



GIVING IDEAS VOICE
DIRECTED BY LEONARD ENNS

Preserve

May 2, 2026 - 7:30pm

May 3, 2026 - 3:00pm

Trillium Lutheran, 22 Willow St., Waterloo

Featuring the premiere of **Taiga** by Leonard Enns
for choir, oboe & strings

with instrumentalists

Jim Mason, oboe

Gwyneth Thomson & Nora Pellerin, violin

Rebecca Diderrich, viola

Miriam Stewart-Kroecker, cello

Catherine Robertson, piano



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THE CITY OF 
Waterloo

Program

Pan from *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid* – **Benjamin Britten**
oboist, Jim Mason

Another Spring – **Tom Nazziola**
soloists: Janelle Santi, Cathleen Leone, Caroline Schmidt

Everything – **Rodney Sharman**

This Fragile Web – **Christine Donkin**
with violin & piano

~intermission~

Taiga (premiere performance) – **Leonard Enns**
with oboe & strings

The Rose – **Ola Gjeilo**
with piano & strings

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

*DaCapo gratefully acknowledges project funding for
Preserve by the Ontario Arts Council.*



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Overview

What do we cherish, what enchants us, and what do we preserve for both our time and future generations? These questions have guided our three-part concert season which concludes today.

When brutal, inhumane, and capricious acts of violence and political madness continue to overwhelm the news and preoccupy us – when, as Yeats put it, it seems that “the centre will not hold” – even then (i.e. even now) we find healing in the quiet constancy of the earth, of nature, of the fragile web that sustains us. Emily Carr, whose paintings were inspired by the forested skin of Canada’s west coast, left us with the gently assuring words: *Dear Mother Earth, I think I have always specially belonged to you. We leave the mad swirl of “news” noise for the moment, and rest our thoughts in the quietly nurturing green home of the life-giving earth itself, in a “Mother Earth” that both preserves and is worth preserving.*

The visionary naturalist, John Muir, wrote: *Here is the tree lover’s paradise, the woods, dry and wholesome,... fir boughs for beds, cascades to sing us asleep as we gaze through the trees to the stars.* Muir’s words direct us to the gifts and gentle teachings of the natural world, reminders of the re-centering values of gratitude and humility, of the possibility of living in thankful harmony with all life forms. Nature itself is a gift of beauty, grace, calm, and hope – a gift to be cherished and preserved. That sentiment is strong in tonight’s premiere, *Taiga*.

At the same time, our program is tempered by sobering acknowledgments of today’s darker realities. Rodney Sharman’s *Everything* is a relentless claim that “everything is vanishing.” The central movement of *Taiga* gives us a child’s voice as, through tears, she watches the city cut down the trees. The balance of give and take between nature’s nurture and human extraction is delicate, and it does seem that humanity has its finger on the scale, giving us a misreading. As Wilfrid Owen wrote from the trenches of WWI, “All a poet can do today is warn.” So we join the many artists who are contributing to the situation by saying: Look at the gift! it is fragile, please don’t mess it up!

Come with us as the seasons bring us another spring, as the woods give us all manner of life and sustenance (including maple syrup!), and, finally, as the rose returns with its blushing beauty – treasures to be preserved.

Welcome.

Most of us are here today as settlers on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Chonnonton 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.

Notes & Texts

Program notes written by Leonard Enns

Pan (1951) – Benjamin Britten

Pan of ancient Greek mythology, god of fields and forests, is connected to fertility and the season of spring. Britten gives him the voice that leads us into this concert, welcoming spring and taking us into field and forest.

Another Spring (2004) – Tom Nazziola

New York based composer and percussionist Tom Nazziola writes:

The essence of this poem can be found in the opening line:

"The seasons revolve and the years change with no assistance or supervision." Both a comforting and chastening reminder in our day.

The seasons revolve and the years change

With no assistance or supervision.

The moon, without taking thought,

Moves in its cycle, full, crescent, and full.

