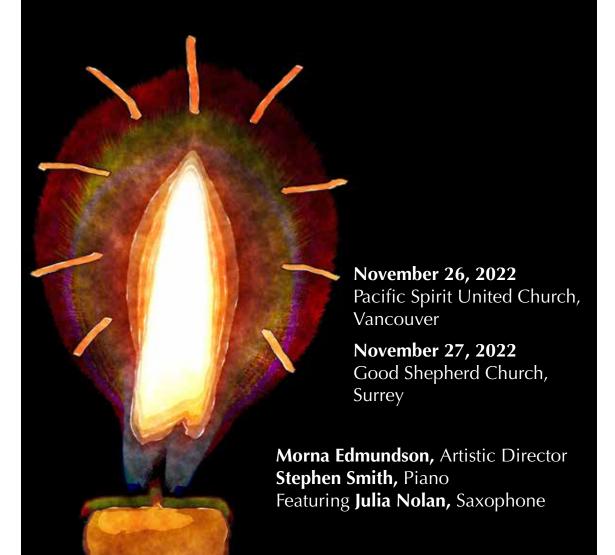


# Ches Nous: Christmas with Elektra







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# Seasons greetings to all!

Thank you so much for joining us today as we sing music both old and new in celebration of Christmas. This is choral music with deep roots—likely the first choral sounds many of us heard. Most choristers will tell you they would happily sing Christmas music at any time of year. It connects us to places, generations, choirs and singers past, to ancient and mysterious texts, and to words and melodies we perhaps didn't realize we knew by heart.

Our program today starts and ends with famous texts in praise of Mary, the mother of Christ. References to her as a noble and singular rose are centuries old. Canadian composer **Kathryn Parrotta's** setting of **There is No Rose** is newly-composed but the words may be familiar to you. **Benjamin Britten** also set them in his famous suite, **A Ceremony of Carols**. The mixture of English and Latin words is one of the enduring appeals of this text. Stephen Smith's energetic piece **The Time of Christëmas** exhorts us to sing. And **Larry Nickel's** beautiful **Be Still and Consider** evokes thoughtful consideration of the story we know so well. It also allows us to introduce you to our guest artist, saxophonist **Julia Nolan**, a favourite collaborator of Elektra's over many years.

The last four pieces in the first half are arrangements of traditional carols. Singer and composer **Winnie Brückner** hails from Berlin. Her a cappella *O Jesus, Sweet Child* (originally *O Jesulein Zart*) is playful and rhythmic. The Spanish carol, *Ríu, ríu, chíu*, recorded by **The King's Singers** and even **The Monkees**, is a contender for the best-known piece of Renaissance music. Please sing along with us as we close the first half with *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas*.

After intermission, composer **Abbie Betinis** continues her great-grandfather's tradition of sending an original composition as his Christmas card with *Hail, Christmas Day*! Hers are featured each year on **Minnesota Public Radio**. **Christian Bährens'** beautiful *O Nata Lux* reminds us of how easily ancient words and the rise and fall of chant-like melodies, even ones written recently, coexist. And **Don Macdonald's** *Winter Sun* is like a vibrant, winter day. **Stephen Smith** and **Julia Nolan** partner for two distinct pieces: *Molto Tranquillo* features an obbligato line over an existing **Bach** keyboard work and *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* is one of the most enduring carol melodies ever. Our closing set ensures you will leave us with a song in your heart.

Again, thank you for allowing us to share our passion for choral music with you today. We hope to see you again soon.

Moma

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.

