



Canadian Art Song Project

# KNOWN TO DREAMERS

Black Voices in Canadian Art Song

La mélodie canadienne à travers  
les voix de la communauté noire

Measha  
BRUEGGERGOSMAN-LEE

Elliot  
MADORE

Steven  
PHILCOX

Jonelle  
SILLS

## KNOWN TO DREAMERS: Black Voices in Canadian Art Song

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by Lawrence Wiliford and Steven Philcox, Artistic Directors of Canadian Art Song Project

The global call to action of the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020 compelled us to consider our responsibility to the name of our organization – Canadian Art Song Project – and made us question why more Black stories were not told through Canadian art music and song. As performing artists and champions of a song tradition that traces its roots to the salons of Europe, we realized that because of our musical education and social privilege, we did not fully understand that even early 21st-century Canadian musical works were not remotely representative of the diverse experiences and histories woven into the contemporary social fabric of Canada.

In response, we began to connect with Canadian singers, composers and writers who identify as members of the Black community. Through initial conversations with Canadian soprano Chantale Nurse (based in Berlin) and American countertenor Darryl Taylor, founder of the African American Art Song Alliance, we learned of compositions of art song by David Bontemps, Rich Coburn, Maria Thompson Corley, Ted Runcie, Larry Strachan and others. Additional research informed us of pieces by Carmen Brouard and Stewart Goodyear, as well as a significant amount of repertoire that is no longer in print by R. Nathaniel Dett. Since then, Canadian Art Song Project has embarked on a number of projects that we hope will help expand the existing repertoire and give voice to a broader lived experience depicted in the songs by Canadians.

*Known to Dreamers: Black Voices in Canadian Art Song* is our first recording project that celebrates

contributions by Black composers and writers to Canadian art song. The songs programmed include new and lesser-known works by Black composers, as well as already established repertoire by James Rolfe and Robert Fleming that set texts by celebrated Black writers André Alexis and Owen Dodson. As the centrepiece, we commissioned composer/writer Maria Thompson Corley and writers Kanika Ambrose and Christene Browne to collaborate on *The Colour of Joy* – the first song cycle written by Black women Canadian artists. Finally, two songs by composer/conductor Larry Strachan on texts by Thomas Hardy and Robert Nathan make their recorded debut.

We would like to thank all of our artistic partners for their contributions to this recording project: Measha Brueggergosman-Lee, Elliot Madore and Jonelle Sills, thank you for your beautiful performances and dedication to this repertoire. Maria Thompson Corley, Kanika Ambrose and Christene Browne, thank you for your thoughtful collaboration and vivid storytelling in *The Colour of Joy*. Thank you to Larry Strachan, for your incredible enthusiasm and trust in our work. James Rolfe and André Alexis, thank you for your 2013 collaboration in *Moths* and for continuing your artistic relationship with us a decade later.

In giving voice to Black experiences through Canadian art song, this project represents an important beginning for us. Canadian Art Song Project was started because we believe in the power of art song as a vehicle for intimate storytelling through music. We commit to continuing this work by sharing, through song, the stories that need to be heard.

par Lawrence Wiliford et Steven Philcox, Directeurs artistiques du Canadian Art Song Project

L'appel à l'action du mouvement Black Lives Matter qui a secoué le monde à l'été 2020 a provoqué chez-nous une prise de conscience. Nous avons réexaminé les responsabilités de notre organisation artistique, et la portée de son nom—Canadian Art Song Project. Cette réflexion a soulevé une importante question : pourquoi la musique classique canadienne (et la mélodie canadienne) ne reflètent-elles pas davantage la réalité et le vécu des Noirs? En tant qu'artistes de la scène, nous défendons l'art de la mélodie. Or, l'origine de cette forme musicale remonte à la tradition des salons européens. Il nous fallut bien admettre que même les œuvres musicales canadiennes du début du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle n'évoquaient en aucune façon les expériences vécues qui constituent le tissu social du Canada contemporain ni sa diversité, sans doute en raison de notre éducation musicale et de nos privilèges sociaux.

Par conséquent, nous avons commencé à créer des liens avec des artistes canadiennes (chanteur-teuses, compositeur-trices et écrivain-es) qui s'identifient comme membres de la communauté noire. Nous avons d'abord contacté la soprano canadienne Chantale Nurse (établie à Berlin) et le contre-ténor américain Darryl Taylor, fondateur de l'African American Art Song Alliance. Au fil de ces premières conversations, nous avons découvert l'existence de mélodies de David Bontemps, Rich Coburn, Maria Thompson Corley, Ted Runcie, Larry Strachan et plusieurs autres. Des recherches supplémentaires nous ont permis de dénicher des œuvres de Carmen Brouard et de Stewart Goodyear, ainsi qu'une

grande partie du répertoire de R. Nathaniel Dett, dont les partitions sont maintenant épuisées. Depuis, le Canadian Art Song Project a entrepris plusieurs projets qui, nous l'espérons, contribueront à élargir le répertoire existant et à donner une tribune à la communauté noire pour se raconter par le biais de la mélodie canadienne.

*Known to Dreamers : La mélodie canadienne à travers les voix de la communauté noire* constitue le premier de nos enregistrements qui met en relief l'apport de compositeur-trices et écrivain-es de la communauté noire à la mélodie canadienne. L'album comprend des mélodies de compositeur-trices noir-es (nouvelles œuvres et œuvres moins connues) ainsi que des compositions qui s'inscrivent dans le répertoire plus courant par des créateurs dont la réputation déjà établie, dont les compositeurs James Rolfe et Robert Fleming, et André Alexis et Owen Dodson, réputés auteurs noirs. La pièce maîtresse de l'album, intitulée *The Colour of Joy*, est une collaboration de l'autrice/compositrice Maria Thompson Corley, et des écrivaines Kanika Ambrose et Christene Browne. Cette commande représente donc le premier cycle de mélodies créé par des artistes féminines noires du Canada. Enfin, l'album comprend aussi les tout premiers enregistrements de deux mélodies de Larry Strachan (compositeur/chef) avec des textes de Thomas Hardy et Robert Nathan.

Nous tenons à remercier tous nos partenaires artistiques pour leur précieuse collaboration : Measha Brueggergosman-Lee, Elliot Madore et Jonelle Sills, merci pour vos magnifiques interprétations, et merci de défendre ce répertoire avec tant de dévouement. Maria Thompson Corley, Kanika Ambrose et Christene Browne, merci de

l'attention que vous avez portée à ce projet, et pour le saisissant récit de *The Colour of Joy*. Larry Strachan, merci de votre enthousiasme et de la confiance que vous nous avez accordée. James Rolfe et André Alexis, merci d'avoir collaboré avec nous en 2013 pour la création de *Moths* et d'avoir accepté de poursuivre notre association artistique, dix ans plus tard.

Ce projet qui nous permet d'offrir à la communauté noire l'occasion de s'exprimer à travers la mélodie canadienne représente pour nous un nouveau commencement. C'est précisément parce que nous croyons que l'art de la mélodie est un parfait véhicule pour transmettre récits et émotions que nous avons fondé Canadian Art Song Project. Nous nous engageons à poursuivre cette démarche et à partager, grâce à la musique, les expériences vécues qu'il est nécessaire d'entendre et de partager.

### A note about the scores used for this recording

The program for this recording includes works ranging from well-established repertoire, to decades-old hand-written manuscripts, to new transpositions and premiere performances.

*The Confession Stone (Songs of Mary)*, by Robert Fleming and Owen Dodson, was composed for Maureen Forrester and premiered in 1967 in Stratford, Ontario. The score was originally published in 1968 by Leeds Music. *The Confession Stone (Songs of Mary)* score is available through the Canadian Music Centre ([cmccanada.org](http://cmccanada.org)).

The two songs by Larry Strachan, *A Broken Appointment* (1998) and *Now Blue October* (2000), were transcribed from hand-written manuscripts, transposed and revised for this recording. Minor adjustments to the scores have been made since 2023. These songs are available directly from the composer or through the Canadian Music Centre ([cmccanada.org](http://cmccanada.org)).