The white moon enters the heart of the river;

The air is drugged with Azalea blossoms;

Deep in the night a pine cone falls;

Our campfire dies out in the empty mountains.

The sharp stars flicker in the tremulous branches;

The lake is black, bottomless in the crystalline night;

High in the sky the Northern Crown

Is cut in half by the dim summit of a snow peak.

O heart, heart, so singularly

Intransigent and corruptible,

Here we lie entranced by the starlit water,

And moments that should each last forever

Slide unconsciously by us like water

~ Kenneth Rexroth (1905-1982)

Everything (2018) – Rodney Sharman

Among various Canadian and European teaching appointments, Vancouver based Sharman also taught at Wilfrid Laurier University for a period. In the current composition, he takes a minimalist approach, marrying a relentlessly recurring musical motive that reflects the structure of the poem.

Everything is racing
 everything is vanishing
Everything is hosted
 everything is vanishing
Everything in the world that's seen
 everything is vanishing
All the angels rise and sing
 everything is vanishing
Everything that's clothed or bare
 everything is vanishing
Anything for a second there
 everything is vanishing
Everything is racing
 everything is vanishing
Everything is hosted
 everything is vanishing
Music, lovers, pillowslips
 everything is vanishing
Lightning, thunder, hail and rain
 everything is vanishing
In the mountains, on the streets
 everything is vanishing
Scissors, paper, rocks, hands
 everything is vanishing

Everything is racing
 everything is vanishing
Everything is hosted
 everything is vanishing
The fox at night, the birds aloft
 everything is vanishing
Speedwell, crocus, lotus, rose
 everything is vanishing
With arms spread wide
 everything is vanishing
With soft foot-fall
 everything is vanishing
Everything is racing
 everything is vanishing
Everything is hosted
 everything is vanishing
Hear it now, see me now
 everything is racing
 everything is vanishing
Love each other, love each other
 everything is hosted
 everything is vanishing
 ~ Alexander Hutchison
 (1943-2015)

***This Fragile Web* (2013) – Christine Donkin**

Donkin, like Sharman, is also based in BC as composer and educator. Regular listeners will recall that DaCapo commissioned and premiered her deeply moving choral cycle, *Following the Moonroad*, in 2019. (That work was awarded an Honourable Mention in the Outstanding Choral Composition 2020 national competition of Choral Canada)!

In today's three-part choral cycle we are reminded, in turn, of the tender beauty of our Canadian land, of the bitter-sweet nostalgia that often arises in the embrace of our forests, and of the quiet blessing we receive from constancy of nature.

1. Autumn's Orchestra

Know by the thread of music woven through
This fragile web of cadences I spin,
That I have only caught these songs since you
Voiced them upon your haunting violin.

2. The Firs

There is a lonely minor chord that sings
Faintly and far along the forest ways,
When the firs finger faintly on the strings
Of that rare violin the night wind plays,
Just as it whispered once to you and me
Beneath the English pines beyond the sea.

3. Finale

The cedar trees have sung their vesper hymn,
And now the music sleeps—
Its benediction falling where the dim
Dusk of the forest creeps.
Mute grows the great concerto—and the light
Of day is darkening, Good-night, Good-night.
But through the night-time I shall hear within
The murmur of these trees,
The calling of your distant violin
Sobbing across the seas,
And waking wind, and star-reflected light
Shall voice my answering. Good-night, Good-night.
~ Pauline Johnson (1861-1913)

Taiga (2024) – Leonard Enns

The taiga, that great forested necklace around the global arctic, is home to hundreds of Indigenous communities and to all manner of wildlife, a massive fresh water source, and a vital carbon sink and oxygen generator. Along with other forests, the taiga has been called the lungs of the earth. As we know, however, centuries of human exploitation and mistreatment have exhausted its abilities, so that today the taiga has actually become a net emitter of carbon, and the crying need for its rehabilitation, preservation and care is more urgent than ever. The thread of hope is thinning, yet in the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins,

