

PRO CORO CANADA

choral experiences 20.21

new s p @ c e s

**PRO CORO CANADA'S
40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

January 30, 2021

Between 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Pro Coro Canada acknowledges that we gather on Treaty 6 territory, the traditional gathering place of many indigenous nations whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our community.

Index

Program	3
Silent Auction Information	4
Memories From Former Pro Coro	
Singer, Connie Bromley	5
Pro Coro Canada	7
Our Conductor	
Michael Zaugg	8
Our Composer-in-Residence	
Alberto Grau	9
Our Honourary Patron	
Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell	10
Our Honorary Director	
Sarah Chan	10
Our Board of Directors & Staff	11
Our Supporters	12

Program

Pro Coro Canada's 40th Anniversary Celebration

Laurier Fagnan, DMA - Host

With special appearances by:

Maria Guinand & Alberto Grau

David Garber

Eva Bostrand

Richard Sparks

Russ Mann

Trent Worthington

Michael Zaugg

Robert Barrett

And Founding Artistic Director Michel Marc Gervais

Musical selections performed by Pro Coro Canada

Silent Auction Information

Register to bid on our online auction items at:

www.auctria.com/auction/ProCoro40thAnniversary



Thank you for joining Pro Coro Canada as we celebrate 40 years of excellence in choral music! We welcome you to our first ever online auction, where you will find many exciting items that have been donated by our choir, Board members, and members of our community.

If you would like to bid on any of these items, you will need to register for this auction site by [clicking here](http://www.auctria.com/auction/ProCoro40thAnniversary).

This auction is open for bidding between 11am on Saturday, January 30, and 12pm on Sunday, January 31 (MST)

PLEASE NOTE: Some items in our auction are available to anyone, anywhere (ie. season passports for our 21.22 season, individual tickets to our online concerts) and some items are available for local pick-up only. Items such as the pressure cooker, the mandolin, and the artwork will need to be picked up at the Pro Coro office. Pick-up times will need to be arranged with our staff by emailing us at thechoir@procoro.ca. Winners will be notified via email when the auction closes on Sunday, January 31, and payments can be made directly through your Auctria account. You will also be notified via email if you have been out-bid on an item.

Memories From a Former Pro Coro Singer

Hello, my name is Connie Bromley, and I was an alto with Pro Coro from 1986-2003. I sang under Michel Gervais, Eric Ericson, Anders Eby, Soren Hansen, Anders Orwahl, Gustaf Sjovkvist, Erik Westberg, Tony Kaluste, Agnes Grossman, Elmer Eisler, Murray Schaffer, Ward Swingle, Frieder Bernius, Diane Loomer, Richard Sparks, Maria Guinand, Len Ratzlaff, and others I may be forgetting to mention. I had just begun teaching voice at Concordia College when I began with Pro Coro, and the Scandinavian conductors were a wonderful influence for me. I believe the concert I needed to prepare the most for was the Concept one with Ward Swingle. His music was hand written, and difficult to read! The people who sang that concert were Eva Bostrand and Linda Perillo, sopranos; Avaleigh Crockett and myself, altos; Trent Worthington and Matt Gould, tenors; and Michel Gervais and David Garber, basses. We performed such works as Overture to the marriage of Figaro, Flight of the Bumble Bee, and Air on a String by Bach. Ward would snap his fingers while he conducted, and one can hear it on the recording!

Rehearsals at first were at First Presbyterian Church and McDougall United Church I believe. Later, we rehearsed in All Saints Cathedral, and also sang our concerts there. We were all thrilled when we could rehearse and give concerts at the Winspear! We auditioned every year. I sat in the alto section beside Avaleigh Crockett. She was my rock - she was always "on" musically and was clever and quick.

Retreats were always fun. Ones I remember especially were the ones at Camp Nakamun where there were good meals, comfortable rooms, and a swimming pool. It seemed to be a repeated event that Trent would hop down the hall in his sleeping bag to my and Avaleigh's room. At one of the retreats, after our day's rehearsals with Frieder Bernius, we went to the bar at Onaway in the evening. Trent Worthington and Martin - now Kieren - Murphy entertained us. Frieder kept saying "fantastisch, fantastisch"!

A special time was staying in Calgary for a couple nights, and singing for the opening for the Winter Games in 1988. I believe Oscar Peterson played, and at the time, Max Headroom was popular, so he was there as well. As far as I remember, we were in the Saddle Dome.