*Moths*, by James Rolfe and André Alexis, was commissioned by Canadian Art Song Project with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council. It was premiered in 2013 by baritone Brett Pologato and pianist Steven Philcox at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre in the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto, Ontario. Several of the songs in the cycle have been transposed from the original score for this recording. *Moths* is available directly from the composer ([jamesrolfe.ca](http://jamesrolfe.ca)) or through the Canadian Music Centre ([cmccanada.org](http://cmccanada.org)).

*The Colour of Joy*, by Maria Thompson Corley with original texts by Corley, Kanika Ambrose and Christene A. Browne, was commissioned by Canadian Art Song Project in 2021 with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts for this recording with soprano Jonelle Sills and pianist Steven Philcox. This studio recording represents the first performance of the work. *The Colour of Joy* is available directly from the composer ([mariacorley.com](http://mariacorley.com)) or through the Canadian Music Centre ([cmccanada.org](http://cmccanada.org)).

### À propos des partitions utilisées pour cet enregistrement

Cet album comprend des œuvres tirées d'un répertoire bien établi, des œuvres provenant de manuscrits qui datent de plusieurs décennies, de nouvelles transpositions et quelques enregistrements inédits.

*The Confession Stone (Songs of Mary)*, de Robert Fleming et Owen Dodson, a été composée pour Maureen Forrester et créée en 1967 à Stratford, en Ontario. La partition originale a été publiée en 1968 par Leeds Music. La partition de *The Confession Stone (Songs of Mary)* est disponible via le Centre de musique canadienne ([cmccanada.org](http://cmccanada.org)).

Les deux mélodies signées Larry Strachan, *A Broken Appointment* (1998) et *Now Blue October* (2000) ont été transcrites à partir de manuscrits originaux (écrits à la main), transposées puis révisées pour les besoins de cet enregistrement. Quelques ajustements ont été apportés aux partitions depuis 2023. Ces mélodies sont disponibles par le biais du compositeur, ou encore via le Centre de musique canadienne ([cmccanada.org](http://cmccanada.org)).

*Moths* de James Rolfe et André Alexis, une commande du Canadian Art Song Project, avec le soutien du Conseil des arts du Canada et du Conseil des arts de l'Ontario a été créée en 2013 par le baryton Brett Pologato et le pianiste Steven Philcox au Bradshaw Amphitheatre (Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts) à Toronto, en Ontario. Plusieurs des mélodies du cycle ont été transposées pour le présent enregistrement. La partition est disponible par le biais du compositeur ([jamesrolfe.ca](http://jamesrolfe.ca)) ou encore via le Centre de musique canadienne ([cmccanada.org](http://cmccanada.org)).

*The Colour of Joy*, sur une musique de Maria Thompson Corley avec texte original de Kanika Ambrose, Christene Browne et Maria Thompson Corley, a été commandée par le Canadian Art Song Project en 2021 avec le soutien du Conseil des arts du Canada pour le présent enregistrement. La captation en studio par la soprano Jonelle Sills et le pianiste Steven Philcox constitue la création mondiale de l'œuvre. La partition est disponible par le biais de la compositrice ([mariacorley.com](http://mariacorley.com)) ou encore via le Centre de musique canadienne ([cmccanada.org](http://cmccanada.org)).



**MEASHA BRUEGGERGOSMAN-LEE,  
SOPRANO**

Measha Brueggergosman-Lee's career effortlessly embraces the broadest array of performance platforms and musical styles and genres. She has presented innovative programs at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York, Washington's Kennedy Center, London's Wigmore Hall, both the Konzerthaus and Musikverein in Vienna, Madrid's Teatro Real, as well as at the Schwarzenberg, Edinburgh, Verbier and Bergen Festivals with celebrated collaborative pianists Justus Zeyen, Roger Vignoles, Julius Drake and Simon Lepper. Her first recording for Deutsche Grammophon, *Surprise*, includes works by Schoenberg, Satie and Bolcom. Her subsequent disc *Night and Dreams*, which features songs by Mozart, Brahms, Strauss, Schubert, Debussy, Duparc and Fauré, won several awards including a JUNO. Her recording of the *Wesendonck Lieder* with Franz Welser-Möst and the Cleveland Orchestra earned her a Grammy nomination. In 2018, Measha released her memoir *Something Is Always on Fire*, published by Harper Collins, and its debut landed on the best-sellers list.

She produced a series of livestream "COVID concerts" in April 2020, produced over 30 music videos for various organizations and donated her newest album, *Measha JAZZ*, to her fans in order to encourage them through the COVID-19 pandemic. She composed original music for World News Day and was the music director for the radio drama *The Christie Pits Riot*. She was also the executive producer and director of *Forgotten Coast*, a 30-minute television episode (broadcast on CBC Gem) that tells the story of her Black Loyalist heritage through the lens of hip hop artist Jay Vernon, with orchestrations by Aaron Davis and Edwin Huizinga for the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa with Alexander Shelley conducting.

**measha.com**

Measha Brueggergosman-Lee mène une carrière diversifiée et évolue avec bonheur dans différents styles et genres musicaux, sur diverses plateformes. Applaudie par les publics de Carnegie Hall et Lincoln Center de New York, Kennedy Center (Washington), Wigmore Hall (London) pour les programmes novateurs qu'elle présente, elle s'est aussi produite au Konzerthaus et Musikverein de Vienne, Teatro Real de Madrid, ainsi qu'aux festivals de Schwarzenberg, Edinburgh, Verbier et Bergen avec les célèbres pianistes accompagnateurs Justus Zeyen, Roger Vignoles, Julius Drake et Simon Lepper.

En avril 2020, Measha Brueggergosman-Lee a réalisé « COVID concerts », une série de prestations diffusées en direct sur Internet, produit plus de 30 vidéos pour le compte de différents organismes musicaux, et fait don de son dernier album, *Measha JAZZ*, à ses fans pour leur apporter courage lors de la pandémie de COVID-19. Measha a par ailleurs composé et interprété sa propre composition pour l'événement virtuel *World News Day: The Climate Crisis*, et agi comme directrice musicale de la dramatique radio *The Christie Pits Riot*. À titre de productrice exécutive et réalisatrice, Measha a pris part à *Forgotten Coast*, un épisode télévisuel de 30 minutes (diffusé sur CBC Gem) dans lequel elle évoque l'histoire de ses ancêtres loyalistes noirs en Nouvelle-Écosse, collaborant avec l'artiste de hip-hop Jay Vernon King, les compositeurs et arrangeurs Edwin Huizinga et Aaron Davis et l'Orchestre du Centre national des Arts d'Ottawa, sous la direction d'Alexander Shelley.

**measha.com**



**ELLIOT MADORE,**  
BARITONE / BARYTON

Hailed by the *New York Times* for his “robust singing” and *Opera News* for his “exquisite vocal beauty,” Grammy Award-winning Canadian baritone Elliot Madore has established himself as an international artist in demand at the leading opera houses and orchestras of the world. Highlights include performances at the Metropolitan Opera of Mercutio in a new production of *Roméo et Juliette* which was broadcast live in HD, Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*, Schaunard in *La Bohème*. Mr. Madore made his European operatic debut at the Glyndebourne Festival singing Ramiro in *L'heure espagnole* and Le chat and L'horloge comtoise in a new production of *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, and returned to the company later to sing the title role in *Don Giovanni*. Additional highlights include his signature role of Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande* with the Bayerische Staatsoper, the Cleveland Orchestra with music director Franz Welser-Möst conducting Yuval Sharon's production, and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra under Charles Dutoit. Mr. Madore has also made appearances with the San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Opernhaus Zürich, Salzburg Festival, Santa Fe Opera, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Dutch National Opera, Concertgebouw Amsterdam and in Canada with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. Together with composer Dinuk Wijeratne, Mr. Madore co-created a new song cycle entitled *Identity*.

