

THE FENIX

OCTOBER 13 & 14, 2023

MEREDITH MONK Earth Seen from Above
ELIZABETH KNUDSON From the Ninth Elegy
JÓHANN JÓHANNSSON Orphic Hymn
AYANNA WOODS close[r], now
BEVERLEY McKIVER All That We Are
SHIREEN ABU-KHADER Lao Rahal Soti
LESLIE UYEDA Small Elegy
MAJA RATKJE A Dismantled Ode To The
Moral Value Of Art
YSAYE M. BARNWELL Wanting Memories

*We invite you to join us in creating a meditative space
this evening by refraining from applause until after the
final piece, 'Wanting Memories' - we look forward to
talking with you after the show!*

MUSICA INTIMA PERFORMS AND OPERATES ON THE STOLEN
TERRITORY OF THE COAST SALISH PEOPLES, INCLUDING
THE TERRITORIES OF THE X^wMƏΘK^wƏYƏM (MUSQUEAM),
SK̓W̓X̓W̓Ú7MESH ÚXWUMIXW (SQUAMISH),
AND SƏL̓L̓W̓ƏT̓A7̓ (TSLEIL-WAUTUTH) NATIONS.

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At its heart, the mythology of the phoenix is about transformation. In death, the bird burns 'wondrous fair' - bringing new light and life. Even in wordless soundscapes, the idea of transformation and transfiguration flows through the music tonight. Death can bring life, light, joy - and as Shireen Abu-Khader's piece says 'if my voice departs, your voice will not.' Ysaye M. Barnwell takes it even further: 'I am you and you are me and we are one.' Through our connection to each other, to our songs, to our stories, we are transformed. Reflecting on our impermanence, Rilke, set by Elizabeth Knudson, writes: "having been earthly just this once, even though it was only once, seems irrevocable." And in January, as the ensemble walked around so-called Stanley Park with T'uy't'tanat-Cease Wyss, she continually reminded us that in a forest, death brings new life.

As we prepared this program, we reflected together about grief. We come into this space carrying our own experiences, and together, we embark on a path of seeing and experiencing change through the journey of grief. We hope, in this shared space tonight, we can together walk on our own journeys, celebrating in the community these shared experiences create.

Tonight, we invite you to sit in the silence between pieces.

Perhaps a phrase caught your eye as you came in, and you just heard it sung. Maybe a colour of light triggered a memory, or a fragment of a melody remains with you after the singing has ended. We have often talked about the music and the connection that live in silence, and the way silence is transformed. There are silences in between fragments in Maja Ratkje's 'Dismantled Ode' and rests at the end of every four-bar phrase in Meredith Monk's 'The Earth Seen from Above'. Leslie Uyeda's 'Small Elegy,' carefully sets the word 'silence' in Patrick Lane's poem - and after each piece, there will be space to breathe and reflect. We hope you find as much in these transformative silences as we have.

Earth Seen from Above
Meredith Monk



Meredith Monk is a composer, singer, and creator of new opera and music theater works. Recognized as one of the most unique and influential artists of our time, she is a pioneer in what is now called “extended vocal technique.” Over the last six decades, Monk has been hailed as one NPR’s 50 Great Voices and “one of America’s coolest composers.” Celebrated

internationally, her work has been presented at major venues around the world.

Monk’s numerous awards and honors include a MacArthur ‘Genius’ award and Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters by the Republic of France. She has also received three of the highest honors bestowed on a living artist in the United States; induction into the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2019), the 2017 Dorothy and Lillian Gish prize, and a 2015 National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama.

Earth Seen From Above was originally composed in 1987 as part of an eight-section a cappella work entitled ‘The Ringing Place.’ In 1991, I incorporated five sections into Part III: *Invisible Light* of my opera, ‘ATLAS’. The lines throughout the piece are sustained, yet the listeners feel the pulse underlying the sustained notes - this is what gives *Earth Seen From Above* its ringing, shimmering quality. The work creates a sustained, resonant sound experience. (MM, 1991)

From the Ninth Elegy

Elizabeth Knudson/Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), trans. Graham Good



Elizabeth Knudson is a Vancouver-based composer, and an Associate of the Canadian Music Centre. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Simon Fraser University, and a Masters degree in Composition from the University of British Columbia. Recent highlights include being guest host of the first international edition of “Making Waves” new music programme (Australia). Recent works include a jazz concerto- “Blueprint”, “A Drop of Honey”- premiered at the Indian Summer Festival in Burnaby, BC, Canada, a work for cello octet- “Acqua”, a piece for men’s choir- “Ere Sleep Comes Down” (winner of a national award), a commissioned piece for double guitar orchestra- “Three Fates”, and a work for quartet and orchestra- “Equinox”, taken on tour through the Balkans with Music Progressive Quartet, and the West Coast Symphony Orchestra. Elizabeth is currently composer-in-residence of Allegra Chamber Orchestra.

