

# Humanity

A musical exploration  
of the human experience



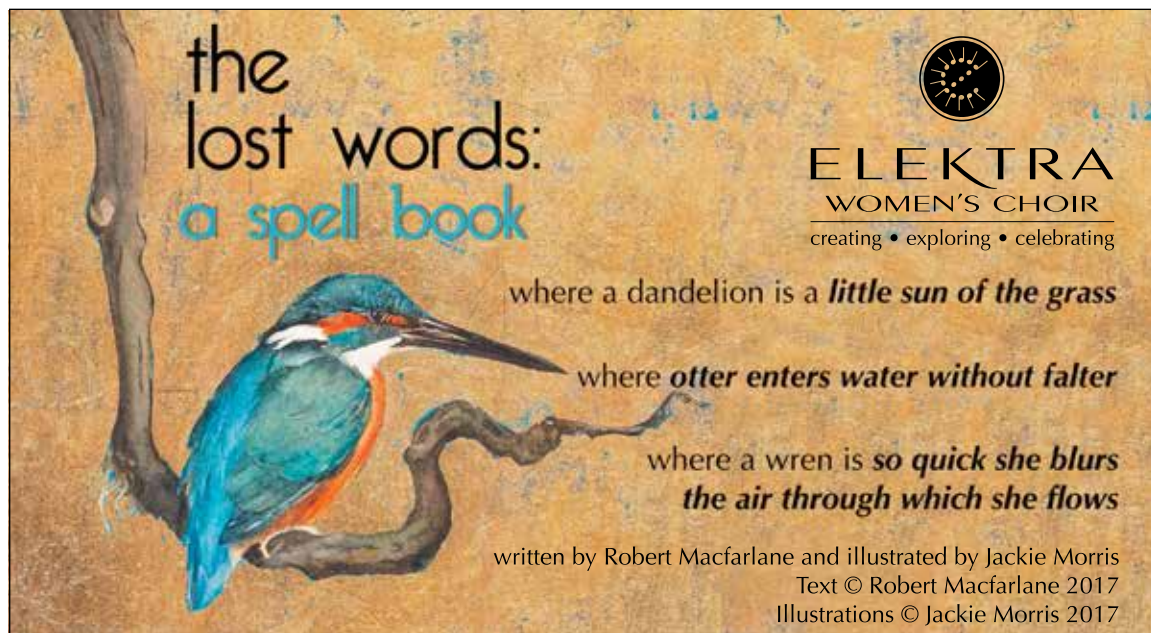
**ELEKTRA**  
WOMEN'S CHOIR  
creating • exploring • celebrating

**March 10, 2023**  
Pacific Spirit United Church,  
Vancouver

**Morna Edmundson**, Artistic Director  
**Stephen Smith**, Pianist

Featuring the photography  
of South Hazelton-based artist  
**Elizabeth Larsen**

with the students of Elektra's  
**Mira Youth Mentorship Program**



Announcing the **digital performance** of  
**The Lost Words: A Spell Book**  
 available for viewing online starting  
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*“How thrilling to watch this, as I have just done... The joy on the faces of the performers, and the standing ovation from the audience, well, that said it all—and it lifted my heart”.*  
**Robert Macfarlane, author**



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## Welcome!

Welcome to **Elektra's** celebration of the human experience. The German poet, **Heinrich Heine** famously said, “Where words leave off, music begins.” Surely photography can make that claim as well! And together, well, a powerful opportunity to experience “all the feels” about being alive. I must admit to leaving out anger, indifference, frustration and, I'm sure, many more of the negative emotions. My goal is that we leave the concert reflecting on the great gifts of the relationships we have in our lives, our ability to get through the tough times when we have community around us, and the beauty and majesty of nature where we live.

I was attracted to the photography of friend and fellow musician **Elizabeth (Beth) Larsen** because of her ability to capture two central themes of tonight's concert: spontaneous connections between people and the beauty of her environment which is **Gitxsan Territory**—the communities of the **Upper Skeena** in the Pacific Northwest of BC - the **Kispiox, Skeena and Bulkley Rivers**, small communities of First Nations and Settlers, and the spectacular backdrop of mountains. While the images may not all be of the exact scenes described in the music (we are not in New York or Norway), the images I chose evoked in me parallel emotions to those of the poets and songwriters. The broad strokes of these parallels will, I hope, allow you to place them in your own context and communities.

