider the Lilies	Stephen Smith (pg.8)
what i want	Stephen Smith (pg.14)

Texts, Translations, and Notes

Der 23 Psalm (D.706) Franz Schubert

Schubert wrote this setting of the beloved Psalm 23, "The Lord is my Shepherd", in December 1820 at the request of his friend Anna Frölich as a test piece for her vocal pupils. Originally written for two sopranos and two altos, Psalm 23 has become a staple of women's choirs everywhere.

Gott ist mein Hirt,
mir wird nichts mangeln.
Er lagert mich auf grüne Weide,
er leitet mich an stillen Bächen,
er labt mein schmachthendes Gemüt,
er führt mich auf rechtem Steige
zu seines Namens Ruhm.
Und wall' ich auch im Todesschatten Tale,
so wall' ich ohne Furcht,
denn du beschüttest mich,
dein Stab und deine Stütze
sind mir immerdar mein Trost.
Du richtest mir ein Freudenmahl
im Angesicht der Feinde zu,
du salbst mein Haupt mit Öle
und schenkst mir volle Becher ein.
Mir folget Heil und Seligkeit
in diesem Leben nach;
Einst ruh' ich ewge Zeit
dort in des Ew'gen Haus.

*The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want;
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I fear no evil,
for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff,
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell
in the house of the Lord forever.*

Cedit, Hyems (Be Gone, Winter!) Abbie Betinis

G. Schirmer: Dale Warland Choral Series - SSAA: #50490336; SATB: #50486492

Flute: Bernat Castillejo

Program notes by the composer:

Cedit, Hyems (Be Gone, Winter!), written in September 2003 on commission from the Dale Warland Singers, depicts the coming of Christ into a troubled, confused world. The opening flute is meant to sound lonely as it wanders through unpredictable chords. The chorus' entrance also shifts uneasily, as if waiting for something. The flute realizes first the potential of Christ's coming, encouraging the chorus in faster rhythms, louder dynamics, and soon the voices are attempting to drive the world's coldness away in preparation for Christ. At first, because they are so physically and emotionally cold, the voices can only whisper the Latin word "cedit" ("be gone"), but the harsh whispering begins to subside as Christ's love begins to envelope them. With a sweeping melody, and a rhythmic propulsion, the chorus is finally able to shoo out the desolation of winter with the newly acquired strength that only love can bring: "Christ comes! Depart!"

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!*

*"Hymnus Matutinus" (lines 1-4)
from Cathemerinon II
by Prudentius (348-ca.410).
Public domain.*

*"Morning Hymn" (lines 1-4)
Trans. by Stephen Self.
Used by permission.*

Cedit, hyems, tua durities,
frigor abiit; rigor et glacies
brumalis et feritas, rabies,
torpor et improba segnities,
pallor et ira, dolor et macies.

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

*Anonymous,
manuscript of Benedictbeuern
(Carmina Burana).
Public domain.*

*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.*

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

*Trans. by Helen Waddell (1929).
Used by permission of
Constable & Robinson Publishing Co.,
London.*

The Circle Game Words and music by Joni Mitchell*, arr. Kate MacColl*

Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. #41870

Soloists: Stephanie Ching, Kate MacColl

Elektra commissioned this arrangement of Canadian singer/songwriter Joni Mitchell's timeless classic from Vancouver-based singer/songwriter, teacher, and Elektra singer Kate MacColl. *The Circle Game* speaks to so many of us in the various stages of our lives.

Yesterday, a child came out to wonder.
Caught a dragonfly inside a jar.
Fearful when the sky was full of thunder,
And tearful at the falling of a star.

Refrain:

And the seasons they go 'round and 'round
And the painted ponies go up and down.
We're captive on the carousel of time.
We can't return, we can only look behind
From where we came
And go round and round and round
In the circle game.

Then, the child moved ten times
'round the seasons,
Skated over ten clear frozen streams.
Words like, "When you're older",
must appease him
And promises of someday make his dreams.

