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ON  
December 11, 2020

Kari Turunen  
CONDUCTOR



# NEVER ALONE ALONE ALONE ALONE



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## Vancouver Chamber Choir

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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 Aurore 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/Səl̓ilw̓itl̓ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We are grateful for this privilege.

VANCOUVER  
CHAMBER CHOIR

SOPRANOS

Emily M Cheung  
Christina Cichos  
Beth Currie  
Krista Pederson  
Madeline Lucy Smith

ALTOS

Dinah Ayre  
Maria Golas  
Martina Govednik  
Fabiana Katz  
Dolores Scott

TENORS

Eric Biskupski  
Tom Ellis  
Eric Schwarzhoff  
Rob Workman

BASSES

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Andrew Bortz  
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George Roberts  
Wim Vermeulen

VANCOUVER CHAMBER CHOIR  
KARI TURUNEN, CONDUCTOR

NEVER ALONE

**In Remembrance** (from *Requiem*)

Eleanor Daley  
(b. 1955)

**Ella Sunlight** (from *Eulogies*)

John Estacio  
(b. 1966)

Madeline Lucy Smith, soprano

**In paradisum**

Christine Donkin  
(b. 1976)

**Do not stand at my grave and weep**

(premiere of version for mixed voices)

Stephen Chatman  
(b. 1950)

**Alouette Meets Her Maker**

Chris Sivak  
(b. 1982)

Christina Cichos, soprano

**Ubi caritas**

Imant Raminsh  
(b. 1943)

**After the Last**

(premiere)

Don Macdonald  
(b. 1966)

**Loam**

Nicholas Ryan Kelly  
(b. 1987)

**Pacem**

Steven Bélanger, baritone

Don Macdonald

**Icarus**

Kristopher Fulton  
(b. 1978)

**Tabula rasa**

Emily M Cheung and Beth Currie, sopranos

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# PROGRAM NOTES, TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

## NEVER ALONE

The fall season of the Vancouver Chamber Choir has featured many works that address loss, death and solace. This was not entirely intended, and I believe my intuition guided me to music that met the reality of this pandemic year head-on. And as music almost always does, it has given me comfort, strength and belief in life. With music, I am never alone.

In this first concert of 2021, I have not been able to completely let go of these themes. Early in the year we stand Janus-faced: we look back to what was and try to comprehend, at the same time as we look forward and try to summon all the optimism and courage the new year needs and demands. Thus, the program moves from darkness to light, but never from a complete darkness and never to a shade-free brightness. All through this journey, we are constantly reminded we are not alone. We made it through 2020 together and we will build the future together.

### Eleanor Daley: In Remembrance

Eleanor Daley's *In Remembrance* is from her *Requiem* that was commissioned and premiered (in 1993) by the Elmer Iseler Singers. The work won the national Outstanding Choral Composition of the Year by the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors in the following year. *In Remembrance* is painted with a light brush and is almost fleeting in character. The well-known poem is attributed to Mary Elizabeth Frye (1905–2004).

Do not stand at my grave and weep.  
I am not there, I do not sleep  
I am the thousand winds that blow,  
I am the diamond glint on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,  
I am the gentle morning rain.

And when you wake in the morning's hush,  
I am the sweet uplifting rush  
of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry,  
I am not there, I did not die.

*(Anonymous, possibly by Mary Elizabeth Frye, 1905–2004)*



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

John Estacio:  
**Ella Sunlight**

John Estacio's *Ella Sunlight* is a movement from a larger work, the *Eulogies* from 2000. *Ella Sunlight* is its fourth and last movement. The poet, Val Brandt, has described the background in the following manner:

I know a woman whose only child died at the age of four. Her grief was so complete that she could never be consoled. Her friends told me it was as if there was no one there for them to console. She had been a mother. That was how she defined herself. Then one day her child was gone... and in a sense, so was she. What could anyone say? "I know how you feel?" "I understand?"

Estacio treats this crushing text with a gentleness that makes it bearable. The idea of adding a fragment of the Requiem into the text gives the work a much-needed objectivity and solace. Estacio sets the "Ella..." sentences in an almost pop-song-like simplicity, whereas the solo soprano, the mother's voice, is harmonically more edgy and emotionally much rawer.

Ella sunlight,  
Ella sky,  
Ella water,  
Ella air,  
Ella music,  
Ella dance,  
Ella wonder,  
Ella joy.

*Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem.* [Sweet Lord Jesus, give them peace.]

Why after I taught you all your colours would you paint everything gray?

Why just when you were learning to run would the whole world come to a halt?

Why after you tumbled with fairies and stumbled with elves and fell into a giggle that filled every corner of my soul,  
why would you take away my faith, my whimsy, my God?

*Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem.*

Were you sent here just to say goodbye?

Ella whisper,  
Ella sigh,  
Ella shimmer,  
Ella hush,  
Ella why.

(Val Brandt)

Christine Donkin:  
**In paradisum**

Even Christine Donkin's *In paradisum* is a fragment from the traditional Requiem Mass – "In paradisum" is sung as the deceased is being taken out of the church at the end of the funeral service. Donkin's work from 2008 is scored for eight voices. She varies the use of these voices beautifully moving fluently from solos in the soprano to imitative duets and rich, full eight-part harmonies. This small work is delightfully wrought and is simple, yet elegant.

In paradisum deducant te angeli;  
in tuo adventu suscipiant te martyres,  
et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem.  
Chorus angelorum te suscipiat,  
et cum Lazaro quondam paupere,  
aeternam habeas requiem.

May the angels lead you into paradise;  
may the martyrs receive you at your arrival  
and lead you to the holy city Jerusalem.  
May choirs of angels receive you  
and with Lazarus, once (a) poor (man),  
may you have eternal rest.

Stephen Chatman:  
**Do not stand at my grave and weep**

Stephen Chatman's creative energy shows no signs of waning and *Do not stand at my grave and weep* is the second Chatman premiere of our fall season. From 2019, this piece is a sustained, harmonically wrought work. Its tempo scheme is very deliberate, and the way Chatman moves from one tonality to another only to make an elegant return shows great skill.

Where charity and love are, there God is.  
The love of Christ has gathered us into one.  
Let us fear and let us love the living God.  
And from a sincere heart let us love each other (and Him).

Where charity and love are, there God is.  
Therefore, whensoever we are gathered as one:  
Let cease malicious quarrels, let strife give way.  
And in the midst of us be Christ our God.

Where charity and love are, there God is.  
Together also with the blessed may we see,  
Gloriously, Thy countenance, O Christ our God:  
A joy which is immense, and also approved:  
Through infinite ages of ages. Amen.

Do not stand at my grave and weep.  
I am not there, I do not sleep  
I am the thousand winds that blow,  
I am the diamond glint on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,  
I am the gentle morning rain.

And when you wake in the morning's hush,  
I am the sweet uplifting rush  
of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry,  
I am not there, I did not die.

*(Anonymous, possibly by Mary Elizabeth Frye, 1905–2004)*

Chris Sivak  
**Alouette Meets Her Maker**

“The *Alouette I* was the first Canadian satellite and was launched on September 26th, 1962. The launch made Canada the third nation, after the USSR and the United States, to design and construct its own satellite and cemented Canada's reputation as a space-faring nation. *Alouette's* mission lasted for 10 years before she was deliberately switched off on September 30th, 1972. She remains in orbit – as a derelict – to this day.

In this piece, *Alouette's* circuits inexplicably come alive after remaining dormant for over 30 years. As she becomes aware once again of her orbit and proximity to earth she hears an inexplicable voice from deep space. The voice calls to her soothingly until its intentions are revealed to be malicious once it threatens to literally pluck her from the sky (ie. “*Je te plumerai*”).

*Alouette* panics and sends out desperate pleas for help but she can't fight the forces pulling her to her doom. She careens to the ground below, exploding in a fiery heap. The piece closes with the last gasp of life from her circuits before they are silenced forever.”

– Chris Sivak

Alouette, gentille alouette,  
alouette, je te plumerai.

Lark, nice lark,  
lark, I will pluck you.

*(Folksong)*

Imant Raminsh:  
**Ubi caritas**

Imant Raminsh is one of the leading Canadian choral composers of his generation. His choral music is often quite instrumental in character and a great deal more demanding than a good performance might suggest. *Ubi caritas* flows and breathes almost seamlessly through the three stanzas. The melodic line moves from soprano to alto and back before being taken up by the tenors in the lilting third stanza; the sopranos join the tenors in the culmination of the work and then resume melodic duties to take the work to an optimistic ending.

