

Welcome, Winter Light Concert Programme

Elise Naccarato, *Artistic Director*

Amelia Yates, *Collaborative Pianist*

Janna Polzin, *Narrator*

The Choir

Section leads are indicated by an asterisk*

Soprano I

Sally Busch
Sarah Chadwick
Erica D'Amore*
Melody Gal
Victoria Hartman
Xiaoli Lin
Haley McIntosh
Elizabeth Pereira*
Emily Playfair-Ocvirk
Namratha Sridevi
Jennifer Wearden

Soprano II

Katie Carmody
Emily Crowe
Alyson Cuddy
Sally Dawoud
Jenn Evans-Laframboise*
Sarah Fearnley-Brown
Leslie Fisher*
Jihyen Ha
Erin Inglis
Laura McNabb
Sara Morgan
Charlotte Myall
Nadine Nejati
Bronwyn Redfern
Lindsay Rett
Alma Sarai
Jamee Smith
Katelyn Sudhakar

Alto I

Sophia Briatico-Kirwin
Amanda Clydesdale
Emily Copps
Leah Drury
Emma Dudley
Catherine Gendron
Marianna Goddard
Kezia Haklander
Misha Mistry
Natalie Plausini
Janna Polzin
Maggie Samson*
Caitlin Tanghe
Izzy Trask
Stella Tung*
Heather Vaughan
Candace Walkes

Alto II

Adena Commisso
Amy Cuddy
Julie Datta*
Emma Duncan
Danica Evering
Megan Graziani
Sophia Hatzis
Emily Horton
Samantha Howse
Kristi Kemp
Emily Lightstone*
Erin Lyon
Emily Marques
Candice McMurdo
A.R.
Pooja Srikanth
Kylie Sylvester
Jennifer Wells

About Us

Myriad Ensemble is a vibrant upper-voice choir based in Burlington, Ontario, under the direction of Elise Naccarato. Renowned for their vocal excellence and innovative performances, the ensemble is dedicated to inspiring audiences through the art of choral music by highlighting works by female and emerging composers. Their repertoire spans works by Burlington native and Composer-in-Residence Katerina Gimon, medieval visionary Hildegard von Bingen, and female composers from throughout the centuries.

Founded in 2017 with a debut performance alongside the Burlington Symphony Orchestra, Myriad quickly established itself as a vital presence in the local and broader choral community. The ensemble's incorporation as a registered non-profit charitable organization in 2020 marked a significant step in their mission to enrich the cultural life of their community. Their dedication and artistry were recognized internationally in 2022 when they achieved top honours at the World Choir Festival, becoming the only North American choir to rank among the top ten overall. This momentum carried into 2024, when they were invited to perform at PODIUM, Canada's prestigious biennial choral conference, an opportunity to share their music with choral enthusiasts from across the nation. Committed to collaboration, Myriad regularly joins forces with other choirs and orchestras, using their music not only to entertain but to support meaningful community causes.

Beyond live performances, Myriad creates dynamic and impactful choral video content. A significant highlight is their innovative video series for *Unsung: If the Earth Could Sing* by Katerina Gimon, an SSAA choral song cycle exploring themes of environmental stewardship. Other notable projects include *Singkap Siaga* by Dr. Tracy Wong, which has garnered over 10,000 views on YouTube, and *Hands* by Jocelyn Hagen, a virtual collaboration involving six choirs from five Canadian provinces.

Today, Myriad Ensemble continues to share their passion for music through live and virtual performances, captivating audiences in the Greater Toronto Area and beyond.

Board Chair Note - Written by Alyson Cuddy

Dear friends of Myriad Ensemble,

Welcome, and thank you for joining us for *Welcome, Winter Light*. We are delighted to share this magical program with you as frosty nights usher in the beauty of the winter season.

Today's concert is a celebration of the warmth, wonder, and whimsy of winter. Through an artful blend of cherished holiday melodies and lesser-known musical treasures, Myriad seeks to capture the essence of this special time of year. We hope that as you listen, you'll be transported to a place of joy and reflection, where the magic of the season comes alive. We are incredibly grateful for the support of our community — your presence here today is a testament to the enduring power of music to bring people together. To our singers, artistic team, volunteers, and supporters, thank you for your dedication and passion in making today's performance possible.

As you step back out into the crisp winter air, may your heart carry the warmth and cheer of today's music. From all of us at Myriad Ensemble, we wish you a joyous holiday season and a bright new year.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are on the Treaty Lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation as well as the Traditional Territories of the Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, and Anishinabek. In stewardship with Mother Earth and the enduring Indigenous presence connected to these lands, we acknowledge the Indigenous Nations of the past, present, and future.

