



LIGHT

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Pacific Spirit United Church

ON
March 26, 2021

Kari Turunen
CONDUCTOR

WITH GUESTS OF
THE 41ST ANNUAL
CONDUCTORS' SYMPOSIUM

Andrew Bortz
Cassie Luftspring

AND

DARK



2020 / 21 SEASON





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VANCOUVER CHAMBER CHOIR

Artistic Director Kari Turunen began leading the Vancouver Chamber Choir - one of Canada's premier professional choral ensembles - in September 2019, its 49th concert season.

Jon Washburn founded the choir in 1971 and it has become an amazing success story, ranking with the handful of North America's best professional choruses and noted for its diverse repertoire and performing excellence. The choir has presented concerts at home in Vancouver and on tour across Canada. International excursions have taken them

to the USA, Mexico, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Finland, France, Germany, the Czech Republic, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine.

Honoured with the Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence by Chorus America, the choir has performed countless concerts and broadcasts, released 36 recordings and received numerous awards. Foremost supporters of Canadian music, they are responsible for commissions and premieres of 334 choral works by 145 composers and arrangers, most of whom are Canadian. Over the years the choir has sung over 4,000 performances of works by Canadian composers, in addition to their extensive international repertoire.

The choir's award-winning educational programs include the *Conductors' Symposium* for advanced choral conductors, *Interplay* interactive workshops for choral composers, *Focus* professional development program for student singers, *OnSite* visitations for school choirs, the biennial *Young Composers Competition*, and many on-tour workshops and residencies.



KARI TURUNEN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The Vancouver Chamber Choir welcomed Kari Turunen in 2019 as its second-ever Artistic Director in 49 years. Prior to his arrival in Vancouver, Dr. Turunen was a versatile performer on the Finnish choral and vocal music scene. A former college-level teacher, he continues to be a full time conductor, clinician, adjudicator and lecturer in Vancouver, Finland and abroad.

As Artistic Director, he has led prominent Finnish choirs Akademiska Damkören Lyran (1998–2009), Akademiska Sångföreningen (2008–2019), Kampin Laulu chamber choir (2011–2019), the choir of the cantors of the Finnish Lutheran Church and Chorus Cantorum Finlandiae (2011–2019), Spira Ensemble (2012–2019), and the professional early music performers Ensemble Petraloysio and I Dodici, with which he continues to occasionally work. He has won numerous prizes at national and international festivals with his groups and was named choral conductor of the year in Finland in 2008.

Dr. Turunen is a founding member of Lumen Valo, a professional vocal ensemble of eight voices. Lumen Valo has been a driving force on the early music scene in Finland since its conception in 1993 and has made a name for itself in almost 250 concerts around Finland and Europe. The group has recorded nine CDs, all of them critically acclaimed for their fresh programming and quality of singing.

In addition to artistic activities, he has produced events as Artistic Director for the annual Aurora Renaissance Festival and the upcoming Finnish-Swedish Song Celebration in June 2021.

He was educated at the University of Helsinki and the Sibelius Academy where he studied choral conducting (MA). He holds a doctorate in early music performance practice from the University of the Arts, Helsinki.



The Vancouver Chamber Choir acknowledges that it operates and performs on the unceded Indigenous land belonging to the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Səlilwítlul (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We are grateful for this privilege.

VANCOUVER
CHAMBER CHOIR

SOPRANOS

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Beth Currie
Cassie Luftspring
Krista Pederson
Madeline Lucy Smith

ALTOS

Dinah Ayre
Maria Golas
Martina Govednik
Fabiana Katz
Dolores Scott

TENORS

Eric Biskupski
Tristán Chalcraft
Tom Ellis
Eric Schwarzhoff
Rob Workman

BASSES

Steven Bélanger
Andrew Bortz
Jacob Gramit
Paul Nash
George Roberts

VANCOUVER CHAMBER CHOIR
KARI TURUNEN, CONDUCTOR

LIGHT AND DARK

Andrew Bortz
CONDUCTOR

אנעים זמירות (*Anim zemirot*) (2013)

