

the
lost words:
a spell book



ELEKTRA
WOMEN'S CHOIR
creating • exploring • celebrating

Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director
Featuring actor **Laara Sadiq**

October 1 and 2, 2022 • 8:00 pm
Pacific Spirit United Church



Chez Nous:

Christmas with Elektra

November 26 • 7:30 pm
Pacific Spirit United Church
Vancouver

November 27 • 3:00 pm
Good Shepherd Church,
Surrey

elektra.ca/concerts-events



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Kingfisher Cover Art

The Lost Words written by Robert
Macfarlane and Illustrated by
Jackie Morris.

Text © Robert Macfarlane 2017
Illustrations © Jackie Morris 2017

Welcome, friends!

Welcome to a very special concert. Tonight, Elektra, actor **Laara Sadiq** and six players hope to make magic—strong magic created first in a bestselling, illustrated book called ***The Lost Words: A Spell Book*** by author **Robert Macfarlane** and illustrator **Jackie Morris**. I discovered the book about three years ago at the home of **Elaine Stevens**, and was immediately struck by its beauty. As I began to read, I learned that it was a whimsical and evocative response to the fact that, in 2007, the ***Oxford Junior Dictionary***, widely used by children, had replaced 40 words about the natural world with words about the digital one. “Adder” and “willow” had given way to “cut-and-paste” and “voice mail”. It wasn’t the dictionary’s fault. They were reflecting, through their standard selection process, a loss of contact with nature in children’s lives. Written in hope, Robert’s “spells” are meant to conjure back twenty of the lost creatures and plants, and Jackie’s stunning paintings hold the reader spellbound.

In tonight’s concert, which is being video-recorded for future release online, you will hear each spell read by actor **Laara Sadiq**, followed by its short musical setting. Enjoy the different ways each composer envisioned in sound and texture their unique plant or creature. The concert lasts about 85 minutes and there is no intermission. Please hold your applause until the end of the concert.

We are indebted to Robert and Jackie, who responded positively to my enthusiasm for turning their book into a choral work, and to literary agent **Penelope Killick** in London for her strong cooperation over the last three years. Once we had their support, I chose my ten Canadian composers—five women and five men—all people I felt had a sense of play as well as solid choral craft. My sincere thanks to **Carmen, Alex, Katerina, Nicholas, Ramona, Don, Monica, Marie-Claire, Rodney** and **Stephen** for catching the energy of this project and putting so much care into their new works. Please read about them and what attracted them to select their “spells” beginning on page 9. Special thanks to **Stephen Smith** for taking on the role of artistic advisor for this project. I so value his judgement and collegial spirit. To the **Elektra singers**, I am always grateful for your outstanding skill and commitment as we held onto the dream of this project across more than two years of a global pandemic. **Katie Rife**, your help and guidance have been essential. Finally, our sincere thanks to the 20 “Spell Sponsors” — individuals who stepped forward in early days with generous donations to make this project a reality.



*Elektra is privileged to sing and perform on the traditional and unceded territories of three Coast Salish peoples; the **Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh** nations.*

The Lost Words: A Spell Book

Saturday, October 1 and Sunday, October 2, 2022
Pacific Spirit United Church, Vancouver

Elektra Women's Choir, Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director
with **Laara Sadiq**, reader, **Katherine Watson**, flute and piccolo
AK Coope, clarinet and bass clarinet, **Ray Wu**, French horn
Domagoj Ivanovic, violin, **Stefan Hintersteiner**, cello,
Katie Rife, percussion

*Please turn off your cell phones. Please note that photography and videography (other than by Elektra's official photographers) are not permitted during the performance.
At intermission and following the concert, we encourage you to tweet about your experience:
@ElektraYVR!*

Program

Performed without intermission; the concert flows from one lost word to the next.
Please hold your applause until after the conclusion of **Wren**.