Refrain

Sixteen springs and sixteen summers gone now,
Cartwheels turn to car wheels through the town.
And they tell him, "Take your time.
It won't be long now
'Til you drag your feet to slow the circles down".

Refrain

So the years spin by and now the boy is twenty
Though his dreams have lost
some grandeur coming true
There'll be new dreams,
maybe better dreams and plenty
Before the last revolving year is through.

Refrain

* denotes Canadian composer or arranger

Consider the Lilies Stephen Smith*

Cypress Choral Music CP 1312

This work by Elektra's multi-talented accompanist, Dr. Stephen Smith, sets the familiar theme of Matthew 6: 25-34 which encourages the listener to trust in God's provision. The texture is dense with many overlapping lines. The scale C, D, E, F, G, Ab, Bb is exotic, meant to convey the Middle Eastern roots of the bible.

Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink.
Behold the birds of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap; yet your heavenly
father feedeth them.

And why take ye thought for raiment, saying wherewithal shall we be clothed?
Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet Solomon in all
his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for itself.
But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these
things shall be added unto you.

Early Spring Traditional Newfoundland, arr. Kathleen Allan*

Cypress Choral Music CP 1142

Program notes by the arranger:

According to the 1950's field research of Kenneth Peacock (published in Songs of the Newfoundland Outports, by the National Museum of Canada, 1965), *Early Spring* is a variant of 19th century British broadside ballad, The Sailor And His Bride, first published in Dublin sometime between 1850 and 1899. Peacock travelled the island of Newfoundland between 1951 and 1961 recording folk songs remembered by inhabitants of Newfoundland communities. *Early Spring* was collected in 1958 from Mrs. Charlotte Decker of Parson's Pond, NL, who remembered it as the first song she learned from her mother when she was six years old (ca. 1890). I remember the process of arranging *Early Spring* very vividly. I was at my family's cabin a few hours outside of St. John's in the small town of Terra Nova. Growing up, this was where I felt most at peace and was able to compose most freely. It was on this particular weekend that I had one of my first experiences with a visual quasi-hallucination of the musical sounds. The notes became characters that interacted with one another, and the music felt like it wrote itself. This has happened on rare occasions since then, but I remember especially the final ascension of the soprano solo as one of the most forceful musical impulses I've experienced. It had a mind of its own, weightless and inevitably rising to the upper tonic, like the spirit of the lost lover singing itself into the heavens.

Early spring when I was young,
the birds so merrilye have sung,
was there ever a bird so happy as I
when my young sailor lad was nigh?

The eastern star is shining clear,
the day o'er breaks on the ocean near,
the sailor leaved his lovely bride
a-weeping on the ocean side.

'Tis six long months since I've been wed,
the days so merrilye have fled,
but tomorrow morning by the dawning of the day,
the ocean presses my love away.

The time rolled on and he came no more
to see his bride on the ocean shore.
His ship, she went down by the rollin' 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.

Oh the past is past and she is gone,
on earth we'll meet no more,
but we will meet in heav'n above,
on God's eternal shore.

Juliet November Tango Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

Commissioned by the 11th World Symposium on Choral Music, Barcelona 2017

Program notes by the composer:

This piece was predicated on a simple structural challenge: whether it would be possible to tell a story using nothing but the NATO alphabet [where “J” “N” “R” is expressed “Juliet November Tango”.] There is clearly potential there for drama, as there is only one woman (Juliet) but several men (Charlie, Mike, Oscar, Victor and, happily, Romeo). Potential settings are limited to Québec, India and Lima, and the choice of airline and hotel is rather severely restricted (Delta). I soon found I had to add single-digit numbers to the mix to have any chance of coming up with a libretto, such as it is, mainly to be able to use 2 and 4 to stand in for ‘to’ and ‘for’, respectively. Why a tango, then? Because a tango is always an option, especially with a love story, even one as elliptically expressed as this one. Plot summary: Romeo and Juliet meet in Québec in November, fall in love and go to the Québec Delta Hotel. Soon Juliet's eye is caught by Mike, apparently a US serviceman with a flashy car. He sweeps her off to India (an artistic liberty forced by the constraints of the material, since currently Delta does not fly to India), where they live it up at a golf hotel. But Mike is exposed as a fraud by Papa Oscar: Mike actually drives a Ford Sierra, not an Alfa-Romeo, and far from being a serviceman, he was rejected by the US Army (the code ‘4F’ meaning ‘unfit for service’). Papa Oscar takes Juliet back to Québec, where in the meantime Romeo has drunk himself into an early grave. Papa Oscar ends up comforting Juliet, but it is anyone's guess whether he is Juliet's father or perhaps a sugar daddy; this is never made clear, and I have no idea.

November, Quebec, Romeo.
November, Quebec, Juliet.
1 Echo Romeo, 1 Echo Juliet.
Romeo, Juliet 2 Quebec Hotel.

November Tango 4 2, 1 Tango 4 2.
Hotel Bravo 5, Quebec Delta Hotel.
Romeo 4 Juliet, Juliet 4 Romeo.
November Tango 4 2.

Mike! Yankee Uniform. Mike! Alfa-Romeo.
Mike Foxtrot Juliet, Mike Foxtrot Juliet.
1 4 Mike, Juliet Delta 2 India.

November Tango 4 2, 1 Tango 4 2.
Hotel Bravo 5, 1 India Golf Hotel.
Whiskey, Foxtrot 9 2 5, 1 4 Juliet, 1 4 Mike.
November Tango 4 2.

Juliet!”
“Papa Oscar! Papa Oscar!”
“Juliet! Mike X-ray! Mike Zero! Mike Tango 4 5!”
“Alfa-Romeo?”
“4 Sierra!”
“Yankee Uniform?”
“4 Foxtrot! Juliet, Delta 2 Quebec!”

Quebec. Juliet 6 4 Romeo. Quebec, Romeo Whisky,
Whisky, 911!
1 Zero Romeo, Mike Golf India,
Juliet 8 1 Kilo; Papa Oscar, Hotel!

November Tango 4 2, Papa Oscar, Juliet.
10-4!

Nóchka (Night) *Sergei Rachmaninoff*
(from *Six Choruses for Treble Voices*, op. 15)
Musica Russica

Rachmaninoff composed his *Six Choruses* in 1895 for a choir at the Maryinsky Girls' School, where he was a teacher of music theory. These are beautiful, lyrical melodies over the sort of brilliant accompaniment that one would expect to see from the famous Russian composer and pianist. The text of the second song, *Nóchka (Night)*, is by Vladimir Ladyzhensky (1859-1932).

Тихо ночка тёмнокрылая
пролетает над землей,
где это лётся песнь унылая,
омраченная слёзой
прочьско рей, на пев таскующий.
Ночка тёмная пройдёт
и, воскреснув, денликующий
людям счастье принесёт.
Ать дохнёт земля усталая
окол дованная сном.
И заблешет зорька алая.
В небе ясноголубом.

*Softly night comes in on dusky wings,
taking flight across the land,
and from somewhere drifts a dreary song,
drifts a song made dark by a tear.
Go away, you melancholy tune.
Soon the night will fall away.
The triumphant resurrected day
will bring happiness to all.
Meanwhile, weary dreamers are renewed
in the mystery of sleep.
Crimson dawn will seep across the sky
and dissolve itself in blue.*

Primary Colours *Kathleen Allan**

Manuscript available from: order@kathleenallan.com

Soloist: Caitlin Robinson

Acknowledged as the first major female voice in Jewish-Canadian poetry, Miriam Waddington was a trailblazer and a visionary. Her poem *Primary Colours* uses haunting and unusual language to paint visceral depictions of each stage of life: "Being Born" (red), "Living" (blue), and "Dying" (yellow).