[elliottmadore.com](http://elliottmadore.com)

Salué par le *New York Times* pour la « puissance de son chant » et par *Opera News* pour « l'exquise beauté de sa voix », le baryton canadien Elliot Madore, lauréat d'un prix Grammy, s'est imposé comme un artiste international sollicité par les plus grandes maisons d'opéra et orchestres du monde. Au Metropolitan Opera, il a notamment interprété Mercutio dans *Roméo et Juliette*, diffusé en direct en haute définition, Figaro dans *Le Barbier de Séville* et Schaunard dans *La Bohème*. Elliot Madore a fait ses débuts européens dans le cadre du festival de Glyndebourne avec le rôle de Ramiro dans *L'heure espagnole*, et chanté Le chat et L'horloge comtoise dans une nouvelle production de *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. Toujours à Glyndebourne, il s'est fait applaudir dans le rôle-titre de *Don Giovanni*. Il a également chanté le rôle de Pelléas dans *Pelléas et Mélisande* avec le Bayerische Staatsoper, rôle qu'il reprit ensuite avec le Cleveland Orchestra sous la direction musicale de Franz Welser-Möst dans la production de Yuval Sharon, ainsi qu'avec le Sydney Symphony Orchestra sous la direction de Charles Dutoit. Elliot Madore s'est également produit avec le San Francisco Opera, le Los Angeles Philharmonic, l'Opernhaus Zürich, le Festival de Salzbourg, le Santa Fe Opera, le Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, le Dutch National Opera, le Concertgebouw Amsterdam et, au Canada, avec le Toronto Symphony Orchestra et l'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. Il a par ailleurs co-créé un cycle de mélodies intitulé *Identity*, en collaboration avec le compositeur Dinuk Wijeratne.

[elliottmadore.com](http://elliottmadore.com)



**STEVEN PHILCOX,**  
PIANO / PIANISTE

Highly regarded as one of Canada's finest collaborators, pianist Steven Philcox is a frequent partner of Canada's vocal elite performing in concert halls both at home and abroad. His extensive recital experience, interest in non-traditional approaches to performance and curiosity for repertoire outside the standard canon have inspired innovation in program curation and recital presentation.

As a pedagogue, Philcox has given masterclasses throughout North America and is regularly invited to mentor young artists at many prestigious training programs. Recent highlights include Opera on the Avalon, Vancouver International Song Institute, University of Texas at Austin, Canadian Opera Company Studio Ensemble, Stratford Summer Music Vocal Academy, Ukrainian Art Song Project Summer Institute and the Centre for Operatic Studies in Italy. He is the director of the Art of Song program at Toronto Summer Music and has been an invited jury member for vocal and piano competitions throughout Canada.

Philcox is Associate Professor and head of Collaborative Piano studies at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music. He is a founding Co-Artistic Director of Canadian Art Song Project and has recorded for the Stone Records and Centrediscs labels.

Steven Philcox est reconnu comme l'un des plus brillants pianistes accompagnateurs du Canada. Partenaire prisé par l'élite vocale au pays, il se produit en concert tant au Canada qu'à l'étranger. Musicien consommé, il préconise l'art du récital avec une approche non traditionnelle et s'intéresse particulièrement au répertoire non conventionnel ou peu connu, ce qui le mène à concevoir des programmes originaux et novateurs.

À titre de pédagogue, Steven Philcox est régulièrement sollicité par des institutions musicales et programmes de perfectionnement pour encadrer de jeunes artistes, et offre régulièrement des cours de maître dans toute l'Amérique du Nord. La liste de ses récentes collaborations inclut des engagements avec Opera on the Avalon, Vancouver International Song Institute, University of Texas at Austin, l'Ensemble Studio de la Canadian Opera Company, l'Académie vocale de musique d'été de Stratford, Ukrainian Art Song Project Summer Institute et le Centre for Operatic Studies en Italie. Steven Philcox est directeur du programme Art of Song de Toronto Summer Music. Il est fréquemment invité à agir comme juré dans le cadre de différents concours de chant et de piano dans tout le Canada.

Steven Philcox est professeur associé et responsable des études de piano d'accompagnement à la faculté de musique de l'Université de Toronto, et co-directeur artistique fondateur du Canadian Art Song Project. Il a réalisé des enregistrements pour les labels Stone Records et Centrediscs.



**JONELLE SILLS,  
SOPRANO**

Jonelle Sills has always loved to sing. She grew up in Markham, Ontario, and music was a big part of life at church, at school, at home. At 12, Jonelle had her first encounter with classical music after joining the Bach Children's Chorus. After high school, she wanted to learn to sing as well as she possibly could (a career as an opera singer was kind of beside the point) so she chose to major in music at York University. Jonelle attended the Artist Diploma Program at the Royal Conservatory of Music's Glenn Gould School in 2018. In 2022 she was a member of the Rebanks Family Fellowship and International Performance Residency Program at RCM.

Sills was named one of York University's 30 Alumni Under 30 in 2022 and one of CBC Music's 30 Classical Musicians Under 30 in 2020. She received a Dora Award in 2019 for her outstanding performance as Mimi in Against the Grain Theatre's *La Bohème*. She's had return engagements with the National Arts Centre Orchestra and has appeared in starring roles with Vancouver Opera and the Canadian Opera Company.

She looks forward to building a thriving career on the opera stages of the world.

**[jonellesills.com](http://jonellesills.com)**

Jonelle Sills a grandi à Markham, en Ontario. La musique fait depuis toujours partie intégrante de sa vie, à l'église, à l'école, à la maison. À l'âge de 12 ans, elle se joint au Bach Children's Chorus et découvre la musique classique. Quelques années plus tard, elle décide de se spécialiser en musique à l'Université York (sans vraiment songer à une carrière de chanteuse d'opéra). Jonelle Sills obtient son diplôme d'artiste de l'École Glenn Gould (Royal Conservatory of Music) en 2018. Dans le cadre du programme de bourse Rebanks Family Fellowship and International Performance du Royal Conservatory of Music de Toronto, elle a complété une résidence artistique en 2022.

Jonelle Sills figure à la liste des « Trente artistes classiques de moins de 30 ans les plus en vue » de CBC Music (2020), et est au nombre des anciens élèves de l'Université York de moins de 30 ans les plus prometteurs. Sa prestation exceptionnelle dans le rôle de Mimi dans *La Bohème*, présenté par Against the Grain Theatre, lui a valu un prix Dora en 2019. Pour le compte du Vancouver Opera et de la Canadian Opera Company, Jonelle Sills a interprété des rôles de premier plan, en plus d'être invitée de nouveau à chanter avec l'Orchestre du Centre national des arts à Ottawa.

C'est avec ferveur qu'elle aspire à poursuivre une fructueuse carrière d'opéra à l'échelle internationale.

**[jonellesills.com](http://jonellesills.com)**





**ANDRÉ ALEXIS,**  
WRITER / ÉCRIVAIN

André Alexis was born in Trinidad and grew up in Canada. His most recent novel is *Ring*. *Days by Moonlight* won the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. *Fifteen Dogs* won the 2015 Scotiabank Giller Prize, CBC Canada Reads, and the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. His other books include *Asylum*, *Pastoral*, *The Hidden Keys*, and *The Night Piece: Collected Short Fiction*. He is the recipient of a Windham Campbell Prize. Other collaborations with composer James Rolfe include the operas *Fire* (1999), *Orpheus and Eurydice* (2004) and *Aeneas and Dido* (2007).

Né à Trinidad, André Alexis a grandi au Canada et est l'auteur de plusieurs recueils et romans. Avec *Days by Moonlight*, il s'est mérité le Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. Son roman *Fifteen Dogs* a remporté le Scotiabank Giller Prize 2015, CBC Canada Reads et le Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. André Alexis est aussi l'auteur de *Asylum*, *Pastoral*, *The Hidden Keys* et *The Night Piece : Collected Short Fiction*, et a reçu le prestigieux Prix de littérature Windham-Campbell. Son plus récent roman s'intitule *Ring*. Avec le compositeur James Rolfe, il a collaboré à aux opéras *Fire* (1999), *Orpheus and Eurydice* (2004) et *Aeneas and Dido* (2007).