In the spirit of ally-ship and mutual respect, we will take the path of truth and reconciliation to create change, awareness, and equity as we strive to elevate the collective consciousness of society.

Artistic Director's Note - Written by Elise Naccarato

Welcome to Myriad's fifth season!

In the business world, it's said that if a venture survives its first five years, it's poised for success. I remember our first rehearsal vividly — just nine of us gathered in my parents' living room, reading through one of Katerina Gimon's 'new' scores, the now widely beloved *Boundless*. If you had told me then that Myriad would blossom into a vibrant organization with over 60 singers five years later, I wouldn't have believed you. My wildest dreams couldn't have envisioned the incredible community Myriad has become.

Building an ensemble like Myriad has never been a solo endeavour. It has taken, and continues to take, the tireless efforts of our Board of Directors, the creativity and dedication of every chorister who has shared their dreams for what this community could become, and the unwavering support of audiences and donors like you. Your belief in us has fueled our growth and sustained us every step of the way.

You may notice many choristers wearing pins tonight. This is a tradition we began last season to recognize the dedication it takes to be part of Myriad. Choristers receive a pin after one season, three seasons, and for the first time in May, five seasons. Among these, you'll see a few adorned with a diamond. These are worn by our founding members, the individuals who have been with Myriad since before its incorporation in 2020. Without their vision, leadership, and belief in my dream, Myriad would not exist. The pins serve as a symbol of each singer's unique contribution to our shared success. They breathe life into the organization, filling every rehearsal with creativity, laughter, passion — **light**. Through moments of struggle and triumph, it is the collective spirit of the ensemble that turns each note into something truly extraordinary.

Welcome, Winter Light reflects the beauty and warmth that shines brightest during the darkest days of winter. From the glistening purity of snow to the magic of holiday lights, the joy of singing familiar melodies reminds us that even in the shortest days, the world is ablaze with kindness, generosity, and hope.

This programme weaves together new works with some of Myriad's cherished favourites. The final work, in particular, holds a special place in our hearts. At our September retreat, the singers requested to rehearse it, not necessarily for performance, but just to sing it together. It was a magical moment where the distinctions of days or years spent together

melted away, and our hearts sang as one (wrong notes and all!). That connection, light, and happiness is what we hope to share with you as we welcome the holiday season together.

Thank you for giving us the gift of your time and continued support. I wish you a winter season filled with joy, good health, laughter, and light.

Programme

Totari (Laura Jēkabsone)

I. Shortest Day by Susan Cooper

Sing We Now of Christmas (Noël Nouvelet, traditional, arr. Kyle Pederson)

Christmas Snowflakes (Laura Hawley)

II. Snowy Night by Mary Oliver

Talvine õhtu (Pärt Uusberg)

O Holy Night (Adolphe Adam, arr. MDH)

Soloists: Jenn Evans-Laframboise, Leslie Fisher, Victoria Hartman, Samantha Howse, Natalie Plausini, Stella Tung

Terre-Neuve (Marie-Claire Saindon)

III. Kindness is Contagious in Canada by Solomon Hailemariam

I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing In (English Folk Song, arr. Edward Henderson)

The Snow It Melts the Soonest (British Folk Song, arr. Winnie Brückner)

Soloist: Elizabeth Pereira

IV. Brief History of 'lesous ahatonnia' by Dr. Jeanette Gallant

*'lesous ahatonnia' (Traditional, arr. Sarah Quartel)

12 Days of Christmas (Traditional, arr. Sarah Chadwick)

Magnificat (Christine Donkin)

Soloists: Sarah Chadwick, Charlotte Myall, Kylie Sylvester, Namratha Sridevi, Leslie Fisher

V. Special Parcel by Rita Joe

O Jesulein zart (Traditional, arr. Winnie Brückner)

O Come, Emmanuel (Elaine Hagenberg)

What Child Is This? (Traditional English Melody and Latin Text, arr. Scott Shattuck)
Soloists: Emily Horton (Sat), Natalie Plausini (Sun), Namratha Sridevi (beatboxing),
Elizabeth Pereira, Maggie Samson, Stella Tung, Sarah Chadwick

VI. The Lesser Known History of Jingle Bells by Jennifer Miller Hammel

Jingle Bells (James Pierpont, arr. Jack Gold, Marty Paich, ad. Mark Hayes)

VII. The Little Towns of Bethlehem by John Terpstra

Silent Night (Stille Nacht) (F. Gruber, arr. Dan Forrest)

Narrations

I. Shortest Day by Susan Cooper

So the Shortest Day came and the year died
And everywhere down the centuries of the snow-white world
Came people singing, dancing,
To drive the dark away.
They lighted candles in the winter trees;
They hung their homes with evergreen;
They burned beseeching fires all night long
To keep the year alive.
And when the new year's sunshine blazed awake
They shouted, reveling.
Through all the frosty ages you can hear them
Echoing behind us - listen!
All the long echoes, sing the same delight,
This Shortest Day,
As promise awakens in the sleeping land:
They carol, feast, give thanks,
And dearly love their friends,
And hope for peace.
And so do we, here, now,
This year and every year. Welcome Yule!

