



GIVING IDEAS VOICE
DIRECTED BY LEONARD ENNS

sing me home

May 10, 2025 - 7:30pm

May 11, 2025 - 3:00pm

Trillium Lutheran, Waterloo

with guest pianist **Catherine Robertson**
and cellist **Miriam Stewart-Kroeker**

featuring the music of
Gerda Blok-Wilson
Christine Donkin
Matthew Emery
Jake Runestad and more

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Program

Silent Dawn – Timothy Corlis

I Heard the Bird Cry – Kathryn Rose

***I am Here** (from *Following the Moonroad*) – Christine Donkin**

***How a Place becomes Holy** (from *The Place of Memory*)
– Leonard Enns**

There will be Rest – Frank Ticheli

~intermission~

Come to the Woods** – Jake Runestad

And the Swallow – Caroline Shaw

My heart is Like a Singing Bird – Gerda Blok-Wilson

The Road Home – Stephen Paulus

Lead Us Home – Matthew Emery

Tonight Eternity Alone – René Clausen

*with Miriam Stewart-Kroeker, cello

**with Catherine Robertson, piano

We'd love to visit with you after the concert...
please join us to chat in the reception area!

Most of us are here today as settlers on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples.

Both our venue today and our choir's rehearsal space is built on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted in 1784 to the Six Nations that includes 10 kilometres on each side of the Grand River from its source in Dundalk to its mouth at Lake Erie.

Overview

Home. Today's program is framed by two compositions that take us from silence to silence, beginning with dawn and ending with night-time. Within this framework, the music presents us with various pictures of home: home, as a place of peace, but also as a place that can become unlivable; home as a state of mind, a holy place; as a place of longing, of destination, of celebration, comfort and safety. More than four walls and a roof, homes is found in people, in nature, or in a profound life-changing experience that makes a particular place holy.

For most of us the word conjures ideas of love, care, warmth and acceptance. But not for all. In her searingly troubling poem, "Home", Warsan Shire writes of the refugee experience: *no one leaves home unless... home is the mouth of a shark / home is the barrel of the gun*. Home can become hell; examples are painfully numerous and unnecessary. It is a reality that we acknowledge in the first part of our concert. In contrast, much of the program touches on the joy, promise, and comfort of home.

Thanks for joining us!

Notes & Texts

Program notes written by Leonard Enns

Silent Dawn (2003) – Timothy Corlis

Corlis writes: *Both text and music for Silent Dawn were inspired by the experience of a winter morning, just before sun-rise*. Corlis brings us to a place where, despite that *"all I have known falls into shades of night,"* we are at peace, where we can find home.

Still, still this dawn.

All with winter's hush chill and new born snow.

Be still this dawn

and cradle up this weary place with gentle light.

Still, still this dawn.

Still, though all I have known falls into shades of night.

Be still my soul and love unfading know.

~ text by the composer

***I Heard the Bird Cry* (2020) – Kathryn Rose**

DaCapo NewWorks winner

Kathryn Rose, born in Saskatchewan, commissioned Welsh-Scottish poet Euan Tait to write the lyrics for this piece. His words, written in the aftermath of the devastating Australian fires in 2019/20, refer to the frenzied madness and desperation of catastrophic loss, but also to the empathy and banding together that can occur in such situations. Nearly 3000 homes were lost, along with billions of wildlife creatures and their habitats. The piece brings before us the agony of a world, a home, in ruin, in need of rebuilding and regeneration.

I heard the bird cry,
her fiery wings sing:
"oh my sister,
my broken brother!"
But oh the sear
of perfect beauty!
choir of the creatures
fierce with love,
Their wings our voices
flocking together,
all our anguish
a great gathering.
roaring, tearing,
crying, breaking.

~ Euan Tait

***I am Here* (2018) – Christine Donkin**

from Following the Moonroad; DaCapo commission

Lozan Yamolky, whose poetry Donkin sets to music here, was born in Baghdad in the early 70s, fled to Turkey with her family in the mid-90s, and, after a year of asylum there, came to Canada in 1995. Her powerful and disturbing poetry reflects the horror of the never-ending refugee plight, the loss of home and the desperate search for a safe one.

