

Seeing Double



iCoristi Chamber Choir

Dr. Rob Curtis, conductor
Ariane Lowrey, resident accompanist

December 3, 2022 - 7:30 p.m.

Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Edmonton
and streamed live at

www.iCoristi.com



i Coristi Chamber Choir

Now celebrating its 29th season, *i Coristi* is one of Edmonton's premiere chamber choirs. Membership is by audition and has encompassed 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 Choral Canada.

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

i Coristi Chamber Choir

Soprano

Caroline De Grave
Ariane Fielding
Kari Heise
Odette Lackey
Ariane Lowrey
Alison McInnes
Evelyn Schaffer
Aynsley Schilbe

Alto

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

Tenor

Wayne Hiebert
Conrad Lutz
Russell Wilkinson
Michael Woodside

Bass

Patrick Farkas
Douglas Jahns
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



photo: Hal Thiessen

Biographies

Dr. Rob Curtis is delighted to welcome you to a new i Coristi season in this, his tenth year with the choir. Rob 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 six- and two-year-olds.





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.

Program Notes

The origins of music for double choir have largely been forgotten by history. Many people will point to the two choir chapels of St. Mark's Basilica in Venice—located on either side of the chancel, perfectly set up for double-choir music—and the stunning polychoral music written by many of that church's choirmasters, starting with Adrian Willaert in the early 16th century and perhaps reaching its pinnacle with Giovanni Gabrieli at the end of that century. Yet we know that composers were writing for double choir in earlier centuries, and the St. Mark's double choir chapels themselves date back to the 11th century. It's not hard to imagine musicians in the Middle Ages or even earlier realizing that one choir is good, but two are even better.

An early inspiration for double-choir music may well have been the Psalms, which rely heavily on parallelism as a poetic device. The Psalms have been recited and sung antiphonally for many centuries—just replace the priest and congregation with a choir each, and voilà, music for double choir. Indeed, some of the earliest extant scores for double choir feature Psalm settings. Heinrich Schütz's setting of Psalm 137, **An den Wassern zu Babel**, comes from his larger collection titled "Psalmen Davids", containing settings of 23 psalms and a handful of other texts. He had studied with the polychoral master Giovanni Gabrieli, and most of the settings are for at least two choirs (in a few cases up to four). Schütz uses the two choirs in a variety of ways: sometimes they present similar material as an echo, sometimes they interrupt each other, sometimes they function together as an eight-voice unit. Word painting can be found throughout, as is typical for Schütz. For example, the word "Heulen" ("weeping", or "howling") is set with extra dissonance, and immediately afterwards the text "fremden Landen" ("foreign land") moves briefly to a new key. Nearly every phrase contains a similar example.

One of the most important and finest works for double choir must be Frank Martin's **Messe pour double chœur a cappella**, often known in English as his Mass for Double Choir. The youngest child of a Swiss Calvinist pastor, Martin's Christian faith inspired much of his music, and his Mass was written as a deeply personal expression of that faith. The first four movements were written in 1922, and the Agnus Dei later added in 1926, but the piece wasn't premiered until 1963. Martin wrote:

“

This mass ... was a work of my own free will, without commission or remuneration. Indeed at that time I knew of no choral conductor who could be interested in it. ... In fact I had no desire to have it performed as I was afraid it would be judged on a purely aesthetic level. As far as I was concerned it was a matter between God and myself. ... I felt that religious fervour should remain private and not be influenced by public opinion. So much that this composition remained in a drawer for forty years, included as a formality in my list of works. ... even though I wrote the mass for a large number of voices, it is music of an inward nature. My musical language has developed considerably since that period. There are some things in this work that I would no longer be able to write; there are also weaknesses that I would never repeat. ... But there are also musical elements that are very close to me. (translation: Rachel Ann Morgan)

”

In contrast to Schütz's setting of Psalm 137, Martin avoids overt word-painting throughout his Mass. Instead, he draws on a number of tools and influences—modality, chant, layered polyphony, choral orchestration—to weave a musical fabric that, itself, profoundly reflects his faith. As the Mass unfolds, you'll hear Martin's incredible skill at writing for eight voices in two choirs, a highly challenging format from a technical standpoint. Martin explores a wide array of layers: you may notice one choir singing hymn-like material while the other chants, seemingly in a different time signature. You'll hear themes presented by singers scattered across both choirs, as if played by violins and flutes in an orchestra. You'll hear energetic fugues and gentle homophony. Overall, you'll experience one of Western music's highest accomplishments in music for double choir.

Jonathan Dove's **The Passing of the Year** is another major modern work for double chorus (and a personal favorite!). Dove brings together poetry from several authors and creates a rich variety of soundscapes, often building up walls of sound by layering motives across all eight parts of the choir. The piece begins with a single line from William Blake in the **Invocation**: "O Earth, O Earth, return!", a sentiment that we in Edmonton are certainly familiar with in the depths of winter. We then move to spring with **The narrow bud opens her beauties to the sun**, which combines more poetry of Blake with the text and music of the mid-13th century round *Sumer is icumen in*.