New music that reflects our themes can be found in **Natalie Fasheh's** haunting *Ya Amar*, having its world premiere tonight. Composer and conductor **Laura Hawley** brings us three contrasting works, including her brand new suite, *The Secret Wisdom of Flowers*, co-commissioned with five other women's choirs from Prince George, BC to St. John's, Newfoundland. These choirs and their conductors are an important part of Elektra's community.

The *Humanity* concert brings us together with Beth and her art, a dozen composers and arrangers, and the students of Elektra's **Mira Youth Mentorship program**. My thanks to these talented and dedicated students in grades 10-12 and their teachers. They are listed on page 14. Thanks, also, to the amazing singers of Elektra, who continue to embrace our musical journeys.

*Mona*

*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.*

# Humanity: a musical exploration of the human experience

March 10, 2023 • 7:30 pm

Pacific Spirit United Church, Vancouver  
**Elektra Women's Choir, Morna Edmundson**, Artistic Director  
**Stephen Smith**, piano | **Elizabeth Larsen**, photographer  
with the singers of Elektra's **Mira Youth Mentorship Program**

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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.

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## Program

**No-One Asked Me**..... words and music by Laura Hawley

*When the pandemic took away, in a matter of days in 2020, virtually all choral singing around the world, Laura and fellow Canadian composers, **Katerina Gimon** and **Geung Kroeker-Lee** created the **Sonic Timelapse** project whereby new works would be created and the community sustained through this crowdfunded initiative. **No-One Asked Me** was one of the resulting compositions. The text is compiled from reflections by conductors from across Canada and expresses the mixed emotions felt as our creative world was turned upside down with no end in sight.*

No one asked me if I wanted everything to change  
One day blends into the next in a slow motion fast forward  
Each time I face the fear I need to turn away again  
No one asked me

I am strong, yet moving with the wind,  
But then I'm lost, not knowing when I'll find my way again.  
One moment I'm inspired, the next I'm overwhelmed.  
I'm grateful and I'm frightened and I don't know where I'm going

I feel it all, can you hear me?  
I feel it all, will you need me?  
Can you tell me who I am? When can I take your hand?  
I feel it all.

I feel as if my roots are being torn and shifting in the wind  
Don't touch, don't breathe, don't sing to me.  
I dream of the joy of dancing carelessly again  
No one asked me.

I am strong, and facing all the pain,  
But then I'm lost, not knowing when I'll find my way again.  
It's out of my control – I'm fragile then I'm brave,  
I'm empty and I'm hopeful and I don't know where I'm going.

[Refrain]

I believe I'm in the right place at the right time.  
We're connected in ways no one can see  
Powerless to change, building resilience  
When will we find our way?

I am strong, yet moving with the wind,  
And when I'm lost, I know that I will find my way again.

I feel it all, can you hear me?  
I feel it all, will you need me?  
Can you tell me who I am? When can I take your hand?  
I feel it all.

**Ya Amar (Ode to the Moon) world premiere** ..... words and music by Natalie Fasheh  
*Solo 1 & guitar Danica Kell, Solo 2 Stephanie Ching*

*Composer **Natalie Fasheh** works with various communities as a conductor, community-engaged artist, composer, writer, and administrator. She is a mezzo-soprano with a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance. Being a Palestinian-Jordanian, she also shares Arabic music as a guest singer, clinician, and choral arranger. Natalie writes compositions in response to current social and political topics and events, in pursuit of social change. About **Ya Amar**, Natalie writes "During one of the pandemic lockdowns, I was walking outside, feeling lonely and overwhelmed. I struggled to understand how I am equally isolated from both loved ones half an hour away, and halfway across the world. I looked up, and there was the full moon, shining in the sky. I felt grounded; it connects us all. In that moment, the Arabic melody and words flowed out of me. I got home, and sang it while strumming my ukulele. As such, Solo 1 in this composition is singing and playing ukulele or guitar at the same time. This is an every person song." **Ya Amar** was commissioned by Elektra with the generous support of **Allison Tremblay** in memory of **Marie-Anne Tremblay**, "devoted mother and friend, who sang everywhere she went. You are so missed."*