**KANIKA AMBROSE,**  
WRITER / ÉCRIVAINNE

Kanika Ambrose is a playwright, opera librettist, screenwriter and mom. She is a recent graduate of the Canadian Film Centre's Bell Media Primetime TV Program and Associate Artistic Director of Necessary Angel Theatre Company. A Scarborough native, Kanika currently lives in rural Ontario with her husband and sons. Kanika's work has premiered at stages and screens large and small, in Toronto and in the USA. Her critically acclaimed play *our place* was the recipient of a Dora Award for Outstanding New Play and her opera *Of the Sea* with composer Ian Cusson premiered to great acclaim at Toronto's historical Bluma Appel Theatre.

La dramaturge, librettiste d'opéra et scénariste Kanika Ambrose est aussi mère de famille. Récemment diplômée du programme Bell Media Primetime TV du Centre canadien du film, elle remplit les fonctions de directrice artistique associée de la Necessary Angel Theatre Company. Originaire de Scarborough, Kanika vit actuellement dans la région rurale ontarienne avec son mari et ses fils. Ses œuvres ont été portées à la scène, au petit écran comme au grand écran, et présentées à Toronto et aux États-Unis. Le prix Dora (catégorie Outstanding New Play) lui a été décerné pour *our place*, une pièce de théâtre acclamée par la critique. Elle a signé le livret de l'opéra *Of the Sea* (musique de Ian Cusson), qui a connu un grand succès lors de sa création au Bluma Appel Theatre, à Toronto.



**CHRISTENE BROWNE,**  
WRITER / ÉCRIVAINNE

For more than 30 years, Christene Browne has produced a wide variety of award-winning productions with subjects as diverse as the welfare system, jazz music, cultural identity, cultural superstitions, Noam Chomsky and linguistics. All of her work has been recognized and has reached international audiences. Browne has written screenplays for both feature length and short films. Her first feature film, *Another Planet* (1999), was the first ever to be directed and written by a Black woman in Canada. Her screenplay *Sena*, which deals with modern-day slavery, was selected as a finalist for the 2018 Women in Cinema International Screenplay Competition.

Browne is also a playwright, librettist and published novelist. Her first novel, *Two Women*, a tale about two women who share the same soul, was published in 2013 and her second novel, *Philomena (Unloved)*, a story that deals with mental illness and sexual violence, was published in 2018 and is currently listed on several Goodreads Readers Choice lists. Her third novel, *2084: The Conversion*, a science fiction allegory that looks at climate change and race, was a finalist in ECW Press's 2022 Best New Speculative Novel Contest.

Other writings include the libretto for *Inertia*, an opera about two elderly neighbours who are in the process of contemplating love, death and dying, and a play, *Attention Au Feu (Risk of Fire)*, which is a reimagining of Sartre's *Huis Clos (No Exit)*.

[christenebrowne.com](http://christenebrowne.com)

Au cours d'une carrière de plus de 30 ans, Christene Browne a conçu et réalisé une grande variété de productions primées portant sur différents sujets tels le système de sécurité sociale, la musique de jazz, l'identité culturelle, les croyances culturelles, la linguistique et Noam Chomsky. Ses œuvres ont été reconnues à l'échelle internationale, touchant différents publics. Christene Browne est l'auteurice de plusieurs scénarios de films—y compris *Another Planet* (1999), le premier long métrage réalisé et écrit par une femme noire au Canada. Le scénario qu'elle a créé pour le film *Sena*, qui traite de l'esclavage moderne, lui a valu d'être sélectionnée comme finaliste du concours international de scénarios Women in Cinema en 2018.

Christene Browne est également dramaturge, librettiste et romancière. Son premier roman, *Two Women*, qui relate l'histoire de deux femmes partageant une même âme, a été publié en 2013. Son deuxième roman, *Philomena (Unloved)*, qui traite de la maladie mentale et de la violence sexuelle, a été publié en 2018 et figure actuellement sur plusieurs listes du Choix des lecteurs de Goodreads. Son troisième roman, *2084 : The Conversion*, une allégorie de science-fiction qui traite du changement climatique et de questions raciales, a été finaliste du concours 2022 Best New Speculative Novel Contest d'ECW Press.

Parmi les autres écrits de Christene Browne figurent le livret de l'opéra *Inertia*, l'histoire deux voisins âgés qui contemplent l'amour, la mort et l'agonie, ainsi que la pièce de théâtre, *Attention Au Feu (Risk of Fire)*, qui se décrit comme une version réimaginée de la célèbre pièce de Sartre, *Huis clos*.

[christenebrowne.com](http://christenebrowne.com)



**MARIA THOMPSON CORLEY,**  
COMPOSER AND WRITER / COMPOSITRICE ET ÉCRIVAINNE

Maria Thompson Corley (DMA, Piano, The Juilliard School) began composing and arranging as a child. Early attempts include creating film scores for her older brother's Super 8 movies at the age of 10 and, as a teen, writing both pop songs and a suite for piano that was transcribed for members of the Petersburg Symphony. Since then, her music has been commissioned and recorded by numerous musicians and entities. She is published by Gentry, Walton, Classical Vocal Reprints, NoteNova and North Star. Though she is known primarily for her vocal music, her instrumental pieces have also won awards.

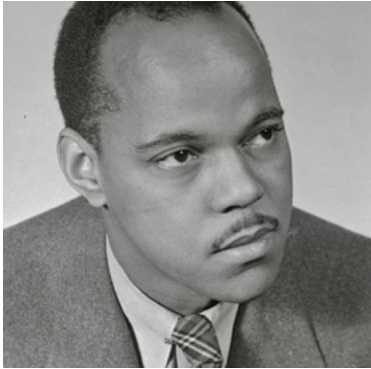
Dr. Corley's short-form opera *The Sky Where You Are* (Jenny O'Connell, librettist) premiered in 2020 as part of the Decameron Opera Coalition's award-winning virtual series, *Tales from a Safe Distance*. *The Place* (Sandra Oyinloye, librettist) was commissioned by Lyric Opera of the North for DOC's subsequent production. An Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre, Maria was chosen for the 2020-21 American National Association of Teachers of Singing Mentorship Program. In 2021-22, she was asked to become a mentor. In addition to Canadian Art Song Project, her vocal music has been commissioned, performed and/or recorded by ensembles such as Musica Intima, KlangART Vision (Leipzig), MUSE (Cincinnati Women's Choir), Florida A&M Concert Choir, California State University (East Bay) and the DeKalb Symphony Orchestra. Similarly, her scores have been commissioned, performed, recorded and/or championed by Sequina DuBose, Darryl Taylor, Louise Toppin, Raehann Bryce-Davis, Marcia Porter, James Dargan, Michael Harper and others.

[mariacorley.com](http://mariacorley.com)

Maria Thompson Corley (D. Mus., piano, The Juilliard School) a commencé à composer et à réaliser ses propres arrangements musicaux dès l'enfance. Parmi ses premières tentatives, vers l'âge de 10 ans, elle compose des musiques pour les films (en format Super 8) de son frère aîné. À l'adolescence, elle passe à l'écriture de chansons pop et compose une suite pour piano qui sera plus tard transcrite pour des membres du Petersburg Symphony. Depuis, de nombreux musiciens et organisations ont commandé et enregistré sa musique, qui a été publiée par Gentry, Walton, Classical Vocal Reprints, NoteNova et North Star. Bien qu'elle soit principalement connue pour sa musique vocale, ses œuvres instrumentales sont également prisées et lui ont mérité des récompenses.

