



iCoristi Chamber Choir

Winter Wassail

SONGS OF WINTER AND CELEBRATION

Dr. Rob Curtis, conductor
Dan Hall, assistant conductor
Ariane Lowrey, resident accompanist

November 23, 2019 - 7:30PM

Holy Trinity Anglican Church
10037 84 Ave, Edmonton

www.iCoristi.com

contact@icoristi.com
facebook.com/iCoristi

 Alberta
Foundation
for the Arts



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Program

An Oíche (1999)
Michael McGlynn (b. 1964)

Snowforms (1983)
*R. Murray Schafer (b. 1933)

Lux Aurumque (2000)
Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)
Connie McLaws, soprano

The Portinari Nativity (2012)
*Stephanie Martin (b. 1962)

The Rose in the Middle of Winter (2010)
Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

Celtic and Seasonal Selections
Keri Lynn Zwicker, harp
Tami Cooper, flute and vocals

Song for a Winter's Night (1967)
*Gordon Lightfoot (b. 1938)
*arr. *Robin Salkeld (b. 1983)*

**Canadian composer*

Reception - Upper Hall
Catered by Upper Crust Cafe & Caterers
Mulled wine and non-alcoholic Wassail , festive hors d'oeuvres

i Coristi

Music Director, Conductor
Rob Curtis
Assistant Conductor
Dan Hall
Resident Accompanist
Ariane Lowrey
Choir Manager
Kirstin Veugelers

Soprano
Margaret Bujold
Raegina Diceman
Ariane Fielding
Kari Heise
Ariel Kroon*
Odette Lackey
Ariane Lowrey
Alison McInnes
Connie McLaws
Aynsley Schilbe

Alto
Heather Berg
Amanda Daignault
Claire MacDonald
Natalie Ehrenholz
Sharon Tarnawsky*
Diana Tayler
Sarah Van Veen
Kirstin Veugelers
Rachelle Wong

Tenor
Dan Hall
Conrad Lutz
Russell Wilkinson
Michael Woodside

Bass
Cameron Dyck
Ryan Ehrenholz
Patrick Farkas
Adam Kristenson
Gord McCrostie
Erwin Veugelers



Bio

Now celebrating its 26th 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, "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 Music Director Dr. Rob Curtis.

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


choir alberta



Choral Canada
Association of Canadian
Choral Communities

Canada Choral
Association des communautés
chorales canadiennes

*on leave

Rob Curtis, *Music Director, Conductor*

Dr. Rob Curtis is entering his sixth 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, and 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 keeps busy working in alumni relations at the University of Alberta, and together with his wife Connie gets his exercise chasing their energetic three-year-old.



Dan Hall, *Assistant Conductor*

Dan Hall started his musical training at the University of Lethbridge where he studied Music Education. He focussed on vocal performance and performed multiple times with the Lethbridge Symphony Orchestra as a member of the U of L Opera Workshop. While in Lethbridge, he worked with various choral groups and performed with them regularly. Upon completion of his undergraduate degrees in 2017, Dan and his family moved to Edmonton in order for him to pursue more training. He was accepted into the University of Alberta as a graduate student with a focus in Choral Conducting. Dan is currently in the final year of his Master's degree and also works as a music teacher at Jasper Place High School. He works hard with the school's three choral groups, as well as teaching multiple guitar classes.



Ariane Lowrey, *Resident Accompanist*

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 and her Master of Music degree at the Université de Montréal in 2005, studying with Ayako Tsuruta, Janet Scott Hoyt, Jean-Paul Sevilla, Jean Saulnier, Richard Raymond and Paul Stewart. She then traveled and worked in the UK and Europe before returning to Edmonton in 2007. Ariane is actively involved in accompanying and collaborative work as well



as teaching and adjudicating. Her first foray into choral music (both as a singer and accompanist) was with the University of Alberta's Concert Choir, under the direction of Dr. Debra Cairns. She then went on to accompany i Coristi Chamber Choir and the King's University College Concert Choir with Dr. Melanie Turgeon, where she also currently works as collaborative pianist. Ariane taught at the Alberta College Conservatory of Music from 2007 to 2017, and is currently the accompanist for A Joyful Noise Monday Choir under the direction of Eva Bostrand. When not at work, Ariane can be found with her husband and three young children walking or biking to the playground, playing in the sand, dancing and singing in the living room to anything from Tchaikovsky to Disney or jamming with them on any musical instrument they can get their hands on. This is Ariane's 10th season with i Coristi and she is very grateful to have spent a decade with this wonderful group!