II. Snowy Night by Mary Oliver

Last night, an owl
in the blue dark
tossed an indeterminate number
of carefully shaped sounds into
the world, in which,
a quarter of a mile away, I happened
to be standing.

I couldn't tell
which one it was –
the barred or the great-horned
ship of the air –
it was that distant.

But, anyway,
aren't there moments
that are better than knowing something,
and sweeter?

Snow was falling,
so much like stars
filling the dark trees
that one could easily imagine
its reason for being was nothing more
than prettiness.

I suppose
if this were someone else's story
they would have insisted on knowing
whatever is knowable – would have hurried
over the fields
to name it – the owl, I mean.

But it's mine, this poem of the night,
and I just stood there, listening and holding out
my hands to the soft glitter
falling through the air. I love this world,
but not for its answers.

And I wish good luck to the owl,
whatever its name –
and I wish great welcome to the snow,
whatever its severe and comfortless
and beautiful meaning.

III. Kindness is Contagious in Canada by Solomon Hailemariam

The weather in Canada was unfamiliar to me. I came to Toronto from Ethiopia, where the weather is predictable and the sun shines almost throughout the year.

When I arrived in the fall, people frequently said, "You poor guy, it is your first winter? Oh my God, you need to get good boots and a jacket." So many people said this, I was petrified of winter. The more people warned me, "Winter is coming, what are you going to do?" the more nervous I became. It was as if a monster was coming, one which I had never heard of or seen.

Then, one December morning, when I tried to open the door, something was blocking it, when I pushed harder I couldn't believe what I saw. Mother Earth had been covered with a big white blanket. I touched it and tried to smell it. It looked like white sugar, but the snow was much more lively and charming, it was gentle and delicate. It was love at first sight and there was nothing to be afraid of.

As my body adapted to the cold, I felt tranquil watching the snow majestically fall down and pile up on the ground. Just looking at it made me happy.

I've learned I have to shovel it right away, when it is light and easy and before the snow can transform itself into something like cement making it very difficult, if not impossible, to clear. I

like shovelling. Even when I fell down a few times, I just laugh. The snow is like a good friend that makes you laugh.

I had an opportunity to visit Ottawa and everyone I met confirmed that Ottawa is colder than Toronto. I've since heard that Montreal is often colder, others say Saskatchewan is the coldest spot. Still, others tell me that if I want to test myself in coldest place in Canada, I need to go to Winnipeg.

"Canada is a cold country, but the people have warm hearts," Caroline, one of my first Canadian friends, said. And it didn't take me long to figure out what she meant by "warm hearts." In fact, I am a living witness to warm hearts.

When I arrived, I was worried about where to stay and how to start a new life. But I discovered that kindness is contagious in Canada. My new Canadian friends have given me their time and tried to genuinely understand me and my challenges as a newcomer to this country. When neighbours heard about me, they bought me a winter jacket, socks and boots. I have been invited to Thanksgiving dinner, Christmas carolling, the neighbourhood pumpkin parade and hockey games. I've watched ski races and horse-riding lessons. I've even been to Canada Blooms!

But it's not just me. Such a penchant for kindness must be hereditary as Canadians have helped generations of refugees. This is, I presume, what distinguishes Canada from the rest of the world.

By now, I have spent two winters in Canada. I still haven't made it to Winnipeg, but I wish one day to travel there and see how cold it gets. I am still waiting for my family to join me from Ethiopia, and I tell them not to worry so much about the snow and the cold.

The weather doesn't scare me any more.

IV. Brief History of *lesous ahatonhia'* by Dr. Jeanette Gallant

During the seventeenth century, Wendake—the Wendat's ancestral home—was situated on what is known, today, as Canada's Georgian Bay. Despite being a formidable community pre-contact, the Wendat Confederacy experienced social and religious division, as well as displacement during the 1600s, due to disease and warfare. For instance, contact with French fur traders exposed the Wendat to diseases such as smallpox, causing considerable loss of life.