Decameron Opera Coalition (DOC) présentait en 2020 la série virtuelle primée *Tales from a Safe Distance*, et c'est dans ce cadre que fut créé *The Sky Where You Are*, opéra de courte durée composé par Maria Thompson Corley sur un livret de Jenny O'Connell. *The Place* (opéra sur un livret de Sandra Oyinloye), une autre production de DOC, fut commandé par le Lyric Opera of the North. Compositrice agréée du Centre de musique canadienne, Maria a été sélectionnée pour le programme de mentorat 2020-21 de l'American National Association of Teachers of Singing, et invitée l'année suivante à devenir mentor. En plus des mélodies composées pour le Canadian Art Song Project, son catalogue comprend nombre d'œuvres vocales qui ont été commandées, interprétées et/ou enregistrées par des ensembles tels que Musica Intima, KlangART Vision (Leipzig), MUSE (Cincinnati Women's Choir), Florida A&M Concert Choir, California State University (East Bay) et le DeKalb Symphony Orchestra. Parmi les artistes qui ont commandé, interprété et enregistré sa musique, citons Sequina DuBose, Darryl Taylor, Louise Toppin, Raehann Bryce-Davis, Marcia Porter, James Dargan, Michael Harper, entre autres.

[mariacorley.com](http://mariacorley.com)



**OWEN DODSON,**  
WRITER / ÉCRIVAIN

Owen Dodson was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1914. He is the author of three poetry collections: *Powerful Long Ladder* (1940), *The Confession Stone: Song Cycles* (1970) and *The Harlem Book of the Dead* (1978). He also wrote more than 35 plays and opera libretti, as well as two novels, *Boy at the Window* (1951) and *Come Home Early, Child* (1967). Dodson was a professor at Spelman College, Atlanta University, and finally at Howard University, where he served as the chair of the drama department for three decades. He died in 1983.

(source: Library of Congress)

Né à Brooklyn, New York, en 1914, Owen Dodson est l'auteur de trois recueils de poésie : *Powerful Long Ladder* (1940), *The Confession Stone : Song Cycles* (1970) et *The Harlem Book of the Dead* (1978). Il a également écrit plus de 35 pièces de théâtre et livrets d'opéra, ainsi que deux romans, *Boy at the Window* (1951) et *Come Home Early, Child* (1967). Owen Dodson a enseigné au Spelman College, à l'Université d'Atlanta ainsi qu'à l'Université Howard, où il a dirigé le département d'art dramatique pendant trois décennies. Owen Dodson est décédé en 1983.

(source : Library of Congress)



**ROBERT FLEMING,**  
COMPOSER / COMPOSITEUR

Robert Fleming was born on November 12, 1921, and died in Ottawa, November 28, 1976. Born in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, he moved at an early age to Saskatoon, where he studied piano with Lyell Gustin. At fifteen, he went to London, England, to study at the Royal College of Music with Herbert Howells (composition) and Arthur Benjamin (piano). He won a Canadian Performing Rights (CAPAC) Scholarship in 1939, which took him to the Toronto Conservatory of Music. Teachers at the Conservatory included Healey Willan (composition), Norman Wilks (piano), Ettore Mazzoleni (conducting), and Frederick Silvester and John Weatherseed (organ).

Fleming joined the Music Department of the National Film Board in 1946, becoming Music Director in 1958. During his twenty-four years with the NFB he wrote and conducted scores for over three hundred films. In 1970, he became Associate Professor of Music at Carleton University in Ottawa, a position he held until his death.

Fleming's compositions are typically lyrical and melodious, reflecting his sincere interest in communicating directly with the listener. Strong rhythmic elements and witty inventiveness are also characteristic throughout his many and varied works, which range from orchestral and band pieces, ballets and film scores, to instrumental works, compositions for piano and organ, as well as about one hundred songs. The song cycle *The Confession Stone* is perhaps his best-known composition. He had an obvious affection for the voice, demonstrating a particular facility for fitting words to music, and was noted for appearing to be "completely at home in writing for the piano."

(source: SOCAN)

Robert Fleming est né le 12 novembre 1921 à Prince Albert (Saskatchewan), et déménage très tôt à Saskatoon, où il étudie le piano avec Lyell Gustin. À quinze ans, il se rend en Angleterre pour étudier au Royal College of Music de Londres avec Herbert Howells (composition) et Arthur Benjamin (piano). En 1939, il obtient une bourse de l'Association des compositeurs, auteurs et éditeurs du Canada Ltée. (CAPAC), qui lui permet de s'inscrire au Toronto Conservatory of Music. Parmi ses professeurs du Conservatoire figurent Healey Willan (composition), Norman Wilks (piano), Ettore Mazzoleni (direction d'orchestre), ainsi que Frederick Silvester et John Weatherseed (orgue).

En 1946, Robert Fleming se joint au département de musique de l'Office national du film et est nommé directeur musical en 1958. Au cours de ses vingt-quatre années à l'ONF, il écrit et dirige les partitions de plus de trois cents films. En 1970, il devient professeur agrégé de musique à l'Université Carleton d'Ottawa, poste qu'il occupera jusqu'à sa mort, le 28 novembre 1976.

Les compositions de Robert Fleming sont habituellement lyriques et mélodieuses, reflétant son profond désir de toucher l'auditeur. Ses nombreuses compositions (pièces pour orchestre et harmonie, ballets et musiques de films, œuvres instrumentales, pour piano et pour orgue, sans compter une centaine de mélodies) sont empreintes d'une énergie rythmique et d'une inventivité pleine d'esprit. Le cycle de mélodies *The Confession Stone* demeure sans doute la plus connue de ses œuvres. Il affectionnait la voix, manifestant une facilité particulière à agencer paroles et musique. Robert Fleming s'est aussi distingué par ses compositions pour piano.

(source : SOCAN)



**JAMES ROLFE,**  
COMPOSER / COMPOSITEUR

Toronto composer James Rolfe has been commissioned and performed by ensembles, orchestras, choirs, theatres and opera companies in Canada, the USA, Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. He has been recognized with a Guggenheim Fellowship, the K.M. Hunter Music Award, the Louis Applebaum Composers Award, the Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music, Choral Canada's Outstanding Choral Work Award and the Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize. He holds composition degrees from Princeton University and from the University of Toronto, where he now serves as a composition instructor. He also works as a composer mentor.

Rolfe's operas have been performed in Toronto, Halifax, Vancouver, Banff, Edmonton and New York. *Beatrice Chancy* (1998, with librettist George Elliott Clarke) played to sold-out houses and rave reviews; *The Overcoat* (2018, with librettist and director Morris Panych) was premiered by Tapestry Opera with Canadian Stage and Vancouver Opera, and was nominated for 10 Dora Awards. Among his other collaborators are writers André Alexis, Anna Chatterton, Luke Hathaway, Steven Heighton, Camyar Chai, Alex Poch-Goldin, Dennis Lee and Sophie Herxheimer, and choreographer James Kudelka. His solo CDs *raW* (2011) and *Breathe* (2017, nominated for a JUNO Award) are available on Centrediscs; *Wound Turned to Light* (2023, a songbook setting contemporary Canadian poets) is available on Redshift Records.

[jamesrolfe.ca](http://jamesrolfe.ca)

La musique du compositeur torontois James Rolfe été interprétée par de nombreux ensembles, orchestres, chœurs, compagnies de théâtre et d'opéra au Canada, aux États-Unis, en Europe, en Asie, en Australie et en Nouvelle-Zélande, souvent à la suite de commandes. Récipiendaire de différents prix et distinctions dont une bourse Guggenheim, le K. M. Hunter Music Award, le Prix Louis Applebaum de composition, le Prix Jules-Léger de nouvelle musique de chambre, le Prix national de chant choral octroyé par Choral Canada (meilleure composition chorale), il a aussi reçu le Prix Johanna-Metcalf des Arts de la scène. James Rolfe est titulaire de diplômes en composition de l'Université de Princeton et de l'Université de Toronto, où il est professeur de composition. Il travaille également comme mentor auprès de jeunes compositeur-trices.