Bramble	Nicholas Ryan Kelly
Adder	Rodney Sharman
Bluebell	Rodney Sharman
Acorn	Alex Eddington
Conker	Ramona Luengen
Dandelion	Nicholas Ryan Kelly
Fern	Ramona Luengen
Heather	Carmen Braden
Heron	Katerina Gimon
Ivy	Katerina Gimon
Kingfisher	Marie-Claire Saindon
Lark	Carmen Braden
Magpie	Alex Eddington
Newt	Stephen Smith
Otter	Monica Pearce
Raven	Don Macdonald
Starling	Stephen Smith
Weasel	Marie-Claire Saindon
Willow	Monica Pearce
Wren	Don Macdonald



ELEKTRA
WOMEN'S CHOIR

Morna Edmundson,
Artistic Director

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**, Elektra is known for adventurous programming, seeking out music written specifically for women and frequently commissioning new works. The choir is honoured to work with an outstanding pianist, **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 90 compositions and arrangements. The choir's recordings on iTunes and CD Baby extend the reach of its repertoire internationally. Elektra's 17th CD, **Fire Flowers**, was released in August of 2020. Elektra's website offers a permanent repertoire resource featuring all works programmed by the choir to date. Elektra's celebrated **sINGSPIRE** community engagement 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**, as well as the **International Federation for Choral Music**, where it appeared at the **World Symposium on Choral Music** in Sydney (1996) and Barcelona (2017). In the summer of 2018, Elektra was one of five choirs from across the country to perform in "...float...", Choral Canada's unique, outdoor immersive performance experience, funded by the **Canada Council's New Chapter** program. In December 2020, Elektra partnered with **WomenSing** from the Bay Area in California, to produce **The Light of Hope Returning** digital performance on **YouTube**, which had almost 12,000 views during its two-week limited run.

In June 2022, Elektra released a video, **Snewiyalh tl'a Stakw (Teachings of the Water)**, with a score commissioned from Canadian composer **T. Patrick Carrabré**. This 3-year-long collaborative project with **Coast Salish First Nations** was conceived by Co-Curator and ethnomusicologist, **Dr. Jeanette Gallant**, and is a musical exploration of water teachings in First Nations cultures.

Soprano 1

Julie Edmundson, Danica Kell, Holly Kennedy, Cassie Luftspring,
Janine Magaw*, Rachel Nelson, Janet Pritchard, Jillian Schina, Anna Turunen

Soprano 2

Bonnie Arthur, Ann Busay, Sophia Fan, Katrin Lohuaru, Sharon Schermbrucker,
Kim Taylor*, Allison Tremblay, Anisha Varghese

Alto 1

Grace Groot*, Kirstin Hain, Shelley Koke, Sheila Little, Stephanie Loo,
Alison Stillwell, Patty Wagner, Brenda Wilson

Alto 2

Stephanie Stephenson, Stephanie Ching, Maureen Ciarniello, Elisabeth Finch,
Corinne Norbraten, Caitlin Robinson*, Deirdre Rogers, Stephanie Schollen, Rosemary Speakman

* Section Leaders

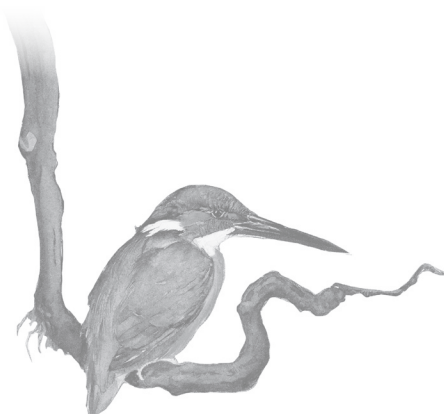
MORNA EDMUNDSON, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

photo: David Cooper



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. In addition to her work with Elektra, Morna is the Artistic Director of **EnChor**, a Vancouver-based, auditioned, mixed choir for mature voices. 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 **Willan Council**. 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 June 2011 Morna received a Vancouver **YWCA Woman of Distinction Award** in recognition of her work with Elektra. From 2013-2022, she served as a Board member of **Chorus America**, the advocacy, research, and leadership development organization that gives voice to the choral field. She currently serves **Choral Canada** as its President. mornaedmundson.com



