



SATURDAY
MARCH 28, 2026
2:00 PM



Earth - Heart - Sky

Featuring works by Indigenous composers

Artistic Director **Edette Gagné**
Collaborative Pianist **Karen Lee-Morlang**

WEST POINT GREY UNITED CHURCH
vwms.ca



Vivaldi Chamber Choir

Saturday March 28, 2026 at 2:00 PM

Artistic Director: Edette Gagné
Collaborative Pianist: Karen Lee-Morlang
Guest Violinist: Larisa Labreda

Message from the Artistic Director – Edette Gagné

We are deeply honoured to perform today and help the VWMS achieve its mission of supporting talented, young musicians with bursary and scholarship awards.

The music and the words of our featured Indigenous composers speak for themselves, so I would like to share a more personal message of the ways that creating this concert has changed me.

Unlearning and Learning.

Musically, this programme has given me, as a settler musician, an opportunity to experience the process of unlearning and learning which is at the heart of true allyship and reconciliation. Exploring different meanings of the aurora, the stars and the earth has taken us far beyond the notes on the page. The journey to this performance has given both myself and the members of Vivaldi Chamber Choir an opportunity to support, amplify and show our appreciation for the Indigenous creative community. It has been humbling.

Interconnection.

This word is at the epicentre of today's concert "Earth-Heart-Sky." Our interconnection with the earth - the interconnections between each of our hearts - and our global, universal connections under the same sky. Our energies and our spirits are intertwined, and our singing together allows us to express this fact.

Storytelling.

Music has always been a universal language in my heart, but learning about the history and meaning behind these songs has transformed my view of our role as storytellers. Storytelling can be transformative - for performer and audience. May you approach this concert and our world with curiosity, wonder and openness.

PROGRAMME

okâwîmâw askîy (Mother Earth)

Woodland Cree text and music by Sherryl Sewepagaham

Words of Welcome

Earth Song

Words & Music by Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)

Four Directions

Music by Thomas Tallis (1505-1585), Ojibway text & arr. by Andrew Balfour (b. 1967)

Forest Song

Music by Stuart Beatch (b. 1991), words by Oliver Goldsmith (1794-1861)

Vision Chant (Journey)

Andrew Balfour

Red River Valley

traditional folk song arr. T. Patrick Carrabré (b. 1958)

Love

Words & music by T. Patrick Carrabré

Sure On This Shining Night

Music by Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943), words by James Agee (1909-1955)

Stars Shall I Find

Words by Sara Teasdale (1884-1933), music by David C. Dickau (b. 1953)

Anang (A Star)

Music & Ojibway words by Andrew Balfour

Dirait-on

Words by Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), music by Morten Lauridsen

The Flight Song

Words by Euan Tait (b. 1968), music by Kim André Arnesen (b. 1980)

NO INTERMISSION

The Vancouver Westcoast Music Society and the Greater Vancouver Vivaldi Chamber Choir Society acknowledge that the land on which we live, work, and play is the unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

IN THE COMPOSERS' WORDS

Sherryl Sewepagaham:

okâwimâw askîy (Mother Earth) - began as a vocable song and Cree words were added to bring more meaning. The intention of the song is love, hope and standing in unity to take better care of our mother earth. A first-person plural perspective is intentional for us to speak directly to her as we sing to her as her children: Mother Earth, we are your children. We love you.

Andrew Balfour:

Four Directions (music from NAGAMO) - Nagamo is a reimagining of history. By taking choral music of the Elizabethan masters and other later choral music, I have reshaped the thoughts behind the texts, by changing the Latin to Ojibway or Cree perspectives. These are not direct translations of the sacred texts, rather a more Indigenous perspective of spirituality, but keeping the beauty of the polyphony intact.

Text translation: West, North, East, South, Sky

Vision Chant - incorporates the Ojibway word, "babamadizwin," which means "journey." Based on an Indigenous chant style, this work is striking for both its stillness and its intensity. The journey that is evoked begins and ends with a soprano melody, at first divided and then symbolically perhaps, unified. What takes place in between these musical bookends is the vision itself.

Anang (A Star) - is dedicated to my wife, who told me about the Indigenous understanding of the Star People, who are among us, representing where we all came from: the Universe and the stars. Only some can see them - among them, little children who attract the Star people, as the little ones have just emerged from the unknown. Star people are also attracted to shells, which is why you might see shells in some Indigenous ceremonies.

Text translation: A star fell through the sky towards me - stars shine brightly

T. Pat Carrabré

Red River Valley was commissioned by David Finn, with the express request that Pat "repatriate the song from cowboy culture."

Composed in 2018, the poetry is written in the voice of the "brown Métis woman" who, having been "married" to a Voyageur, now finds herself abandoned after the Voyageur's contract has come to an end. She asks that he never forgets their sweet vows and their time spent together, as he leaves his grief to the Red River girl. Her strength is reflected in the final four verses of the song.

Love was written as part of a set of Three Madrigals that were commissioned for the Westman Youth Choir and the Tlaxcala Canta Festival in Mexico. When I was a student I loved singing Madrigals, from the English fa-la-la type through the full range of Italian and French styles. Here I decided to use a single word for the text, trying to fill the piece with a range of the emotions from sweet and tender to hopeful and at times needful. We need to love ourselves, our family and friends, the land we live on, and hopefully each other.

Other text translations:

Dirait-on (As They Say)

Wildness surrounding wildness, tenderness touching tenderness,

It is your own core that you ceaselessly caress... as they say.

It is your own centre that you caress, your own reflection gives you light.

