

ELEKTRA WOMEN'S CHOIR



CLASSIC ELEKTRA

S K Y L A R K

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SOLO: CORLYNN HANNEY

CLASSIC ELEKTRA

ELEKTRA WOMEN'S CHOIR

Morna Edmundson & Diane Loomer, co-directors

with special guests:

Eric Hominick, piano
Evelyn Creaser-Rumley, violin
Nancy DiNovo, violin
Brenda Fedoruk, flute

This disc brings you a sampling of the challenging repertoire that has made Elektra Women's Choir one of the most notable choirs of its kind in North America. Singing in English, Latin, Finnish, Spanish and Zulu, the choir shares some of its music, including newer settings of traditional sacred texts, lush accompanied works, and pieces with roots in the folk music of many cultures.

Elektra is very pleased to collaborate with some of its favourite instrumental musicians on this recording. Vancouver pianist Eric Hominick has been the choir's regular accompanist for several years. Evelyn Creaser-Rumley, Nancy DiNovo and Brenda Fedoruk have been with us in live concerts over the years as we have discovered some of these musical gems for women's choir.

1 | Laudate Dominum

Norwegian composer Egil Hovland (b. 1924) is considered a Scandinavian neo-Classicist. His **Laudate Dominum** provides an excellent example of his adventurous approach to 20th century polyphony. The motet, opening with a dramatic, chant-inspired unison line, moves quickly to a complex rhythmic and musical treatment of the ageless, sacred text. With its bi-tonal harmonies, multi-rhythms, and wide dynamic contrasts, Hovland's energetic motet demands a virtuosic vocal technique.

Laudate Dominum

let us praise the Lord.

| Missa Brevis

"The music of this **Missa Brevis** was so powerful within me that I felt compelled to set it down on paper. The mass begins with an urgent plea for mercy in the *Kyrie* followed by the luxurious swaying movements and some wild rhythmic dance in the *Gloria*. The spaciousness of the *Sanctus* gives a sense of a limitless universe and I have tried to capture the purity of a liturgical setting in the *Agnus Dei* but also offer some comfort to the listener'

Notes: Nancy Telfer

2 | Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

3 | Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax hominibus bone voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,
Pater omnipotens, Domine Fili unigenite,
Jesu Christe, Filius Patris
qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus,
tu solu Altissimus,
cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest.
And on earth' peace to all those of good will.
We praise Thee. We bless Thee.
We worship Thee. We glorify Thee.
We give thanks to Thee according to Thy great glory.
Lord God, Heavenly King,
God the father almighty, Jesus Christ the only begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father
who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
For Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art the Lord,
Thou alone art the most high
with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

4 | Sanctus

Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

5 | Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.
Amen.

6 | Nigra sum

Famous and beloved for his legendary virtuosity, this Spanish cellist (1876-1973) is likely less well-known as a composer. His compositional output for choirs, although small, incorporates his wonderful sense of melody, line, and lush- harmonies. Treating the Nigra Sum text with tenderness and simplicity, Casals requires beauty of tone and careful concentration by both the singers and pianist to the intellectual interpretation of words and music.

Nigra sum, sed formosa filim Jerusalem:
Ideo dilexit me Rex,
et introduxit me in cubiculum suum.

I am black, but comely, daughters of Jerusalem:
The King rejoiced in me,
the King brought me into His own chambers.

Et dixit mihi: Surge et veni amica mea,
Jam hiems transiit, imber abiit et reces sit,
Flores apparu erunt in terrat nostra,
Tempus putationis ad venit. Alleluia.

He spake unto me: Rise up, my loved one, and come
away, For lo, the winter is past and gone, and the rain
has stopped, Flowers appear in our land:
The time of renewal has come. Alleluia.

— *The Bible, Song of Solomon 1:5, 2:10-12*

7 | Hosanna

American composer David Conte is Professor of Composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He has received commissions from many of the nation's leading performing ensembles. His approach to Hosanna's short, traditional text opens with a warm chant-like theme. With freely mixed metres and close voicing, the rising theme is given a rich harmonization and contrasted with a second *benedictus* motive. The *hosanna* melody returns in several harmonic guises, sometimes interrupted, and brings the motet to an end with a beautiful answering phrase between the first and second altos.

Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

8 | The Snow

English composer Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934) collaborated with his wife Alice to create **The Snow** (op. 26, no. 1) in 1894, a romantic chamber piece scored for women's chorus, two violins and piano. Her poem, full of noble Victorian sentiment, is mirrored beautifully in his poised choral writing and sweeping violin melodies.