The arrival of the Jesuits then culminated in social schisms because of competing spiritual beliefs. Finally, Haudenosaunee attacks in 1648 and 1649 split the Wendat Confederacy into various groups. In time, some Wendat (now called the Wyandot) ended up in Michigan, Ohio, Kansas, and Oklahoma, while others assimilated with Indigenous groups, especially the Haudenosaunee. Others eventually established themselves near present-day Québec City in Jeune Lorette—later renamed Wendake—where they remain today.

lesous ahatonnia' is believed to have been written in the 1640s by Jesuit priest Jean de Brébeuf. The song likely was transcribed after Brébeuf's death by his replacement, Father

Pierre-Joseph-Marie Chaumonot (c.1660). This original Wendat-language version, previously thought to be lost, is housed at the Bibliothèque de l'Assemblée nationale du Québec.

In historical documents like the Jesuit Relations, the carol is not mentioned during Father Brébeuf's stay among the Wendat. However, there is an account of Father Chaumonot administering the last rights to a dying Wendat girl on Christmas day in 1688. The child is said to have sung Jesus is going to be born, a tune thought to be performed by the Wendat around Christmas time. This is possibly a reference to *lesous ahatonnia*, which translated means: 'Jesus, he is newly made, just born'.

Choral groups recently have distanced themselves from the Huron Carol, concerned it either has been culturally appropriated, or is insensitive to the Wendat people. Tonight, this changes. Sarah Quartel's new arrangement—with texts by Wendat poet Andrée Levesque Sioui—invites choirs and audiences, alike, to reflect on the truths of the past while preparing for a more cohesive future. To honour its origins, the name of the piece has been changed to *lesous ahatonnia*. The term 'Huron' is considered derogatory, depicting how French settlers referred to the bristled hairstyle of Wendat men in colonial times.

Myriad is honoured to have commissioned the treble-voice version, which we are premiering tonight.

May we continue to use our voices to listen, grow, relearn, and share the truth of our history.

V. Special Parcel by Rita Joe

The reading room was always kept locked, and it was where the nuns would put the Christmas parcels that came from home. As Christmas approached, new boxes would arrive in the reading room every day. The mail will be delivered and someone would announce "That's your parcel there and so-and-so's parcel is there and so-and-so had two parcels!" We would compare, "How big is your parcel? Oh, it's just a little box!"

During each of the four years I was at school I looked for a parcel from home. But no parcels came until I was 15. I used to voice my feelings to the nun I was working with in the laundry. "Do you have any brothers and sisters?" she asked me once. I told her "Yeah, I've got a brother in the army in England somewhere. I don't know where he is and another is in the army, too, and I don't know where my oldest brother is right now, either. My half-brother does not communicate with me at all. And my sister, she had problems, I guess."

Finally, when I was fifteen, I was told, "Rita, there's a parcel there for you."

Where did it come from?" I asked

"We don't know, there's no name on it."

I remember I was so happy to receive this parcel, and so anxious to see who it was from. But when I opened it there was no name inside, and I couldn't make out the postmark. It contained fruit and candies, a handkerchief, hand lotion and pretty pins for my hair. Oh, I treasured those gifts. They meant so much to me. Of course, after the holidays I told my

friend the nun about them. "I got a parcel this year," I said, "and I got all this stuff, but I don't know who gave it to me, there's no name!"

"Oh," she said, "somebody must care for you." She never took credit for the parcel; she wanted me to feel good. I just told her how much I appreciated whoever had given it to me.

VI. The Lesser Known History of Jingle Bells by Jennifer Miller Hammel

There are things that are certain in life. Taxes are due April 30. Going to the Service Ontario is never a good time. And at Christmas, you will always hear "Jingle Bells". The first Christmas song you learned to sing in school. Sung by carolers (and cats) worldwide. Favorite holiday tune of the Joker – because he gets away. You know it as well as Happy Birthday – perhaps better. But how much do you know about "Jingle Bells?"

Legend says that the song made its debut in 1850 in Medford, Massachusetts, composed by James Lord Pierpont. Pierpont was a native of the town and wanted to write something to commemorate the town's annual sleigh races around Thanksgiving. Historians have cast some doubt on that date since it's recorded that Pierpont had relocated to Savannah, Georgia by that time. Nevertheless, there's a plaque in the Medford town square saluting Pierpont's songwriting achievement.

He published the song in 1857 under the title "One Horse Open Sleigh." It had three verses in addition to the one we typically sing today and details a young couple who go riding and tip their sleigh in a snowdrift. As its popularity increased, the song became simply known as "Jingle Bells," referring to the jolly refrain.

While that recording no longer exists, the second one from 1898 can still be found online. In 1965, "Jingle Bells" became the first song broadcast from space when the astronauts aboard Gemini 6 decided to play a prank on Mission Control and performed the song on a harmonica and actual jingle bells they had smuggled on board. It's certainly a song with a colourful and storied past. So the next time the carolers come to your door, there's no need to roll your eyes when they burst out into "Jingle Bells." In fact, ask them for...Myriad's rendition?