*nature is never spent;
there lives the dearest freshness deep down things.*

The general themes of each of the five movements are:

- i) the beauty and gift of the forest (text by naturalist John Muir);
- ii) the interrelationship of all life forms (text by Métis poet Katherena Vermette);
- iii) human impact on nature (text again by Katherena Vermette, and ancient biblical words);
- iv) the resilience of nature (text by Gerard Manley Hopkins);
- v) again, the absolute wonder of the forest – this “paradise,” as John Muir puts it (texts by John Muir and Rae Crossman). Crossman’s words remind us that our actions – both healing and harmful – leave a “finger print” on the environment.

Taiga was commissioned by the Victoria Choral Society, Brian Wismath, director, and the University of Guelph Choirs, Marta McCarthy, director.

I

The forest hushed and tranquil,
towering above on the slopes of the hills.

Every tree (was) excited.

Every hidden cell throbbing with music and life,
every fibre thrilling like harp strings,
and incense ever flowing
from the balsam bells and leaves.

The setting sun filled it with amber light,
and seemed to say,

“My peace I give unto you.”

~ John Muir, (1838-1914), *A Windstorm in the Forests, and
The Yosemite (excerpted & alt. LE)*

II

she wants to
open her arms
wide enough
stretch them out
like an elm's long branches
to catch
a thousand birds
and hold them close
she thinks
all the animals at the zoo
belong to her
knows them through
her thin tan skin
greet the lion
like an old friend
nods to the monkeys
like cousins
she knows
how we all share
the same air

~ *Katherena Vermette* (b. 1977) *treegirl*

III

she watches the city
cut down trees
bright orange
X
a kill mark
spray painted
across the bark
she watches

until the tree looks nothing
like itself
it is naked
bald
amputated
cut after cut
until the tree is barely
taller than the grass
and pieces sit around the stump
like stones

.....

He will destroy the glory of his forest,
and it will be as when a sick man wastes away.
And the rest of the trees will be so small in number
that a child could write them down.

~ *Isaiah 10:18&19 (alt. LE)*

.....

she studies
the pieces of the tree
tries to count
the yellow rings that were once
inside
but each blonde circle blurs
into the next

~ *Katherena Vermette, green disease (excerpt)*

IV

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

~ *Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), God's Grandeur*

V

Here is the tree lover's paradise, the woods, dry and wholesome,
letting in the light in shimmering masses half sunshine, half shade,
the air indescribably spicy and exhilarating,
fir boughs for beds, cascades to sing us asleep
as we gaze through the trees to the stars.

~ *John Muir, The Treasures of the Yosemite, (excerpted & alt. LE)*

touch
the tip
of a young spruce

go about your life
for twenty or thirty years

come back

lie down on the needle bed

look up

and see your fingerprint on a cloud
~ Rae Crossman, *Want to Touch the Sky?*

***The Rose* (2017) – Ola Gjeilo**

The lily has a smooth stalk,
Will never hurt your hand;
But the rose upon her brier
Is lady of the land.
There's sweetness in an apple tree,
And profit in the corn;
But lady of all beauty
Is a rose upon a thorn.
When with moss and honey
She tips her bending brier,
And half unfolds her glowing heart,
She sets the world on fire.

~ Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

The Artists

Jim Mason, oboist

Jim Mason is one of Canada's most prominent oboists. Recently retired in 2019 from the Principal Oboe position in the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony (a position he held for 40 years), he now spends his time playing chamber music around Ontario and operating a small business selling - what else? - oboes.

Over the years, Mason has been a very familiar face in the musical life of Waterloo Region. He and his wife, violinist Julie Baumgartel, were founding Artistic Directors of the Grand River Baroque Festival. He has performed and recorded most of the oboe's chamber music and solo repertoire, including 7 works that were written specifically for him. Jim was on the faculty at Wilfrid Laurier University for 37 years (7 of which were as a full-time faculty member) and in 2009 was awarded the University's Mentor of the Year award. His students occupy positions in orchestras and universities across North America.