Jacob Mühlrad
(b. 1991)

Tristán Chalcraft, tenor

Cassie Luftspring
CONDUCTOR

Standing as I do before God (2013)

Cecilia McDowall
(b. 1951)

Madeline Lucy Smith, soprano

Lux aeterna (2012)

Ivo Antognini
(b. 1963)

Kari Turunen
CONDUCTOR

Hon (She) (2011)

Eric Banks
(b. 1969)

L'infinito (2020 - WORLD PREMIERE)

Teemu Tammola
(b. 1972)

Madeline Lucy Smith and Emily M Cheung, sopranos
Paul Nash, bass

When David Heard (1999)

Eric Whitacre
(b. 1970)

Eric Schwarzhoff, tenor

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- ❖ **Finding the Still Point *music for healing**** A healing ambience of calm, warmth and consolation projected through 15 beloved choral favourites with interconnecting Gregorian chants.
- ❖ **Unexpected Gifts *music for healing II**** Familiar folk music in choral arrangements with several meditations for harp based on the same themes.
- ❖ **A Quiet Place *music for healing III**** An outstanding collection of choral treasures chosen to help find peace, quiet and healing in today's hectic world.

The Masters Series

- ❖ **BaroqueFest** Festive music of Bach, Purcell, Handel and Monteverdi from a gala Expo 86 concert, with Jon Washburn and Michael Corboz conducting their professional choirs from Canada and Switzerland.
- ❖ **Missa Brevis** Four contrasting short masses by Haydn *Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo*, Fauré *Messe basse*, von Weber *Jubelmesse* and Christoph Bernhard *Missa Durch Adams Fall*.

The Canadian Composer Series

- ❖ **A Garden of Bells*** R. Murray Schafer, Vol. 1: Early choral works including *Miniwanka*, *Epitaph for Moonlight*, *Snowforms*, *Gamelan*, *Sun*, *Fire*, *Felix's Girls* and *A Garden of Bells*.
- ❖ **Imagining Incense*** R. Murray Schafer, Vol. 3: Recent choral works including *Magic Songs*, *Three Hymns*, *Rain Chant*, *Alleluia*, *Beautiful Spanish Song*, *Imagining Incense* and other works.
- ❖ **The Love that Moves the Universe*** R. Murray Schafer, Vol. 4: Three outstanding major works recorded in 2018 for the composer's 85th birthday: the title piece for choir and orchestra, plus *The Star Princess and the Waterlilies* and *Narcissus and Echo*.
- ❖ **Earth Chants** Imant Raminsh, Vol. 2 *Missa Brevis in C Minor*, *Earth Chants* & smaller works.
- ❖ **Due West** Stephen Chatman, Vol. 2 With oboist Roger Cole and pianist Linda Lee Thomas.
- ❖ **Due East** Stephen Chatman, Vol. 3 The Canadian composer's latest pieces since 2000.
- ❖ **Rise! Shine!*** Music of Jon Washburn Including *The Star*, *A Stephen Foster Medley*, *Chinese Melodies*, *Rossetti Songs*, *God's Lamb*, *Noel Sing We!*, *Behold I build an house* and *Rise! Shine!*

The Christmas Recordings

- ❖ **A Dylan Thomas Christmas*** The Vancouver Chamber Choir's signature performance of *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, read by Welsh actor Russell Roberts with special carol settings by Jon Washburn.
- ❖ **A World Christmas** Carols and seasonal songs of many lands from guitarist and arranger Ed Henderson, the Worldfest Ensemble and the Vancouver Chamber Choir with Jon Washburn conducting.
- ❖ **The Miracle of Christmas** Christmas music with a colourful Central and South American flavour played by the ensemble Ancient Cultures with several tracks featuring the Vancouver Chamber Choir.