VII. The Little Towns of Bethlehem by John Terpstra

For unto us
in Aklavik
is born a child, in
Attiwapiskat
Gaspé
Cornerbrook, Newfoundland.
And a son is given, in
Westaskiwin
Bella Coola
Flin Flon.
And the future of the whole
earth is placed upon the shoulders of the
daughter of
Tuktoyaktuk
Tignish
Swan Lake.
And the place of their birth is called
Vermilion
Temiskaming
Nain.
Picture Butte
An angel of the Lord appears in the night
sky over Rankin Inlet, over
Iqaluit, saying
This shall be the sign: you will find the babe
wrapped in cast-off flannel, lying
on a bed of straw, in
Esther, Alberta
in a winter feeding stall
an open boxcar, outside
Kindersley, Saskatchewan.
And sure, several hours north
from Hogg's Hollow, just this side
Englehart
you see a one, sleeping in its mother's arms

on the soft shoulder, where their car broke
down.
And the dark highway shines
imperishable life
while helping them
beneath these northern lights
and driving on, through
Cochrane
Kapuskasing
Hearst
past Nipigon, and on
to the little town of Emo
Rainy River Region,
and least among the little dots
that lie scattered as stars
and litter the map
of Northwest Ontario,
where they're expecting you,
as in so many other
of these least likely dots
this expectation
also is; in
Miniota
Pickle Lake
Ohswekan
Glace Bay.
For unto us.
For into all
this night
is born a child, this night
bearing each,
and the places of their birth,
and nativity is given
every name.

Sing With Us - 12 Days of Christmas

Verse 1 January	On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, a partridge in a pear tree...
Verse 2 February	On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, two turtle doves...
Verse 3 March	On the third day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, three French hens...
Verse 4 April	On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, four calling birds...
Verse 5 May	On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, five golden rings...
Verse 6 June	On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, six geese a-laying...

Verse 7 July	On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, seven swans a-swimming...
Verse 8 August	On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, eight maids a-milking...
Verse 9 September	On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, nine ladies dancing...
Verse 10 October	On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, ten lords a-leaping...
Verse 11 November	On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, eleven pipers piping...
Verse 12 December	On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, twelve drummers drumming...

Elise Naccarato Artistic Director

Elise Naccarato is a dynamic and innovative conductor, whose journey in choral music began in the Hamilton Children's Choir, igniting a lifelong passion that has shaped her career. As the Founder and Artistic Director of Myriad Ensemble, Elise has nurtured the ensemble's extraordinary growth over the past five seasons, transforming it into a thriving collective of over 60 members.

Elise holds an Honours Bachelor of Music and a Diploma in Voice Performance from McMaster University, as well as a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from the University of Toronto. In 2024, she further expanded her leadership skills by completing a Master of Business Administration with a focus on Innovation Leadership at the University of Fredericton.

Her early career included roles such as Apprentice Conductor of the Ontario Youth Choir (2016 and 2018) and Associate Conductor of both Chorus Niagara and Orpheus Choir of Toronto, where she worked under the mentorship of Robert Cooper. Elise also served as the Conductor of the Hamilton Estonian Choir, leading the ensemble to represent Canada at the Estonian Song Festival in 2019.

Elise is known for her creative and forward-thinking approach to programming, as well as her commitment to supporting women in the arts. Her contributions have earned her recognition, including the 2021 St. Catharines Emerging Artist Award and a nomination for the Halton Women of Distinction Award. In 2022, Myriad Ensemble's remarkable achievements at the World Choir Festival, where they were the only North American choir to place in the top ten, highlighted Elise's visionary leadership.

In addition to her work with Myriad Ensemble, Elise balances her roles as the Managing Director of Chorus Niagara, a guest clinician, and a board member of Choirs Ontario, continuing her mission to innovate, inspire, and elevate the choral music community.

Amelia Yates, Collaborative Pianist

Amelia Yates, D.M.A., is a pianist, adjudicator, and instructor from Hamilton, Ontario. A graduate of the Doctor of Musical Arts program at the University of Western Ontario, Dr. Yates's research focuses on the solo piano music of Canadian composer Ann Southam. In addition to performing as a soloist, Dr. Yates has had the pleasure of adjudicating at music festivals across Ontario.

Dr. Yates teaches piano lessons from her home studio, AGYPiano. Her goal is to help students perform, understand, and enjoy music thoughtfully, healthily, and artfully. She is also passionate about applying teaching approaches that nurture students' mental health and empower them to think critically and independently.