Ya 'amar Dawwilnal-leil  
Daffi 'lubna aṣṭīna 'amal  
Ya 'amar Ya ruḥ ll-njum  
byizghar hal-baṣḍ  
Lamma n-shufak

*Oh Moon, light up this night.  
Warm our hearts, give us hope.  
Oh Moon, oh spirit of the stars,  
We forget this distance (between us)  
when we see you.*

*We're all pieces of the moon  
So when the moon shines bright in the sky,  
it glues us back together*

**Pur Ti Miro**..... words by Giovanni Francesco Busenello (1598 - 1659),  
music by Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

*Predating the rest of our Humanity repertoire by nearly 400 years, this most famous duet from the conclusion of **Monteverdi's** opera, **The Coronation of Poppea**, is adoration, lust, love, and fixation rolled into one. It is sung by the Roman Emperor **Nero** and his lover **Poppea** as they are finally united following a storyline full of twists and turns of seduction, betrayal, intrigue, and loyalty.*

**POPPEA e NERONE**

Pur ti miro,  
Pur ti godo,  
Pur ti stringo,  
Pur t'annodo,  
Più non peno,  
Più non moro,  
O mia vita, o mi tesoro.  
Io son tua...  
Tuo son io...  
Speme mia, dillo, di,  
Tu sei pur, speme mia  
L'idol mio, dillo, di,  
Tu sei pur,  
Sì, mio ben,  
Sì, mio cor, mia vita, sì.  
Pur ti miro,  
Pur ti godo,  
Pur ti stringo,  
Pur t'annodo,  
Più non peno,  
O mia vita, o mi tesoro.

**POPPEA and NERONE**

I gaze at you  
I tighten closer to you  
I delight in you  
I am bound to you  
I no longer suffer  
I no longer die  
Oh my life, Oh my treasure.  
I am yours  
You are mine  
My hope, say it, say,  
The idol of mine, Yes, my love,  
You are mine, tell me so  
The idol of mine,  
Yes, my love,  
Yes, my heart, my life, yes.  
I gaze at you  
I tighten closer to you  
I delight in you  
I am bound to you  
I no longer suffer  
Oh my life, Oh my treasure.

**Chelsea Morning** ..... words and music by Joni Mitchell, arr. Laura Hawley

*Speaking of being in love, no piece on tonight's program better reflects "all's right with the world" than **Joni Mitchell's** exuberant **Chelsea Morning**. According to **Wikipedia**, the song was inspired by Mitchell's room in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City. The inspiration for the first verse comes partly from the distinct décor of her apartment. While in Philadelphia, Mitchell and friends had made a mobile from shards of colored glass they had found in the street and wire coat hangers, which filtered the light coming into her room through the window and created the "rainbow on the wall.". Mitchell held off releasing her own recording of it until her second album, **Clouds**, since **Judy Collins** and others were getting significant airplay with their own recordings. **Laura Hawley** wrote this guitar-inspired arrangement for *Elektra* in 2019.*

Woke up, it was a Chelsea morning, and the first thing that I heard  
Was a song outside my window, and the traffic wrote the words  
It came a-ringing up like Christmas bells and rapping up like pipes and drums

Oh, won't you stay  
We'll put on the day  
And we'll wear it 'till the night comes

Woke up, it was a Chelsea morning, and the first thing that I saw  
Was the sun through yellow curtains, and a rainbow on the wall  
Blue, red, green and gold to welcome you, crimson crystal beads to beckon

Oh, won't you stay  
We'll put on the day  
There's a sun show every second

Now the curtain opens on a portrait of today  
And the streets are paved with passers-by  
And pigeons fly  
And papers lie  
Waiting to blow away

Woke up, it was a Chelsea morning, and the first thing that I knew  
There was milk and toast and honey and a bowl of oranges, too  
And the sun poured in like butterscotch and stuck to all my senses

Oh, won't you stay  
We'll put on the day  
And we'll talk in present tenses

When the curtain closes and the rainbow runs away  
I will bring you incense owls by night  
By candlelight  
By jewel-light  
If only you will stay  
Pretty baby, won't you  
Wake up, it's a Chelsea morning

**She Lingers On**..... words and music by Zanaida Robles

***Dr. Zanaida Stewart Robles** is an award-winning Black American female composer, vocalist, and teacher. She is a fierce advocate for diversity and inclusion in music education and performance. Authentic interpersonal connection and relationship-building are core principles of her teaching and performance methods. **She Lingers On** deals with the subject of depression.*

She walks in pools of sadness.  
Her face is cool in moonlight.  
No-one can cover it.  
She walks in pools and moonlight.  
She lingers on.