# **Chez Nous: Christmas with Elektra**

Saturday, November 26 and Sunday, November 27, 2022

Pacific Spirit United Church, Vancouver Good Shepherd Church, Surrey

Elektra Women's Choir, Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director Stephen Smith, piano | Julia Nolan, saxophone | Yefeng Yin, bass

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**

There is No Rose

There is No RoseRatiliyii Failotta		
The Time of Christëmas traditional English words, music by Stephen Smith		
Be Still and Consider		
O Jesus, Sweet Childtraditional German carol, arr. Winnie Brückner Soloist: Danica Kell		
Sussex Caroltraditional English carol, arr. David Willcocks		
Ríu, Ríu, Chíutraditional Spanish carol, arr. Erica Phare-Bergh Soloists: Stephanie Ching (Saturday), Janelle Claudio (Sunday)		
Three in White: A Suite of Songs About Snow		
Winter Wonderland by Felix Bernard and Richard Smith; Let it Snow by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne; White Christmas by Irving Berlin. arr. Stephen Smith		
Please sing with us when we get to 'White Christmas', lyrics on page 7		

# Intermission

Hail, Christmas Day!	poem by John Harris Burt, music by Abbie Betinis	
O Nata Luxtraditional Latin text, Christian Bährens Soloist: Stephanie Loo		
Winter Sun	poem by Malca Litovitz, Don Macdonald	
Molto Tranquillo	Bach's <i>Prelude in C-sharp major (WTC II)</i> countermelody by Stephen Smith	

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel Anon. 15th century, arr. by Lawrence Underwood		
Yorkshire Wassail	traditional English, arr. Stephen Smith	
I'll Be Home for Christmaswo	ords by Kim Gannon, music by Walter Kent, arr. Mark Hayes	
Soloist: Danica Kell		
Still, Still, Still	•	
Lo, How a RoseTra	ditional German carol, arr. Shawn Kirchner	

#### THERE IS NO ROSE

There is no rose of such virtue as is the rose that bare Jesu. For in this rose contained was heaven and earth in little space. Alleluia. Res miranda (wonderful thing).

By that rose we may well see there be one God in persons three.

The angels sungen the shepherds to, "Gloria in excelsis Deo!" (Glory to God in the highest).

Pari forma (of the same form). Gaudeamus (Let us rejoice).

Leave we all this worldly mirth and follow we this joyful birth.

Alleluia. Res miranda. Pari forma, Gaudeamus. Transeamus (Let us go).

# THE TIME OF CHRISTËMAS

Let no one come into this hall, Be ye groom, page, nor yet marshall, But that a song ye bring withal, For now is the time of Christëmas.

If that ye say ye cannot sing, Some other sport then shall ye bring, That it may please at this feasting, For now is the time of Christëmas. If neither sport nor song ye know, Then we shall ask no more, I trow, But to the stocks then shall ye go, For now is the time of Christëmas.

# **BE STILL AND CONSIDER**

Who holds the dust of the earth in a basket? Who weighs the mighty hills in a balance? Lift your eyes, look to the heavens. Who created all these?

Be still. Consider the wonders of God. Lift up your eyes, look to the heavens. Who created all these?

He who measured out the ocean in the hollow of His hand. He who beckons out the starry host and calls each one by name.

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

For God so loved the world that he gave His Son and whosoever believes in Him will have eternal life.

He who measured out the ocean in the hollow of His hand.
Born to Virgin Mary, the Lord became a man. He who beckons out the starry host and calls each one by name.
Came to offer us abundant life, His love is ours today.

Be still, be still. Consider the wonders of God. Be still.

4

Kathryn Parrotta

# O JESUS, SWEET CHILD

O Jesus, sweet child, how hard is your bed, O Jesus, sweet child, for your tender head! Sleep now, oh close your eyes in peace, and grant us, in you, blessed release. Child Jesus, so sweet, we lie at your feet.

Winds, gentle and mild, disturb not the child! All storming must cease, your Lord is at peace! Sleep, child, oh close your eyes in peace, and grant us, in you, blessed release. Winds, gentle and mild, disturb not the child! With peace all around, no movement or sound the silence will break; the child will not wake. Sleep then, and close your eyes in peace, and grant us, in you, blessed release. And may the Lord keep you safe in sweet sleep.

# SUSSEX CAROL

On Christmas night all Christians sing To hear the news the angels bring. News of great joy, news of great mirth, News of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should we on earth be so sad Since our Redeemer made us glad? When from our sin he set us free, All for to gain our liberty?

# RÍU RÍU CHÍU

Ríu, ríu Chíu, la guarda ribera Dios guardó el lobo de nuestra cordera.