LAARA SADIQ, READER



Laara Sadiq is an award-winning actor/writer/director, working extensively in theatre, film, TV and voice-over. She holds a BFA from the **University of British Columbia**, on unceded Musqueam Territory. Ms. Sadiq has appeared on stages across the country, notably: **The Electric Company, The Arts Club, Bard on the Beach, Touchstone Theatre, Newworld Theatre, Caravan Farm Theatre, The Vancouver Playhouse, Theatre Calgary, National Arts Centre, Canadian Stage Company, Tarragon Theatre, and Nightwood Theatre**. Recent film/TV highlights include **The Hardy Boys, Chesapeake Shores, Virgin River, Maid, Yellowjackets, Arrow, Family Law, Heartland, 12 Hours,**

and **Send the Rain**. Her voice-over work includes cartoons, radio, audiobooks, immersive sound walks and animated features. Ms. Sadiq's upcoming projects include **HAGMOUTH** (currently in development with the support of the **Canada Council for the Arts**), **An Unidentified Sound** (**Electric Company Theatre**/world premiere 2023). In addition to her work as an artist, Ms. Sadiq is a Mama, urban farmer, beekeeper, and curator of **Lovebowl**, a long-table community dinner series. laarasadiq.com

GUEST ARTISTS

AK COOPE, CLARINET AND BASS CLARINET

AK performs with an eclectic array of ensembles, including the **Vancouver Symphony Orchestra**, **Vancouver Opera Orchestra**, and **Vancouver New Music Ensemble**, among others, and has played concerts across the globe. She is a long-time member of Juno-nominated contemporary chamber music ensemble **Standing Wave**, of **Turning Point Ensemble**, and Victoria's **Aventa Ensemble**. AK is also a founding member of both the **Ad Mare Wind Quintet** and **Cascadia Reed Quintet**, and has enjoyed many musical adventures, from **Couperin** to the **Cutting-Edge**, with both groups. On the video front, she is thrilled to have been a part of **Marcus Goddard's *Antarctica: Life Emerging***, and to have been able to contribute a solo work (*Leaning*) to the **Canadian Music Centre BC Chapter's *Unaccompanied*** series in July 2021.

STEFAN HINTERSTEININGER, CELLO

Stefan Hintersteiner is a Vancouver-based cellist, educator, composer, and arranger, equally at home in a vast range of different musical styles. Stefan is a regular extra player with the **Vancouver Symphony Orchestra** and **Vancouver Opera Orchestra**, as well as many freelance projects. For many years, he was also a member of **Erato Ensemble** and **Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra**, as well as being a founding member of Vancouver's cutting-edge improvising new music sextet, **Ethos Collective**. A new music specialist, Stefan has worked extensively with **Vancouver New Music**, **Turning Point Ensemble**, **Vancouver Pro Musica**, and **City Opera Vancouver**.

DOMAGOJ IVANOVIC, VIOLIN

Originally from Zagreb, Croatia, Mr. Ivanovic moved to Canada in 2007 after graduating with a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Violin Performance at the **University of Miami**, where he was a Teaching Assistant, and served as the Assistant Concertmaster for the **Miami Symphony Orchestra**. Currently he is a member of the **Turning Point Ensemble** and **Vancouver Opera Orchestra**, as well as the Co-Head of Violin Department at the **Vancouver Academy of Music** and Co-Director of **Vancouver Chamber Players**. Described as a player with "clear technique and great sensitivity", he has performed all over Europe, North America as well as China, Taiwan and Singapore.

KATIE RIFE, PERCUSSION

Percussionist Katie Rife is a dynamic performer of classical and new music. Based in Vancouver and active throughout BC, Katie is the principal percussionist of the **Okanagan Symphony Orchestra** and has performed in numerous concerts with the **Vancouver Symphony Orchestra**, **Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra**, **Redshift Music Society**, **Music on Main**, and **Chor Leoni**, among others. She holds a Masters of Music from the **San Francisco Conservatory of Music** and a Bachelors of Music in Percussion Performance from the **University of British Columbia**.

KATHERINE WATSON, FLUTE / PICCOLO

Katherine Watson is an acclaimed Canadian musician that currently lives in Vancouver. Before moving to Vancouver in 2021, Katherine established herself as one of Toronto/s emerging classical/orchestral/contemporary flutists. She has premiered dozens of new compositions written for flute and piccolo, and has performed with the **Vancouver Symphony**, the **Victoria Symphony**, **London Symphonia**, the **Kingston Symphony**, **Niagara Symphony**, and Toronto-based flute quintet **Charm of Finches**. She has appeared on stage with great musical groups such as **Il Divo**, **Josh Groban**, and **Sarah Brightman**. When not performing or teaching music lessons, Katherine can be found lacing up for running races around Vancouver.