**Ved Rondane**..... words by Aasmund Olavsson Vinje (1818-1870),  
music by Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

*One of **Grieg's** intimate songs originally scored for voice and piano, here the poet finds renewal, hope, and abundant memories in the snowy mountainous wilderness of his childhood days. Similarities between the coastal landscapes of Norway and BC made this lyrical and delicate piece a perfect choice for the **Humanity** concert.*

No ser eg atter slike Fjell og Dalar,  
Som deim eg i min forrste Ungdom såg,  
Og sama Vind den heite Panna svalar;  
Og Gullet ligg på snjo, som for det låg.  
Det er eit Barnemål, som til meg tåler,  
Og gjer meg tankefull, men endå fjåg.  
Med Ungdomsminne er den Tala blandad;  
Det strøymmer på meg, so eg knapt kan anda.

Ja, Livet strøymmer på meg, som det strøymde,  
Når under snjo eg såg det grønne strå.  
Eg drøymmer no, som for eg alltid drøymde,  
Når slike Fjell eg såg i Lufti blå.  
Eg gløymmer Dågsens Strid, som for eg gløymde,  
Når eg mot kveld af Sol eit Glimt fikk sjå.  
Eg finner vel eit Hus, som vil meg hysa,  
Når Soli heim til Notti vil meg lysa.

Now I see the same mountains and valleys,  
As those I, in my young childhood, saw,  
And the same wind cools my heated brow,  
And gold lies on the snow, as before it lay.  
There is a childlike voice, which speaks to me,  
And makes me thoughtful, but still full of joy.  
With childhood memories is this speech blended;  
It streams over me, so I can hardly breathe.

Yes, life streams over me, as it streamed,  
When under the snow I saw the green straw.  
I dream now, as once I always dreamed,  
When such mountains I saw in the blue air.  
I forget the day's stress, as once I forgot it,  
When I, towards night, a glimmer of sun did see.  
I will well find a house, that will shelter me,  
As the sun, home for the night, will light my way.

**O Sister (Keep Me Steady Through the Storm)**..... words by D. Allen,  
music by Kathleen Allan

*In February 2017, the **Voices of Hope**, a Minnesota women's prison choir directed by **Amanda Weber**, partnered with the **University of Minnesota Women's Chorus** on a project entitled **Phenomenal Woman**. Inspired by a set of poems written by **Maya Angelou**, the two choirs prepared music written for women, by women, including the premiere of **O Sister (Keep Me Steady Through the Storm)**. The women of *Voices of Hope* helped brainstorm words or phrases they felt should be represented in the text, and from this, **D. Allen** created the poem, **O Sister**, on which Canadian composer **Kathleen Allan** then wrote the music.*

O sister, the wind's picking up, the sky's gone dark too early.  
O sister, please be my rain, please be my roots, keep us steady through the storm.

O sister, as the lightning breaks, as the thunder shakes our shoulders,  
O sister, let it be our voice, let it be our song to keep us steady through the storm.

O sister when your bones are sore, and your legs can go no further,  
O sister, come sit with me, come speak your truth, keep us steady through the storm.

O sisters, lift your voice with mine, keep us steady through the storm.  
O sisters, tell me of your life, keep us steady through the storm.

O sister, my body it aches, my work's been long, I'm weary,  
O sister, please sit with me, please hear my hurts, keep us steady through the storm.

O sisters, rest your aching heart, keep us steady through the storm.  
O sisters, come and sit with me, keep us steady through the storm.

O sister, let it be our voice, let it be our song, keep us steady through the storm.