And in this way, you show us how Narcissus is redeemed. (www.lingualco.com)

Discover more about our featured composers:

T. Pat Carrabré: <https://tpatrickcarrabre.com> cris derksen: <https://www.crisderksen.com>

Andrew Balfour: <https://deadofwinter.ca/about-us/composer-and-artistic-director/>

Sherryl Sewepagaham: <https://nac-cna.ca/en/bio/sherryl-sewepagaham>

Vivaldi Chamber Choir
Edette Gagné, Artistic Director
Karen Lee-Morlang, Collaborative Pianist
Miriam Davidson, Administrative Assistant

Sopranos

Yasmine Bia
Susie Britnell
Arianna Cheveldave
Cara Elrod
Winnie Gibson
Denise Gilbert
Sarah Little
Valie Madejska
Olivia Selig *
Andrea Teigelhoefer

Altos

Dinah Ayre *
Roz Coulson
Bev Ferguson
Bri Lefever
Karen Millard
Eve Munns
Rebecca Citlali Nichols
Cheryl Thomas

Tenors

Matt Emery
Steve Froese *
Jordan Hiller
David Kaplan
Jorge Vega

Basses

Richard Cunningham
Jack Foster *
Jeremy Hay
Aaron Lau
Michael Loo
Mike Millard
Peter Munns
Kees van den Doel

* Section Lead

On Leave

Margaret Archibald
Michelle Arduini
Jeff Carmichael
Sarah Ebert
Al Kvern
Sarah Lamont
Angel Liu
Freda Miller





Edette Gagné – Artistic Director

Edette Gagné is a visionary leader who inspires others to go beyond what they thought were limitations, to achieve amazing results.

In her work around the globe with professionals and amateurs, Edette creates communities where people feel valued, included and safe to take chances, so that they can grow, flourish and be their best.

Edette increases sponsorship and audience growth; historically by up to 300%, by connecting with and engaging community support for performing arts organizations. As a strategist, Edette works with boards and stakeholders to find flexible, resilient ways to re-invent their organizations when facing challenges; so that they can create responses that are flexible and adaptive to needs as they emerge.

As an artistic director, stage director and music director of orchestras, choirs, opera and musical theatre groups, Edette champions creative programming, including staging and performances that captivate artists and audiences alike. She is known for inspiring performers to rise above the ordinary.

Throughout her career creating international touring shows, facilitating grand scale events on location, and transforming performing ensembles to realize their potential, Edette brings a deep work ethic and a commitment to creative collaboration. Edette resides in Vancouver, BC with her wife Melisa and several wonderful, rescued animals. She recharges her batteries with cooking, mindfulness, gratitude and reading.



Karen Lee Morlang – Collaborative Pianist

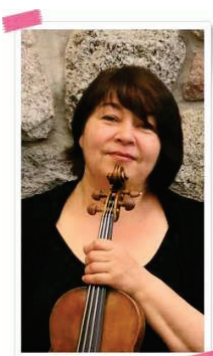
An award-winning performer, educator and producer, Karen Lee Morlang has been lauded as “funny, brainy and creative.” After specializing in art song and chamber music for her post-graduate degree from the University of British Columbia, she then taught as a Sessional Lecturer at UBC while continuing her own education and performing in different parts of North America, Europe and Asia. Karen has been featured at the Vancouver International Jazz Festival, MusicFest Vancouver, the World Peace Forum, Women’s Worlds Conference, the Vancouver Folk Festival and has been broadcast on CBC Radio.

In addition to working with the Vivaldi Chamber Choir, Karen enjoys collaborating with local choirs such as the Vancouver Welsh Men’s Choir, BC Girls Choir, Chor Leoni Men’s Choir, Enchor, Vancouver Thunderbirds and Summerchor. With her passion for reaching new audiences for classical music, Karen has also directed recital and lecture series for the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Vancouver Public Library, the UBC Main Library, and completed a three-year project with the UBC Learning Exchange in the Downtown Eastside producing and teaching the Music Appreciation 101 course. As part of her

work in the DTES, Karen co-coordinated the “Night Before the Opera” events at the Carnegie Center with the Vancouver Opera.

Previously Karen also created and hosted a mini-series called “Nuts & Notes” on CBC Radio One as well as guest hosting on Westcoast Performance for CBC Radio Two. In exploring her own voice while playing piano with other singers, Karen was a founding member of the vocal groups The Lady Larks, The K Sisters and The No Shlt Shirleys. September 2022, Karen assumed the role of Music Director at St. Francis-in-the-Wood Church in West Vancouver, where she leads the enthusiastic Church Choir and the Coast Mountain Men’s Chorus.

Karen is also committed to her role as the Artistic Director of Health Arts Society of BC, which curates and delivers several hundred professional performances annually for elders living in long-term health care and retirement communities. When not at the piano or computer, Karen takes great pleasure in pursuing other passions such as riding her motorcycle, boating, fishing, hiking, swimming, reading, sewing, fussing over her potted plants and now learning to coordinate her lower limbs in the form of tap dancing.



Larisa Labreda – violinist

Larisa studied violin at Moscow’s “Gnessin” College and then Gnessin Academy of Music. She also obtained her Master degree at Wroclaw “Lipinski” Academy of Music (Poland).

Larisa has had a full career as orchestra musician and teacher. She has performed as a violin and viola player with orchestras in Russia, Poland, Germany, Columbia and Canada, and has taught in conservatories in those countries.

After moving to Vancouver Larisa has performed with various orchestras including Vancouver Symphony, Vancouver Opera, Victoria Symphony, Vancouver Island Symphony, Kamloops Symphony and others.

Larisa enjoys being the part of our vibrant community and often performs in small music groups all around our wonderful city of Vancouver.

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