



MEETING PLACES III: SPACE

Dr. Rob Curtis, conductor
Ariane Lowrey, resident accompanist
Dr. Sharon Morsink, astrophysicist

May 28, 2022 - 7:30 p.m.
Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Edmonton
and streamed live at

www.iCoristi.com



I CORISTI CHAMBER CHOIR

Now celebrating its 28th season, i Coristi is one of Edmonton's premiere chamber choirs. Membership is by audition and encompasses a broad cross-section of the population: accountants, teachers, computer programmers, nanotechnologists, designers, theologians, administrators, office personnel—singers for whom music is their vocation, and singers for whom music is their avocation!

The name i Coristi is Italian, meaning "the choral singers". Noted for its unique, eclectic programming, the choir focuses on a *cappella* masterpieces from the Renaissance to the 21st century, presented in three main concerts each season; the choir also performs at seniors' facilities and various local

businesses and gatherings. i Coristi has been heard on national and regional broadcasts of CBC Radio, and is a past first-prize winner in the Mixed-Voice Adult Chamber Choir category of the National Competition for Canadian Amateur Choirs. The choir has performed with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, has toured to England, Wales, Newfoundland, Ontario and Manitoba, and has been invited to perform in Toronto, Winnipeg and Edmonton at Podium, the national biennial conference of Choral Canada. The choir has recorded four CDs, including *Paths*, released in 2016.

Founded by Dr. Debra Cairns, the choir is currently led by Artistic Director Dr. Rob Curtis.

i Coristi Chamber Choir is a proud partner of Choir Alberta and Choral Canada.

*i Coristi Chamber Choir
PO Box 52068
Edmonton, AB T6G 2T5*

i Coristi Chamber Choir

Soprano

Caroline De Grave
Raegina Diceman*
Ariane Fielding
Kari Heise
Odette Lackey
Ariane Lowrey
Alison McInnes
Aynsley Schilbe

Alto

Heather Berg
Amanda Daignault
Colleen Jahns
Lidia Khaner
Diana Tayler
Yvonne Trethart
Sarah Van Veen*
Kirstin Veugelers
Rachelle Wong

Tenor

Wayne Hiebert
John Hooper
Douglas Jahns
Conrad Lutz
Shawn Wakley*
Russell Wilkinson
Michael Woodside*

Bass

Cameron Dyck
Patrick Farkas
Gord McCrostie
David Ravensborg
Erwin Veugelers

**on leave for this concert*

Honorary Members

Lorna Arndt
Dr. Debra Cairns
Colleen Jahns
Douglas Jahns
Peter Malcolm
Margaret 'Peg' Matheson



BIOGRAPHIES

Rob Curtis is delighted to be back in person for his ninth season as artistic director of i Coristi Chamber Choir. He completed a master's degree in choral conducting in 2007 and a doctorate in 2015, both at the University of Alberta; his doctoral research focused on elements of space and place in the choral music of composer Malcolm Forsyth. Rob's other interests include spatialized choral music in general as well as the Canadian choral music repertoire. In addition to his work with i Coristi, Rob also conducted the University of Alberta Concert Choir from 2011 to 2017. Prior to that role he conducted Sine Nomine Chamber Choir and was the assistant conductor for the Richard Eaton Singers. Outside of his musical pursuits, Rob works as a freelance writer and keeps busy chasing after his very energetic five-year-old.



Born and raised in the Smoky River Region of Alberta, Ariane Lowrey received her Bachelor of Music Degree in piano performance at the University of Alberta in 2003, studying with Ayako Tsuruta and Janet Scott Hoyt. In the summers of 2001 and 2002, she attended the Summer Festival at the Orford Art Centre in Quebec, studying with piano professors Jean-Paul Sevilla, Jean Saulnier, and Richard Raymond. After completing her undergraduate degree, Ariane studied at the Université de Montréal with Paul Stewart and completed her Master of Music degree in piano performance in 2005.



Ariane is actively involved in accompanying and collaborative work as well as teaching and adjudicating and has been i Coristi's resident accompanist for the past 12 seasons. Ariane is also the resident accompanist for *A Joyful Noise Monday Choir* under the direction of Eva Bostrand and a collaborative pianist for the Department of Music at King's University.