Emily Dickinson's **Answer July** tells the story of the seasons squabbling with each other: Autumn asks July where can be found the bees, blush and hay that mark the transition from summer. July kicks the can down the road to May: where are its seeds and buds? May replies that it first needs winter's snow, bells and jay, and the jay wonders where can be found the maize, haze and bur left over from the autumn, which it needs to survive the winter. The Year steps in: "Here", it replies, "I contain them all."

Next is George Peele's **Hot sun, cool fire**, which is written from the point of view of Bathsheba, bathing on her roof, not knowing that she is being watched by King David. Though in the poem she hopes that her beauty will not "enflame unstead desire", in the biblical narrative she is summoned and raped by David, who later, unable to conceal his crime, arranges for her husband's death. Peele's poem has been described as the poetic equivalent of a nude portrait, where the reader takes on the role of the viewer of a painting, seeing a moment in Bathsheba's story while she is unaware that she is being captured in paint, or print.

Ah, Sun-flower! sets more Blake poetry in a stunningly effective canon: twice, all eight sections of the choir sing the same material, offset by a single measure between entries. The result is a vast wall of sound, cresting like a wave across the ensemble. This leads us into an antiphonal setting of Nashe's **Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!**, written during an outbreak of the bubonic plague in London from 1592 to 1593, in which about 20,000 people died in London and the surrounding area. The words of this poem land a bit closer to home than when Dove wrote the cycle in 2000, as we live through a global pandemic and many of us echo the poem's refrain, "Lord, have mercy on us."

We conclude at the end of the year, ready to ring in a new one, with **Ring out, wild bells**, setting poetry by Tennyson. Dove pushes the piano to the very limits of how much sound the instrument can produce, and brings both choirs together at the beginning and end of the movement to present the musical material together. In the middle section, each choir sings the melody in octaves or in canon while the other provides more atmospheric material. After the joyful tumult of the bulk of the movement, we end quietly and gently with an invocation of a thousand years of peace.

Program

An den Wassern zu Babel (1619)
Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672)
Ariane Lowrey, piano

Messe pour double chœur a cappella (1922/1926)
Frank Martin (1890-1974)
1. Kyrie
2. Gloria
3. Credo
4. Sanctus
5. Agnus Dei

Intermission

The Passing of the Year (2000)

Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)

1. Invocation

2. The narrow bud opens her beauties
to the sun

Colleen Jahns, alto

Diana Tayler, alto

Michael Woodside, tenor

3. Answer July

4. Hot sun, cool fire

5. Ah, Sun-flower!

6. Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!

7. Ring out, wild bells

Ariane Lowrey, piano

Texts and Translations

Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672) - **An den Wassern zu Babel (1619)**

text: Psalm 137

An den Wassern zu Babel saßen wir und
weineten, wenn wir an Zion gedachten.

Unsre Harfen hingen wir an die Weiden, dir
drinnen sind,

denn daselbst heißen uns singen, die uns
gefangen hielten, und in unserm Heulen fröhlich
sein: "Singet uns ein Lied von Zion!"

Wie sollten wir des Herren Lied singen in
fremden Landen?

Vergess ich dein, Jerusalem, so werde meiner
Rechten vergessen.

Meine Zunge muss an meinem Gaumen kleben,
wo ich dein nicht gedenke, wo ich nicht lass
Jerusalem mein' höchste Freude sein.

Herr, gedenke der Kinder Edom am Tage
Jerusalem, die da sagen: "Rein ab, rein ab, bis
auf ihren Boden!"

Du verstörete Tochter Babel, wohl dem der dir
vergelte, wie du uns getan hast!

Wohl dem, der deine junge Kinder nimmet und
zuschmettert sie an den Stein!

Ehre sei dem Vater und dem Sohn und auch
dem heiligen Geiste,

wie es war im Anfang, jetzt und immerdar und
von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. Amen.

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and we
wept when we remembered Zion.

On the willows there we hung up our harps,

for they themselves bade us sing, they who held
us captive, and to be joyful in the midst of our
weeping: "Sing us a song of Zion!"

How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign
land?

If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand
wither.

Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you, if I do not make
Jerusalem my highest joy.

Lord, remember the children of Edom on the
day of Jerusalem's fall, how they said: "Rip it up,
rip it up right to its foundations!"

You doomed daughter Babylon, happy is the one
who shall repay you according to what you have
done to us!

Happy is the one who shall take your young
children and dash them against the rock!

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to
the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and always,
and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Frank Martin (1890-1974) - **Messe pour double chœur a cappella** (1922/1926)

text: Roman Missal

1. Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

2. Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam
gloriam tuam,
Domine Deus, rex coelestis,
Deus pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,
qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis;
qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe
deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus,
Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu:
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

3. Credo

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium
et invisibilium.
Et in unum Dominum, Jesum Christum,
Filius Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum
ante omnia saecula.
Deum de Deo, Lumen de Lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
Genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri,
per quem omnia facta sunt.
Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram
salutem descendit de coelis.
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria
Virgine. Et homo factus est.