ZHANGLONG (RAY) WU, FRENCH HORN

Zhanglong (Ray) Wu is an enthusiastic freelance horn player based in Vancouver. An active and avid chamber musician, Ray has collaborated with groups of all sizes and instrumentation throughout western BC and Boston. He has performed with the **Vancouver Symphony Orchestra**, **Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra**, **Vancouver Opera**, **Boston Philharmonic Orchestra (USA)**, and **Fujian Symphony Orchestra (China)**, among others. As a soloist, Ray is a frequent recitalist, and was featured with the **Quanzhou Symphony Orchestra** in 2016 in a performance of the ***Horn Concerto Op. 91*** by **Reinhold Glière**. Ray holds a Graduated Performance Diploma in French horn performance from the **Boston Conservatory at Berklee** and a Master of Music (Horn Performance) Degree from the **University of British Columbia**.



SINGSPIRE
ELEKTRA WOMEN'S CHOIR
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Elektra is proud to offer a suite of **sINGSPIRE** programs that support, encourage, and educate the choral community. Elektra's programs take place in people-focused, artistically-rich environments in which to learn and grow.

Help us spread the word to the singing-loving people in your life.

FOR YOUNG SINGERS

Mira Youth Mentorship Program—a mentoring program for individual, experienced sopranos and altos in their final years of high school. Sing with Elektra January 30–March 10, 2023.

Application deadline: December 10

Youth Scholarship—an annual \$500 scholarship is awarded to support a young musician aged 15-20 in their musical development.

Application deadline: February 28

FOR HIGH SCHOOL CHOIRS

Each year, Elektra designates one lucky high school treble choir as its **Diane Loomer Choir**. Honouring the nurturing spirit of Elektra's Co-Founder/Conductor of 22 years, this program is all about encouragement, sharing, and learning.

FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CHOIRS

Elektra's annual Choral Encounters (formerly Choral Leadership Workshop) is one of our most popular and diverse events. Up to six guest treble choirs from high school to adult join Elektra in a safe and non-competitive evening of singing, learning and laughter.

Applications open now until space filled.

FOR COMPOSERS

An important part of Elektra's mandate is to encourage the creation of new works for classically-based women's choirs. Welcoming three composers, our next **Reading Session of New Compositions** is on **Monday, March 27, 2023.**

Application deadline: February 27

ALL WELCOME

Under the guidance of ethnomusicologist **Dr. Jeanette Gallant**, Elektra's free, online **Cultural Conversations** build networks and open fruitful conversation around respectful, informed, and inclusive cross-cultural collaboration in our community. The next is a discussion of Elektra's ***Snewiyalh tl'a Staḵw (Teachings of the Water)*** video project.

Watch our website for details.

COMPOSERS

Carmen Braden, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories (Heather and Lark)

Carmen Braden is an emerging force in the world of new music, hailing proudly from Yellowknife NWT. Her contemporary classical compositions are nationally recognized, including multiple WCMA nominations, commissions and performances by the **Toronto Symphony Orchestra**, **James Ehnes** and the **Gryphon Trio**. Her choral compositions have been performed from coast-to-coast-to-coast with choirs including the **Canadian Chamber Choir**, the **Elmer Iseler Singers**, **Luminous Voices**, **Spiritus Chamber Choir**, **Aurora Choralis**, **Eastern Horizon**, **Vancouver Chamber Choir**, and the **Whitehorse Community Choir**. Her compositions have been called “drop-dead gorgeous” (*Ottawa Citizen*), she has been called an “acoustic ambassador of the Canadian Subarctic” (*Musicworks*) and her songwriting described as “quirky and clever...à la Joni Mitchell.” carmenbraden.com

I dug into the sounds of the words themselves for Heather—the softness of the “h” and the “th” consonants, the gentle vowels, sounded as gentle and scratchy as the heather itself. And as the poem goes on to list some of the other fantastic-sounding plant names that all make up the moorlands, it becomes almost a tongue-twister of a journey for the singers, just like exploring a landscape.