**INTERMISSION**



Photo by Elizabeth Larsen



Photo by Elizabeth Larsen

**The Secret Wisdom of Flowers.....** Laura Hawley

Commissioned in 2022 by six Canadian choirs: **Elektra Women’s Choir, Nove Voce Choral Society, Ariose, Oriana Women’s Choir, The Aeolian Singers, and Lady Cove Women’s Choir**

*Laura Hawley is a Canadian composer, conductor, pianist, and educator known for her creative musical leadership and artistic programming, community engagement, distinctive compositional style, and passionate advocacy for Canadian choral art. **The Secret Wisdom of Flowers** is the third work we have commissioned from her, this time in collaboration with five other Canadian choirs. The texts share a sense of wonder about nature—from the majestic landscape of the opening movement to the smallest detail of a flower in **Evening Primrose** and **Fire Flowers**.*

**The suite includes eight movements. Please hold your applause until the end of *Sunrise Along the Shore*.**

**1. Lord of Morning**  
*poem by Bliss Carman (1861-1929)*

LORD of morning, light of day,  
Sacred color-kindling Sun,  
We salute thee in the way—  
Roadside pilgrims robed in dun.

For thou art a pilgrim too,  
Overlord of all our band;  
In thy fervor we renew  
Quests we do not understand.

At thy summons we arise,  
At thy touch put glory on,  
And with glad unanxious eyes  
Move into the march of dawn.

**2. Marigolds**  
*poem by Bliss Carman (1861-1929)*

THE marigolds are nodding;  
I wonder what they know.  
Go, listen very gently;  
You may persuade them so.

Go, be their little brother,  
As humble as the grass,  
And lean upon the hill-wind,  
And watch the shadows pass.

Put off the pride of knowledge,  
Put by the fear of pain;  
You may be counted worthy  
To live with them again.

Be Darwin in your patience,  
Be Chaucer in your love;  
They may relent and tell you  
What they are thinking of.

**3. Thirsty Earth**  
*poem by Abraham Cowley (1618-1667)*

THE THIRSTY earth soaks up the rain,  
And drinks and gapes for drink again;  
The plants suck in the earth, and are  
With constant drinking fresh and fair;  
The sea itself (which one would think  
Should have but little need of drink)  
Drinks twice ten thousand rivers up,  
So fill'd that they o'erflow the cup.  
The busy Sun (and one would guess  
By's drunken fiery face no less)

Drinks up the sea, and when he's done,  
The Moon and Stars drink up the Sun:  
They drink and dance by their own light,  
They drink and revel all the night:  
Nothing in Nature's sober found,  
But an eternal health goes round.  
Fill up the bowl, then, fill it high,  
Fill all the glasses there—for why  
Should every creature drink but I?  
Why, man of morals, tell me why?

**4. Evening Primrose**  
*poem by John Clare (1793-1864)*

When once the sun sinks in the west,  
And dewdrops pearl the evening's breast;  
Almost as pale as moonbeams are,  
Or its companionable star,  
The evening primrose opes anew  
Its delicate blossoms to the dew;  
And, hermit-like, shunning the light,

Wastes its fair bloom upon the night,  
Who, blindfold to its fond caresses,  
Knows not the beauty it possesses;  
Thus it blooms on while night is by;  
When day looks out with open eye,  
Bashed at the gaze it cannot shun,  
It faints and withers and is gone.

**5. The Heart of Night**  
*poem by Bliss Carman (1861-1929)*

When all the stars are sown  
Across the night-blue space,  
With the immense unknown,  
In silence face to face.

We stand in speechless awe  
While Beauty marches by,  
And wonder at the Law  
Which wears such majesty.

How small a thing is man  
In all that world-sown vast,  
That he should hope or plan  
Or dream his dream could last!

O doubter of the light,  
Confused by fear and wrong,  
Lean on the heart of night  
And let love make thee strong!

The Good that is the True  
Is clothed with Beauty still.  
Lo, in their tent of blue,  
The stars above the hill!

**7. Fire Flowers**  
*poem by E. Pauline Johnson*

And only where the forest fires have sped,  
Scorching relentlessly the cool north lands,  
A sweet wild flower lifts its purple head,  
And, like some gentle spirit sorrow-fed,  
It hides the scars with almost human hands.

**8. Sunrise Along the Shore**  
*poem by L. M. Montgomery (1874-1942)*

Athwart the harbor lingers yet  
The ashen gleam of breaking day,  
And where the guardian cliffs are set  
The noiseless shadows steal away;  
But all the winnowed eastern sky  
Is flushed with many a tender hue,  
And spears of light are smiting through  
The ranks where huddled sea-mists fly.

Across the ocean, wan and gray,  
Gay fleets of golden ripples come,  
For at the birth-hour of the day  
The roistering, wayward winds are dumb.