There was a period that I was a singer rep on the board. It was during this time that Les Stahlke came onto the board. His wife Paula had terminal cancer, and Pro Coro went to the palliative care facility and sang a work by Bach, which was her favourite composer. The choir also sang for her funeral. It was after that that Les sponsored the Good Friday concerts at the Winspear. Other board members and faithful supporters who were active during the time I was in Pro Coro were Ed Bridges and Esther Ondrack, and of course many others.

Singers and friends of Pro Coro worked Bingos and Casinos. Madge McCready arranged for volunteers for years for the Casinos. We worked our Bingos at West Edmonton Mall and there was still smoking allowed - not a great place for singers. Agnes Grossman was interested in going to a Bingo, so I recall taking her there. The only problem was, she wore her mink, and the staff at the hall had to find a place to hang it where it would not gather all the smoke! That was an interesting evening! It wasn't long after that that Agnes received an invitation to conduct the Vienna Boy's choir, which her father had conducted for years. She was the first woman to be asked, and she accepted.

Another incident I remember was with Anders Orwahl. He had never seen a buffalo, and dearly wanted to, so offered to take him to Elk Island Park. Unfortunately, it wasn't the best time of the year for viewing buffalo, I think they were mostly in paddocks. Well, didn't we find a big bull lying down in a ditch alongside the road. Before I realized, Anders was out of the car and was up close taking pictures! He was so excited about the buffalo, and I was sooo excited that he was back in the car safely!

One person I want to be sure to mention before I end this epistle is Jeremy Spurgeon. He was a fixture for our choir. Always there, always accurate, ready and so gifted. We were so fortunate to have him as our rehearsal accompanist, pianist, and organist.

I count the 17 years I sang with Pro Coro a wonderful gift in my life. I look back with many fond memories, and thank the singers, conductors, and supporters who have made it possible for this choir to celebrate 40 years.

Connie Bromley

Pro Coro Canada

Founded in 1981 by Canadian Michel Marc Gervais, Pro Coro Canada has performed at the Toronto International Choral Festival (1994 and 2002), the 1988 Olympic Arts Festival, and Canadian Voices (2003 landmark series of concerts celebrating 50 years of professional choral singing in Canada and R. Murray Schafer's 70th year). The choir has commissioned dozens of new works, the majority by Canadian composers. Pro Coro Canada produced the second Edmonton International Choral Festival from May 30th to June 2nd, 2019.

The twenty-four voices of Pro Coro Canada have been shaped by some of the finest choral conductors in the world, including Gervais, Anders Eby (Sweden), Søren Hansen (Denmark), Agnes Grossmann (Austria), and Richard Sparks (USA). Guest conductors have included Frieder Bernius, Eric Ericson, Gary Graden, Maria Guinand, Bo Holten, Elmer Iseler, Tönu Kaljuste, Diane Loomer, Leonard Ratzlaff, Ward Swingle, Ivars Taurins, Jon Washburn, and Erik Westberg. In early 2012 Michael Zaugg was announced as Pro Coro's new Artistic Director and Principal Conductor.

Under the direction of Swiss-born Michael Zaugg, the choir is widely recognized as one of this country's finest. The choir is particularly proud of its composer-in-residence program with internationally renowned composer Alberto Grau; its appointment as Faculty in the Choral Art program at the Banff Centre; and critically acclaimed tours of four provinces. Pro Coro Canada believes strongly in community partnerships and over the past few years has collaborated with many community choirs as well as mentoring young choral artists through their Emerging Artist Program.



Our Conductor

Michael Zaugg, Artistic Director & Principal Conductor

Swiss-native Michael Zaugg has distinguished himself as an innovative and versatile conductor, pedagogue and clinician. Currently in his 7th season as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the professional chamber choir Pro Coro Canada in Edmonton, Michael also previously led other notable Canadian choirs including, in Montreal, the St. Lawrence Choir (2008-2013) and voces boreales (2006-2015), and the Cantata Singers Ottawa (2005-2014).

As Chorus Master of the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal (2006-2011), Michael successfully prepared groups of up to 1500 singers for OSM Artistic Director Kent Nagano, including the award-winning production Saint François d'Assise by Messiaen. Michael also prepared the Cantata Singers Ottawa for their appearances with the National Arts Centre Orchestra under conductors such as Franz-Paul Decker, Trevor Pinnock, and Helmuth Rilling.