The inspiration for this piece came in equal parts from the 1987 Wim Wenders film, ‘Wings of Desire (Der Himmel über Berlin)’; and from my maternal grandmother, Gudrun Joensen, who passed away in 2006. ‘Wings of Desire’ appealed to me in its imagery and thematic use of angels existing alongside “earthly” beings; the film is based on the writings of poet Rainer Maria Rilke. The text of my piece is taken from Rilke’s Ninth Duino Elegy, which speaks of the transience of being “earthly”, and yet that the fact of having existed once on this earth is irrevocable. Ever since my grandmother passed away, I had been looking for an opportunity to incorporate her essence somehow into one of my compositions. She was a very gentle person, hence the whispered, hushed quality of the beginning of the piece. The very end of the piece uses a quotation of a Danish lullaby she used to sing.

From the Ninth Elegy was written for musica intima, and given its premiere on 21 March, 2009, as part of Vancouver Pro Musica’s Sonic Boom Festival, at the Western Front. (EK)

Aber weil Hiersein viel ist, und weil uns scheinbar
alles das Hiesige braucht, dieses Schwindende...
Uns, die Schwindendsten. Ein Mal
jedes, nur ein Mal.

Ein Mal und nicht mehr. Und wir auch
ein Mal... Aber dieses
ein Mal gewesen zu sein, wenn auch nur ein Mal:
irdisch gewesen zu sein, scheint nicht widerrufbar.

*But because being here means so much, and because
all of the transient things that are here seem to need us...*

*They need us - us, the most transient. Once
for each thing, just once.*

Once and no more.

*Just once for us too... But having been
Earthly just this once, even though
It was only once, seems irrevocable.*

Orphic Hymn

Jóhann Jóhannsson/Ovid (43 BCE - 17/18 CE)



Born in Iceland, Jóhann Jóhannsson (d. 2018) was an award-winning composer, musician and producer. In 2015 Jóhann won the Golden Globe and received Oscar®, BAFTA, Grammy® and Critics' Choice nominations for his score for *The Theory of Everything*, James Marsh's biographical drama based on the life of theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking. In 2016 Jóhann was again nominated for Oscar®, BAFTA and Critics' Choice awards, this time for the best original score for director Denis Villeneuve's thriller *Sicario*. 2016 also saw the release of *Arrival*, and once again Jóhann's score was nominated for Grammy®, Golden Globe and BAFTA awards. The last film soundtrack he wrote was for *The Mercy*, released on 2 February 2018. He made his Deutsche Grammophon debut with the release of his first studio album in six years, *Orphée*, in September 2016. *Orphée* was inspired by a range of readings of the Orpheus myth and draws on a varied sonic palette, both acoustic and electronic, to explore the boundaries between darkness and light. It contemplates impermanence, memory and the elusive nature of beauty, ultimately celebrating art and its power of renewal.

Umbra subit terras, et quae loca viderat ante,
 cuncta recognoscit quaerensque per arva piorum
 invenit Eurydicen cupidisque amplectitur ulnis;
 hic modo coniunctis spatiantur passibus ambo,
 nunc praecedentem sequitur, nunc praevious anteit
 Eurydicenque suam iam tuto respicit Orpheus.

*The ghost of Orpheus goes underground,
 and recognizes all the places it had seen before;
 and, searching the fields of the Blessed,
 he found his Eurydice again, and embraces her in his arms.*

*There they walk together side by side;
 sometimes he follows her, sometimes he goes ahead,
 for Orpheus can now safely look back at his Eurydice.*

close[r], now

Ayanna Woods

Ayanna Woods is a Grammy-nominated performer, composer and bandleader from Chicago. Her music explores the spaces between acoustic and electronic, traditional and esoteric, wildly improvisational and mathematically rigorous. A collaborator across genres and forms, her work spans new music, theater, film scoring, arranging, songwriting, and improvisation. She earned her B.A. in music from Yale University.