O snow, which sinks so light,
Brown earth is hid from sight,
O soul, be thou as white as snow.

O snow, which falls so slow,
Dear earth quite warm below;
O heart, so keep thy glow beneath the snow.

O snow, in thy soft grave
Sad flow'rs the winter brave;
O heart, so soothe and save as does the snow.

This snow must melt, must go,
Fast, fast, as waters flow.
Not thus, my soul,
O sow thy gifts to fade like snow.

O snow, thou'rt white no more,
Thy sparkling too, is o'er;
O soul be as before was bright the snow.

Then as the snow all pure,
O heart be, but endure;
Through all the years full sure not as the snow.

C. Alice Eiger

9 | The Seeds of Love

Long-time member of the famous Paul Winter Consort, Canadian-born Paul Hafiefs (b. 1952) compositions bring an effortlessness to the melodies and personal flavour to accompaniments often spiked with a jazzy personality. His strict canon treatment of this tune combines ease of declamation and natural speech rhythms that seem to perfect suit the despairing, older-but-wiser nature of the poetry.

I sowed the seeds of love, and it was all in the spring,
In April, May and June, like-wise when small birds they do sing:
My garden is well planted with flowers everywhere,
Yet for myself I could not choose the flower that I loved so dear.

My gardener he stood by, I asked him to choose for me,
He chose me the violet, the lily and pink, but those I refused all three;
The violet I forsook, because it fades so soon,
The lily and pink I did o'erlook, and I vowed I'd stay till June.

In June there's a red rose-bud, and that's the flower for me!
But oft have I plucked at the red rose-bud till I gained the willow tree;
The willow tree will twist, and the willow tree will twine,
Oh! I wish I was in the dear youth's arms that once had the heart of mine.

My gardener he stood by, he told me to take great care,
For in the middle of a red rose-bud there grows a sharp thorn there;
I told him I'd take no care till I did feel the smart,
And often I plucked at the red rose-bud till I pierced it to the heart.

I'll make a posy of hyssop, for no other I can touch,
That all the world may plainly see I love one flower too much;
My garden is run wild! where shall I plant anew
For my bed, that once was covered with thyme, is all overrun with rue?

Mrs. Fleetwood Habergham

| In Praise of Music

“**In Praise of Music** is cast in three contrasting sections performed without pause. The first section, based on an unfinished fragment by Shelley, is marked *Allegro e appassionato*. The ecstatic nature of music is expressed in an unabashedly romantic vein through vigorous choral writing and a turbulent accompaniment. This gives way to a second section, based on Dryden's *Ode to St Cecilia's Day* marked *Lento misterioso*. The chorus, filled with awe in listening to the pianist's evocation of Jubal's harp, sings in unison with a remote, other-worldly tone. The final section, marked *Rapturously floating*, returns to the concluding section of Shelley's poem. Supported by an undulating accompaniment, the altos sing long, sustained lines, embellished by murmuring in the divisi sopranos. The piece ends blissfully and calmly; the singers have floated toward heaven, enraptured by the transfiguring power of music.”

Notes: David Conte

11 | **First Section** *(words by Percy Bysshe Shelley)*

I pant for the music, which is divine,
My heart in its thirst is a dying flower;
Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,
Loosen the notes in a silver shower;
Like a herbless plain, for the gentle rain,
I gasp, I faint till they wake again.
Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound,
More, oh more, — I am thirsting yet;
It loosens the serpent which care has bound
Upon my heart to stifle it;
The dissolving strain, through every vein,
Passes into my heart and brain.

12 | **Second Section** *(words by John. Dryden)*

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck his corded Shell,
His list'ning Brethren stood around,
And wond'ring on their Faces fell
To worship that Celestial Sound:

(What Passion cannot Music raise and quell?)
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that Shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
(What Passion cannot Music raise and quell?)

13| **Third Section** *(words by Percy Bysshe Shelley)*

As the scent of the violet withered up,
Which grew by the brink of the silver lake,
When the hot noon has drained its dewy cup,
And mist there was none its thirst to slake —
And the violet lay dead while the odor flew
On the wings of the wind o'er the water blue —
As one who drinks from a charmed cup
Of foaming, and sparkling, and murmuring wine,
Whom a mighty Enchantress filling up
Invites to love with her kiss divine ...