I was captivated by this imagining of the Lark as a little astronaut heading out into space, singing its song in the company of exploding suns. It brings to mind how the power of small sounds, small words, things that seem small at first glance can have a real strength, and sometimes be the thing that reaches farthest and deepest into the unknown.

Alex Eddington, Toronto, Ontario (Acorn and Magpie)

Alex Eddington's music has been commissioned, performed and recorded by a diverse list of musicians including the **Toronto Symphony Orchestra**, **Scarborough Philharmonic**, **Mississauga Symphony**, **Continuum Contemporary Music**, **Toronto Consort**, **Odin String Quartet**, **Phoenix Chamber Choir**, **Viva Singers** and **Chronos Vocal Ensemble**. His many pieces for young and community musicians include *Living Soul* for the **Suzuki String School of Guelph**. Alex's music has been recorded and released worldwide on the **Cambria** label. In 2021, Alex released *A Present From a Small Distant World*, an album showcasing nearly 20 years of collaboration with soprano **Kristin Mueller-Heaslip**, on **Redshift Records**. alexeddington.com

I love the rhythm and shape of the spells, but Acorn in particular makes a flurry of parts becoming larger wholes—as though the growth of an oak tree happens over a thrilling couple of minutes

Magpies were my joy when I lived in Edmonton, and this spell captures their personality in a bold manifesto—I enjoy setting text with clear characters like this.

Katerina Gimon, Vancouver, British Columbia (Heron and Ivy)

Vancouver-based composer Katerina Gimon's uniquely dynamic, poignant, and eclectic compositional style is rapidly gaining her a reputation as a distinctive voice in contemporary Canadian composition and beyond. Her music has been described as “sheer radiance” (*Campbell River Mirror*), “imbued...with human emotion” (*San Diego Story*), and capable of taking listeners on a “fascinating journey of textural discovery” (*Ludwig Van*), earning her several honours including two **SOCAN Awards** (2016, 2021), nomination for **Western Canadian Composer of the Year** (2021), and a **Barbara Pentland Award for Outstanding Composition** (2022). Her works are performed widely in Canada, the United States, and internationally. katerinagimon.com

Heron beautifully captures the regality, tranquility, and power of this majestic bird. The poem's use of alliteration, repetition, rhythm, and clever wordplay are some of my favourite features and aid in carefully depicting the meditative stillness and eventual sudden flight of the heron.

Although this is one of the shorter spells in this collection, I was immediately drawn in by the poem's very playful tone and its personification of ivy (“I am ivy”). Musically, I was interested in exploring how the “voice” of ivy might sound twisting and climbing up higher and higher.

Nicholas Ryan Kelly, Penticton, British Columbia (Bramble and Dandelion)

Commended by the **Vancouver Sun** for his “sophisticated work of such immediate, glittery appeal,” Nicholas Ryan Kelly writes lyrical, cinematic music for choirs and wind bands throughout North

America. Since 2016, he has won over 20 national and international awards for wind ensemble and choral writing, including the **Edwin Fissinger Choral Composition Prize** and the **Canadian Band Association's Howard Cable Composition Prize**. nicholasryankelly.com

I love to create music that explores contrasts, so the duality between bramble as an invasive, thorny nuisance and a bearer of sweet, nourishing berries appealed to me. The music builds in complexity and intensity—as the bramble grows thicker—culminating in a surprising moment of lyricism and tranquility when the berries are revealed at the end.

My childhood home bordered on the field of an old farm, which would turn gold every year with dandelions. I used this musical setting to bring to life the sense of wonder a child might experience when blowing a dandelion's seeds into the wind, and to revive this sense of awe at the commonplace.

Ramona Luengen, Burmaby, British Columbia (Conker and Fern)

Dr. Ramona Luengen has composed extensively in the choral genre. Her works have been performed in North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, and have been broadcast on CBC, BBC and the national radio stations of Denmark, Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands, Sweden and Spain. Ramona's opera for young audiences, **Naomi's Road**, has received over 350 performances in North America. Her **Stabat Mater**, premiered by **Elektra Women's Choir**, was awarded 'Outstanding Choral Composition' and 'Choral Event of the Year' by the **Canadian Association of Choral Conductors**. In addition to composing, Ramona is respected for her work as conductor and educator. ramonaluengen.com

Although all the spells are uniquely enticing, I was attracted to Conker firstly (and simply) because of the noise they make as they fall to the ground. How can this be translated via music relying on the magical capabilities of the human voice? Furthermore, there is a significant second element to this spell—a fabulous little story which quite naturally sets the scene for a modern fairytale being read aloud. What a perfect combination for inspiration!