Woods has been commissioned by Chanticleer, The Crossing, Lorelei Ensemble, the Chicago Children’s Choir, Boston Children’s Choir, and Chicago Chamber Choir. Her music appears in a range of film and theater projects. Two of her songs are featured in the Emmy-nominated web series *Brown Girls*. She continues to tour the U.S. and Canada with Manual Cinema as a bassist and music director.

“close[r], now” was commissioned by Chanticleer in 2021. The source material for the work is an L.A. Times editorial from March 2020 detailing the reasons why theaters and performing arts venues should “close, now.” Woods restructured and resampled the article to create a new text that highlights the changes we had to make to connect to one another during the pandemic. Through isolation and distance, we were forced to “hone the dexterity of love” and to be creative with how we care for each other. Woods closes the piece with an imperative for the world: “come back to life.”

close[r], now

the point of ease is a window.
dream - fathom -
hone the dexterity of love.
the mask/ a [path] through
come back/ come back to
life.

All That We Are

Beverley McKiver

Beverley McKiver writes: “I am a pianist, composer and music educator just east of Ottawa, Ontario. I teach piano to students of all ages and am available as a collaborator and soloist. Formerly, I was a business analyst for many years, until I made the decision to pursue my love of music, which has always been an important part of my life. I spent my formative years preparing for Royal Conservatory exams and music festivals. I earned my college tuition by accompanying for ballet classes. I have been an pianist and organist for congregations in Kingston, Scarborough and Ottawa. Currently, I am the music and choir director at Knox United Church in Edwards, just outside of Ottawa.



Music has been a life-long learning process for me. I am continuing with private studies in classical and jazz piano and composition and regularly attend teaching seminars and masterclasses. In 2019, I completed the Undergraduate Piano Pedagogy Certificate program at the University of Ottawa, including teaching practicums with OrKidstra and Lotus Centre for Special Music Education. Also in 2019, I attended the Indigenous Classical Musicians and Banff Musicians in Residence programs at Banff Centre for the Arts.”

The inspiration for “All That We Are” comes from the Anishinaabe concept of “mino-bimaadiziwin” (the good life) and the Seven Grandfather teachings of Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth. It was originally written for solo vocalist with instrumental accompaniment as the opening song for Beverley’s suite, “Boozhoo Manoomin”, which honours “manoomin” (wild rice) and its importance to the Anishinaabeg. (BM)

All that we are, all that we are living.
All that we breathe, all that we are giving.
All we receive, all that we are knowing.
All that we grieve, all that we rejoice in.
All that we share, all that we do.
All that we dare, all that we are dreaming.
All that we are, all that we are living.

The Fenix

Edie Hill/Exeter Book (late 10th century)



Described as “...bold...radiant, deftly crafted...” (Musical America) and “flat out beautiful” (Stereophile Magazine), Edie Hill’s music is performed all over the world.

A three-time McKnight Artist Fellow and a two-time Bush Artist Fellow, Hill has received grants from the Jerome Foundation, ASCAP, New Music USA,

Meet The Composer, the Minnesota State Arts Board, Chamber Music America, and was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. Spectral Spirits, featured on the album BORN: the music of Edie Hill and Michael Gilbertson by The Crossing, Donald Nally, conductor, won the 2023 GRAMMY for Best Choral Performance.

After earning a B.A. from Bennington College in Vermont under the tutelage of Vivian Fine, Hill moved from her native New York to Minneapolis where she earned her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Minnesota with principal composition teacher, Lloyd Ultan. She has also studied extensively with Libby Larsen.

Composing is a life-long love. Writing music is always an opportunity to research, learn, muse, reach down deep, and allow inspiration to come from the stuff of life. Her music is fueled by her passions and curiosities. She lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Se sceal þære
sunnan sið behealdan
leohte in life
lif butan ende

*She shall behold
the sun's journey
light in life
life without end*

ðone wudu weardap,
wundrum fæger
fugel feþrum strong,
se is fenix haten.

*in woodland dwells,
wondrous fair
bird, feather-strong,
who is called Fenix.*

Se sceal þære
sunnan sið behealdan
hwonne up cyme
eastan glidan
ofer sidne sae
swegles leoma.

*She shall behold
the sun's journey
When up comes,
gliding from the east
over the wide sea,
heaven's gleam*

Se sceal þære
sunnan sið behealdan
leohte in life

*She shall behold
the sun's journey
light in life*

þær se eadga mot
eardes neotan,
wyllestreama
wuduholtum in,
wunian in wonge,
oppæt wintra bið
þusend urnen.

