

# UBCCHOIRS

GRAEME LANGAGER, DIRECTOR OF CHORAL ACTIVITIES

## Shine Warm A Little Longer

January 31, 2025

4:00pm, Barnett Recital Hall, UBC School of Music

### I. Rivers of Light

Rivers of Light

Ēriks Ešenvalds (1977)

Denise Chung, soprano; Thomas Dalton, baritone

The Darkling Thrush

Timothy Takach (1978)

### II. How They So Softly Rest

Agnus Dei (from *A Polish Requiem*)

Krzysztof Penderecki (1933-2020)

### III. Shine Warm A Little Longer

A Winter Breviary

Reena Esmail (1983)

- I. We Look For You (Eventide / Raag Hamsadhvani)
- II. The Year's Midnight (Matins / Raag Malkauns)
- III. The Unexpected Early Hour (Lauds / Raag Ahir Bhairav)

Lament for Pasiphaë (from *Mid-Winter Songs*)

Morten Lauridsen (1943)

I Will Lift Mine Eyes Unto the Hills

Graeme Langager (1970)

I'll Be On My Way

Shawn Kirchner (1970)

Brian Archdekin, Bartholomew Lim, Thomas McIlwraith, Carlo Santos, quartet

University Singers  
Graeme Langager, conductor  
Eshantha Peiris, piano

We acknowledge that UBC Vancouver is located on the traditional and unceded territories of the hən̓q̓əmi̓n̓əḥ̓-speaking xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam people).

## Program Notes

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### Rivers of Light

The northern lights have been the subject of myth and legend for millennia. In ancient times some even believed them to be dragons dancing across the sky. The aurora borealis are the subject of Ēriks Ešenvalds' Rivers of Light. Sámi folk songs are interwoven throughout the piece, enhancing the timeless quality of the phenomenon. Highly evocative and descriptive writings of Candace Savage, Kari Kaila, William Reed, and explorers Fridtjof Nansen and Charles Francis Hall captivate the imagination. And Ešenvalds' trademark rich and shimmering harmonies characterize the luminescent dance of the borealis.

Kuovsakasah reukarih tåkko teki, sira ria  
(*Northern lights slide back and forth. Fa-la-la.*)

Winter night,  
the sky is filled with symphony of light,  
the sky is flooded with rivers of light.  
The doors of heaven have been opened tonight.

Guovssat, guovssat radni go, libai libai libaida  
Ruoná gákti, nu nu nu  
(*Northern lights, blanket shivering. Fa-la-la. Green coat. Fa-la-la.*)

From horizon to horizon  
misty dragons swim through the sky,  
green curtains billow and swirl,  
fast-moving, sky-filling,  
the tissues of gossamer.  
Nothing can be heard.

Light shakes over the vault of heaven,  
its veil of glittering silver  
changing now to yellow, now to green, now to red.  
It spreads in restless change, into waving,  
into many-folded bands of silver.

It shimmers in tongues of flame,  
over the very zenith  
it shoots a bright ray up  
until the whole melts away  
as a sigh of departing soul  
in the moonlight,  
leaving a glow in the sky  
like the dying embers of a great fire.

## The Darkling Thrush

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was born into a family of storytellers, and a strong narrative voice infuses much of his work. He shared his father's love of music, and this is apparent in *The Darkling Thrush*, as music plays such a key role in this poem. Some of his finest literary works revolve around humanity's frailty, and the struggle of man against an indifferent natural world. Hardy viewed the reasoning of the mind as being an insufficient means for finding joy, and through it he could find no spiritual solace. This poem was written in the late 1890s, and was later dated December 31, 1900 to mark the end of the millennium.

Trying to find hope in the face of doubt is a struggle to which anyone can relate. The thrush in this poem is a symbol of strength, faith, and reasonless hope in the face of an environment that lacks sympathy. The thrush's voice is the antithesis to "*the strings of broken lyres*" we see in the first stanza. The musical colours in this piece mirror the author's narrative description. The beginning should feel cold and "*spectre-grey*" in contrast to the third stanza, which should elicit excitement and joy as the thrush begins to sing (SAT soli). Finally, we start to understand the thrush's defiance of the cold, indifferent world in the fourth stanza as the altos begin their melody. The singers should assume the character of the narrator, and paint the scene with the text, given so vividly by the poet. This piece should take the singer, the conductor, and the audience on a journey from the cold, austere setting Hardy sets up in the first two stanzas to the warm, hopeful appreciation of the thrush's song at the end.

(Notes by Timothy Takach)

I leant upon a coppice gate  
When Frost was spectre-grey,  
And Winter's dregs made desolate  
The weakening eye of day.  
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
Like strings of broken lyres,  
And all mankind that haunted night  
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be  
The Century's corpse outleant,  
His crypt the cloudy canopy,  
The wind his death-lament.  
The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
Was shrunken hard and dry,  
And every spirit upon earth  
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among  
The bleak twigs overhead  
In a full-hearted evensong  
Of joy illimited;  
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,  
In blast-beruffled plume,  
Had chosen thus to fling his soul  
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings  
Of such ecstatic sound  
Was written on terrestrial things  
Afar or nigh around,  
That I could think there trembled through  
His happy good-night air  
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew  
And I was unaware.

Poem by Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

## **A Winter Breviary**

A Winter Breviary is a set of three carols, on new texts by poet Rebecca Gayle Howell, traces a journey through the solstice, the longest night of the year. The texts follow the canonical hours of Evensong, Matins and Lauds, and the music maps onto Hindustani raags for those same hours (Raag Hamsadhwani, Malkauns and Ahir Bhairav. This set is a meeting of cultures, and of the many ways we honor the darkness, and celebrate the return of light.