1. Being Born

Be red,
a red of space
and stretch,
a flow,
a burst of
burn.

And now
reverse, contract,
enclose
to interpoint:
shift darkness
into out or in
until you have
a hearse,
a box, a cage,
with nets and loops
of leaves, with pods
of seeds.

Then move
in protoplasmic
dance
through streaming
mysteries
of cell and cellicle;
flow
through careful
barriers of bone
and storms
of blood,
past cartilage
and hinge,
past loose vestigial
wings and
dangle from torn
ligaments and broken
muscle strings.

Whatever
you are or ever
were or who,
made old or
born new,
embellish,
polish space;
rake up the
summer, loosen
winds,
Plant seeds until
glorious at last
you hang
upside down from
sky's umbilicals.

2. Living

Be blue,
a blue of fathomless,
a spray of far,
a gleam of
absent sunlit
highs and
glittering echoings,
grab the empty
edge of skies,
swing wide,
and plunge
to blanching
presences.

Now write
your hieroglyphs
on snowman's
letterhead,
dictate
your glaciers to
sleeping space,
compose
an orange song
and circle it
with canticles
of blue;
pack up the forest
and consign
its hundred owlsh
eyes to earth
in nailed crates
of night.

Or slide
some measured
two-by-fours
through open window
frames;
then wake the
dreaming dead
and touch
their breath
with stars.

Before you leave,
sweep the blue
sawdust up
into a heap,
and with clean
brushes scatter it—
through a thousand
radiant doors.

3. Dying

Yellow,
who are you
yellow?
Tuwhit tuwhoo
I am I,
yellow and
you are you.

Yellow
you are the
sound's horizons,
its early
orisons unpacked
from vats
of dew.

And yellow,
you are the
golden bar
across
the topmost
star.

You are also
the fertile toad
of the yellow
swollen day,
you are yellow;
the shrunken
pearl of the
loudly yellow
night.

Sanctus–Benedictus (from Mass no.6) György Orbán Hinshaw Music, Inc. HMB223

Born in Romania in 1947, Hungarian composer György Orbán worked for most of his life as Professor of Composition at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest. His Mass No. 6 for treble voices and piano was composed for the prestigious Angelica Girls' Choir of Budapest. A challenging piano accompaniment functions sometimes as support for the chorus and at other times in equal counterpoint with them. Says Orbán: "...the audience will probably hear in this mass my profound appreciation of the choral art of J.S. Bach."

Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth
Pleni sunt caeli, et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus, qui venit
In nomine Domini
Hosanna in excelsis.

*Holy Lord God of hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes
In the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

Solitude Stephen Smith*

Alliance Music Publications, Inc. AMP 1018

Written in 2011, *Solitude* is an original composition by Canadian composer Stephen Smith on an excerpt of a poem by Canadian poet Lorna Crozier (published in *Whetstone*, McClelland & Stewart Ltd, 2005). Rich in imagery and harmony, the piece speaks about darkness and solitude, ending with a testament to music's power to give us the strength to carry on.

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.

Songbird Sarah Quartel*

Oxford University Press

Canadian composer, conductor, and educator Sarah Quartel is known for her fresh and exciting approach to choral music. *Songbird* sets an evocative text describing songbirds that spin tunes of gold. The catchy, colourful melody is first presented by tutti voices, and is then woven through the vocal parts, often to scat accompaniment. The setting ends with an effective passage of close imitation.

Valkyrie Kristopher Fulton*

Soprano saxophone: Albert Juliá

Soloists: Julie Edmundson, Danica Kell, Jillian Schina

Available for purchase from: kristopherfulton.com

Program notes by the composer:

In Norse mythology, a valkyrie is one of a host of female figures who choose those who may die in battle and those who may live. It was the valkyrie who would ultimately bring their chosen to the afterlife hall of the slain, Valhalla. Translated from Old Norse, *valkyrja* means "chooser of the slain". Valkyries appear often in the *Poetic Edda*, a book of poems compiled in the 13th century from many earlier sources, and are described as daughters of royalty, sometimes even accompanied by ravens. It is not hard to imagine then that, looking out over the slain on the field of battle, Norseman would have seen carrion birds circling and diving over their fallen comrades and envisioned that it was indeed these immortal maidens escorting the dead to the heavens.