ANDREW BORTZ

Andrew is a sought-after conductor, composer, singer, pianist, and music educator. He is the founder and artistic director of Aurora Chamber Choir, an auditioned young adult ensemble under the Crescent Choirs umbrella. He is also the collaborative pianist for all of the Crescent Choirs ensembles. As an accompanist, Andrew is known for his sensitive and intuitive music making, and has collaborated with high school, collegiate, and community choirs across the US and Canada. Andrew currently sings bass with Vancouver's *musica intima*.



Andrew received a Master of Music degree in choral conducting from UBC in 2017, where he directed the Chamber Choir, Men's Choir, and Women's Choir. His previous studies include a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington where he studied voice, composition, and piano.

Andrew has an active studio of private singing, guitar, piano, and conducting students. In the past, he has taught choir, band, IB music, and math at Mead High School, Mulgrave School, and Cornerstone Montessori School. He has also worked as the assistant conductor for Vancouver's Phoenix Chamber Choir and Chrysalis Vocal Ensemble.

CASSIE LUFTSPRING

Cassie Luftspring is a versatile choral conductor, composer, soprano, and pianist. She is currently Director of Choral Studies at the Vancouver Academy of Music, Assistant Director of the British Columbia Girls Choir, and a Teaching Artist with Vancouver Opera. She has held conducting positions with several other organizations, including the Vancouver Youth Choir, Vancouver Children's Choir, Pacifica Singers, Cantabile Youth Singers of Silicon Valley, Toronto Children's Chorus, Mississauga Festival Youth Singers, Cantabile Choirs of Kingston, and University of Toronto Women's Chamber Choir and Men's Chorus.



As a professional choral singer, she is the soprano section leader for the Vancouver Bach Choir, and has performed with various local groups including *musica intima* and *Players and Singers*, with Bay Area chamber choir *Convivium*, and with the University of Toronto *Schola Cantorum*. A seven-time winner of the Amadeus Choir's Songwriting Competition, Cassie's compositions and arrangements have been commissioned and performed by ensembles throughout North America. A recipient of numerous academic awards, Cassandra received a Master of Music degree in choral conducting from the University of Toronto, and a degree in piano and composition from Queen's University.

PROGRAM NOTES, TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

LIGHT AND DARK

In a normal year, this concert would have been our Conductors' Symposium concert with a full week of work with five to six conductors working with the choir preceding it. Even in this exceptional year, we wanted to keep the idea of the Symposium alive and decided to invite two promising but already established young conductors to join me on the stage. Cassie Luftspring and Andrew Bortz have shared the rehearsals with me and both conduct the works they have prepared in this concert video.

The program choices are, however, mine. I believe this program reflects how our thoughts and expectations are turning at best from the pandemic to what will follow it. I am sure I am not the only one who is a little apprehensive – disappointment seems to have followed disappointment in the last year and the old normal seems a distant dream. But still, I do feel a new kind of hope and I think this is present in the kind of music I am turning to. During the fall, I felt a great need for something beautiful and comforting, but, of late, I have been seeking out much more diverse music and immersing myself in more expansive, more challenging and more energetic sounds. Even if the subject matter of the works in this concert still seems to revolve around loss, the music opens in many directions. And all of the music is very recent. When the oldest piece on the program is from 1999, I think you can safely define the program as contemporary music!

The term contemporary (or modern) music still tends to send a chill down some spines, but I think contemporary choral music is nowadays a different beast altogether. There is an amazing stylistic diversity in the choral music written in our day. This diversity is both broad and deep: broad in the sense that one can choose to write in so many different musical styles (for example, modernistic or traditional classical, or in styles drawing on pop, jazz, folk or the different music traditions from all over the world) and deep in the sense that one can use and combine the musical styles of different eras. This allows for an incredible kaleidoscope of music. When you add the variety of texts and subjects, I believe the choral music of today is ever more reflective of the cultural diversity of our times.

