**In the Beginning**

*with mezzo-soprano Jennifer Enns Modolo and pianist Lorin Shalanko*

*In the Beginning* (1947) ~ Aaron Copland (1900-1990)


*Songs of Nature* (op. 63; 1882) ~ Antonin Dvorak, (1841-1904)

*this amazing day* (2007) ~ Leonard Enns (b. 1948)

Our concert falls near the midpoint of the spring season, and, fittingly, on Mother’s Day weekend. In keeping with both, the program celebrates creation & nature, spring & new life, and, of course, love.

We begin with one of the great a cappella works of the 20th century, Aaron Copland’s setting of the Genesis creation account. The text is familiar, while Copland’s “reading” is unique and stimulating, alternating between the soloist’s almost cantor-like narration and more expressive choral settings of the text.

Following Copland’s creation account, we perform excerpts from Srul Irving Glick’s celebrative and hopeful *Triumph of the Spirit*. Glick, born a generation after Copland, is Canada’s pre-eminent Jewish composer, whose much-loved compositions include major works both for concert hall and synagogue.

Gwyneth Walker’s *A Heart in Hiding* is a lovely cycle of songs on poems by Emily Dickinson, set for soloist, choir, and piano. Here is someone who has been a faculty member at Oberlin College Conservatory, a dairy farmer for three decades, and all along a prolific composer of beautiful music imbued with energy, reverence, drama and humour. *A Heart in Hiding* speaks more of anticipation and promise than of realization and fulfillment, reflecting perfectly the character of spring time.

Dvorak’s much-loved *Songs of Nature* bring us back to creation, now flourishing and in full bloom, and through a musical language that is familiar, celebrative and joyful.

What remains to be said in response to this remarkable act of creation is “thank you!” and so we end with Leonard Enns’s setting of the wonderful sonnet by e. e. cummings, *i thank You God for most this amazing day*. 