Program Notes

Winter brings with it a long list of inconveniences that we as Albertans are terribly familiar with: snow shovelling, dark mornings, cars that won't start. But winter can also bring about some of the very best times: staying inside with friends and family in front of a warm fire, singing carols, drinking piping hot mugs of cider. It's the latter kind of winter night that we want to evoke tonight with songs of wintertime and a friendly, comfortable, warm gathering that staves off the darkness and cold. Instead of our usual reception partway through the concert, we'll sing through the entire program and then invite you to join us in the Upper Hall for some festive beverages and a little bit of singing all together.

Michael McGlynn's **An Oiche** describes a reminiscence of meeting a lover on a cold winter's night, and a desire to see them again. As the text moves back and forth between past and present, the music, too, moves between a gentle rocking and surges of emotion. McGlynn often has one of the inner parts sustain a single note through an entire section, while the rest of the ensemble moves relative to that part, creating short patterns of harmonic progression which contribute to the feeling of rocking. He often writes subtle echoes of the melody into the accompanying parts as well, giving the sense of fleeting images in memory, or perhaps faint wisps of breath in the cold air.

R. Murray Schafer has written a number of pieces using graphic notation, where the music is expressed not in notes on the page, but through lines, curves, and other visual elements. Schafer's experience teaching music in schools convinced him that students should be encouraged to be creative and musical above all else, and that reading traditional notation could get in the way of this goal, which is a major factor behind his exploration of graphical notation. In **Snowforms**, he was inspired by the shapes and patterns of fallen snow that he could see out of his Ontario farmhouse window, and he translated those shapes into lines and curves to which he assigned various pitch values. He added a variety of snow-related words in Inuktitut, creating a piece that is inspired by snow in every aspect. A common factoid disseminated with this piece and others like it is the urban legend that the Inuit languages have hundreds of words for snow. In fact, there are only a handful of stem words that relate to snow, but because Inuit languages are agglutinative (that is, they form ... morphemes together), they can form multiple different constructions to talk about snow, or anything else, from a few roots.

Lux Aurumque is not explicitly a wintertime piece of music, but something about the music itself (beyond its Christmas lyrics) reminds me strongly of winter - perhaps its slow pace and crystalline harmony. Whitacre writes

that composing the piece required a simple approach, and that he had to “[wait] patiently for the tight harmonies to shimmer and glow”. The harmonic device that he uses throughout the piece is to establish and sustain a chord, and then to repeat the same chord but with each part moving to a different note and with a few extra, gently dissonant notes added. In this way, each chord unfolds and changes colour as the choir sustains it, and the overall pace of harmonic changes becomes very slow and almost out of tempo entirely.

The Portinari Nativity is an oil-on-wood painting by the Flemish painter Hugo van der Goes (ca. 1430-1482), commissioned for the Portinari family chapel in the Santa Maria Nuova hospital’s church, in Florence. The central panel depicts the shepherds’ visit to the newborn Christ child, and unusually the painting depicts the child lying directly on the floor, not in a manger or crib. The composer, Stephanie Martin, writes: “When I received a commission to write an a *cappella* Christmas piece for the British choir Ex Cathedra, this beautiful poem written by my sister happened to be sitting in front of me on my cluttered desk, so it was obviously meant to be set to music. Cori’s poem highlights the different worlds represented in this 15th-century painting: the rustic shepherds, the angels, the holy family, and the little glowing baby. I hope my musical setting does her poem justice. I’ve tried to juxtapose earthly music with heavenly music, using one theme that is transformed several times.”

Bob Chilcott and poet Charles Bennett have collaborated on a number of Christmas carols; **The Rose in the Middle of Winter** was their first joint effort. Bennett writes, “In one sense, the movement of this carol is simple: it records a series of arrivals. In each case, the verse performs the function of a list – with each item appearing ‘in the middle of winter’. But the rose and the bird are functioning as representations and harbingers of the child who features in the final verse, and in each case they act as similes

designed to signify an unusual but enhancing force of vital new life (in the case of the rose) and a numinous presence (in the case of the bird whose ‘song is a prayer’). The rhymes and half-rhymes bind these images together, so that the rose, bird and child combine to blossom and sing in the human heart. The images of the verse draw, as do so many of my carols, on the mediaeval folk-song tradition, and their impact and vitality is seen in action through the figure of the gardener in the chorus. To some extent the gardener is a mysterious figure – perhaps his singing helps the rose to blossom, and brings fruition to midwinter. In that role he is actively participating in the regenerative process. On the other hand, his song might simply be a way of passing time until he can witness the miracle of a blossoming rose in winter. In this reading he is the passive recipient of the blessings which stem from hearing ‘the song of a rose’. However we want to regard his involvement in the process the carol records, it is clear that singing lies at the heart of the experience. If we want to find a moral in the carol, perhaps we might frame it as follows: until such time as a rose, bird or child comes to dance in our soul, we may as well sing.”