* denotes Canadian composer or arranger

English translation:

*Then light shone
from Logafell,
and from that radiance
there came bolts of lightning;
wearing helmets
at Himingvani (came the valkyries).
Their byrnies (chainmail tunics) were
drenched in blood;
and rays shone
from their spears.*

*Three times nine maidens;
though one maide foremost rode,
bright, with helmed head.
Their horses shook themselves,
and from their manes there sprang
dew into the deep dales,
hail on the lofty trees,
whence comes fruitfulness to man.
To me all that I saw was hateful.*

The Valley Jane Siberry*, arr. Beth Hanson*
Cypress Choral Music CP 1583

The Valley is Canadian songwriter Jane Siberry's reflection on the 23rd Psalm. It was famously covered by fellow Canadian singer-songwriter K.D. Lang.

I live in the hills,
You live in the valleys,
And all that you know
Are these blackbirds.
You rise every morning
Wondering what in the world will the world bring today?
Will it bring you joy or will it take it away?
And every step you take is guided by
The love of the light on the land
And the blackbird's cry.
You will walk,
You will walk,
You will walk in good company.

*The valley is dark,
The burgeoning holding,
The stillness obscured by their judging.
You walk through the shadows
Uncertain and surely hurting,
Deserted by the blackbirds
And the staccato of the staff,
And though you trust the light
Towards which you wend your way,
Sometimes it feels all that you wanted
Has been taken away.*

* denotes Canadian composer or arranger

You will walk,
You will walk,
You will walk in good company.

I love the best in you;
You love the best in me.
Though it's not always easy,
lovely? Lonely?
We will walk,
We will walk,
We will walk in good company.
The shepherd upright and flowing
You see.

what i want *Stephen Smith**
Rhythmic Trident Music Publishing RTCA-026

Vancouver-born Pat Lowther's stature as a poet reached its peak in the 60s and 70s, when she was co-chair of the League of Canadian Poets and taught creative writing at the University of British Columbia. Her personal life, however, was complicated, and weighed down by poverty, unhappiness, and a destructive marriage. In September 1975, at the age of 40, Lowther was murdered by her husband. *what i want*, a simple plea for light and blessing, was one of the poems in a manuscript she was working on at the time of her death. Stephen Smith's composition was written in 1997 for A Vancouver Women's Chorus to commemorate the victims of the Montreal Massacre, a tragic chapter in Canada's history in which a lone gunman shot and killed 14 women at the École Polytechnique in 1989.

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

Now in its 31st season, Elektra Women's Choir is a passionate advocate for the development of adult women's choral singing.

Our website houses a permanent listing of all music performed in our season concerts. Some listings have comments, texts, translations, publisher links, and short sound files. We invite you to check it out at elektra.ca/repertoire

Every three years, we welcome three visiting women's choirs to our *Tapestry International Celebration of Women's Choirs*. In May 2018, we welcome *Frisches Ei* from Japan, *Gardabaer Women's Choir* from Iceland, and *VOX Femina Los Angeles*. (The next intake of applications will be in 2019 for the May 2021 event – please write to us if your choir would like to be notified when applications open.)

Every year we commission new works. If your choir would like to co-commission with us, please write to us to be notified of upcoming projects.

We are always interested in knowing about the worldwide community of adult women's choral singing. Please reach out any time and tell us about your choir and your activities!