When not at work, Ariane can be found with her husband and three young children walking or biking to the playground, growing a garden, baking, crafting, dancing and jamming with them on any musical instrument they can get their hands on.

BIOGRAPHIES



Sharon Morsink is a Professor of Physics at the University of Alberta, where she teaches a wide variety of astrophysics courses ranging from introductory courses to graduate level, and supervises the university's astronomical observatory located in the CCIS building. Her research focus is neutron stars, which are tiny stars that can spin with frequencies equivalent to the musical range of middle to high C. She is also keenly interested in the intersection of art and science in popular culture, music, theatre, and movies.

PROGRAM NOTES

The night sky has fascinated humans since the beginning of recorded history, and surely for millennia before. Stories and myths have grown around the mysterious points of light that dazzle our eyes as they march across the heavens. Modern discoveries, too, have shown us that space is filled with strange and amazing things; to consider the vastness and variety of the universe is to engage both the brain and the heart. This is something that artists and scientists have in common: being both fascinated and inspired in seeking to explore and understand the awesomeness of the cosmos. Our tools may be different, but tonight we meet to look at a captivating subject together.



Katerina Gimon
(photo: Brian Lee Topp)

Before looking outward tonight, we look inward; before looking up at the heavens, we look down at the earth. Katerina Gimon's **beneath/sound** creates a mysterious and mystical atmosphere which reflects the breadth of the spatialized layout of the poem by Yaya Yao that it sets. Chant-like melodies and driving rhythms bring to mind elements of ritual and magic, grounding us in a very human experience. The piano accompaniment often acts as a fifth section in the ensemble, adding melodies and motives that put it in the spotlight, with the singers providing a harmonic backdrop. At times, choristers are given the freedom to sing slightly behind the rest of their section, creating echo effects across the choir.

Cheryl Frances-Hoad's **Beyond the Night Sky** was written for the 75th birthday of famed cosmologist Stephen Hawking, and was first performed at a private birthday party for him. The piece is in several distinct sections: in the opening, the sopranos and altos sing a melody together, with several singers stopping early to sustain specific pitches—creating a similar effect to holding the damper pedal down on a piano. As this is happening, tenors and basses use both whistling and unpitched sounds to create a background inspired by NASA's recordings from space. The brief second section is bitonal: the upper voices begin in the key of F major while the lower voices sing in F-sharp, creating a complex sound that contains both lush consonance as well as challenging dissonance. The third section presents cascading scales moving in opposite directions while solo voices sing excerpts from Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, and in the concluding section, the choir sings various chords and rhythms on the word "everything"—if you listen closely, you may catch a slightly modified quotation from "Happy Birthday To You", a nod to the occasion that inspired the piece's composition.



Cheryl Frances-Hoad

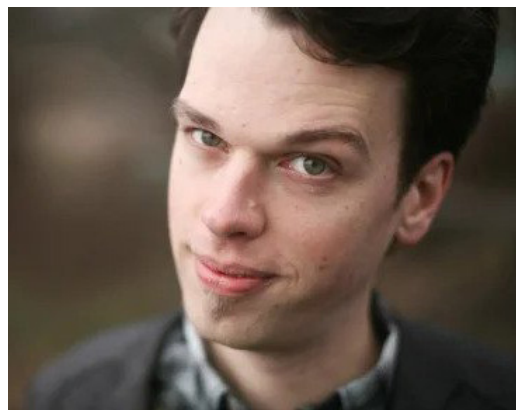


Alex Eddington (photo: Dahlia Katz Photography)

A Present From a Small, Distant World by Alex Eddington begins with the choir singing "Per aspera ad astra", and gradually their rhythms spell out the same message in Morse code. Eddington's musical language paints the picture of a few human voices travelling through the darkness, among machinery and silence—as the Golden Records on the Voyager probes are doing this very minute. The choral texture is stripped down to duets at first, with their carefully crafted interplay evoking the hope with which the Golden Records were created. Eventually, all four sections join together in an imitative texture, before suddenly arriving at one unison melody as the message itself is presented. The probe then speeds away on its eternal journey, as the chorus of voices slowly fades to silence.