Gordon Lightfoot’s **Song for a Winter’s Night** has become a Canadian classic, thanks not only to his two recordings of the song but also a series of cover versions including Sara McLachlan’s well-known version on her album *Wintersong*. Lightfoot wrote it on a hot summer’s night in Cleveland, while he was travelling and missing his wife. Tonight’s version is an arrangement by Robin Salkeld, who is not only an accomplished composer and enthusiastic choral singer, but also holds a PhD in computer science.

We hope that you have enjoyed this winter’s night together, and that you will join us to continue this festive evening in the Upper Hall with a warm drink and a couple more songs!

-Rob Curtis

Texts and Translations

Michael McGlynn - An Oíche (The Night)

text: Michael McGlynn

An cuimhin leat an oíche úd a bhí tú ag an bhfuinneog,
Gan hata gan láimhne dod dhíon gan chasóg?
Do shín mé mo lámh chughat ‘s do rug tú uirthi barróg,
Gan hata gan láimhne dod dhíon gan chasóg?
Do labhair an fhuiseog.
A Chumainn mo chróí tar oíche ghar éigin.
An cuimhin leat an oíche úd ‘san oíche ag cur cuisne.

*Do you remember that night when you were at the window
Without a hat or glove or overcoat on you?
I gave my hand to you and you clasped it to you.*

*Without a hat or glove or overcoat on you?
And the skylark spoke.
My love, come to me some night.
Do you remember that night, and the night was so cold.*

Eric Whitacre - Lux Aurumque (Light and Gold)

text: Edward Esch, translated into Latin by Charles Anthony Silvestri

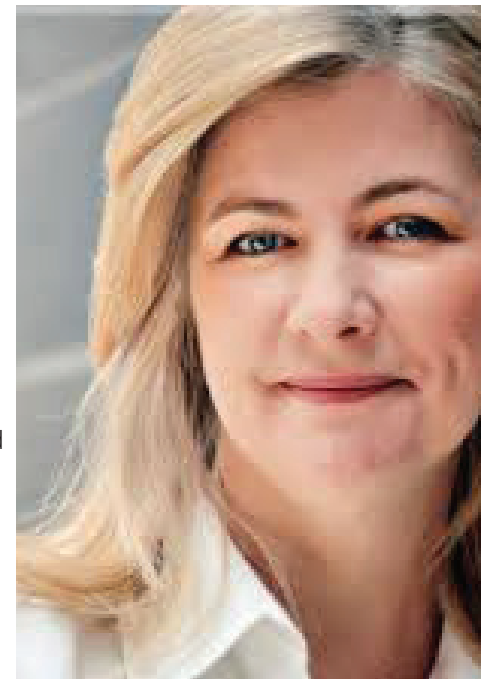
Lux,
calida gravisque pura velut aurum
et canunt angeli molliter
modo natum.

*Light,
warm and heavy as pure gold
and angels sing softly
to the new-born babe.*

Stephanie Martin - The Portinari Nativity

text: Cori Martin

The ruined stable’s open to the air,
a stage on which the rustic scene plays out.
Here stumbling shepherds fix their gaping faces,
their brothers rushing from the hill behind
where heavenly hosts have choired goodwill
to them. More angels, anxious, hover in
the roof or roost below in feathered flocks.
All keep respectful distance, hanging back,
the uncertain parents, too, unmoving.
All awestruck, dumb with wonder, cluster in
a perfect circlet round the little one.
He wears no swaddling clothes; bare skin’s exposed
to winter’s chill. Only his holy glow
keeps him from freezing on the cold stone floor.
No one dares approach him closer there;
but huddled in the dark, the frosty air,
each reaches hands toward the tiny wight
as if to warm them in his little light.



Bob Chilcott - The Rose in the Middle of Winter

text: Charles Bennett

There's a rose in the middle of winter
a rose which has no thorn,
into the garden it comes
like a child who is waiting to be born.