Este quí'es nacido es El Gran Monarca Cristo patriarca de carne vestido. Hanos redimido con se hacer chiquito Aunque infinito, finito se hiciera.

Muchas profecías lo han profetizado, Y aún en nuestros días lo hemos alcanzado. A Dios humanado vemos en el suelo, Y al hombre nel cielo porqu'er le quisiera.

Este viene a dar a los muertos vida. Y viene a reparar de todos la caida. Es la luz del día aqueste mocuelo; Este es el cordero que San Juan dixera. When sin departs before his grace Then life and health come in its place Angels and all with joy may sing All for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light Which made the angels sing this night: "Glory to God and peace to men, Now and forevermore, Amen."

River, roaring river, guard our homes in safety As God kept the wolf from our lamb.

The one who is born is the Great Monarch, Christ the Patriarch, clothed in flesh. He has redeemed us by making himself small Though he was infinite, He became finite.

Many a prophecy told of his coming, and now in our days we have seen them fulfilled. God became man, on earth we behold him, and see man in heaven because He so willed.

He comes to give life to the dead. He comes to redeem the fall of man. This child is the light of day; He is the very lamb St. John prophesied.

# THREE IN WHITE: A SUITE OF SONGS ABOUT SNOW

# Winter Wonderland

Over the ground lies a mantle of white,
A heaven of diamonds
shines down through the night.
Two hearts are thrillin'
in spite of the chill in the weather.
Love knows no season, love knows no clime,
Romance can blossom any old time.
Here in the open we're
walkin' and hopin' together.

Sleigh bells ring, are you list'nin'? In the lane, snow is glist'nin'. A beautiful sight, we're happy tonight Walkin' in a winter wonderland. Gone away is the bluebird, Here to stay is a new bird. He sings a love song as we go along, Walkin' in a winter wonderland.

In the meadow, we can build a snowman, And pretend that he is Parson Brown. He'll say, "Are you married?" We'll say, "No, man But you can do the job when you're in town."

Later on, we'll conspire
As we dream by the fire
To face unafraid
The plans that we've made
Walkin' in a winter wonderland.

# Let It Snow

Oh the weather outside is frightful, But the fire is so delightful, And since we've no place to go, Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow.

Oh it doesn't show signs of stopping, And I've brought some corn for popping. The lights are turned way down low Let it snow, let it snow. When we finally kiss goodnight How I hate going out in the storm. But if you really hold me tight, All the way home I'll be warm.

Oh the fire is slowly dying, And, my dear, we're still goodbying But as long as you love me so, Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow.

# Please join us in singing...

# I'm dreaming of a white Christmas

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
Just like the ones I used to know,
Where the tree tops glisten
And children listen
To hear sleigh bells in the snow.
I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
With every Christmas card I write.
May your days be merry and bright
And may all your Christmases be white.

Interlude

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas With every Christmas card I write. May your days be merry and bright And may all your Christmases be white.

# HAIL, CHRISTMAS DAY!

Hail, Christmas Day that brings the story Echoed forth from East to West, Unto us God comes in glory, Hodie, Jesu Natus Est! (Today Jesus is born)

All over Bethlehem hills a-singing, Down through centuries to our day: Peace, good will, and love he's bringing, Gloria tibi, Domine. (Glory to you, o Lord)

# O NATA LUX

O nata lux de lumine, Jesu redemptor saeculi, Dignare clemens supplicum Laudes precesque sumere.

Qui carne quondam contegi Dignatus es pro perditis, Nos membra confer effici Tui beati sumere.

# **WINTER SUN**

To light,
to water,
and the flow of birds
through ancient stars.
To the wild sun of winter
startling the dark green
trees: giants
of majestic silence.

What does this birth to us betoken? Can he save from fear and doom? This have saints and prophets spoken, Christus redemptor omnium. (Christ, the redeemer of all)

So, all good people, let's be giving Praise and offerings profuse Unto Christ, the Lord of Living, Adeste fidelis, gaudeamus! (All ye faithful, rejoice)

O Light born of Light, Jesus, redeemer of the world, with loving-kindness deign to receive suppliant praise and prayer.