Dr. Yates holds positions on the board of the Hamilton/Halton Branch of the Ontario Registered Music Teachers' Association and the Hamilton Music Festival. She is honoured to support the Association of Canadian Women Composers as an associate member. Dr. Yates is also a member of the Royal Conservatory of Music's College of Examiners.

Janna Polzin, Narrator

Janna Polzin (she/her) is a voiceover artist living in Burlington, Ontario. This is her second glorious season with Myriad and she considers singing with this group an absolute privilege and joy.

Janna began performing as a very shy teenager in Woodstock, Ontario where her love of music propelled her into singing lessons and eventually musicals. After graduating from Sheridan College's Music Theatre Performance program, Janna moved to Toronto to begin her professional career.

Favourite past credits include Maria in *The Sound of Music* (Mirvish), earning the role as a finalist on CBC's *How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?*, *Legally Blonde* (Neptune Theatre), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* (StageWest), multiple shows with the Toronto Fringe Festival, and productions across Canada.

Programme Notes

Inspired by Latvian folklore, Laura Jēkabsons's *Totari* opens *Welcome, Winter Light* by inviting light into the world. This joyous folk tune is brought to vivid life by Jēkabsons's arrangement combining the soaring voices of the singers and percussive vocal lines.

Sing We Now of Christmas is a fresh take on the traditional French carol *Noël Nouvelet*. Fun fact: the word *nouvelet* shares its roots with *Noël*, both meaning "news" or "newness". In this arrangement, Kyle Pederson uses tempo, harmony, and moments of dissonance to bring out a sense of longing and anticipation. As Pederson explains, "Our hearts of expectation look ahead to the good news that peace, hope, and love are born among us." This beautiful piece invites listeners to reflect on the hope and joy of the season.

Originally written as a Christmas gift for the Cantiamo Girls Choir, Canadian composer Laura Hawley's ***Christmas Snowflakes*** features text by a young American poet named Sasha

Isabella Alexander. Laura uses onomatopoeic syllables for Christmas bells and chimes, using the voice to literally ring in the good of the new year. Hawley also uses a changing meter from 6/8 to 7/8 creating a dance-like feel, mirroring our poet's text "As we dance to a winter's night dance...we dance our way to the town below."

Oh to be a snowflake, born on Christmas night,
 Soaring through the air, floating with delight,
 Down, down, down below. Listen. Don't you hear?
 The joyful chimes of Christmas, ringing out good cheer.
 Dancing high, we gracefully sway
 As we dance to a winter's night ballet.
 Sometimes fast, then maybe slow,
 We dance our way to the town below.

Estonian poet, translator, linguist, and folklorist Villem Grünthal-Ridala's poem **Talvine õhtu**, meaning "winter evening", paints a vivid picture of an Estonian winter landscape. From the dying reddish sun glowing over the bluish snow to the endless snowy plain, the denseness of the described landscape is brought to life by Pärt Uusberg's dissonant harmonies and layered melodies, passing the moving notes from part to part. We want to thank Merike Koger for the translation and assisting us with learning the Estonian language!

The rolling, setting sun casts a dying,
 reddish glow over the dusky,
 shadow-darkened,
 gentle and bluish snow.
 Over the endless, snowy plain,
 so empty and bare,
 a solitary trail runs over the river where brownish willows have sunk into the snow.
 In the reddish twilight,
 under the pale glow of the moon,
 sleighs go along the trail,
 traveling afar.

Based on the French poem *Minuit, chrétiens* by Placide Cappeau in 1847 and translated to English in 1855, **O Holy Night** is a beloved holiday carol. This arrangement was first performed by Myriad years ago during our first EVER live concert. The opening line "O holy night, the stars are brightly shining" is sung in unison until a shimmering harmony explodes on 'shining', bringing the lyrics to life.

"Shrieks of sun, colours of the ocean, rock, crackling ice, shivering snow and wind; **Terre-Neuve** is a love-letter to the powerful geology that is the land of Newfoundland and its ancient mysteries." (Marie-Claire Saindon) From the thunderous body percussion to the percussive text, Saindon writes the splitting cliffs and crackling ice "with anticipation".

Terre éclaboussée du cri d'un soleil aux couleurs d'océan	Land, splattered with shrieks of sun, with colours of ocean and,
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de roc fauve la falaise se brise craquements de glace goût frais de neige qui fait trembler la mémoire ensevelie se mêle de vent s'enroule au sel d'une joie Neuve	rock, rust-red the cliff splits, crackling ice, a fresh taste of shivering snow, stirs a shrouded memory, mingles with the wind, spirals vibrant with the salt of a new found joy
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English folk song *I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing In*'s cheery tune references three ships sailing into Bethlehem on Christmas morning. Given that Bethlehem was landlocked, Canadian singer-songwriter Bruce Cockburn says the weird lyrics are the result of English folk in the 18th century hallucinating from eating too much ergot in their moldy English bread! Arranger Edward Henderson creates a waterfall of chiming and cheerful holiday-esque bells, helping to ring in the good fortune of the season!