Les opéras de James Rolfe ont été produits à Toronto, Halifax, Vancouver, Banff, Edmonton et New York. *Beatrice Chancy* (avec le librettiste George Elliott Clarke) a été présenté en 1998 devant des salles comblées et reçu d'élogieuses critiques. *The Overcoat* (avec le librettiste et réalisateur Morris Panych), créé en 2018 par Tapestry Opera avec Canadian Stage et Vancouver Opera, a été nommé pour 10 prix Dora. Parmi ses collaborateurs, James Rolfe compte les écrivain-es André Alexis, Anna Chatterton, Luke Hathaway, Steven Heighton, Camyar Chai, Alex Poch-Goldin, Dennis Lee et Sophie Herxheimer, ainsi que le chorégraphe James Kudelka. James Rolfe a par ailleurs plusieurs albums à son actif dont *raW* (2011) et *Breathe* (2017, nommé pour un prix JUNO), disponibles chez Centrediscs. *Wound Turned to Light* (2023, un recueil de mélodies sur des textes de poètes canadiens contemporains) est disponible sur Redshift Records.

[jamesrolfe.ca](http://jamesrolfe.ca)



**LARRY STRACHAN,**  
COMPOSER / COMPOSITEUR

A Caribbean-Canadian of Grenadian heritage, Larry Strachan was born and raised in Winnipeg. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Music from the University of Manitoba where he majored in piano and played viola in the university orchestra. He then went on to complete a Master's degree in Orchestral Conducting from Shenandoah Conservatory in Winchester, Virginia, under the tutelage of Juilliard alum Ray Fowler. He has studied privately with Bramwell Tovey, Earl Stafford and Roy Goodman and was an active participant in masterclasses led by Nurhan Arman, Frieder Bernius, John Morris Russell and Dwight Oltman.

Larry has been composing throughout his life. In the early 1990s he formed the Spiritus Ensemble at Blessed John XXIII Parish and wrote a number of works for them, including *Tantum Ergo Sacramentum* which was chosen to be included in a Manitoba Choral Association publication. The work was subsequently performed by the Manitoba Honour Choir under the direction of Prof. Henry Engbrecht. In 2019 Larry received the Frances Seaton Award for Composition from the Manitoba Choral Association for his *St. Cecilia Anthem* which was premiered in 2020 by the Konektis Choir under Michelle Chzyk's direction.

In 2006 Larry founded Chamber Orchestra Without Borders Inc. and its performance ensemble Chamber Orchestra MUSAIC for which he serves as Artistic Director.

Canadien d'origine grenadienne, Larry Strachan a grandi dans sa ville natale de Winnipeg. Ayant obtenu un baccalauréat en musique de l'Université du Manitoba, il a poursuivi ses études de piano tout en jouant de l'alto au sein de l'orchestre de l'Université. Larry Strachan a ensuite obtenu une maîtrise en direction d'orchestre au Shenandoah Conservatory de Winchester, en Virginie, sous la tutelle de Ray Fowler. Il s'est perfectionné auprès de Bramwell Tovey, Earl Stafford et Roy Goodman, et participé à des classes de maître dirigées par Nurhan Arman, Frieder Bernius, John Morris Russell et Dwight Oltman.

Larry Strachan s'est consacré à la composition tout au long de sa vie. Au début des années 1990, il forme l'Ensemble Spiritus de la paroisse Blessed John XXIII, pour lequel il écrit plusieurs œuvres dont *Tantum Ergo Sacramentum*, retenue pour une publication de la Manitoba Choral Association. L'œuvre a ensuite été interprétée par le Manitoba Honour Choir sous la direction d'Henry Engbrecht. Larry Strachan a reçu le prix Frances Seaton de composition de la Manitoba Choral Association (2019) pour *St. Cecilia Anthem*, œuvre créée en 2020 par le Chœur Konektis sous la direction de Michelle Chzyk.

Larry Strachan a de plus fondé le Chamber Orchestra Without Borders Inc. en 2006, et le MUSAIC Chamber Orchestra, dont il est le directeur artistique.





Canadian Art Song Project (CASP) was founded in 2011 by tenor Lawrence Wiliford and pianist Steven Philcox. Its mission is to build on the rich legacy of Canadian song by engaging composers, writers and performers to create new music while also providing opportunities for Canadian artists to champion the wealth of existing song literature.

Since its inception, CASP has commissioned 17 new works by the likes of James Rolfe/André Alexis, Marjan Mozetich, Tawnie Olson, Jeffrey Ryan, Cecilia Livingston, Ana Sokolović, Abigail Richardson-Schulte, Afarin Mansouri, Christos Hatzis and Maria Thompson Corley.

CASP's debut recording, *Ash Roses* (2014), featuring all previously unrecorded works by composer Derek Holman, was met with critical acclaim from *WholeNote*, *Opera Canada* and *Notations* magazines, with the latter exclaiming, "This superb CD should be on the shelf of every music lover with an interest in art song, and anyone who is passionate about poetry or the human voice." Since then, the organization has released five additional full-length commercial recordings on the Centrediscs label. Their recording *Summer Night* (2019), dedicated to the solo songs of Healey Willan, was nominated for a JUNO in 2020 as Classical Album of the Year: Vocal or Choral. *Found Frozen*, a recording devoted to the song cycles of Jeffrey Ryan, was released in 2022.

In addition to research, commissioning and recording, Canadian Art Song Project presents recitals and performances that highlight song in traditional and innovative ways through partnerships with arts organizations and educational institutions across Canada.

[canadianartsongproject.ca](http://canadianartsongproject.ca)

Fondé en 2011 par le ténor Lawrence Wiliford et le pianiste Steven Philcox, le Canadian Art Song Project (CASP) est un organisme artistique qui a pour mission d'élargir le répertoire de la mélodie canadienne. Pour ajouter à ce riche héritage musical, CASP sollicite interprètes, écrivain-es et compositeur-trices du Canada, commande régulièrement de nouvelles œuvres tout en parrainant nombre d'artistes au pays qui défendent ce florissant catalogue musical.

Depuis ses tout débuts, CASP a commandé et créé 17 œuvres originales de James Rolfe/André Alexis, Marjan Mozetich, Tawnie Olson, Jeffrey Ryan, Cecilia Livingston, Ana Sokolović, Abigail Richardson-Schulte, Afarin Mansouri, Christos Hatzis et Maria Thompson Corley.

*Ash Roses* (2014), le tout premier album de CASP, se compose uniquement d'enregistrements inédits d'œuvres du compositeur Derek Holman. Le disque a été salué par les magazines *WholeNote*, *Opera Canada* et *Notations*, qui a affirmé que « Ce superbe CD devrait se trouver sur l'étagère de tous les mélomanes qui s'intéressent à l'art de la mélodie, et de tous ceux qui sont passionnés par la poésie ou la voix humaine ». CASP a depuis publié cinq autres albums sur le label Centrediscs dont *Summer Night* (2019), consacré aux mélodies de Healey Willan, qui fut mis en nomination pour un prix JUNO en 2020 (catégorie Album classique de l'année : Vocal ou Choral). *Found Frozen*, consacré aux cycles de mélodies de Jeffrey Ryan, est paru en 2022.

Outre ses activités de recherche, de commandes et d'enregistrement, le Canadian Art Song Project a mis sur pied plusieurs partenariats avec des organisations artistiques et établissements d'enseignement qui lui permettent de présenter récitals et prestations dans tout le Canada, mettant en valeur la mélodie canadienne de manière à la fois traditionnelle et innovante.

[canadianartsongproject.ca](http://canadianartsongproject.ca)

**The Confession Stone (Songs of Mary)**

Owen Dodson

**I. O my boy: Jesus, my first and only son**

O my boy: Jesus, my first and only son,  
 Rock on my breast, my first and only one,  
 my first and only son.

O my Jesus: my first and only one:  
 Born of God and born near his sun,  
 bright boy: my only one:

O my Jesus, rest on my breast,  
 my first and only son:

O my boy: Jesus: rest:  
 shhh, you need the rest.

**II. Don't pay attention to the old men in the temple**

Don't pay attention to the old men  
 in the temple: they have given up.  
 tell them what you told me:  
 cast the sinners out,  
 clean the house of God,  
 load the rich with grief,  
 prepare the poor with hope and Jesus,  
 don't stop to play with Judas and his friends  
 along the way.