In 1999, in recognition of his contribution to the arts, Mason was given the Kitchener Waterloo Arts Award for Music.

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-five 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 performed for, and served on the board of the Guelph Connections concert series, promoting musical excellence in the city in which she resides.

Dr. Gwyneth Thomson, violin

A graduate of the doctoral performance program at the University of Toronto, Gwyneth Thomson is an accomplished and sought after violinist. She plays regularly with local ensembles, is the principal 2nd of the Spiritus Ensemble, and violinist of the Tannin Trio which is based in the GTA. She teaches 32 piano and violin students per week and runs the Reverberation Concert Series which features the music of predominantly (Canadian) women. When not performing or teaching, she is busy spending time with her two young boys, husband, and dog.

Nora Pellerin, violin

Nora Pellerin completed her undergraduate degree at McGill University, and earned her Master's in Violin Performance at the University of Ottawa, where she received the Bessie Ewen Scholarship in Orchestral Studies. Her musical family cultivated her love of music, and she began playing the violin at age 6. She was an apprentice with the Boris Brott National Academy Orchestra for many summers. Today, Nora performs with orchestras throughout Ontario, including those in Kitchener-Waterloo, Niagara, London, Kingston, Windsor, Ottawa and the Mandle Philharmonic in Toronto. She held the position of principal second in the Georgian Bay and Peterborough Symphonies for many years. Additionally, she has participated in several summer music programs, including Domaine Forget in Quebec and the Toronto Summer Music Academy and Festival, and has taught at music festivals in both Canada and Ireland. She loves performing music with her husband (piano, cello) and son (violin, voice) whenever possible.

Rebecca Diderrich, viola

Born in London ON, Rebecca holds a Bachelor of Music Performance degree from the University of Toronto and a Professional Performance Certificate from Lynn University in Boca Raton Florida. While living in Florida, Rebecca was the principal violist of the Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra and also performed with the Palm Beach Opera Orchestra, Florida Grand Opera, and the Naples Philharmonic as well as being an in-demand chamber and studio musician. Rebecca is now a member of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony and also performs in a variety of other chamber and orchestral settings, including playing frequently with the Canadian Opera Company.

Miriam Stewart-Kroeker, cello

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

Miriam 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. 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 explores Métis-Mennonite relations in Canada, inspired by Karen and Miriam's ancestries on Treaty 1 territory.

Miriam has performed for many chamber music series, including the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society, Conrad Grebel Noon Hour series, Wilfrid Laurier Noon Hour Series, Barrie Concert Association, Music Mondays in Toronto, Between The Ears Festival, Toronto Chamber Players series and much more. In 2013 Miriam completed a winter residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts in solo and chamber music, and her chamber ensembles have been the recipients of numerous awards. She has performed as a soloist with several orchestras and ensembles, including the Cambridge Symphony Orchestra, DaCapo Chamber Choir and the Georgian Bay Symphony.

Leonard Enns, Artistic Director

Leonard Enns is the founding director of the DaCapo Chamber Choir and Professor Emeritus of Music at Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo. His composition, *Taiga*, premiered today, will have regional premieres in their 2026/27 concert seasons by the commissioning choirs: Guelph University Choirs directed by Marta McCarthy, and Victoria Choral Society directed by Brian Wismath.

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.dacapochoamberchoir.ca or join our eList by emailing info@dacapochoamberchoir.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
Sydney O'Brien
Janelle Santi

Alto

Theresa Bauer
Sarah Flatt
Sara Martin
Alex Meinzingen
Nathalie Nasr
Caroline Schmidt

Tenor

Brian Black
Kevin Bui
Curtis Dueck
Marcus Kramer
Nathan Martin

Bass

Reuben Janzen
Chengxian (Eric) Jin
Dan King
Evan Rueb
Kento Stratford
Tavis Weber

Acknowledgements

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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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