The Snow It Melts the Soonest (most recognizably covered by Sting in 2009 on his album *If on a Winter's Night*) is a British folk song dating back to the 19th century, first published in Blackwood's Magazine and popularized in the 1960's by folk singer Anne Briggs. Arranger Winnie Brückner uses sixteenth note accidentals to emulate a folk vocal style in the melody and percussive acapella style vocal parts fill out the arrangement and drive the melody forward.

The 12 Days of Christmas, is a cumulative song meaning, each verse is built on top of the previous. There are twelve verses, each describing a gift from a "true love", which we can assume is a fun spin on the Christian theology of the 12 days of Christmas that marks the span between the birth of Christ and the coming of the Magi, the three wise men. While most verses have stayed true to the original, the third verse has differed from the original "colly birds", to "colour'd birds", "curley birds", "canary birds", and the version we know now, "calling birds".

"Choral groups recently have distanced themselves from the *Huron Carol*, concerned it either has been culturally appropriated, or is insensitive to the Wendat people. Sarah Quartel's new arrangement — with text by Wendat poet Andrée Levesque Sioui — invites choirs and audiences, alike, to reflect on the truths of the past while preparing for a more cohesive future. ***lesous ahatonnia***' is believed to have been written in the 1640s by Jesuit priest Jean de Brébeuf.

In historical documents like the Jesuit Relations, the carol is not mentioned during Father Brébeuf's stay among the Wendat. However, there is an account of Father Chaumonot [his successor] administering the last rights to a dying Wendat girl on Christmas day in 1688. The child is said to have sung *Jesus is going to be born*, a tune thought to be performed by the Wendat around Christmas time. This is possibly a reference to ***lesous ahatonnia***', which translate means: '*Jesus, he is newly made, just born*'. [Ernest] Myrand described the song as Canada's 'first' Christmas carol, written to teach the Wendat the nativity story." (Dr. Jeanette Gallant)

Myriad is honoured to have commissioned the SSAA arrangement of this work and will be performing the premiere today. In Elise's words, "May we continue to use our voices to listen, grow, relearn and share the truth of our history."

Poetry by Andrée Levesque Sioui

Definitions of the Wendat text

<p>Sky Woman, Yäa'tayenhtsihk, fell from the sky at sea. An island formed on Turtle's back, Atiio' diving deep. From battling Twins rose harmony, creation's Circle, öniändih. Singing ahskennon'nia, ahskennon'nia, singing ahskennon'nia.</p> <p>Then came the missionaries with their own mythology: a child born to Mother Mary, come to set souls free. Three Magi bearing gifts they came, led by a star to praise His name. lesous ahatonnia', ahatonnia', lesous ahatonnia'.</p> <p>The Jesuits' story, fashioned as the Wendat's own, drove some toward these new beliefs as death and war had grown. As conflict grew, division came; the Circle severed, ever changed. Höndatrawanh, höndatrawanh, höndatrawanh.</p> <p>Sing thanks to those who've come before to teach us harmony. A world of peace where differences can shape our unity. True friendship grows a Circle strong, for generations yet to come! Singing ahskennon'nia, ahskennon'nia, kwaten'ndiyonhrahchondiah.</p>	<p>lesous ahatonnia' Jesus is born</p> <p>Yäa'tayenhtsihk the Ancient (Sky Woman)</p> <p>Atiio' the wild animals</p> <p>öniändih for a long time</p> <p>ahskennon'nia peace</p> <p>ehonstorat they will hurry up</p> <p>höndatrawanh they have separated and taken different paths</p> <p>kwaten'ndiyonhrahchondiah let us prepare our minds</p>
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Canadian composer Christine Donkin originally composed *Magnificat* to be performed in a prayer labyrinth. Many Magnificat settings are about joy but this one seems to be about Mary's fear and the burden of the decision placed upon her. "Singing or listening to this piece, like walking a labyrinth, lifts the participants out of everyday, linear reality into a sense of mystical timelessness. The choral parts form a cloud of sound, emanating and reverberating from the soloist's mantra-like repetitions of the beginning of the text."
(Mary Lycan, editor)

<p>Magnificat anima mea Dominum Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo. Gloria Patri et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.</p>	<p>My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.</p>
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Winnie Brückner's arrangement of *O Jesulein zart* brings a fresh and modern perspective to this traditional German carol. With rich harmonies and subtle contemporary touches, Brückner transforms the simple lullaby into a captivating piece that feels both timeless and

new. This arrangement invites listeners to pause and reflect on the beauty and peace of the Nativity story, reimagined with a unique and heartfelt voice.