The rocks that stretch to meet the tide  
Are smitten with a ruddy glow,  
And faint reflections come and go  
Where fishing boats at anchor ride.

**6. Moonset**  
*poem by E. Pauline Johnson (1861-1913)*

Soloist: Stephanie Schollen

Idles the night wind through the dreaming firs,  
That waking murmur low,  
As some lost melody returning stirs  
The love of long ago;  
And through the far, cool distance, zephyr fanned.  
The moon is sinking into shadow-land.

The troubled night-bird, calling plaintively,  
Wanders on restless wing;  
The cedars, chanting vespers to the sea,  
Await its answering,  
That comes in wash of waves along the strand,  
The while the moon slips into shadow-land.

O! soft responsive voices of the night  
I join your minstrelsy.  
And call across the fading silver light  
As something calls to me;  
I may not all your meaning understand,  
But I have touched your soul in shadow-land.

And only to the heart that knows of grief,  
Of desolating fire, of human pain,  
There comes some purifying sweet belief,  
Some fellow-feeling beautiful, if brief.  
And life revives, and blossoms once again.

All life leaps out to greet the light —  
The shining sea-gulls dive and soar,  
The swallows whirl in dizzy flight,  
And sandpeeps flit along the shore.  
From every purple landward hill  
The banners of the morning fly,  
But on the headlands, dim and high,  
The fishing hamlets slumber still.

One boat alone beyond the bar  
Is sailing outward blithe and free,  
To carry sturdy hearts afar  
Across those wastes of sparkling sea;

Staunchly to seek what may be won  
From out the treasures of the deep,  
To toil for those at home who sleep  
And be the first to greet the sun.

**The Girl with the Numbers** ..... words and music by Marie-Claire Saindon

On February 20th 1962, **John Glenn** was the first American to launch into space and orbit the Earth. **Friendship 7's** success heavily depended on the exactitude of the rocket trajectory's calculations. A few days prior to the mission, Glenn trusted his life with only one person to confirm by hand these IBM-generated numbers: **Katherine Johnson** (1918-2020), 44 year-old mathematician; daughter, sister, widow, wife, mother of three, friend, teacher, community-builder, chorister; the first woman—and African-American woman—to join **NASA's Space Flight Research Division** in Langley's **Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory** as research mathematician, and who was part of the **Space Task Group** for America's first multiple missions to space. Human computer. "The girl with the numbers". Having been denied an education higher than grade 6 himself, Johnson's father armed her with many tools. One that would propel her beyond many challenges was the following lesson: "You are no better than anybody, but nobody's better than you." Johnson was able to gather the courage and ask many questions that some may not have dared to ask both as a woman and an African-American. One of her favourite questions was "Why not?" Her life was the subject of the 2016 film **Hidden Figures**.

Can a Black student take part  
as a scholar, a classmate  
can "separate but equal" finally unite?  
Why not?

I am no better than anyone,  
but no one is better than me.

Can a woman pioneer  
as an expert, a master  
can a "computer in skirts" change the script?  
Why not?

Can a Black woman challenge  
as a colleague, an equal  
can the "girl with the numbers"  
balance the question and reach for the moon?  
Why not?

**Your One and Only Life** .....words and music by Susan Crowe, arr. Stephen Smith

Nova Scotia singer-songwriter **Susan Crowe** infuses her music with great melody and insightful, poetic lyrics. Arranged here by **Stephen Smith**, this song looks back on a life, wondering if missed opportunities could have been, instead, moments in which to live life to the fullest.

About a thousand years ago, when I was very young,  
My hair burned like the sea beneath an ever-rising sun;  
My blood ran thick with promise, I was tender to the bone;  
But now I'm Evangeline, made of stone.

This is your one and only life. What will you do?

Now the meteors of August, they fly all through my hair.  
The day will come when I will rise to find my eye less fair;  
And this body scorched by beauty and these hands I left unplayed -  
What was I waiting for, afraid?

This is your one and only life. What will you do?

You can dream, you can imagine, you can simply hope and pray,  
You can save yourself for glory, you can wait til judgement day;  
You can hold out til you stand a breath away from heaven's gate;  
Your day of redemption will come—too late.

This is your one and only life. What will you do?