I was attracted to Fern for several reasons, including the author's marvellous use of alliteration and the tightly-wrought, almost stark, writing. I was, however, most intrigued by how active, visual words such as rolling, unfolding, flaring and fanning could be transformed and demonstrated chorally.

Don Macdonald, Nelson, British Columbia (Raven and Wren)

Don Macdonald is an award-winning composer of film and concert music and he has an eclectic musical background as a performer, educator, and conductor. Don has been active as a choral singer since a very young age and as a result, many of his works use voice in some way. Highlights include the 2-hour opera **Khaos, Tabula Rasa**, (winner of the **Da Capo Chamber Choir New Works Competition**), and **Fire-Flowers** (a seven-movement suite of choral works commissioned by the **University of Western Ontario Women's Choir**). Don lives in Nelson, BC and teaches at the **Selkirk College Contemporary Music and Technology Program**. donmacdonaldmusic.com

Raven is certainly one of the darkest and most cunning creatures in the book and I was drawn to the opportunity of writing a piece that explores these traits. I also wanted to choose a piece that could use most of the instruments at our disposal and Raven, due to it being one of the lengthier pieces in the book, seemed like it could benefit from the full ensemble.

I chose Wren because it's one of the fastest creatures in the book and the instruments chosen for our ensemble are mostly very agile. It was interesting for me during the creative process to have a mood which is in stark contrast to my other selection.

Monica Pearce, Montreal, Quebec; Brownsville, Texas (Otter and Willow)

Monica Pearce is an arts administrator, concert presenter, and composer specializing in opera, chamber music and everything toy-piano-related. Pearce's work has been performed by numerous orchestras and ensembles across North America, including the **Toronto Symphony Orchestra**, the **Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal**, **International Contemporary Ensemble**, **Array Ensemble**, and **Essential Opera**. She was born in Prince Edward Island, began her professional career in Toronto, and recently relocated to Brownsville, Texas. Her operas have been performed across Canada and the United States. She is active as a librettist and has worked with composer **Cecilia Livingston** on a Dora-nominated opera on the life of **Anne Frank** entitled **Singing Only Softly**. monicapearce.com

The text for “Otter” is playful, sneaky and filled to the brim with near rhythms; its tone has the same constantly moving, slippery energy of a young otter falling in love with water.

The secretive, mysterious words of “Willow”, conjures all hushed tones and listening for the smallest sounds. It also brought up memories of growing up, and reading books about characters reading by a willow tree—while sitting under a regular maple tree.

Marie-Claire Saindon, Montreal, Quebec (Kingfisher and Weasel)

Marie-Claire Saindon is a Franco-Ontarian choral composer with a penchant for vivid imagery and a great affinity for setting text. Her experience while studying music at **McGill University** and **Université de Montréal** ranges from accompanying dancers, to scoring films, to fiddling in a team of folk musicians on a historical steam train. Based in Montreal as composer-in-residence for **Choeur Adleisia**, she runs creative choral/vocal composition workshops, scores films, and teaches fiddle. Recipient of multiple composition prizes, her choral works are published with **Boosey & Hawkes, Hal Leonard, Cypress Choral Music, Earthsongs Choral Music, and Alliance Music Publications. marieclairesaindon.com**

What attracted me to Kingfisher is how the majority of the text lists many rhythmically similar names for the bird: it really does feel like a quick-paced, percussive, energetic spell to call that colourful little flash of a bird to life!

Weasel: it curls, it whirls, and it sparks—this short, alliterate, and active little spell invokes the image of a spinning weasel to life as a flame. It reminds me that fire can be so much fun to conjure through music too, and I hope I’ve done it justice!