<p>Jesulein zart, dein Kripplein ist hart. O Jesulein zart, wie liegst du so hart! Ach schlaf, ach tu dein Äuglein zu, schlaf und gib uns die ewige Ruh. O Jesulein zart, wie liegst du so hart.</p>	<p>Oh Jesus, sweet child, how hard is your bed. Oh Jesus, sweet child, for your tender head! Sleep now, oh close your eyes in peace, and grant us, in you, blessed release. Child Jesus, so sweet, we lie at your feet.</p>
<p>Seid stille, ihr Wind', lasst schlafen das Kind! All' Brausen sei fern, lasst ruh'n euren Herrn! Schlaf, Kind, und tu dein Äuglein zu, schlaf und gib uns die ewige Ruh! Seid stille, ihr Wind', lasst schlafen das Kind!</p>	<p>Winds, gentle and mild, disturb not the child! All storming must cease, your Lord is at peace! Sleep, child, oh close your eyes in peace, and grant us, in you, blessed release! Winds, gentle and mild, disturb not the child!</p>
<p>Nichts mehr sich bewegt, kein Mäuslein sich regt, zu schlafen beginnt das herzige Kind. Schlaf denn und tu dein Äuglein zu, schlaf und gib uns die ewige Ruh. Schlaf, Jesulein zart, von göttlicher Art.</p>	<p>With peace all around, no movement or sound the silence will break; the child will not wake. Sleep then, and close your eyes in peace, and grant us, in you, blessed release. And may the Lord keep you safe in sweet sleep.</p>

Elaine Hagenberg's ***O Come, Emmanuel*** is a stunning reimagining of the well known carol. With lush harmonies and sweeping melodies, Hagenberg infuses the traditional tune with an emotional depth that captures both the longing and hope of the season. This arrangement bridges the ancient and the contemporary, offering a powerful and moving musical reimagination.

What Child Is This? combines two well-known works that reflect on the theme of reverence. The first, *What Child Is This?*, sets the familiar *Greensleeves* melody to lyrics that wonder about the identity of the Christ child. This leads into *Ave Maria*, a prayer to the Virgin Mary, traditionally expressing devotion and peace. The arrangement thoughtfully weaves these two pieces together, creating a contrast between the questioning tone of the carol and the reverent calm of the prayer. Through careful vocal arrangement and rich harmonies, the performance highlights both the mystery and the sacredness of the Christmas story. Myriad is making this arrangement our own by adding an extra surprise to really give this mash-up a new and unexpected twist.

<p>Ave, ave, Mater Dei, Ave, ave, Dominus, Ave, ave, O Maria, Gratia plena, Iesus. Ave Maria, Dominus tecum, et benedicta tu in mulieribus, Ave Maria, gratia plena, et benedictus fructus ventris,</p>	<p>Hail, hail Mother of God, Hail, hail, Lord, Hail, hail, Mary, Full of grace, Jesus. Hail Mary, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women, Hail Mary, full of grace, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,</p>
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<p>Ave Maria, Mater Dei, et benedicta tu in mulieribus. Nunc et in hora, in hora mortis, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, Ave Maria, Ave Maria, Mater Dei, Mary. Ave, ave, Mater Dei, Ave, ave, Dominus, Ave, ave, O Maria, Gratia plena, Ave Maria.</p>	<p>Hail Mary, Mother of God, blessed art though amongst women. Now and at the hour of our death, pray for us sinners, Hail Mary, hail Mary, Mother of God, Mary. Hail, Hail, Mother of God, Hail, Hail, Lord, Hail, Hail, Mary, Full of grace, Mother of God.</p>
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Originally titled *The One Horse Open Sleigh* in 1857, **Jingle Bells** is one of the most commonly sung Christmas carols across the world. Mark Hayes' choral adaptation of Jack Gold and Marty Paich's arrangement of *Jingle Bells* is sure to bring a smile to your face. Building on the carol you know and love, the text jingles, jangles, and will have your feet tapping.

As one of the most beloved holiday carols of all time, **Silent Night** spreads a message of hope for all those who hear it. Dan Forrest's arrangement begins with a simple musical idea that builds to an overwhelming crescendo both musically and emotionally delivering the message "Christ the Saviour is born". This arrangement of *Silent Night* is a special one for Myriad as it opened last year's concert, queuing the start of a memorable evening. This year, we hope to leave choristers and audience members alike with warm and fuzzy feelings that last the whole season long.

Programme Notes written by Sarah Chadwick and Elise Naccarato

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