*There she enjoys
her dwelling place
in the well-streams,
and the woodland grove,
living in the world,
until winter takes
a thousand turns.*

ond fenix byrneð.
wundrum fæger

*and Fenix burns.
wondrous fair*

lif butan ende
leohte in life...

*life without end
light in life...*

Lao Rabal Soti*Samih Choukeir, arr. Shireen Abu-Khader*

Shireen is a Palestinian Jordanian Canadian artist, composer and educator living in Toronto, Canada. After earning a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education from Oberlin College Conservatory in 1994 and a Master's degree in Choral Music from the University of Southern California in 1998, Shireen's musical odyssey drew her to Palestine to teach music for several years. Expanding on her experience and passion, Shireen founded Dozan wa Awtar Music Establishment in 2002, which contributed greatly to her personal and professional development. She earned her PhD Music Education from the University of Toronto in 2019.

Through Dozan World, Shireen is overcoming geographic barriers to encourage all people to discover the musical richness of the Levant, celebrate the stories in the songs and join the movement in each melody.

The arranger was first introduced to this piece during her work in Ramallah in 1998. Syrian composer Samih Choukeir's original is a protest song, fast with a march-like feel. However, the melody and lyrics resonated with the arranger's belief as a Jordanian of Palestinian origin; voices and songs do not depart. With that in mind, the approach was calmer, quieter, and more hopeful. With a personal dedication to the Palestinian ongoing struggle for freedom and dignity, Shireen hopes that the universal message of this beautiful melody resonates with everybody, reminding us that the voices of all those who have been silenced continue to resonate in our music. (SA-K)

لَوْ رَحَلَ صَوْتِي مَا بَتَّرَحَلَ حَنَاجِرُكُمْ
 عُيُونِي عَلَى بُكَرَا وَقَلْبِي مَعَكُمْ
 لَوْ رَاحَ الْمُغَنِّي بِنُتَّصَلَ الْأَغَانِي
 تَجْمَعُ لِقُلُوبِ الْمَكْسُورَةِ وَالْبِئْتَانِي

*If my voice departs, your voices will not
 I look unto tomorrow and my heart is with you
 If the singer dies, the songs will remain
 Bringing together the broken and suffering hearts.*

Small Elegy

Leslie Uyeda/Patrick Lane

Born in Montréal, Québec, Leslie Uyeda is a composer, pianist, and conductor. Leslie's first love is the human voice.

During 25 years in opera, Leslie worked as a coach, pianist, chorus music director and conductor.

She has composed over fifty songs to the gorgeous and powerful poetry of Canadian poet Lorna Crozier, and four song cycles using the poignant and delicate words of Joy Kogawa. Leslie has composed for *musica intima*, the Elektra Women's Choir, Chor Leoni, and Ensemble Vocal Arts-Québec (new work to be premiered this fall).



I would like to thank musica intima for commissioning Small Elegy. This poem means a lot to me. It was written by the late poet, author, and friend Patrick Lane, and it speaks acutely to the dire situation we find ourselves in this world today. I have dedicated this new work to the memory of composer and friend Jocelyn Morlock, who died recently, leaving so many of us in the music community heartbroken. I do not mean for Small Elegy to be depressing. I hope it can be sung with heart and healing for all of us. (LU, 2023)

The silence of the dead is what we own.
It's why we sing. The sky is clear today.
Go on, I hear my father say, my mother too,
and though they rest in sunken graves
I hear them still. The sky is clear today,
the harvest weeks away and no forests burn.
The dead sing in the rubble and the fires.
We must listen to their song.
Their burden is our lives.
We pray because we cannot turn away.

from Lane, Patrick and Lorna Crozier, *The Quiet in Me: Poems* (Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing Co., 2022).

A Dismantled Ode To The Moral Value Of Art

Maja S.K. Ratkje

Maja S. K. Ratkje has been honing her singular, interconnected performing and composing styles for more than twenty years. The process has placed her at the forefront of the musical avant-garde where, depending who you ask, she is either an exciting new talent or a respected elder stateswoman. Despite its boldness and originality, her music is meant for sharing. At its heart lies Ratkje's own voice, an open door to her individual musicianship and a constant tool for realigning her work with natural expressions and human truths.



Her music frequently involves stark contrasts, more often in the delivery of balance and kinetic action than to create shock or effect. 'Form is the most important aspect of composition and the reason I consider myself a composer,' Ratkje once said; 'It must be carefully planned to avoid the obvious.' At the same time, she has spoken of intuition in relation to form and of intuition as 'an aesthetic filter.' The words have extra resonance coming from a performing and improvising musician who charges her creativity with the opportunity and risk of live performance.