Wine glasses have been played as musical instruments since at least the 14th century, and reached a height of popularity in the 18th century with the invention of the "glass harmonica", a series of rotating glass bowls on a spindle that could be played with the fingers. Musical glasses have an ethereal, almost disorienting sound, which is partly because the human brain finds their specific sound difficult to process when trying to locate the direction it's coming from. Eriks Esenvalds makes use of water glasses played by the singers in his piece **Stars** to set the scene of a dark and magical night watching the stars march across the sky, setting Sara Teasdale's famous poem of the same name. As they're singing, the choir members are sounding and silencing their glasses according to instructions in the score, creating shifting chords that vary from an open fifth to a dense six-note cluster.

Chris Sivak's **Alouette Meets Her Maker** makes use of a number of extended vocal techniques to tell the imagined narrative of Canada's first satellite, *Alouette I*, as it powers itself back on in the distant future only to encounter a malicious voice from space that sends it crashing down to earth. The choir performs crescendo-decrescendos not only with the loudness of the sound, but also with the shape of the vowel they sing and where they place their vocal resonance—a challenging technique to learn, but an effective one. You'll also hear spoken texts chosen by the choir, representing the satellite picking up broadcasts from Earth as it gets closer to the surface. The piece concludes with various sound effects as pieces of *Alouette* break down, as it crashes into the ground, and as its electronics slowly begin to fail...



Chris Sivak

Eric Whitacre's **Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine** imagines what it might have been like if Leonardo da Vinci had built and flown one of his designs for human flight. The piece is full of word-painting: you'll hear the dream of flight literally call out to him by name, and once Leonardo takes off, repeating, overlapping rhythms give the impression of gears and cogs spinning and clicking. Whitacre also makes frequent reference to Renaissance techniques—chains of suspensions, imitative polyphony, and so on—but combines them with his modern harmonic language to tell a centuries-old story in a 21st-century language.

—Rob Curtis

PROGRAM

beneath/sound (2019)
Katerina Gimon* (b. 1993)
Ariane Lowrey, piano

Beyond the Night Sky (2018)
Cheryl Frances-Hoad (b. 1980)
Ariane Lowrey, soprano
Kirstin Veugelers, alto

A Present From a Small Distant World (2019)
Alex Eddington* (b. 1980)

Lux Antiqua (2011)
Jason Nobles* (b. 1969)

Stars (2012)
Ēriks Ešēvalds (b. 1977)

Alouette Meets Her Maker (2018)
Chris Sivak* (b. 1982)
Aynsley Schilbe, soprano

Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine (2001)
Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)
Kari Heise, soprano
Kirstin Veugelers, alto
Erwin Veugelers, baritone

*indicates Canadian composer

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Katerina Gimon (b. 1993) - **beneath/sound** (2019)