Active as a Guest Conductor, Michael Zaugg has worked with notable groups including the Vancouver Chamber Choir, National Youth Choir of Canada, the BBC Singers, Vancouver's musica intima, Thirteen Strings, as well as the Longueuil Symphony Orchestra. Michael's US debut was with the Grammy-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street in New York. Over the last three years, he has led a 60-voice



male choir, with singers selected from across Canada, the US and the Ukraine, to perform the Resurrection Liturgy by Fr. John Sembrat (Alberta) in tours across the Prairies and to Toronto, Philadelphia, Rochester and New York City.

Originally an accomplished tenor, Michael became the first Swiss conductor to be accepted to the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm, Sweden in its prestigious post-graduate program for Professional Choir Conducting. Mr. Zaugg also holds degrees in voice and music education from the University in Basel. In 2018 he was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music (Hon DMus) by Scotland's King's College, University of Aberdeen.

Michael Zaugg is strongly committed to his work not only with choirs but also with emerging artists, and is the Program Director of CHORAL ART at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. His work with and support of emerging Canadian composers is presented through Pro Coro Canada's Choral Series, distributed by the Leading Note in Ottawa.

Our Composer-in-Residence

Alberto Grau

Alberto Grau is a renowned composer, conductor, pedagogue from Venezuela, born in Cataluña. He is the founder of professional choral studies in Venezuela.

The Schola Cantorum de Caracas (now de Venezuela), internationally known Venezuelan choir was founded by Grau in 1967 (in 2017 it celebrated its 50th anniversary). He led this famous group to win the Guido D'Arezzo Choral Competition in 1974. He also founded the Movimiento Coral Cantemos, another institution that has participated in the choral movement of Venezuela.

Grau has been Vice President of the International Federation of Choral Music (1982-1996) where he promoted the International Singing Day (World Choral Day), celebrated every year worldwide.

In the choral field, he has composed for mixed choirs and equal voices (female, male and children). His choral works have been premiered by different choirs from diverse continents and published by GGM Ediciones (Venezuela), Earthsongs (USA), À Coeur Joie (France) and Neil A. Kjos Music Co.(USA).



He has been awarded several national and international prizes such as:

- Jose Angel Montero National Music Prize in three categories: *Triptico* (songs for mezzo soprano and piano, 1983 for *Dies Irae*, and 1987 *Pater Noster*, both for mixed choir.
- First Prize, International Choral Singing Day, 1978 (Barcelona, Spain), for *La Doncella*, ballet for mixed choir, narrator and orchestra.
- Fama prize in the Arts, for his *Five Songs for Children*, based on the popular poetry "El San Pedro".
- Choral Expression and Composition Prize (sixth edition, 1998), Gran Canarias Government (Spain), for his *Operetta Ecológica* in four acts.

In July, 2017 his most recent composition for childrens choir and orchestra was premiered at New York's Carnegie Hall.

Our Honourary Patron



Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell

The Right Honourable Kim Campbell PC CC OBC QC, currently the founding principal of the Peter Lougheed Leadership College at the University of Alberta, has led an exemplary public life, having served as a School Board Trustee and Chair, an MLA for Vancouver-Point Grey and as MP for Vancouver Centre.

While considering the appointment as Honorary Patron, Ms. Campbell reflected on her love of the arts in general and choral music specifically. She spoke of being a singer and chorister while studying at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Ms. Campbell said, “Among my memorable experiences at the LSE was learning to sing the choral music of Britten, Bach, Mozart, Orff and others. Rather than being a distraction from my studies in Soviet Government, my involvement with the choir (as president of the Music Society, no less) enriched my thinking and well-being in the company of other like-minded scholars. I am very happy to support the work of Pro Coro Canada, which represents the highest level of this beautiful art form.”

Sarah Chan
Honourary Director

Sarah Chan MA is a teacher, musician, writerly-type, and mother of Dexter and Alice. She runs a full time private piano studio, and publishes the blog *Girls and Bicycles*. Her current volunteer focus is on the United Way's youth initiative. Sarah also spends her time with: Big Brothers, Big Sisters; friend of Norquest College; co-chair for The Works Festival Gala; honorary chair for YESS; an advocate for the Edmonton Public Library; Member of the Mentor team at Peter Lougheed Leadership College (UofA); and a board member of Apricity, a not-for-profit that is working with Boyle Street's HERpregnancyprogram.



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Pro Coro Canada would like to graciously thank our patrons who donated the face value of their tickets after the cancellation of the remainder of our 2019-2020 subscription season. Your support ensures Edmonton's voice will live on in these uncertain times.

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