14 | **Vesi Väsy Lumen Alle (Water Under Snow is Weary)**

Currently a professional composer in Finland, Harri Wessman (b.1949 and former member of the renowned Tapiola Children's Choir) is known for his highly individual, idiomatic writing with its light, lyrical and melodic air. When he wrote this piece for his beloved Tapiola choir, he looked to the old Kalevala melody to which many Finnish folk poems were sung in the days when oral verse tradition was still alive. The work begins with the choir singing the original Kalevala tune on which Wessman's interpretation is based. It then progresses with a duet for flute and piano, written in an improvisatory style on the ancient melody. Finally, the choir, returning with the flute and piano, sings the hauntingly memorable tune.

Vesi väsy lumen alle,
jäiden alle jaa lepoon.
Tuulee tuuli, ei torkahda.
Tanssii tuisku tuhatjalka,
pyryn poika pyörähtelee.
Tuulee tuuli, ei torkanda.

Water under snow is weary
under ice it stretches sleeping.
Winds are blowing, no rest for them.
Thousand-footed flakes are dancing
and the blizzard-boy is whirling.
Winds are blowing, no rest for them.

Sitä ei kuule kuloruoho,
kuloruoho kuolon korsi,
hangen alla ei aavista.
Aikaa on olla uninen,
Aikaa olla luminenkin.

But it is silent where the grass lies,
wither'd grass whose stalks are deathly,
under snow-drifts oblivious.
There is time now for slumbering,
there is time for snowing as well.

Eha Lättemäe

English translation by Keith Bosley

"Suite" de Lorca

Internationally acclaimed Finnish composer, Einojuhani Rautavaara (b. 1928) is known for his distinctive, always-interesting music. Using compositional tools of resonant parallel chords, modal scales and bitonality, he achieves results that represent an eclectic modern idiom. Although presently teaching in the southern part of Finland at the Helsinki Sibelius Academy, his upbringing in the primal northern landscape of Oulu, Finland still pervades much of his music. Rautavaara's "**Suite**" de Lorca (op. 72b) is a sparse, darkly-powered four-movement composition, reflecting the sinister images of Federico Garcia Lorca's death-laden Spanish poetry.

15 | Canción de jinete

Córdoba.
Lejana y sola.

Jaca negra, luna grande,
y aceitunas en mi alforja
Aunque sepa los caminos
yo nunca llegaré a Córdoba.

Por el llano, por el viento,
jaca negra, luna roja.
La muerte me está mirando
desde las torres de Córdoba.

¡Ay que camino tan largo!
¡Ay mi jaca valerosa!
¡Ay que la muerte me espera,
antes de llegar a Córdoba!

Córdoba.
Lejana y sola.

Rider's Song

Córdoba
Distant and lonely.

Black pony, large moon,
in my saddlebag olives.
Well as I know the roads,
I shall never reach Córdoba.

Over the plain, through the wind,
black pony, red moon.
Death keeps a watch on me
from Córdoba's towers.

Oh, such a long way to go!
And, oh, my spirited pony!
Ah, but death awaits me
before I ever reach Córdoba

Córdoba.
Distant and lonely.

16 | El Grito

La elipse de un grito
va de monte
a monte.

Desde los olivos,
será un arco iris
sobre la noche azul.

Como un arco de viola,
el grito ha hecho vibrar
largas cuerdas del viento.

(Las gentes de las cuevas
asoman sus velones.)

17 | La luna asoma

Cuando sale la luna
se pierden las campanas
y aparecen las sendas
impenetrables.

Cuando sale la luna,
el mar cubre la tierra
y el corazón se siente
isla en el infinito.

Nadie come naranjas
bajo la luna llena.
Es preciso comer,
fruta verde y helada.

Cuando sala la luna
de cien rostros iguales,
la moneda de plata
solloza en el bolsillo.

18 | Malagueña

La muerte
Entra y sale
De la taberna.

The Scream

The arc of the scream,
goes from mountain
to mountain.

From the olive grove,
negro over the blue night
it will be a black rainbow.

Like the bow of a viola
the scream has set humming
the long strings of the wind.

(The people of the caves,
with lamps, open their doors and peer.)

The Moon Appears

At the rise of the moon
Bells fade out
And impassable paths
Appear.

At the rise of the moon
the sea overspreads the land
and the heart feels like an island
in the infinite.

No one eats oranges
in the full moon's light.
Fruit must be eaten
green and ice-cold.

At the rise of the moon
with its hundred faces alike,
silver coins
sob away in pockets.

Malagueña

Death
enters and leaves
through the tavern.

Pasan caballos negros
y gente siniestra
por los hondos cominos
de la guitarra.

Y hay un olor a sal
y a sangre de hembra
en los nardos febriles
de la marina.