And while he waits for the rose to bloom
the gardener sings –
and the clouds all dance to his tune.

There's a bird in the middle of winter
a bird whose song is a prayer
into our dreams it comes
like a child who is almost here.

And while he waits for the bird to sound
the gardener sings –
and the stars all dance in a round.

There's a child in the middle of winter
a child like a flower in the snow,
into our days he comes
like a child who is with us now.

And while he listens to the song of a rose
the gardener sings –
and the child is a dance in his soul.



Lightfoot, arr. Salkeld - Song for a Winter's Night

text: Gordon Lightfoot

The lamp is burning low upon my table top
The snow is softly falling
The air is still within the silence of my room
I hear your voice softly calling

If I could only have you near
To breathe a sigh or two
I would be happy just to hold the hands I love
On this winter's night with you

The smoke is rising in the shadows overhead
My glass is almost empty
I read again between the lines upon the page
The words of love you sent me

If I could know within my heart
That you were lonely too
I would be happy just to hold the hands I love
On this winter night with you

The fire is dying, the lamp is growing dim
The shades of night are lifting
The morning light steals across my windowpane
Where webs of snow are drifting

If I could only have you near
To breathe a sigh or two
I would be happy just to hold the hands I love
On this winter's night with you
And to be once again with with you



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 - i Coristi Chamber Choir Scholarships.

Through these scholarships, *i Coristi* is proud to support Alberta singers in Canada's National Youth Choir.

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2018 scholarships...

Christina Sawchuk, Elsie Hoover, Jackson Berry, Nathan Bootsma, Graeme Climie

Donations made to *i Coristi* will be transferred to Choir Alberta to **support four Alberta singers** - assisting them in participating in **Canada's National Youth Choir**.

Please consider supporting these legacy scholarships, and assisting young Alberta singers, by making a donation.

Make cheques payable to "i Coristi Chamber Choir"; write "Legacy Scholarship", on the memo line.

Did you know...

Your donations are used to support several valuable programs offered by *i Coristi*:

Assistant Conductor

Hiring of a conducting student or recent graduate of the University of Alberta

Legacy Scholarships

Providing support for four Alberta singers to participate in the National Youth Choir of Canada

Choral Commissions

Enables the composition of new choral music

National Competition in Choral Composition

Financial award presented to the winner of i Coristi's biennial competition

Thank You

i Coristi Chamber Choir extends a sincere Thank You

to the many volunteers who generously donated their time to work at our casino events on July 26 & 27, 2019. Their invaluable contributions raised approximately \$77,000 toward the ongoing operations of the Choir.

Lorna Arndt, Kathleen Baergen, Dennis Heise, Erik Heise, Colleen Jahns, Douglas Jahns, Heather Kristenson, Alden Lowrey, Scott MacLean, Chuck Schilbe, Dan Schilbe, Tony Schiebel, Andy Tarnawsky, as well as singers and staff from the Choir

Donors & Supporters

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

*Alberta Foundation for the Arts
City of Edmonton, Edmonton Arts Council*

*Anonymous
Loma Arndt
Kathleen Baergen
Cameron Dyck
Michael Woodside*

I Coristi Chamber Choir extends a sincere **Thank You** to the following individuals, organizations, and business partners:

*John Brough and Janette Chambers
Holy Trinity Anglican Church*

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Corporate Copy
Tix on the Square
University of Alberta
Upper Crust Cafe & Caterers
Erik Visser, Graphic Design*

We have made every effort to acknowledge all donations received since July 1, 2018. Please contact us in case of error or omission.

i Coristi Chamber Choir Society is a Registered Charity. Tax receipts are issued for all donations \$20 and above, including donations made in support of the Legacy Scholarships.

I Coristi Chamber Choir

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Board of Directors

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Tony Schiebel
Erik Heise
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Colleen Jahns
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i Coristi Chamber Choir

Passiontide

HEINRICH SCHÜTZ'S ST. JOHN PASSION

March 14, 2020 - 7:30PM
Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 10037 84 Ave, Edmonton

Dr. Rob Curtis, conductor
Dan Hall, assistant conductor
Ariane Lowrey, resident accompanist



Space

MEETING PLACES 2

May 30, 2020 - 7:30PM
Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 10037 84 Ave, Edmonton

Dr. Rob Curtis, conductor
Dan Hall, assistant conductor
Ariane Lowrey, resident accompanist

Guest: Dr. Sharon Morsink
Associate Professor of Physics, University of Alberta

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