You won't find me in the abandoned towns,
the empty schools or playgrounds,
or the collapsed hospitals of my homeland.

You won't find me at my friends' houses,
on my bicycle in the parks,
or in a roofless home

on dark and frightening nights.
You won't find me in the market
that now is colorless and empty;
You won't find me on a prayer mat at a mosque
that now is a sniper's enclave;
or on a merciless rocky mountain path
overflowing with women and children
searching for safety.

You won't find me covering my ears
to shut out the din of the relentless bombing.
You won't find me in cities blanketed with smoke,
carpeted with the blood of the innocent
oozing beside a fading horizon that begs the sun
not to leave at dusk.

You won't find me buried along with those
that perished from hunger, from pain
while longing for peace.
You won't hear my name mentioned
in the keening cries of parents
left childless in the mayhem.
You won't find me in the crowd
fleeing the imminent and terrible end

and you won't find me fenced-in
behind a gate from which I cannot escape
and at the mercy of an army that cannot understand
the words I speak.

You won't find me among the little girls
bought and traded and used spoils-of-war.
You won't find me clinging to dear life
on a flimsy boat crossing the sea;
and you won't see my life jacket floating.
You won't find me drowned in the sea,
washed up on an unforgiving shore
or wrapped in a golden rescue blanket
shivering, unable to speak or cry.

You won't find me dousing the flames
of a burning refugee camp in Lesbos.
You won't find me picking up food scraps in Vienna
and you won't spot me escaping bulldozers
crushing my makeshift home
in an icy dawn in Calais.

You won't find me where I used to belong
or where I have been lost on the journey.
I am not there because I have been found.
I am here now.

All you must do is help me grow;
I am the child,
and this is...
 our village.
~ Lozan Yamolky

***How a Place becomes Holy* (2023) – Leonard Enns**
from The Place of Memory

Years ago, a friend sent me Yehoshua November's text, which I found deeply compelling. November, an Orthodox Jewish award-winning poet, is a Professor of Creative Writing at Rutgers University. His poem expresses the transformation from pain and alienation into acceptance, the moment when the place of sorrowful recollection becomes holy, becomes sacred, becomes home.

Sometimes a man
will start crying in the middle of the street,
without knowing why or for whom.
It is as though someone else is standing
there, holding his briefcase, wearing his coat.

And from beneath the rust of years,
come to his tongue the words of his childhood.
"G-d" and "I'm sorry," and "Do not be far from me."

And just as suddenly the tears are gone,
and the man walks back into his life,
and the place where he cried becomes holy.
~ Yehoshua November

***There will be Rest* (2000) – Frank Ticheli**

Sure on this shining night
Of star made shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.
The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.
Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder
Wand'ring far alone
Of shadows on the stars.
~ Sara Teasdale

***Come to the Woods* (2015) – Jake Runestad**

Scottish-born American naturalist John Muir was an early advocate for the preservation of wilderness areas. In this excerpt from his many writings, and throughout all of them, Muir highlights the beauty and healing nature of our environmental home. The final words of this excerpt remind us of the environmental life-giving gift which (still) surrounds us: *Come to the woods, for here is rest*. You will hear that phrase repeated mantra-like in the men's voices as Runestad's composition builds toward the end.

Another glorious day, the air as delicious
To the lungs as nectar to the tongue

The day was full of sparkling sunshine
And at the same time enlivened with one of
The most bracing wind storms

The mountain winds bless the forests with love
They touch every tree, not one is forgotten

When the storm began to sound
I pushed out into the woods to enjoy it
I should climb one of the trees for a wider look

The sounds of the storm were glorious with
Wild exuberance of light and motion
Bending and swirling backward and forward, round and round
In this wild sea of pines

The storm-tones died away, and turning toward the east
I beheld the trees, hushed and tranquil
The setting sun filled them with amber light, and seemed to say
"Come to the woods, for here is rest."