text: Yaya Yao

beneath throat, breath

beneath breath, earth

beneath earth, stone

beneath

stone, liquid

beneath liquid, vein

beneath vein, fire

beneath fire, darkness

beneath darkness

the sound

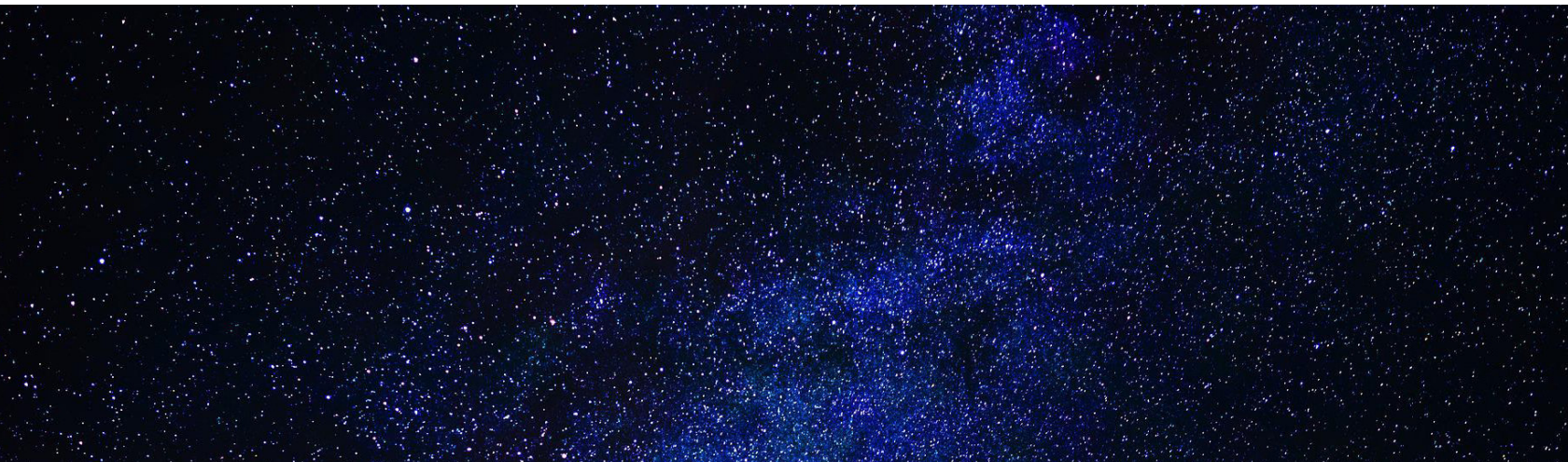
of beneath

Cheryl Frances-Hoad (b. 1980) - **Beyond the Night Sky** (2018)

text: Steven Schnur, Stephen Hawking

Up beyond the
Night sky, an
Indigo darkness like
Velvet
Embraces the farthest
Reaches of the mind
Sun, moon, stars,
Everything.

We find ourselves in a bewildering world.
What is the nature of the universe?
What is our place in it?
Where did it come from?
Where did we come from?
Why is it the way it is?



Alex Eddington (b. 1980) - **A Present From a Small, Distant World** (2019)

text: Jimmy Carter

Per aspera ad astra.

[Through hardship to the stars.]

We cast this message into the Cosmos. It is likely to survive a billion years into our future, when our civilization is profoundly altered and the surface of the Earth may be vastly changed. Of the two hundred billion stars of the Milky Way galaxy, some, perhaps many, may have inhabited planets and space-faring civilizations. If one such civilization intercepts Voyager and can understand these recorded contents, here is our message:

This is a present from a small, distant world, a token of our sounds, our science, our images, our music, our thoughts, our feelings. We are attempting to survive our time so we may live into yours. We hope someday, having solved the problems that we face, to join a community of galactic civilizations.

This record represents our hope and our determination, and our good will in a vast and awesome universe.

Jordan Nobles (b. 1969) - **Lux Antiqua** (2011)

text: traditional Greek, Latin, Arabic, Mandarin

Auva	Rasalthothallah
Ascella	Alula Borealis
Alcyone	Asellus Australis
Alhena	Unukalhai
Aludra	Dschubba
Avior	Vega
Koo She	Alioth
Miaplacidus	Zubenelgenubi
Menkalinan	Alnilam
Nair al Saif	Zubeneschamali
Chara	Lacaille
Mirzam	Deneb Algiedi
Althaimain	Zaniah
Denebola	Suhail al Muhlif
Sirius	Pleione
Aldebaran	Azha

Intermission

Ēriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977) - **Stars** (2019)
text: Sara Teasdale (adapted)

Alone in the night
On a dark hill
With pines around me
Spicy and still,

And a heaven full of stars
Over my head,
White and topaz
And misty red;

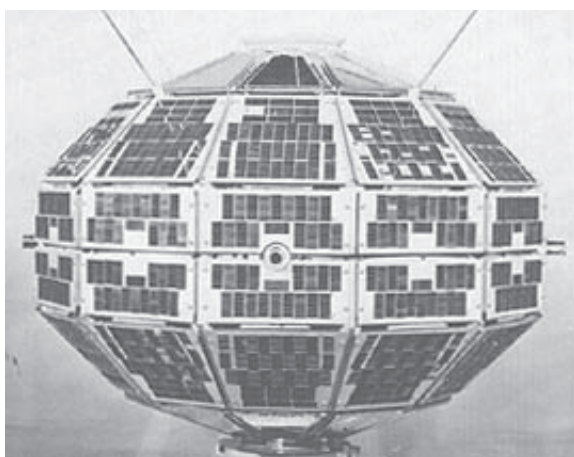
Myriads with beating
Hearts of fire
The aeons
Cannot vex or tire;

The dome of heaven
Like a great hill,
And myriads with
Beating hearts of fire,
Heaven full of stars.