The works on this program are philosophical or, perhaps even better, humanistic in that they address immense human questions. Some of the works bear references to religion(s), but more than religious, I would define these works as spiritual. The answers to the questions raised are definitely more open-ended than not. Some of the works seem to turn inward and be satisfied with creating a unique, ephemeral world; whilst some seem to reach out stronger and demand us to address the questions they raise. All of the works are excellent choral music, and their composers have their own, unmistakable voices. The video format gives you the chance to revisit this music and I warmly recommend you to do so – so often a new piece requires more time to unfold for us.

Jacob Mühlrad: אנעים זמירות (*Anim zemirot*)

Jacob Mühlrad from Stockholm, Sweden, grew up in an orthodox Jewish family. *Anim zemirot* (2013), the text of which is a synagogue hymn from the 13th century, was Mühlrad's first major success as a composer. The dramatic and voluminous music is sombre and colorful at the same time. It seems to twist and turn in surprising ways and always be in the verge of bursting into a flowing song. Mühlrad has himself said that the work was for him returning to the emotions and sounds of the synagogue services of his early childhood.

אנעים זמירות וְשִׁירִים
אָאָרְגַּב כִּי אֶלֶיךָ נִפְשֵׁי תַעֲרֹג
נִפְשֵׁי חֲמֻדָּה בְּצֶל יָדְךָ
לְדַעַת כָּל רֵז סוּדְךָ
מִדֵּי דַבְּרֵי בִּקְבוּדְךָ
הוֹמָה לְבִי אֶל דּוֹדְךָ

Anim zemirot v'shirim
e'erog ki eilecha nafshi ta'arog.
Nafshi chamda b'tzel yadecha
lada'at kol raz sodecha.
Midei daberu bi'chvodecha
homeh libi el dodecha.

Soothing songs and poems I weave
because my soul longs for you.
My soul desires the shadow of your hand,
to know every one of your secrets.
Each time I speak of your glory,
my heart longs for your love.

(13th century, ascribed to Judah ha-Chasid of Regensburg)

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Cecilia McDowall:
Standing as I do before God

The text of Cecilia McDowall's work *Standing as I do before God* (also from 2013) is a combination of the famous words by English nurse Edith Cavell, who was executed in 1915 for helping allied soldiers escape during WWI, and verses by poet Seán Street that create a context for Cavell's words. McDowall, who turns 70 this year, is an excellent English composer with an extensive body of fine choral works. Her contrapuntal skill and spiced-up harmonic language bear references to the choral music of Benjamin Britten. *Standing as I do before God* is scored for choir and soprano soloist. Most of the emotional expressivity is reserved for the soloist, but the choir certainly plays its part in this sad, but noble story.

I have seen death, seen death so often that it is not strange or fearful to me.
Standing, as I do, in view of God and eternity, I realize that patriotism is not
enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone.

And when the time was close, for once her eyes filled with tears, then she quietly
rose through the stilled prison, grey dawn light, passed gas flame, tired flowers, out
beyond her final night, a flame alight in hours before infinity, in the presence of
death leaving all enmity: in view of God we are air after breath.

Standing as I do.

(Edith Cavell, 1915, and Seán Street)

Ivo Antognini:
Lux aeterna

Ivo Antognini is a Swiss composer with studies in both classical and jazz piano, in addition to composition. Antognini writes of his *Lux aeterna*:

“*Lux aeterna*, for eight-part mixed choir a cappella, is dedicated to my mother, Amelia, and to my father, Giorgio. In this piece I tried to blend a simple melodic idea that could be a thousand years old – descending and ascending scales – with harmonic textures that are much more complex and modern: all this within a rather contrapuntal environment. There are slight but frequent changes of the tonal center; it never ends at a clear point; this shall give to the listener a hypnotic effect. The final chord is a complete D mixolydian scale where the highest note of the male voices (G = Giorgio) and the lowest of the female voices (A = Amelia) symbolize the names of my parents lying next to each other in the middle of this suspended context – the mixolydian mode does not have a tonal stability and this emphasizes the never-ending factor.”

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine:
cum Sanctis tuis in aeternum:
quia pius es.
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine:
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Cum Sanctis tuis in aeternum:
quia pius es.