La muerte
entra y sale,
y sale y entra
la muerte
de la taberna.

Black horses
and sinister people
travel the deep roadways
of guitars.

There's a smell of salt
and woman's blood
from the feverish spikenards
in the harbour.

Death
enters and leaves,
leaves and enters
through
the tavern.

10 | Calling Home the Cattle (Karjan kotiinkutsu)

Estonian composer Veljo Tormis' music expresses a deep love for his Finno-Ugric heritage, its poetry, melodies, and stories. **Calling Home the Cattle** is a setting of Canto 32 from the Finnish national epic, the Kalevala. It uses three traditional melodies, two sung by the choir and one, a traditional herder's call, performed by an off-stage soloist.

Tellervo, Tapion neiti,
Metsän tyttö tylleröinen,
Jok' olet karhan kaitselija,
Vitsiä emännän viljan.
Paivan mennessä majoille,
litalinnun laulellessa
Itse virki viljalleni
Sano sarvijuonelleni;
`Kotininne kourusarvet,
Melon antajat, majalle!

Koissa on hyvä ollaksemme,
Maa imara maataksenne,
Korpi on kolkko käyaksenne,
Manta raikutellaksenne;
Kotihinne tullaksenne
Vaimot valkean tekevät
Nurmelle mesinukalle,
Maalle marjanvartiselle.

Tellervo, O maid of Tapio,
Little daughter of the forest,
Be the guardian of the cattle,
Do thou guard the mistress' cattle.
"When the sun to rest has sunken,
And the bird of eve is singing,
Then I say unto my cattle,
Speak unto my horned creatures,
"Come ye home, ye curve-horned cattle,
Milk-dispensers to the household.

In the house 'tis very pleasant,
Where the floor is nice for resting,
On the waste 'tis bad to wander,
Or upon the shore to bellow,
Therefore you should hasten homeward,
And the women fire will kindle,
In the field of honeyed grasses,
On the ground o'ergrown with berries.

Nyyrikki, Tapion poika,
Siniviitta viian polka!
Tyvin pistä pitkät kuuset,
Latvoin lakkapäät petäjät
Sillaksi likasijoille,
Paikaksi pahoille maille,
Suosulihin maasulihin,
Lätäkköihin läilyvihin!
Anna käyä käyräsarven,
Haarasorkan sorkutella,
Joutua joka savulle
Viatoinna vilpiöinnä,
Ilman suohon sortumatta,
Likahan litistymättä!

Kun ei karja tuosta huoli,
Yöksi ei kulkene kotihin,
Pihlajatar, piika pieni,
Katajatar, kaunis neiti,
Leikkaa lehosta koivu,
Ota vitsa viiakosta,
Käykös piiska pihlajainen,
Katajainen karjan ruoska
Takoa Tapion linnan,
Tuolta puolen Tuomivaaran,

Aja karja kartanolle,
Saunan lämmitä-panolle,
kotiin kotoinen karja,
Metsän karja Metsolahan!

Nyyrikki, O son of Tapio,
Blue-coat offspring of the forest!
Take the stumps of tallest pine-trees,
And the lofty crowns of fir-trees,
For a bridge in miry places,
Where the ground is bad for walking,
Deep morass, and swampy moorland,
And the treacherous pools of water,
Let the curved-horned cattle wander,
And the split-hoofed cattle gallop,
Unto where the smoke is rising,
Free from harm, and free from danger,
Sinking not into the marshes,
Nor embogged in miry places.

If the cattle pay no heeding,
Nor will home return at nightfall,
Pihlajatar, little damsel,
Katajatar, fairest maiden,
Quickly cut a branch of birch-tree,
Take a rod from out the bushes,
Likewise take a whip of cherry,
and of juniper to scourge them,
From the back of Tapio's castle,
From among the slopes of alder.

Drive the herd towards the household,
At the time for bathroom-heating;
Homeward drive the household cattle,
Cows from Metsola's great forest.

English translation by W.F. Kirby (1907)

19 | African Celebration

Victoria, British Columbia composer Stephen Hatfield has this to say about his arrangement:

“**African Celebration** draws on seven South African freedom songs, most of which I hear on a field recording of a Tanganyika refugee camp. Distilling an oral tradition into a choral arrangement is like knitting a sweater out of running water. The rapt, open-throated style of the singing that gives the simplest harmonies the dignity and force of a spiritual essence – you can’t pen hat into the confines of a half note. I tried anyway – you have to spread the rapture round as best you can. Commissioned by John Barron for the Amabile Youth Singers of London, Ontario.”