**III. Jesus, did you know that Lazarus is back?**

Jesus, did you know that Lazarus is back?  
 Jesus, are you listening?  
 Laz'rus has come back.

His grave is still open and Martha  
 tells she heard three angels singing  
 with three birds:

their feathers brushed together.  
 Jesus, are you hearing?

Laz'rus has returned to Bethany.

Jesus, won't you answer?

Laz'rus has come back and  
 he's calling for you.

He says that death was gentle  
 and woke him up early.

Jesus, are you praying?

Laz'rus has returned.

**IV. There's a supper in Jerusalem tonight and I wish that I was there**

There's a supper in Jerusalem tonight  
 and I wish that I was there,

I'll journey anywhere to be with Jesus:

to stroke his hair,

Remind Him, O my baby dear, I'd journey  
 anywhere to be with Jesus tonight.

There's that supper in Jerusalem tonight  
 and I could be right there.

But I don't dare to journey  
 to Jerusalem tonight.

O my Jesus, you're eating in Jerusalem  
 tonight and I wish that I was there.

O my boy, take care at that supper  
 in Jerusalem tonight.

**V. Cold and icy in my bed: laid on the ground of Jerusalem**

Cold and icy in my bed:  
 laid on the ground of Jerusalem

ev'ry flower is withered,  
 the birds have left their song, the sun wears  
 a twisted eye.

I'm alone with your dream of redemption,  
 my Lord.

Save Him, save our son.

I'm his mother: save Him:

Let me rock Him again in my trembling arms.

Save Him. I'll receive the silver from Judas.

Help Him.

Your word is all my world.

I'll receive the silver from Judas' hand  
 and spend it on nothing.

Save Him, Jehovah, help Him, my God,

Bless Him, my Lord, redeem Him,  
 my husband.

Oh save Him, save Him, save Him,  
 save Him, save our boy.

**VI. Bring me those needles, Martha,  
I believe I'll knit Jesus a scarf**

Bring me those needles, Martha,  
I believe I'll knit Jesus a scarf  
Go on snapping those butterbeans.  
What time is it? Let me see now: knit one.  
You say it's twelve o'clock?  
Snap enough for Joseph and Lazarus.  
They'll be home before you're through.  
Martha, what time is it?  
Purl two, purl one, knit one, purl two.  
If I had the star of Bethlehem,  
I'll knit three and light His sky.  
Where was I, Martha?  
Oh yes, knit one, purl sev'n.  
What time is it, Martha?  
Knit three, purl ten.  
It can't be near three o'clock.  
Where was I? Knit, purl twelve,  
purl nothing.  
Martha, don't leave me alone.  
Where are you, Martha? Martha!

**VII. Everything is black, air, water, sun,  
moon, all light, dirt is black**

Everything is black, air, water, sun, moon,  
all light, dirt is black  
Heav'n is in mourning for our Son.  
The earth is dead: it will rise again,  
Almighty God.  
Now I understand what light is: it is our Son.  
It is Jesus, no longer trembling in my arms:  
it is the Christ.  
O my boy: Jesus, my first and only one.  
Now on my knees with Joseph at my side,  
I ask Thee: send the resurrection now.  
Give the air and water and sun and the  
moon and the dirt, thy light again.  
Send the presence Almighty God,  
send it even to evil men.  
I see Jesus in the clouds, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh,  
free Him from death for life:  
We must be free to sing:  
Loose the birds for their songs,  
Bloom the flow'rs for their songs,  
Light Martha, whose brother came back  
from death, light Mary Magdalene,  
light Gethsemane's gardens:  
Light those walkways with lilies, and heal  
the wounds of Christ.  
Let me rise up into your starry sky and love  
our Son, and praise thee.  
Ah, comfort me in paradise.

**VIII. O my boy: Jesus, my first and only son**

O my boy: Jesus, my first and only son,  
Rock on my breast, my first and only one,  
my first and only son.  
O my Jesus: my first and only one:  
Born of God and born near his sun,  
bright boy: my only one:  
O my Jesus, rest on my breast,  
my first and only son:  
O my boy: Jesus: rest:  
shhh, you need the rest.

**A Broken Appointment**

Thomas Hardy

You did not come,  
And marching Time drew on, and wore me numb, —  
Yet less for loss of your dear presence there  
Than that I thus found lacking in your make  
That high compassion which can overbear  
Reluctance for pure lovingkindness' sake  
Grieved I, when, as the hope-hour stroked its sum,  
You did not come.

You love not me,  
And love alone can lend you loyalty;  
—I know and knew it. But, unto the store  
Of human deeds divine in all but name,  
Was it not worth a little hour or more  
To add yet this: Once you, a woman, came  
To soothe a time-torn man; even though it be  
You love not me?

**Now Blue October**

Robert Nathan

Now blue October, smoky in the sun,  
Must end the long, sweet summer of the heart.  
The last brief visit of the birds is done;  
They sing the Autumn songs before they part.  
Listen, how lovely—there's the thrush we heard  
When June was small with roses, and the bending  
Blossom of branches covered nest and bird,  
Singing the summer in, summer unending—  
Give me your hand once more before the night;  
See how the meadows darken with the frost,  
How fades the green that was the summer's light.  
Beauty is only altered, never lost,  
And love, before the cold November rain,  
Will make its summer in the heart again.

## When the World Was Green

Maria Thompson Corley

When the world was green  
and people were brown,  
Daddy made jonny cakes on  
Sat'day morning, singing and  
swaying to mento music  
as fish fried golden brown  
on the stove.

My cousin Glenn and me,  
under a tall palm tree,  
sipped young coconuts  
through a straw.

The next day, I looked  
down through the clouds  
at endless, patchwork  
Alberta fields and  
asked, "Mommy and Daddy,  
where are the trees?"

When the world was white  
and people were pink,  
I built snowmen and Daddy  
chained the tires so our car  
wouldn't slip on the ice. I  
pulled my toque low and  
trudged to school  
with Trixie Schneider. She  
got mad at a boy  
in second grade. I  
didn't know why, so  
I asked, "Mommy and Daddy,  
what is a nigger?"  
"Mommy?"  
"Daddy?"

The fields beside Highway 2  
turned yellow. Tall green  
grass hid tiny mosquitoes.  
Glenn, Aunt Betty and  
Uncle John rode  
wide-eyed, through  
acres of waving  
wheat, the foothills, and  
at last, the Rockies.  
Wordless, in late  
night daylight, we  
listened to the  
Bow Falls roar.  
Nothing could replace  
the sweetness of  
fresh coconut water,  
but I knew,  
just then,  
a part of  
my heart  
was already  
Canadian.

**Transition**

Kanika Ambrose

Leduc to Toronto  
 Girl to lady  
 Nigger to Negro to Coloured  
 African American to Black Canadian.  
 Bargain Harolds to Sears  
 To love, to work,  
 To love to work.

**Elias 511**

Kanika Ambrose

Kensington Market has changed...  
 Even the name.  
 Used to buy fish on Fridays  
 Used to wear my prettiest dress  
 Feel the crisp breeze on my thighs; oooo!  
 Used to walk up Bathurst;  
 Passed Lloyd's barbers.  
 Sometimes take streetcar  
 And see you at the back.  
 Fresh fish at my feet  
 And the taste of your name; oooo...  
 Kensington Market has changed.  
 Walk-up on Bathurst,  
 Two bedrooms, three children,  
 You and me; in love on the sofa.  
 Fifty years, fifteen grandchildren;  
 My world is full of you.  
 Walking down Bathurst,  
 Pictures of you fill my mind's rooms  
 Like...  
 You in a white suit... me a red dress.  
 You in your checked slacks, me in a white hat.  
 You in a black suit, me—  
 In Kensington Market,  
 Now.  
 Alone.  
 Tryna find a fish place, finding military wear.  
 Tryna to find a meat place, finding Tribal incense.  
 Tryna to find a Communion suit... Homegoing

Without fish  
 Without meat  
 Without suit  
 Without you,  
 Sweet stranger, sweet name.  
 Elias,  
 Even the streetcar  
 Has changed.  
 And the people, the people are brown and pink  
 And grey and yellow and so so blue.  
 And red and white  
 And the people, the people are black.