May light eternal shine upon them, O Lord,
with Thy Saints for evermore:
for Thou art gracious.
Eternal rest give to them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them:
with Thy Saints for evermore,
for Thou art gracious.

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Eric Banks:
Hon (She)

Eric Banks is a choral conductor and composer from Seattle. Banks has a clear voice of his own: he often uses wide-sweeping technical solutions that give the music a solid structure and a flavor of its own. *Hon* (She) is based on a section from a novel by Swedish author and stand-up comedian Jonas Gardell. It is a scene of a daughter in the presence of a dying father and the questions that arise in the moment. This work that groups the voices in four choirs was written for the Norwegian choir Voces Nordicae in 2011. In typical Banks manner, there are two simultaneous languages: the original Swedish and an English translation by the composer. Choir I sings the English mostly in a calm, chant-like manner; Choir IV carries the complete Swedish text and has the most energetic music; whilst Choirs II and III create a sonic field and comment on the events around them – with the exception of one active section. Almost imperceptibly, the music flows through eight different keys (from 3 sharps to 4 flats), all the while telling a touching story.

Hon höll sin fars hand.
Vems hand höll hon i?
Den blev kallare och kallare.

Själv fanns hon där, men
allt som hon hade lärt sig var borta,
allt som hon trodde att hon kunde.

I ett rum nästan utan ljus,
fanns han och hon;
sedan fanns bara hon kvar.

Hon gick ut ur rummet.
Hon såg upp mot himlen.
Hon ville se om hon såg Gud.

Men hon såg bara stjärnorna,
och ett hus med en skorsten
som pumpade ut rök,
så att huset liknade ett lokomotiv.

Det var allt hon såg.

She held her father's hand.
But whose hand was holding hers?
It became colder and colder.

Of course she was there, but
everything she learned had vanished,
everything she believed she could do.

In a room with almost no light,
she stayed there with him,
until only she remained.

She walked out of that room.
She looked up at the sky.
She was eager to find out if she could see God.

But all that she could see were the stars,
and a house with a chimney
so billowing with smoke,
it reminded her of a locomotive.

That was all she saw.

(Jonas Gardell, 1988)

(translated by Eric Banks)

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you

Thank you to
our Concert Patrons,

Heather Wood

&

Matthew Baird

The Vancouver Chamber Choir
appreciates your continued support
of our performances.

Teemu Tammola:
L'infinito

Teemu Tammola is a composer and choral conductor from Helsinki, Finland. No one had really thought of him as a composer before the day of his Master's examination in conducting when the choir of the Sibelius Academy sang his novelty: his *Arnolfini's Engagement* was by far the most interesting piece on the program. Since then he's written choral works at a steady pace and wrote *L'infinito* at my request for us. Teemu was a mathematician before he took up music, and his works are always stylistically and formally well-polished. In *L'infinito*, the harmony is based on the use of chords a minor third from each other either in succession or simultaneously. Here are his own words about the piece:

"After setting Shelley's famous *Ozymandias* (1819) into music 200 years after the poem was written, I found an equally celebrated text in my archives—*L'infinito* by Giacomo Leopardi—clearly waiting for its turn. These two poems were written in the same year and share the theme of transience of things. The former is a relatively straightforward text about the remnants of an ancient statue, whereas *L'infinito* is so subtle and romantic, intimate and warm in its almost terrified contemplation on eternity, that even after composing this song, I can't really tell if the poem is tragically nihilist, or if there is, indeed, some comfort included—or even joy."

Sempre caro mi fù quest'ermo colle,
e questa siepe, che da tanta parte
dell'ultimo orizzonte il guardo esclude.
Ma sedendo e mirando, interminati
spazi di là da quella, e sovrumani
silenzi, e profondissima quiete
io nel pensier mi fingo; ove per poco
il cor non si spaura. E come il vento
odo stormir tra queste piante, io quello
infinito silenzio a questa voce
vo comparando: e mi sovvien l'eterno,
e le morte stagioni, e la presente
e viva, e il suon di lei. Così tra questa
immensità s'annega il pensier mio:
e il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare.