O freedom!

Sikhalela izwe lakithi
Iona lizothwa ngamagalatshane.
Zulu, Mxhos, Msuthu, unite.

O freedom!

Freedom is coming, oh yes, I know.

Sithi jbulu Jesu, jabula!

Oh, I want to wake up in the moonlight singing
Jabula! Lalela!
Sikhalela izwe lakithi...

Nkosi sikeleli Afrika

Maliphakanyis uphondo Iwayo.
Yiva, Yiva, nemithandazo yethu.
Nkosi sikelela.

O thina, thina, oh silulutsha.

Sithi jbulu Jesu, jabula
Sithi thandaza Solly, thandaza.
Heaven is a-waiting for you.
Oh, I want to wake up in the moonlight singing
Lalela, heaven is a-waiting for you.

Hlanganani Tshotsholosa Mandela.

Shayinduku mfana
Uzokuzwa ngathi xa sekulungile
Oh, yes, I know that freedom is coming.
It’s coming, sing Alleluia,
coming with an Alleluia.

O freedom!

We cry for our land
Which was taken by criminals.
Zulu, Mxhos, Msuthu, unite.

O freedom!

Freedom is coming, oh yes, I know.

We say rejoice [with] Jesus, rejoice.

Oh, I want to wake up in the moonlight singing
Rejoice! Listen!
We cry for our land...

Lord sustain Africa.

May her horn be upheld.
Hear, hear our prayers.
Lord sustain.

Oh we, we the youth

We say rejoice [with] Jesus, rejoice.
We say pray, Solly, pray.
Heaven is a-waiting for you.
Oh, I want to wake up in the moonlight singing
Listen, heaven is a-waiting for you.

Unite, proceed, Mandela.

Strike [with] the stick, boy.
You will hear from us when all is well.
Oh, yes, I know that freedom is coming.
It’s coming, sing Alleluia,
coming with an Alleluia.

ELEKTRA WOMEN'S CHOIR

Elektra Women's Choir was founded by co-directors Morna Edmundson and Diane Loomer in 1987. The choir is known for its adventurous programming, seeking out music written specifically for women and frequently commissioning new works. The singers are selected by audition and share an enthusiasm for challenging repertoire. Elektra has been awarded first prize for women's choirs in four consecutive rounds of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's National Choral Competition, as well as several major prizes for performance of contemporary music. The choir's first CD "Elektra Women's Choir" was nominated for a Juno Award in 1994. The choir is frequently heard on CBC Radio across Canada, and on National Public Radio in the United States.

Morna Edmundson

Morna Edmundson holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of British Columbia, a Diploma in Choir Pedagogy from the Stockholm Conservatory of Music, and a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting from Western Washington University. Her professional music career spans more than a decade of singing and conducting, including eight years singing with the Vancouver Chamber Choir. Besides co-directing Elektra, Morna conducts the Vancouver Orpheus Male Voice Choir and the Coquitlam District Youth Chorus, and she is on Faculty at the University of British Columbia teaching Renaissance and Baroque ensembles.

Diane Loomer

Born in Minnesota, Diane Loomer is an honours graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College and the University of British Columbia School of Music. Her professional music career includes twelve years of teaching, clinicing, and conducting in the United States and Canada. She is currently on faculty at the University of British Columbia's School of Music. In addition to Elektra, she also conducts a men's choir, Chor Leoni (which won first prize in the men's category of the 1994 CBC competition), the Amabilis Singers, and UBC's Choral Union, and just completed a three-year stint as Assistant Conductor of the Vancouver Bach Choir. In May, 1994, she conducted and toured with the prestigious National Youth Choir of Canada. She was named by the YWCA as Vancouver's Woman of Distinction for Arts and Culture for 1994. Her choral compositions and arrangements have been published, performed and recorded internationally.

Eric Hominick

Born in Nova Scotia, Eric Hominick studied piano at Dalhousie University and the Royal Conservatory of Music under William Tritt and Reginald Godden. Joining the music faculty at the Vancouver Community College in 1983, he has accompanied the choral, classical voice, pop vocal and musical theatre programmes. A frequent guest accompanist with many of Vancouver's finest choral ensembles, Eric joined Elektra in 1991 and continues his free-lance activities as piano and voice teacher, baritone soloist and arranger.

CLASSIC ELEKTRA

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S K Y L A R K



ELEKTRA WOMEN'S CHOIR

Morna Edmundson & Diane Loomer, co-directors

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