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.  
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.  
Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.  
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.  
Simul ergo cum in unum congregamur.  
Cessent iurgia maligna, cessent lites.  
Et in medio nostri sit Christus Deus.

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.  
Simul quoque cum beatis videamus.  
Glorianter vultum tuum, Christe Deus.  
Gaudium quod est immensum, atque probum,  
sæcula per infinita sæculorum. Amen.

Don Macdonald:  
**After the Last**

*After the Last* is the second premiere of this concert. Don Macdonald is known for his film music and beautiful choral music. This piece, perhaps a response to the heaviness of this pandemic year, is also beautiful, but more concise and introverted than *Pacem* and *Tabula rasa*, which will be heard later in the program. *After the Last* is almost entirely homophonic (all voices sing the same rhythms and text simultaneously) and the *clou* is in the surprising chordal progressions that are repeated over and over. The chords themselves are often spiced with added notes, giving them an ambiguity that creates energy. The piece has, despite its brevity, a clear character of its own and it creates an atmosphere that outlives itself.

Here at the last,  
My love.  
Soon to that vast  
Unknown.  
So close to the summit  
But slowing.  
Whispers urge your going.

Give up the fight,  
My love.  
The night can be friend  
Not foe.  
Some battles are won by leaving  
Or letting go.

Roots will come greet us,  
Weaving a blanket  
Midst rock and loam.  
And forests will feed us,  
Serving a banquet  
Of seed and cone.

Never alone.

And when it's my last  
My love  
I will hold fast  
To love  
And dreams of embrace,  
A gathering place

Where roots will come greet us,  
Weaving a blanket  
Midst rock and loam.  
And forests will feed us,  
Serving a banquet  
Of seed and cone.

Never alone, never.  
Never, never alone.  
After the last,  
My love.

(Don Macdonald)

Nicholas Ryan Kelly:  
**Loam**

Like most composers on this program, Nicholas Ryan Kelly is a BC resident. His work *Loam* was first workshopped and performed in Banff by Pro Coro Canada in 2019. It is a beautifully structured work to a poem by the American early 20<sup>th</sup>-century poet Carl Sandburg. The music moves freely in a free-tonal landscape and the way the composer builds the long wave that leads to the culmination is impressive.

In the loam we sleep,  
In the cool moist loam,  
To the lull of years that pass  
And the break of stars,

From the loam, then,  
The soft warm loam,  
We rise:  
To shape of rose leaf,  
Of face and shoulder.

We stand, then,  
To a whiff of life,  
Lifted to the silver of the sun  
Over and out of the loam  
A day.

(Carl Sandburg)

Don Macdonald:  
**Pacem**

Don Macdonald's *Pacem* (Peace) is a flowing work from 2016 set to seven sentences about war and peace in Latin, the most striking of which is "War is the poison [virus] of the world". The work is strongly linear, with the main theme being a staggered downward scale in the sopranos. Macdonald builds long and strong rising waves, the last of which takes us to the expansive ending of the work.

Pacem non bellum	Peace not war
Pacem in aeternam	Eternal peace
Dona nobis pacem	Grant us peace
Pacem in terris	Peace on earth
Scelus est bellum	War is a crime
Bellum est mundi virus	War is the poison of the world
Si vis pace para pactem	If you want peace agree to keep the peace

Kristopher Fulton:  
**Icarus**

I had the good fortune of conducting the premiere of Vancouver-based composer Kristopher Fulton's *Icarus* when guest-conducting Laudate Singers here in 2007, when I had no idea I could ever end up a Vancouverite. *Icarus* and *Alouette* form a pair in my mind. Both are optimistic, forward-looking ventures – success is not guaranteed, but the courage behind the ventures is commendable (even if the teaching of the Icarus myth might be to avoid reaching for the stars...). Fulton's work is scored for eight voices and has a ternary or cyclical structure, heard in many of the works of this concert. The beginning and ending are more stagnant, with sumptuous harmonies, and the middle part, a depiction of the flight, is energetic, rhythmical and soaring.

Icarus was boy destined to fall  
Wondering at the sight of birds taking flight  
And soaring far above the Earth.

Icarus dreams of flying, receives his wings made by his father and  
Climbs up to the highest cliffs of his island prison and  
Prepares to take flight.

Fly! Icarus the flying boy,  
Screaming through the clouds above the Earth.