(Notes by Reena Esmail)

### **I. We Look for You** (Evensong – *Raag Hamsadhwani*)

Eventide, our single star,  
One looking star, this night.  
Next to me, the sparrow hen,  
Two pilgrims small and bold.

Dusking hour, that lonely hour  
The sky dims blue to grey.  
Our forest road will fade,  
We look for You.

Pines glisten wet with sleet,  
She looks with me,  
We look for You.

Fog falls in  
So close, my breath,  
She looks with me,  
We look for You:

Great Silent One Unseen,  
We look for You.

Eventide, our single star,  
One looking star, this night.  
We look for You,  
Forgiving light, our guide.

### **II. The Year's Midnight** (Matins – *Raag Malkauns*)

The longest night is come,  
A matins for beasts, they low, they kneel,  
O, their sleep, their psalm sung.  
A matins for trees, they slow, they stem,  
O, their reach, their psalm won.

Hush, hush,  
Can I hear them?  
Can I hear what is not said?

Hush, hush,  
Can I hear You?  
Ev'ry need met.

To light, the path is dark,  
Our star has gone.  
Beneath my feet a year of leaves fallen, frozen, done.

I walk these woods,  
The longest night is come,  
Above me, the sparrow,  
She brings our new seed home.  
Brown true sparrow,  
Take tomorrow home.

### **III. The Unexpected Early Hour** (Lauds – *Raag Ahir Bhairav*)

Praise be! praise be!  
The dim, the dun, the dark withdraws  
Our recluse morning's found.  
The river's alive  
The clearing provides

Lie down, night sky, lie down.

I feel the cold wind leaving, gone,  
I feel the frost's relief.  
My tracks in the snow can still be erased  
In us, the sun believes.

Winter is, Winter ends,  
So the true bird calls.  
The rocks cry out  
My bones cry out  
All the trees applaud.

Ev'ry hard thing lauds.

Lie down, night sky, lie down.  
I know the seeding season comes,  
I know the ground will spring.  
My fate is not night  
I don't need to try  
Behold! The dawn, within.

Horizon lights across my thoughts,  
Horizon lines redraw.  
Inside of my throat a rise of the gold  
Inside my chest I thaw.

Winter is, Winter ends,  
Nothing stays the same.  
The moon strikes high,  
The sun strikes high and  
Now I hear your name:

Earth's Untired Change.

Praise be! praise be!

The unexpected early hour  
grows the good light long.  
Our darkness ends,  
O mercy sun,  
Trust can warm us all.

Begin again, again, again,  
O may our day begin!

Poem by Rebecca Gayle Howell (1975)

### **Lament for Pasiphaë**

Dying sun, shine warm a little longer!  
My eye, dazzled with tears, shall dazzle yours  
Conjuring you to shine and not to move  
You, sun, and I all afternoon have laboured  
Beneath a dewless and oppressive cloud--  
A fleece now gilded with our common grief  
That this must be a night without a moon  
Dying sun, shine warm a little longer!

Faithless she was not: she was very woman  
Smiling with dire impartiality  
Sovereign, with heart unmatched, adored of men  
Until Spring's cuckoo with bedraggled plumes  
Tempted her pity and her truth betrayed  
Then she who shone for all resigned her being  
And this must be a night without a moon  
Dying sun, shine warm a little longer!

Poem by Robert Graves (1895 - 1985)

### **How They So Softly Rest**

How they so softly rest,  
All they the holy ones,  
Unto whose dwelling place  
Now doth my soul draw near!  
How they so softly rest,  
All in their silent graves,  
Deep to corruption  
Slowly down sinking!

And they no longer weep,  
Here, where complaint is still!  
And they no longer feel,  
Here, where all gladness flies!  
And, by the cypresses  
Softly o'ershadowed,  
Until the Angel  
Calls them, they slumber!

Poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)

## UNIVERSITY SINGERS

Dr. Graeme Langager, conductor  
Eshantha Peiris, collaborative pianist

### SOPRANO

\* Joanne Acasio  
Naomi Barasch  
Leah Brooks  
Denise Chung  
Briseis Jameia  
Anastasia Lutsenko  
Julia Yoo

### ALTO

\* Kristine Choi  
Bethanea Chou  
\* Sharon Chu  
Lauren Coulson  
Sofia Culjak-Wade  
Cooper Hatch  
Mireya Hosein  
Emily Malmgren

### TENOR

Brian Archdekin  
Killian Krauss  
Bartholomew Lim  
Aidan Redulla  
Carlo Santos  
Aaron Yurkowski

### BASS

\* Tyler Baek  
Thomas Dalton  
Thomas Farrell  
Gabriel Henderson  
Noah James  
Thomas McIlwraith  
Aidan Pfeife

\*denotes teaching assistant

## Join us this season!

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### UBC Opera: Street Scene

Jan 31 - Feb 2, 2025 | Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

### UBC Early Music Ensemble

Feb 3, 2025 | 12:00pm | Roy Barnett Recital Hall

### UBC Choral Union

Feb 7, 2025 | 7:30pm | Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

### UBC Symphonic Wind Ensemble: Dreams

Feb 8 | 7:30pm | Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

### Ryan Davis/Radia viola

Feb 9, 2025 | 7:00pm | Roy Barnett Recital Hall

### UBC Jazz Ensemble

Feb 12, 2025 | 12:00pm | Roy Barnett Recital Hall

### UBC Chamber Choir

Feb 12, 2025 | 7:30pm | Roy Barnett Recital Hall

### UBC Composer Concerts

Feb 24, 2025 | 12:00pm | Roy Barnett Recital Hall

### UBC Symphony Orchestra

Mar 7, 2025 | 7:30pm | Chan Centre for the Performing Arts



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