(Giacomo Leopardi, 1819)

This lonely hill was always dear to me,
and this hedgerow, which cuts off the view
of so much of the last horizon.
But sitting here and gazing,
I can see beyond, in my mind's eye,
unending spaces, and superhuman silences,
and depthless calm, till what I feel is almost fear.
And when I hear the wind
stir in these branches, I begin comparing
that endless stillness with this noise:
and the eternal comes to mind,
and the dead seasons, and the present
living one, and how it sounds.
So my mind sinks in this immensity:
and foundering is sweet in such a sea.

(translated by Jonathan Galassi)

Eric Whitacre:
When David Heard

Eric Whitacre achieved an amazing popularity in the choral community at the turn of the millennium and has remained a favorite of choral singers and audiences alike. His *When David Heard* from 1999 is one of his strongest works and, according to the composer, came about as a reaction to his hearing of a tragedy of parents losing both their children in two separate incidents. In Whitacre's own words:

"...so as I set out to write *When David Heard* I decided that my first and most principal musical motive would be silence. Setting this text was such a lonely experience, and even now just writing these words I am moved to tears. I wrote maybe 200 pages of sketches, trying to find the perfect balance between sound and silence, always simplifying, and by the time I finished a year later I was profoundly changed. Older, I think, and quieted a little. I still have a hard time listening to the recording."

When David heard that Absalom was slain
he went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept:
and thus he said: O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom!
Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

(Samuel II 18:33)

W I T H O U R T H A N K S

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\$ 100 - \$ 249 | Anonymous (5) | Rita Acton | Gloria Aldrich | Frank & Anita Anderson | Kenton Anderson | David & Jan Buley | Lloyd Burritt | Frank Cameron | George & Susan Challies* | Dr. Pamela Dalziel | Dr. Terence Dawson | Marilyn deVerteuil* | Marna Disbrow | Richard Dolan | Earl & Monica Drake | Thomas Duncan | Morna Edmundson | Susan Edwards | Elektra Women's Choir | Ian Farthing | Thom Geise* | Victoria Hathaway | Johanna Hickey | Donna Hinds | Ralph Huenemann & Deidre Roberts* | Lars Kaario | Wendy Klein | Joslin Kobyłka | Ron Lambert | Sophia Leung | Laurel March | Peter Mercer | Colin Miles* | Craig Morash* | Paul Nash | Sumiko Nishizawa | William Patey | Jocelyn Pritchard* | Imant Raminsh | Patrice Ranger | Ronald Schubank | Eileen Sengara | Elizabeth Snow | David Squires | Dr. Ian and Mrs. Jane Strang | Lucille Taylor | Ching Tien | Anthony Tobin | Joel Tranquilla | Anna Turunen | Victoria Uberall* | José Verstappen | Margaret Wadge | Marianne Werner | Tom Whalley | James W. Wright

Up to \$100 | Anonymous (8) | Maria Baharustani | Lois Bewley | Marilyn Clark* | Jenny Crober | Colin Dowson | Judith Forst* | Sarah Gaddes | Nancy Garrett | Michael B. Hare | Drusilla Harding | Dr. Peter Harmon | Shirley & David Hsu | Rudolf & Ulrike Janzen | Dianne Kennedy | Ann Marie McGrath | Jean Pamplin | Ian Perry | Silva Plut | Carman J. Price | Jennifer Price | David Rain | Stan Ridley | George & Frances Roberts | Rogers' Chocolates | Polly Sams | Dr. Heather Sutherland

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My wife, Marion Haney | Ron Haney

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In memory of Bob | Jean Pamplin

Fern Seaboyer | Karen Seaboyer*

IN APPRECIATION

Dubravko Pajalic – for Beethoven Devotion participation

IN HONOUR

A friend in San Mateo, CA – in honour of Brent Hunter
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