~ John Muir

And the Swallow (2017) – Caroline Shaw

Shaw says she was thinking of the Syrian refugee crisis as she composed the work; she writes: *There's a yearning for a home that feels very relevant today. The second verse is... a beautiful image of a bird trying to keep her children safe – people trying to keep their family safe.*

*how beloved is your dwelling place...
my soul yearns, faints, my heart and my flesh cry out...
the sparrow found a house and the swallow her nest where she may
raise her young...
they pass through the valley of bakka, they make it a place of springs;
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.
~ from Psalm 84*

My Heart is Like a Singing Bird (2024) – Gerda Blok-Wilson

Blok-Wilson writes: *I feel Christina Rossetti's poem exudes happiness and joy in a simple almost "over the top" way – something that we need in a world with many conflicts and challenges. The gentle folk-like nature of her composition evokes comfort, joy, and love.*

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a water'd shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these,
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a daïs of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.

~ Christina Rossetti

***The Road Home* (2005) – Stephen Paulus**

Paulus adapted this song from the original shaped note version in the *Southern Harmony* collection, first published in 1835.

Tell me, where is the road
I can call my own,
That I left, that I lost
So long ago?
All these years I have wandered,
Oh when will I know
There's a way, there's a road
That will lead me home?

After wind, after rain,
When the dark is done,
As I wake from a dream
In the gold of day,
Through the air there's a calling
From far away,
There's a voice I can hear
that will lead me home.

Rise up, follow me,
Come away is the call,
With love in your heart
As the only song;
There is no such beauty
as where you belong,
Rise up, follow me,
I will lead you home.

~ *Michael Dennis Browne*

Lead Us Home (2018) – Matthew Emery

Emery writes: *In moments of conflict, strife, and grief, we turned to music to lead us home and make us whole.*

O though the way be rough and long,
And dangers lurk on every side,
Yet still we lift our constant song,
And music shall be our guide.

Though tempests fill the empty sky,
And terrors vex the circling night,
Yet still with one accord we cry,
And music shall be our light.

Though fear should follow all the way
Along the path our feet must roam.
Yet still with heart and voice we say,
Music shall lead us home.
~ Marjorie Pickthall (adapted by composer)

Tonight Eternity Alone (1991) – René Clausen

Evening, and we are back in our universal home, where the overwhelming sensation is awe and the wonder of the eternal timescale which embraces the brief moment of our lives. We are home.

Tonight, eternity alone is near,
the sunset and the darkening blue, there is no space for fear,
only the wonder of its truth.
~ Thomas S. Jones, Jr. (altered)

The Artists

Miriam Stewart-Kroeker, cellist

Miriam Stewart-Kroeker is a versatile cellist based in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. She's a tenured member of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony and a founder of the Andromeda Piano Trio.

Miriam is a native of Hamilton, Ontario, where she began her studies at the age of 5. She studied with Paul Pulford and the Penderecki String Quartet at Wilfrid Laurier University, where she received an Honours Bachelor of Music in Cello Performance as well as a Diploma in Chamber Music Performance. She went on to complete a Master's degree in Cello Performance at McGill University under the direction of Matt Haimovitz.

On top of performing with various orchestras throughout Ontario, Miriam is an active chamber musician and soloist. She recently performed her first chamber and solo CBC recordings, which will be featured on CBC's In Concert program. The Andromeda Trio recently received two grants from Canada Council for the Arts and the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund to commission and record a piece by local composer, Karen Sunabacka, which will explore Métis-Mennonite relations in Canada, inspired by Karen and Miriam's ancestries on Treaty 1 territory.

Catherine Robertson, pianist

Catherine Robertson has had a long and versatile music career. She has distinguished herself as a pianist, conductor, singer and teacher. For over thirty years Catherine has been a piano, choral and instrumental adjudicator at music festivals across Canada. She received a B. Mus. Piano Performance (Queen's University), Piano Licentiate LRAM (Royal Academy of Music, London, UK) and her M. Mus. Piano Performance (Western University) degrees.