Rodney Sharman, Vancouver, British Columbia (Adder and Bluebell)

Rodney Sharman lives on traditional Musqueam territory in Vancouver, Canada. He is the **Victoria Symphony’s** Composer-Mentor-in-Residence, and has been Composer-in-Residence of **Early Music Vancouver’s New Music for Old Instruments, Victoria Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, National Youth Orchestra of Canada**, and Composer-Host of **Calgary Philharmonic’s Festival, Hear and Now**. In addition to concert music, Sharman writes for cabaret, opera and dance. He sings, conducts, plays recorders and flutes. Sharman was awarded First Prize in the **CBC Competition for Young Composers, Kranichsteiner Music Prize** (Darmstadt), **Dora Mavor Moore Award** (Toronto), and the **Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts. rodneysharman.com**

I chose Bluebell for the beauty of the language and imagery. The text immediately conjured ideas of how I may transform vocal colours and harmonies through layering and sonic after-images.

Adder is a more sibilant incantation, evoking a more repetitive, rhythmic setting, ornamented with percussive sound.

Stephen Smith, Vancouver, British Columbia (Newt and Starling)

Stephen grew up in rural Nova Scotia, but has lived in urban wildernesses since 1987, spending three years studying in Manchester, England before becoming a Vancouverite in 1990. Since 2001 he has had the pleasure of being the pianist for **Elektra Women’s Choir**, and he has also been fortunate to have had Elektra perform and record many of his arrangements and compositions over the years. He is particularly pleased to be participating in this project, as it involves three things he loves: music, of course, but also the English language (the senses, sounds, and rhythms of its words), and nature—especially the hundreds of birds and wildflowers his grandmother taught him to identify as he was growing up in rural Nova Scotia! **stephensmith.musicaneo.com**

Newt is a brief dialogue between two animals—a coot (which is described as “emoting” its lines) and the spell’s eponymous amphibian (which is said to “roar” its reply!). Finding a suitable way for the choir and instruments to represent these two peculiar characters was an interesting challenge!

Starling vividly describes its subject’s iridescent feathers, chattering song, jet-black eyes, and flight behaviour. And it does so in such a way (using multiple compound adjectives to propel the tempo, and a plethora of percussive consonants to create a cacophonous effect) that it actually mimics a starling’s voluble and varied vocalizations.

SPONSORS

This project would not have been possible without the generous support of our “Spell Sponsors”, to whom Elektra is deeply grateful.

Joanie Anderson (*Raven*)

Maureen Ciarniello (*Heather*)

Rosalyn Clark (*Dandelion*)

Elisabeth and David Finch (*Bluebell*)

Dr. Jeanette Gallant (*Ivy*)

Karen Gilmore and Rob Van Nus (*Acorn*)

Don Harder and Laurie Townsend (*Conker*)

James Henderson and Jocelyn Godolphin (*Bramble*)

Martha Lou Henley (*Newt*)

Paul Knickerbocker and Sharon Hayles (*Heron*)

Myrna Kozier (*Lark*)

Margaret Mason (*Otter*)

Nancy and Peter Mortifee (*Starling*)

Garth, Corinne, and Erik Norbraten (*Wren*)

Jill Purdy (*Fern*)

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ELEKTRA
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Holly Winter, Projection Operator | Mike Southworth, Collide Entertainment, Videographer
Joanna Dundas, Collide Entertainment, Producer | Don Harder, Audio Recording Engineer
Grant Rowledge, Audio Recording Producer | Elaine Stevens, Venue Décor

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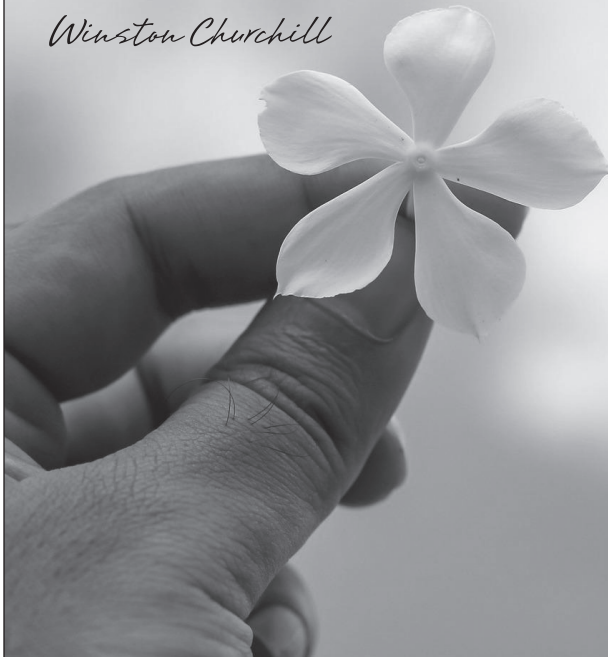
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We make a life by what we give.*