I know I
Am honoured to be
Witness
Of so much majesty.



Chris Sivak (b. 1982) - **Alouette Meets Her Maker** (2018)
text: traditional French-Canadian



Alouette I satellite. Photo: NASA

*Alouette, gentille Alouette.
Alouette, je te plumerai.*

*Alouette, nice Alouette.
Alouette, I will pluck you.*

Eric Whitacre (b. 1970) - **Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine** (2001)

text: Charles Anthony Silvestri

I.
Leonardo Dreams of his Flying Machine...
Tormented by visions of flight and falling,
More wondrous and terrible each than the last,
Master Leonardo imagines an engine
To carry a man up into the sun...

And as he's dreaming the heavens call him,
softly whispering their siren-song:
"Leonardo. Leonardo, vieni a volare".
["Leonardo. Leonardo, come fly".]

L'uomo colle sua congegiate e grandi ale,
facciando forza contro alla resistente aria.
[A man with wings large enough and duly
connected might learn to overcome the
resistance of the air.]

II.
Leonardo Dreams of his Flying Machine...

As the candles burn low he paces and writes,
Releasing purchased pigeons one by one
Into the golden Tuscan sunrise...

And as he dreams, again the calling,
The very air itself gives voice:
"Leonardo. Leonardo, vieni a volare".
["Leonardo. Leonardo, come fly".]

Vicina all'elemento del fuoco...
[Close to the sphere of elemental fire...]

Scratching quill on crumpled paper,

Rete, canna, filo, carta.
[Net, cane, thread, paper.]

Images of wing and frame
and fabric fastened tightly.

...sulla suprema sottile aria.
[...in the highest and rarest atmosphere.]

III.
Master Leonardo Da Vinci
Dreams of his Flying Machine...
As the midnight watchtower tolls,
Over rooftop, street and dome,
The triumph of a human being ascending
In the dreaming of a mortal man.

Leonardo steels himself,
takes one last breath,
and leaps...

"Leonardo, vieni a volare! Leonardo, sognare!"
["Leonardo, come fly! Leonardo, Dream!"]

DR. DEBRA CAIRNS LEGACY SCHOLARSHIPS

After 19 years as visionary Music Director of i Coristi, Dr. Debra Cairns retired in the summer of 2013. To honour Debbi's significant contributions to the choral community in Edmonton, the province, and the nation, and in recognition of her long and close association with Choir Alberta, i Coristi Chamber Choir has established the Dr. Debra Cairns Legacy Scholarships.

Donations made to i Coristi will be used to support Alberta's delegates to the National Youth Choir, covering a portion of their participation fees. Please consider supporting these legacy scholarships and assisting young Alberta singers by making a donation.

To support this program, visit www.icoristi.com and click on "Donate".

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Rob Curtis
Artistic Director, Conductor

Ariane Lowrey
Resident Accompanist

Kirstin Veugelers
Choir Manager

DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

i Coristi Chamber Choir is grateful for the ongoing support provided by the following agencies and individuals:

Anonymous
Lorna Arndt
Bev Curtis

Rob Curtis
Colleen & Douglas Jahns
Erin Olovson-Cleveland

Sarah Van Veen
Peeranut Visetsuth

Alberta Foundation for the Arts
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*We have made every effort to acknowledge all donations received since February 1, 2021.
Please contact us in case of error or omission.*

Mark your calendars for *i Coristi's* next performance:



SEEING DOUBLE

Join *i Coristi* as we explore repertoire that groups us into two smaller choirs working together—including Jonathan Dove's *The Passing of the Year* and Frank Martin's *Mass for Double Choir*.

Saturday, December 3, 2022, 7:30 p.m.
Holy Trinity Anglican Church
(10037 84 Ave, Edmonton)