Icarus slows his flight over Earth far above the shores on his mainland home.  
Deciding whether or not to land.  
Reflecting, debating, will he leave his new home in the Heavens?  
Icarus takes one last look at the Earth and turns back toward the sky.

Icarus the flying boy,  
Screaming through the clouds and sky.  
Icarus, flying higher with each moment, soars into the sky  
And into the golden sun and falls...

Falls under his wings of wax.

*(Kristopher Fulton)*



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Don Macdonald:  
**Tabula rasa**

We end with a third Macdonald work, *Tabula rasa* (Blank slate). This work from 2010 is set to a poem by the composer's spouse, singer Allison Girvan. The Spanish text receives a homophonic chordal musical form that is broken only in the middle part listing the essential freedoms that are requisite for growth. This is a beautiful work that encompasses both the intimacy of the lullaby and the soaring, hopeful thoughts of the parent singing.

En mis brazos, respira,  
vida sin límites,  
luz del día, noche oscura,  
duerme, sueña, duerme con seguridad.

Con su corazón, su alma,  
escucha y sabe esta verdad:  
dentro de ti hay futuros ilimitados  
si le dan la libertad.

Libertad de crecer,  
libertad de aprender,  
libertad de tocar,  
libertad de sentir,  
libertad de imaginarse,  
libertad de volar,  
libertad de adorar,  
libertad de ser amado.

En mis brazos, respira,  
vida sin límites,  
luz del día.  
Lo mismo es válido para todos.  
Duerme, sueña, en mis brazos,  
duerme con seguridad.  
Respira.

In my arms, breathe,  
life without limits,  
light of day, dark night.  
Sleep, dream, sleep in safety.

With your heart, your soul,  
listen and know this truth:  
within you are boundless futures  
if you are given freedom.

Freedom to grow,  
freedom to learn,  
freedom to touch,  
freedom to feel,  
freedom to imagine,  
freedom to fly,  
freedom to love,  
freedom to be loved.

In my arms, breathe,  
life without limits,  
light of day.  
The same is true for everyone.  
Sleep, dream, sleep in my arms,  
sleep in safety.  
Breathe.

*(Allison Girvan)*

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New Honorary Patron  
**Imant Raminsh**

Music and Symbiosis

One of Canada's most internationally famous composers, Imant Raminsh, C.M., came to this country from Latvia at the age of five. He studied violin, composition and conducting in Toronto and in Salzburg, and eventually settled in BC's Okanagan Valley where he founded the Aura Chamber Choir and played violin in the Okanagan Symphony.



Here are his comments upon recently being appointed as an Honorary Patron of the Vancouver Chamber Choir:

"My life's journey first intersected with that of Jon Washburn in the late 60s when we were both graduate students at the UBC School of Music. Little did I anticipate that some ten years later Jon would become the first and most important champion of my choral music when he and the Vancouver Chamber Choir premiered my Ave verum corpus.

In the years following, we became close friends and colleagues and I benefited hugely from the musical symbiosis between the VCC as commissioners and performers and me as a composer. I was a frequent overnight house guest at the home of Jon and his lovely wife Linda Lee Thomas. We shared thoughts and dreams over meals and coffee. I celebrated with them when their son Michael was born. We shared many cherished moments planning performances and CBC recordings.

There are many memories that could be retold, many anecdotes to be shared, but probably the one that stands out most vividly concerns the VCC's 1989 tour to the Baltic States and Russia. As a final encore to a highly successful concert in Riga, Jon and the VCC decided to sing my arrangement of Pūt vējiņi, a Latvian folk song that, unbeknownst to me, had become something of an "underground" national freedom song. To the unforewarned, unsuspecting audience of largely choral aficionados and leading lights, the moment was so electrifying that it is still remembered there today.

Such is the power of song, and such is this wonderful choir and its marvellous Founder and Conductor Emeritus who gave voice to what I had to say."

Imant Raminsh, 2021



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**My wife, Marion Haney** | Ron Haney

**Björn Nitting** | Al & Violet Goosen | Viviane Nitting | John & Leonora Pauls

**In memory of Bob** | Jean Pamplin

**Fern Seaboyer** | Karen Seaboyer\*

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A friend in San Mateo, CA – in honour of Brent Hunter  
Shirley Bens – in honour of Dr. Robert Rothwell's retirement  
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