Catherine taught piano and piano literature courses at Conrad Grebel University College for twenty-one years. She conducted the College Chapel Choir for four years. Prior to this, she was a collaborative pianist at Wilfrid Laurier University, and taught piano at Redeemer University College. More recently she has taught and examined at the University of Guelph.

Wide-ranging musical interests and experiences are evident in Catherine's many collaborations. She regularly performs with DaCapo Chamber Choir. Her dedication to new music is also seen in recordings, including piano and chamber compositions of Leonard Enns and Michael Purves-Smith. A love of early music was shown over the fifteen years in which Catherine was

music director and sang with TACTUS Vocal Ensemble. This professional octet specialized in music of the European Renaissance. Catherine sang as a consort member with the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, and had a long association with the Elora Singers as pianist, singer and flautist. Catherine regularly performs for, and served on the board of the Guelph Connections concert series, promoting musical excellence in the city in which she resides.

Leonard Enns, Artistic Director

Enns is the founding director of the DaCapo Chamber Choir, Professor Emeritus of Music at Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo. Also a JUNO nominated composer, Enns anticipates several performances of his new half-hour choral/instrumental suite, *Taiga*, in the coming year, beginning with its premiere by the University of Guelph Choirs in spring of 2026, followed by a performance in BC in the fall of the that year by the Victoria Choral Society.

DaCapo Chamber Choir

The DaCapo Chamber Choir was founded in 1998 in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario under the direction of Leonard Enns. The mission of the choir is to promote the best of contemporary choral music through public performance and recordings, including the intentional championing of music of Canadian and local composers. The choir's NewWorks choral composition competition for Canadian composers (which ran for over a decade) aided in establishing a vibrant and vital presence for recent and emerging Canadian choral music.

The choir has released three CDs: *NewWorks* (2019); the award-winning *ShadowLand* (winner of the 2010 ACCC's National Choral Recording of the Year award, including the Juno-nominated *Nocturne* by Leonard Enns); and *Still* (2004).

For more information about the choir, including photos, sound clips, and more, visit our web site at www.dacapochamberchoir.ca or join our eList by emailing info@dacapochamberchoir.ca.

We're Social!

For behind-the-scenes photos, rehearsal insights, and online savings, follow us on one of our socials!

Choir Members

Soprano

Sara Fretz
Maria Geleynse
Cathleen Leone
Marlys Neufeldt
Sydney O'Brien
Janelle Santi

Tenor

Brian Black
Curtis Dueck
Marcus Kramer
Stephen Preece
Art Winter

Alto

Theresa Bauer
Sarah Flatt
Sara Martin
Nathalie Nasr
Caroline Schmidt
Laura Shantz

Bass

Nick Allen
Dan Cockayne
Dan King
Kento Stratford
Tavis Weber
Lukas Winter

Acknowledgements

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Rachel Harder
Lawrence McNaught
Tom Nagy
Dave Switzer

DaCapo thanks the following organizations and individuals:



PeaceWorks – for hosting our Web site
TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS



We are grateful to Conrad Grebel University College for providing rehearsal space in its beautiful Chapel, where DaCapo was shaped as a child of the Grebel Chapel Choir, and which continues to be our rehearsal home.

There is a strong historic and ideological relationship between DaCapo and Grebel. Artistic director, and Grebel Professor Emeritus, Leonard Enns directed the Grebel Chapel Choir for 33 years; out of this grew the DaCapo Chamber Choir, beginning in 1998 with a dozen alumni.

DaCapo has grown to extend beyond its Grebel origins, but organic connections remain. Even after more than 25 years, a number of the singers are Grebel alumni, and our music continues to be grounded in spiritual and healing convictions shared with the College.

Donors

DaCapo thanks all of our donors, including the many individuals and organizations who wished to remain anonymous.



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