1. Kyrie

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

2. Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth, peace to people of good will.
We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you.
We give thanks to you for your
great glory.
Lord God, heavenly king,
God the father almighty,
The Lord's only-begotten son, Jesus Christ,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
who takes away the sins of the world: have
mercy on us. You who take away the sins of the
world: hear our prayer.
You who sit at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are holy, you alone are Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

3. Credo

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
who made heaven and earth, all that is visible
and invisible.
And in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
Only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father
before all generations.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
Begotten, not made, of one substance with the
Father, through whom all things were made.
Who, for us and for our salvation,
descended from heaven.
And was incarnate of the Holy Spirit from the
Virgin Mary. And was made man.

(Martin Messe pour double chœur a cappella, continued)

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis: sub Pontio Pilato
passus, et sepultus est.
Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas.
Et ascendit in caelum: sedet ad dexteram Patris.
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria,
iudicare vivos et mortuos:
cujus regni non erit finis.
Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum
et vivificantem:
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.
Qui cum Patre et Filio simul
adoratur et conglorificatur:
qui locutus est per Prophetas.
Et unam Sanctam catholicam et
apostolicam Ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem
peccatorum.
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum.
Et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

4. Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini,
hosanna in excelsis.

5. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona nobis pacem.

He was crucified for us: he suffered under
Pontius Pilate, and was buried.
And rose again on the third day, according to
the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven: he is
seated at the right hand of the Father.
And he shall come again with glory, to judge the
living and the dead: his kingdom shall have no
end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord
and giver of life:
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
Who with the Father and Son together is
worshiped and glorified:
who has spoken through the Prophets.
And in one Holy catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism for the
forgiveness of sins.
And I await the resurrection of the dead.
And the life of the coming age. Amen.

4. Sanctus

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the
Lord, Hosanna in the highest.

5. Agnus Dei

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the
world: have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the
world: have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the
world: grant us peace.

Jonathan Dove (b. 1959) - **The Passing of the Year** (2000)

1. Invocation
text: William Blake

O Earth, O Earth, return!

2. The narrow bud opens her beauties to the sun
(William Blake/mid-13th century anonymous)

The narrow bud opens her beauties to
The sun, and love runs in her thrilling veins;
Blossoms hang round the brows of morning, and
Flourish down the bright cheek of modest eve,
Till clust'ring Summer breaks forth into singing,
And feather'd clouds strew flowers round her head.

The spirits of the air live on the smells
Of fruit; and joy, with pinions light, roves round
The gardens, or sits singing in the trees.

*Sumer is icumen in
Lhude sing cuccu*

*[Summer has arrived,
Loudly sing, cuckoo!]*

3. Answer July
(Emily Dickinson)

Answer July—
Where is the Bee—
Where is the Blush—
Where is the Hay?

Ah, said July—
Where is the Seed—
Where is the Bud—
Where is the May—
Answer Thee—Me—

Nay—said the May—
Show me the Snow—
Show me the Bells—
Show me the Jay!

Quibbled the Jay—
Where be the Maize—
Where be the Haze—
Where be the Bur?
Here—said the Year—

4. Hot sun, cool fire
(George Peele)

Hot sun, cool fire, temper'd with sweet air,
Black shade, fair nurse, shadow my white hair:
Shine, sun; burn, fire; breathe, air, and ease me;
Black shade, fair nurse, shroud me and please me:
Shadow, my sweet nurse, keep me from burning,
Make not my glad cause, cause of my mourning.

Let not my beauty's fire
Enflame unstaid desire,
Nor pierce any bright eye
That wand'reth lightly.

5. Ah, Sun-flower!
(William Blake)

Ah, Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun,
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done:

Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my Sun-flower wishes to go.



Jonathan Dove
(image: Marshall Light Studio)

6. Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!
(Thomas Nashe)

Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!
This world uncertain is:
Fond are life's lustful joys,
Death proves them all but toys.
None from his darts can fly:
I am sick, I must die—
 Lord, have mercy on us!

Rich men, trust not in wealth,
Gold cannot buy you health;
Physic himself must fade;
All things to end are made;
The plague full swift goes by:
I am sick, I must die—
 Lord, have mercy on us!

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour:
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair
Dust hath closed Helen's eye:
I am sick, I must die—
 Lord, have mercy on us!

7. Ring out, wild bells
(Alfred Lord Tennyson)

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
 The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
 For those that here we see no more:
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
 The faithless coldness of the time;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old;
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

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 (NYCC), covering a portion of their participation fees. Please consider supporting these legacy scholarships and assisting young Alberta singers by making a donation.

The 2022 recipients told us about the impact of this scholarship:

"Being a member of NYCC gave me a sense of community that I had not felt in a long time because of the pandemic, and I formed many connections that will last for years to come."

"This experience gave me a love and passion for choral singing that I didn't know I had."

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

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*We have made every effort to acknowledge all donations received since May 1, 2021.
Please contact us in case of error or omission.*

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

Stabat Mater

Stand with Mary at the foot of the cross: a scene that is tragically relevant in many places in the modern world, and that has inspired composers and artists for centuries. Join *i Coristi* to explore themes of conflict and healing through the work of a variety of composers modern and ancient.

February 25, 2023 | 7:30 pm
Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Edmonton
and via live-stream at iCoristi.com