**Look! Be: leap;** ..... poem by Muriel Rukeyser, music by Libby Larsen

*Libby Larsen is one of the USA's preeminent composers. Poet Muriel Rukeyser (1913-1980) was a highly acclaimed American poet and political activist. She believed that poetry presented a way for people to learn more about themselves and their relations with others, and that through poetry people could be challenged to take action. Exemplary of this is **Look! Be: leap;**, the title poem in her award-winning first collection, **Theory of Flight**, published in 1935.*

Look! Be: leap;  
 paint trees in flame  
 bushes burning roar in the broad sky  
 know your color:  
 be:  
 produce that the widenesses be full  
 and burst their wombs  
 riot in redness, delirious with light,  
 swim bluely through the mind  
 shout green as the day breaks  
 put your face to the wind  
 FLY

chant as the tomtom hubbubs crash  
 elephants in the fleshes jungle  
 reek with vigor  
 sweat  
 pour your life in a libation to itself  
 drink from the ripe ground  
 make children over the world  
 lust in a heat of tropic orange  
 stamp and writhe;  
 stamp on a wet floor  
 know earth  
 know water  
 know lovers  
 know mastery  
 FLY



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photo: Wendy D. Photography



**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** 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 initial two-week run. In 2022, the choir released **Teachings of the Water**, a collaborative project with First Nations educators and knowledge-keepers from Canada's West Coast.

**Soprano 1**

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

**Soprano 2**

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

**Alto 1**

Angela Adam, Grace Groot\*, Katerina Gimon, 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

photo: Wendy D. Photography



**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

photo: David Cooper



**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](http://www.smithstephen.musicaneo.com)

## GUEST ARTISTS



### ELIZABETH (BETH) LARSEN

As a non-indigenous woman of European descent, I have been fortunate to live on the territory of the **Gitxsan** people and the communities of the **Upper Skeena** in Central British Columbia since the turn of the 21st century. Through my work as a freelance photographer, I have used my camera as a way to experience, document and savour elements of landscape, celebration and humanity. Photography has been a passion of mine for as long as I can remember. My desire has always been to bring my own perspective to and reflect upon the incredible richness of the life that surrounds me, while acknowledging that each one of us has our own unique vision of the world. I am grateful for the technology that has made possible the powerful camera in my hands and the digital darkroom. I am grateful to my mentors and teachers and for my vision and mobility—being able to see and move in the world. I am also and especially

grateful for the support of my family, and for the patience and good humour of the people of the Upper Skeena and surrounding communities who allow me, who trust me, to take their pictures and hone my skills as a photographer. It is a distinct pleasure and honor to share some of these photographs to provide a visual backdrop for Elektra's spring offering of the concert entitled **Humanity**. Included are a selection of landscape, event, portrait and candid images, curated in a lively collaboration with **Morna Edmundson** and the **Elektra** team. If you would like to contact me with comments or questions, to discuss purchasing any of my work, or to ask about my services as a photographer, I would love to hear from you. Enjoy!

Elizalarsen.photography@gmail.com

778-202-1670

South Hazelton, BC



## 2023 MIRA YOUTH MENTORSHIP SINGERS

**Graciél Daluz**

Archbishop Carney Regional Secondary School  
(*Emmanuella Triveri, music teacher*)

**Emily Chia**

Burnaby Central Secondary School

**Emily Fan**

Burnaby Central Secondary School

**Elishka Hugo Rucka**

Burnaby Central Secondary School

**Maya Laramée**

Burnaby Central Secondary School

**Candace Lee**

Burnaby Central Secondary School

**Ada Yang**

Burnaby Central Secondary School

**Kelly Yang**

Burnaby Central Secondary School  
(*Carrie Taylor, music teacher*)

**Chloe Cummings**

Carson Graham Secondary School, North Vancouver

**Lauren Gibson**

Carson Graham Secondary School, North Vancouver  
(*Frank Lee, music teacher*)

**River Karac**

Killarney Secondary School, Vancouver  
(*Lisa Reimer music teacher*)

**Ariel Kuiack**

Little Flower Academy, Vancouver  
(*Marizza Mislang, music teacher*)



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

*This list is complete as of February 15, 2023. If there are any errors or omissions, please contact managingdirector@elektra.ca*

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Morna Edmundson  
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*Winston Churchill*



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