Winston Churchill



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VANCOUVER CHAMBER CHOIR

2022 / 23 SEASON

**SEA
PSALM**

with Stephen Smith, organ

Friday, September 23, 2022
7:30pm
Pacific Spirit United Church

www.vancouverchamberchoir.com

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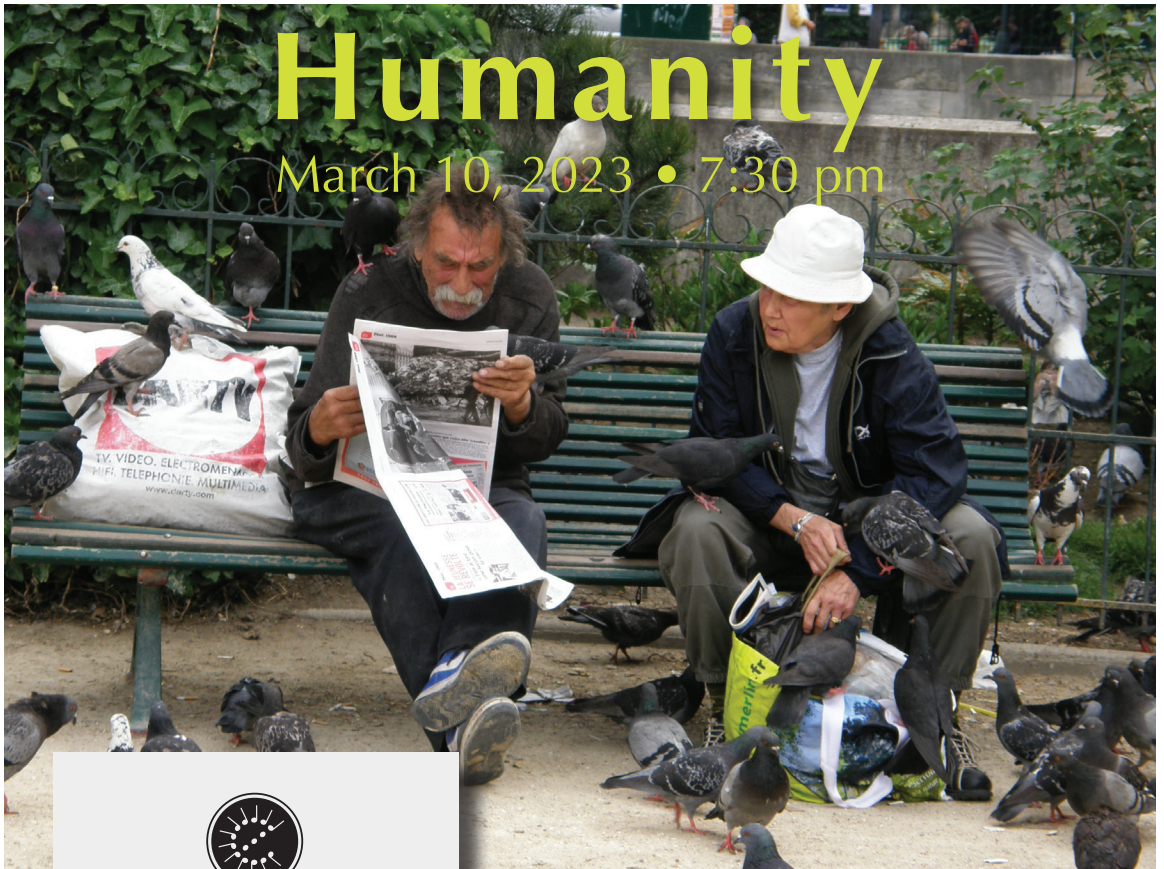
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