Thou who once deigned to be clothed in flesh for the sake of the lost, grant us to be members of thy blessed body.

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To snow on roofs and the peace of Sunday. To quiet and certitude, to breathing, to air. To acceptance, to dreams. To disclosures of the sleeping heart, for air, for light.

# YORKSHIRE WASSAIL

We've been the while a-wandering Among the leaves so green, And now we come a-wassailing So plainly to be seen.

For 'tis Christmas time, And we travel far and near. May God bless you and send you A happy new year.

We are not daily beggars that beg from door to door. We are your neighbours' children Whom you have seen before.

Good master and good mistress While you're sitting by the fire, Pray think of us poor children A-wand'ring in the mire.

# I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

I'm dreaming tonight of a place I love, Even more than I usually do. And although I know it's a long road back, I promise you...

I'll be home for Christmas. You can plan on me. Please have snow and mistletoe And presents on the tree Christmas Eve will find me Where the love light gleams. I'll be home for Christmas If only in my dreams.

We have a little purse Made of stretching leather skin. A little of your money Would line it well within.

Pray bring us out a table And spread it with a cloth. And bring us out some mouldy cheese And some of your Christmas loaf.

God bless the master of this house. Likewise the mistress too, And all the little children That round the table go.

# STILL, STILL, STILL

Still. still. still. One can hear the falling snow. For all is hushed, The world is sleeping. Holy Star its vigil keeping. Still, still, still, One can hear the falling snow.

Sleep, sleep, sleep, 'Tis the eve of our Saviour's birth. The night is peaceful all around you, Close your eyes, Let sleep surround you. Sleep, sleep, sleep, 'Tis the eve of our Saviour's birth.

Dream, dream, dream, Of the joyous day to come. While guardian angels without number, Watch you as you sweetly slumber. Dream, dream, dream, Of the joyous day to come.

# LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING

Lo. how a rose e'er blooming From tender stem hath sprung. Of Jesse's lineage coming, As saints of old have sung. It came a flow'ret bright Amid the cold of winter, When half-spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, This rose I have in mind. With Mary we behold it, The Virgin Mother kind. To show God's love aright, She bore to us a saviour, When half-spent was the night.

This flower whose fragrance tender With sweetness fills the air Dispels with alorious splendour The darkness ev'rywhere. True man, yet very God, From grief and death he saves us And lightens ev'ry load.





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** the 45-voice adult choir 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 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, 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 intial two-week run.

# Soprano 1

Danica Kell, Holly Kennedy, Ashley McConnell, Janine Magaw\*, Rachel Nelson, Janet Pritchard, Jillian Schina, Anna Turunen, Robyn Van Luven

# Soprano 2

Bonnie Arthur, Janelle Claudio, Sophia Fan, Kyumin Lee, Katrin Lohuaru, Kim Taylor\*, Allison Tremblay, Isabella Troche, Anisha Varghese

#### Alto 1

Angela Adam, Grace Groot\*, Kirstin Hain, Shelley Koke, Sheila Little, Stephanie Loo, Nancy Squair, Alison Stillwell, Patty Wagner, Brenda Wilson

#### Alto 2

Vanessa Borowicz, Stephanie Ching, Maureen Ciarniello, Elisabeth Finch, Tejas Madhur, Corinne Norbraten, Denise O'Brien, Caitlin Robinson\*, Deirdre Rogers, Stephanie Schollen, Stephanie Stephenson

\* 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. 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. For nine years, she served as a Board member of Chorus America, the advocacy, research, and leadership development organization that gives voice to the choral field. Currently, she serves Choral Canada as its President.