While many of Ratkje's scores are notated, many stretch beyond the confines of traditional notation in aspiring to both greater precision and greater liberation. Many ask performers to improvise or produce material themselves.

Ratkje has contributed to well in excess of 130 albums and has written music for dance, radio plays and gallery installations. She is a member of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, was the inaugural winner of the Arne Nordheim Prize and was nominated for the Nordic Council Music Prize in 2013.

Program Note:

It was performed under the direction of Leonard Bernstein at a concert to mark the fall of the Berlin Wall, it appears in Stanley Kubrick's 'A Clockwork Orange.' Hitler celebrated his birthdays with it, and the government of Rhodesia made it their anthem. And the prisoners in German concentration camps played it. It also figured prominently at Mitterand's 1981 investiture. In 2012 [the date of composition], we celebrate the Ode to Joy's 40 years anniversary as National Anthem of the EU.

*Thanks to Neil Young and Edvard Grieg for inspiration.
(MR, 2012)*

Freunde, lasst uns
angenehmen Leben.
angenehmere anstimmen.
Froh, wie seine Sonnen.
Fliegen.

*Friends, let us
enjoy life.
sound more pleasantly.
Glad, like the suns
to fly.*

Everything's gonna be alright.



RECORDING RATKJE, APRIL 2021

Wanting Memories

Ysaye M. Barnwell

Most known for her singing with and musical compositions performed and recorded by Sweet Honey In The Rock, Dr. Barnwell has composed and arranged music appearing on 10 recordings. She has been a commissioned composer on numerous and varied dance, choral, film and video projects including Plymouth Music Series, Sesame Street, GALA Festival Choruses V, Dance Alloy of Pittsburg, David Rousserve's Reality Dance Company, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Women's Phillharmonic of San Francisco, Redwood Culture Work, all outgrowths of her combined understanding of creative artists inextricably bound to society.



Trained as a violinist for fifteen years, beginning at the age of 2 1/2, she holds degrees in speech pathology (BS, MEd), cranio-facial studies (Ph.D.) and public health (MSPH). She was a professor at Howard University College of Dentistry for over a decade, and over the following 8 years developed training programs in Child Protection at Children's Hospital National Medical Center, and administered community-based health programs at Gallaudet University, all in Washington DC. For almost thirty years, and on three continents, Barnwell has led the workshop 'Building a Vocal Community - Singing in the African-American Tradition', which utilizes oral tradition, an African world view, and African-American history, values, cultural, and vocal traditions to build communities of song among singers and non-singers alike.

'Wanting Memories' was part of a suite of songs commissioned for a dance theater piece called CROSSINGS. I did dedicate 'Wanting Memories' to my father when we recorded it but it was written while both my parents were still alive. What was special though was that I am an only child and when my father died and then my mother, and I prepared to sell the house I grew up in, I found bags of photos, letters and other memorabilia - the kind of things especially an only child hopes for ... So in a sense, the song was an unconscious wish or prayer that actually came true.
(YMB)

*I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,
to see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.*

*You used to rock me in the cradle of your arms,
You said you'd hold me till the pains of life were gone.
You said you'd comfort me in times like these and now
I need you, Now I need you, and you are gone.*

*I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,
to see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.
Since you've gone and left me, there's been so little
beauty, But I know I saw it clearly through your eyes.*

*Now the world outside is such a cold and bitter place,
Here inside I have few things that will console.
And when I try to hear your voice above the storms of
life, Then I remember all the things that I was told.*

*I think on the things that made me feel so wonderful
when I was young. I think on the things that made me
laugh, made me dance, made me sing. I think on the
things that made me grow into a being full of pride. I
think on these things, for they are true.*

*I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,
to see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.
I thought that you were gone, but now I know you're
with me, You are the voice that whispers all I need to
hear.*

*I know a please a thank you and a smile will take me
far, I know that I am you and you are me and we are
one, I know that who I am is numbered in each grain
of sand, I know that I've been blessed again, and over
again.*

*I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,
to see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.*

Save the Date...

saturday, december 9 (friday & saturday, december 15 & 16)
IN WINTER'S HOUSE

saturday, december 23
DING DONG

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wishes to thank our donors for
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musica intima is unique. There is no other professional ensemble in Canada that is created for the artists, by the artists - and you know how special the shared connection is when you join us for our performances. Help us continue to share that here, across the province, and across Turtle Island...

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