Elektra Women's Choir can be reached at manager@elektra.ca



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WOMEN'S CHOIR
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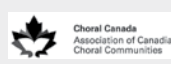
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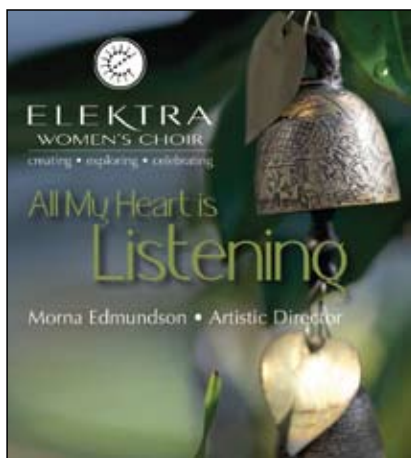
Available at tour concert venues



Songbird: Elektra's Canadian Choral Sound

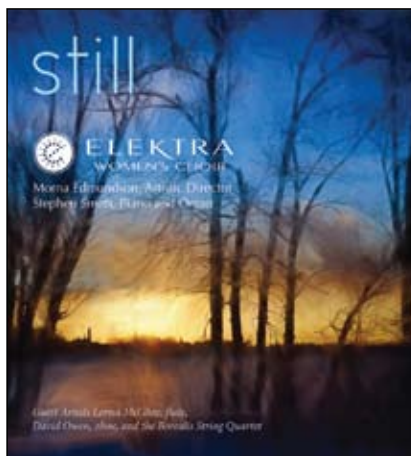
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Solitude (2011) | - Stephen Smith |
| Valkyrie (2015) | - Kristopher Fulton |
| Der 23 Psalm (1820) | - Franz Schubert |
| Cedit Hyems (2003) | - Abbie Betinis |
| Early Spring (2008) | - Trad, arr. Kathleen Allan |
| Songbird (2013) | - Sarah Quartel |
| Sanctus-Benedictus (2000)
<i>(from Mass No. 6)</i> | - György Orbán |
| what i want (1997) | - Stephen Smith |
| Consider the Lilies (2013) | - Stephen Smith |
| The Circle Game (1970/2013) | - Joni Mitchell, arr. Kate MacColl |
| The Parting Glass | - Trad, arr. The Wailin Jennys |

These recent CDs and others available for purchase through elektra.ca/recordings



All My Heart is Listening

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Stars | - Sheldon Rose |
| The Dawn is not Distant | - Christine Donkin |
| Consider the Lilies | - Stephen Smith |
| The Peace of Wild Things | - Joan Szymko |
| Aria | - J.S. Bach, arr Malcolm Edwards |
| How the Blossoms are Falling | - Ramona Luengen |
| Noche de Lluvia | - Sid Robinovitch |
| The Circle Game | - Joni Mitchell, arr. Kate MacColl |
| My Funny Valentine | - Rodgers & Hart, arr. Bjorn Kruse |
| It Was a Lover and His Lass | - Ward Swingle |
| Yellow Twig of Willow | - Stephen Smith |
| If My Love Leaves Me | - Trad, arr. Stephen Smith |
| Two Gaelic Songs: Cronan | - Trad, arr. Stephen Smith |
| Two Gaelic Songs: E mo leannan | - Trad, arr. Stephen Smith |



Still

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Deck the Hall | - arr. John Rutter |
| Tyrley, Tyrlow, | - Mark Sirett |
| Let All Mortal Flesh | - arr. Claybrook |
| Be Still and Consider | - Larry Nickel |
| Misterium Mirabile | - Nicola LeFanu |
| O Magnum Mysterium | - Ivo Antognini |
| Northern Lights | - Ola Gjeilo |
| Infant Holy, Infant Lowly | - Jeff Enns |
| Still, Still, Still | - arr. Ken Berg |
| If You Would Hear the Angels Sing | - Stephen Smith |
| Noël Nouvelet | - arr. Erica Phare |
| Hail Christmas Day | - Abbie Betinis |
| Thou Shalt Know Him | - Mark Sirett |
| Prayer for Peace | - Abbie Betinis |