# STEPHEN SMITH, PIANIST



**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. www.smithstephen.musicaneo.com



# **GUEST ARTISTS**

# JULIA NOLAN, SAXOPHONE



Remaining active as a performer in 2020-2021, Julia Nolan premiered *Luminous Blue*, an unaccompanied piece for alto saxophone by Jeffrey Ryan, performed with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and *An American in Paris*), Weill (*Three Penny Opera*), and Milhaud (*Creation of the World*), in addition to a concert called *Tango, Klezmer, and Jazz* for the Vetta Chamber Music Series (Joan Blackman, violin; Jane Hayes, piano; and Jodi Proznick, bass) that featured premiered works by Fred Stride and Jodi Proznick. Days before lockdown in March 2020, Julia Nolan was the featured soloist with Sinfonia Orchestra performing Stefan Hintersteininger's *Saxophone Concerto*. In October 2019, Saxophilia Saxophone Quartet presented the Canadian premiere performance of Nicolas Scherzinger's *Cross Court* with the Acadia University Wind Ensemble. As soloist with the West Coast Symphony, Julia performed Hintersteininger's concerto in

Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Macedonia. In 2018 she released a CD with Jane Hayes and Joan Blackman (*Chromaticity*) and another CD with the Saxophilia Saxophone Quartet. Julia performed Jeffrey Ryan's concerto *Brazen* with the Lubbock Symphony in 2016 (previously premiered with the Vancouver Symphony and the Victoria Symphony Orchestra) and premiered *Cool Cut* by John Oliver with the Turning Point Ensemble. She recorded with Denis Bedard (2014), with the Naden Band of the Royal Canadian Navy (2015) performing Robert Buckley's *Prestidigitation*. She recorded with Alan Matheson's jazz groups on the CD *Intrada* and with the *CBC Orchestra* as soloist (*Tableaux de Provence*/Paule Maurice, and two concertos by Fred Stride, and lan McDougall).

# YEFENG YIN, BASS



Vancouver-based bassist Yefeng Yin has performed with ensembles around British Columbia, including the Vancouver Island Symphony, Kamloops Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Opera, and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. He was previously a member of l'Orchestre de la Francophonie under the baton of Jean-Philippe Tremblay. Yefeng completed his orchestral performance studies under the guidance of Kenneth Friedman at the University of British Columbia. During his scholastic tenure, he has been afforded the opportunity to work with artists such as Johannes Debus, Joel Quarrington, and David Murray. He avidly stewards his petit permaculture-style garden and seeks to ferment the tastiest sauerkraut.



# Elektra would like to acknowledge the support of the following generous donors.

This list is complete as of April 28, 2022. If there are any errors or omissions, please contact manager@elektra.ca

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#### Morna Edmundson, Artistic Director | Stephen Smith, Pianist

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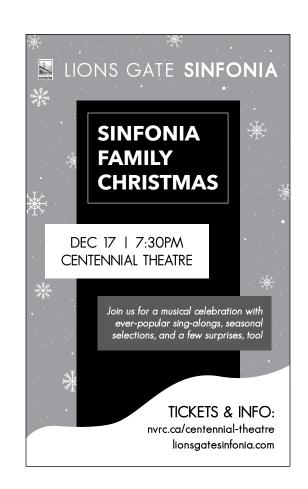






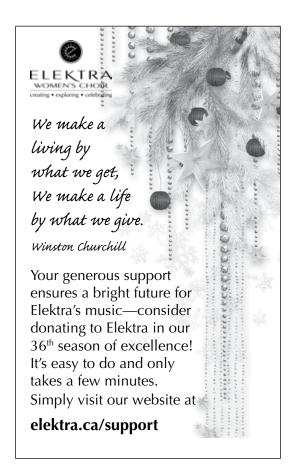














# HUMANITY

Elektra takes a deep dive into the human condition, exploring despair, hope, love, solidarity, boldness, and more with *Humanity*. Featuring the music of **Zanaida Robles**, **Natalie Fasheh**, **Iryna Aleksiychuk**, **Claudio Monteverdi**, **Marie-Claire Saindon**, **Libby Larsen**, and **Laura Hawley**.



Enriching the listening experience are photographs by South Hazelton photographer **Elizabeth Larsen**. Joining Elektra for part of this program will be the singers of Elektra's **Mira Youth Mentorship Program**.

Friday, March 10, 2023 | 7:30pm Pacific Spirit United Church

Tickets on sale now at

elektra.ca/concerts-events