**Ode to Our Joy**

Christene A. Browne

I sing and sway  
Been here long  
My babies born here  
This is their home  
Now mine too  
We gather and laugh  
Share food when we can  
This is my life now  
It hasn't always been easy  
Battles to fight  
Hard work to do  
But I sing and sway  
My father's lesson still with me  
We gather and laugh  
Jump and dance when we can  
Eating food from back home  
It comforts me  
It hasn't always been easy  
Barriers and hate to fight  
But I swing and sway  
Home is here now  
I have grown accustomed  
It hasn't always been easy  
But I continue to smile and persevere  
I sing and sway  
And marvel at how far I've come  
With my head held high  
I sway and sing  
This life in the north

It has been cold  
And sometimes not easy  
But I'm still here  
Singing and swaying  
To the beat of my own song

**Moths**

André Alexis

**I. Night is a river**

Night washes the room in darkness  
rising, as my bed fords the river  
and cries out.  
The flood leaves a ruined canvas.  
Your face has faded and my hand is lost.  
But what makes you so restless, River?  
Why restless, now that my bed is gone  
and light is useless to me?

**II. The river of dreams**

Every atom of night  
leaves a world in its wake.  
The man I bumped,  
falling in Lyon.  
A woman in Pamplona,  
red scarves flooding the Plaza de Toros.  
Nothing is anything.  
Nothing is nothing.  
The mirror sings  
while the city burns in its sleep.

**III. Dreams are a cloth**

Stitch up this feeling, embroidered  
with cities and rooms  
trees and oceans  
talking heads on countertops,  
horses falling from the sky,  
and minarets on tundra,  
whose lining moves through years of blue,  
from glacial lakes  
up through Sunday sweaters,  
from iodine bottles  
and airless rooms  
to long gone shadow  
and woollen nights  
spooled on wooden looms.  
Up through all the blues of blue  
singed by lost constellations: the flipper,  
the tree, and the muddy boot.

**IV. The cloth is eaten by moths**

On they come, a plague of them,  
settling on sleep like ticks on cattle  
burrowing into familiar faces,  
eating old memories and well-known places.  
Soon there will be nothing left but light.  
And on,  
quietly festive, dainty in power,  
they make off with black days,  
with flickering sands and red towels,  
with mothers turned to unfasten their tops  
with gorgon winters and summers stags.  
Any moment, now, morning will break  
and all moths be taken by restless birds.



**V. Moths give off light**

Electromagnetic radiation,  
moth light, visible to sleepers only,  
the light moths themselves give off as they kiss  
the aching acres of fabric knitted  
somewhere 'twixt wide awake and fast asleep.  
Joy beamed at the limits of a spectrum  
whose farthest reaches are known to dreamers  
poised at the farthest reaches of sleep itself.  
Do not ask what it is like. It is like  
nothing on earth, though it is to the eye  
what long gone trains are to the dreamer's ear.

**VI. Light is a river**

First it is a wave on a spectrum, moving at speed:  
one hundred and eighty six thousand, two  
hundred and eighty two miles per second. A river too  
fast to be troubled by much, bending its  
endless shores to its will, its self-regard laying waste  
to ships caught in burning mirrors.  
Then, it is clever, hiding its trillion tributaries in subtle  
places. Opening certain fruit – grapes,  
watermelon, Spanish limes – one sees light curled  
within, in embryo.  
But then, it is itself a tributary: sun, star, quasar, com-  
bustion, ionization, lightning, bioluminescence,  
glow worms, fireflies, Aequorea victoria, the Antarctic  
krill, the parchment worm,  
foxfire, and the common piddock.  
Strange, then, that the creatures who seek it out  
most ardently, like this black moth entreating at  
the window screen, are so wary of its bright, blessed  
name.

Producer / Réalisateur : **Denise Ball** and / et **Lawrence Wiliford**

Digital editing & mastering / Montage numérique et préparation de la bande maître : **Pouya Hamidi**

Recording engineer / Preneur de son : **Pouya Hamidi**

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Piano engineer / Technicien du piano : **Akos Prekop**

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Special thanks to the **CASP Board of Directors** who, for over a decade, have continually encouraged us in our work to expand and promote Canadian art song through their time, dedication and resources. This recording would not have been possible without the donations and financial contributions we have received from our community of supporters. We are deeply grateful for the continued encouragement for our work.

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The Canadian Music Centre was founded in 1959. We were established in the context of violent state policies targeting Indigenous communities including the Potlatch ban, the 60s scoop, and residential schools. These policies were not part of some dark chapter, ended and in the past, as injustice and violence against Indigenous people are ongoing. Acknowledging the land is to acknowledge that the CMC and many legacy arts organizations within Canada have been a part of racist policies that devalue and seek to erase Indigenous cultural expression.

We encourage community members to familiarize themselves with the 94 calls to action that were released in 2015 as part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report. We would also encourage you to follow some of the efforts that the CMC is taking to address these calls by viewing the webpage on our Accountability for Change and Indigenous Advisory Councils.

Fondé en 1959, le Centre de musique canadienne (CMC) a été créé dans le contexte de violentes politiques étatiques ciblant les communautés autochtones, notamment l'interdiction du potlatch, la rafle des années 60 et les pensionnats autochtones. Ces politiques ne font pas partie d'un sombre chapitre qui s'est achevé et appartient au passé : l'injustice et la violence contre les peuples autochtones perdurent encore aujourd'hui. Reconnaître le territoire, c'est reconnaître que le CMC a été associé à des politiques racistes qui dévalorisent et cherchent à effacer l'expression culturelle autochtone.

Nous invitons les membres de la communauté à se familiariser avec les 94 appels à l'action qui ont été publiés en 2015 dans le cadre du rapport final de la Commission de vérité et de réconciliation. Nous vous encourageons également à rester au fait des efforts déployés par le CMC pour répondre à ces appels en consultant la page Web concernant le Comité consultatif autochtone et le Comité de responsabilité pour le changement.

# KNOWN TO DREAMERS

Black Voices in Canadian Art Song

La mélodie canadienne à travers les  
voix de la communauté noire

## THE CONFESSION STONE (THE SONGS OF MARY)

Robert Fleming (1921-1976)

1. O my boy: Jesus, my first and only son – 2:21
2. Don't pay attention to the old men in the temple – 0:54
3. Jesus, did you know that Lazarus is back? – 1:45
4. There's a supper in Jerusalem tonight and I wish that I was there – 1:53
5. Cold and icy in my bed: laid on the ground of Jerusalem – 3:22
6. Bring me those needles, Martha, I believe I'll knit Jesus a scarf – 1:58
7. Everything is black, air, water, sun, moon, all light, dirt is black – 5:28
8. O my boy: Jesus, my first and only son – 2:32

Owen Dodson poet

Measha Brueggergosman-Lee soprano, Steven Philcox piano

## TWO SONGS BY LARRY STRACHAN

Larry Strachan (b. 1970)

9. A Broken Appointment – 3:43

Thomas Hardy poet

Elliot Madore baritone, Steven Philcox piano

10. Now Blue October – 4:12

Robert Nathan poet

Elliot Madore baritone, Steven Philcox piano

## THE COLOUR OF JOY

Maria Thompson Corley (b. 1966)

11. When the World Was Green – 7:49
12. Transition – 1:44
13. Elias 511 – 5:42
14. Ode to Our Joy – 6:53

Maria Thompson Corley, Kanika Ambrose, Christene Browne poets

Jonelle Sills soprano, Steven Philcox piano

## MOTHS

James Rolfe (b. 1961)

15. Night is a river – 2:21
16. The river of dreams – 0:55
17. Dreams are a cloth – 1:31
18. The cloth is eaten by moths – 2:27
19. Moths give off light – 1:47
20. Light is a river – 3:26

André Alexis poet

Elliot Madore baritone, Steven Philcox piano

Total time / Durée totale: 63:02