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conductor

Ivan Jovanovic
piano

WORKS BY

GJEILO,

LAURIDSEN,

RUTTER,

WHITACRE,

BOULANGER

& OTHERS

Light

Church of St. Peter & St. Simon
525 Bloor St. E. (Sherbourne station)

Sat. Nov. 26
2022 7:30 pm



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The Jubilate Singers acknowledge that we are on the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of New Credit, the Anishinaabeg, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples who walked here before them. The territory was the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. It also lies in Treaty 13, a treaty made with the Europeans to which we are all subject.

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Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to live, work, and share our music in the community, on this territory.

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JUBILATE SINGERS

PRESENT

Light

Isabel Bernaus

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ivan Jovanovic

PIANO



Keep Your Lamps!

Trad. Gospel Blues arr. André Thomas

Deborah Park, conductor

Abendlied

from *Drei geistliche Gesänge*

Words: Luke 24:29 Music: Josef Rheinberger

Ödi Ödi

Trad. Tamil arr. Stephen Hatfield

Lux Aeterna

from *Piezas sacras*

Words: Latin Mass Music: Fernando Moruja

Stephanie Leung, soprano solo

Fireflies

Words: Rabindranath Tagore Music: Jake Runestad

Northern Lights

Words: Song of Solomon Music: Ola Gjeilo

Deborah Park, conductor

Lux Aeterna

Words: Latin Mass Music: Ēriks Ešenvalds

Catherine Maguire, conductor

Sure on This Shining Night

from *Nocturnes*

Words: James Agee Music: Morten Lauridsen

Hymne au soleil

Words: Casimir Delavigne Music: Lili Boulanger

Catherine Maguire, soprano solo

The Lake in the Mountains

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Ivan Jovanovic, piano

Clair de lune

from *Suite bergamasque*

Claude Debussy

Ivan Jovanovic, piano

Light: Unveiled

from *Nür: Reflections on Light*

Words: Qur'an 24:35 Music: Hussein Janmohamed

Lux Aurumque

Words: Edward Esch transl. Charles Anthony Silvestri

Music: Eric Whitacre

Catherine Maguire, soprano solo

El cant dels ocells

Trad. Catalan arr. Enric Ribó

Star Carol

Words and Music: John Rutter

Catherine Maguire, conductor

This Little Light of Mine

Trad. Gospel arr Neil Johnson

Brightest and Best

Words: Reginald Heber Music: Southern Harmony, 1835

arr. Shawn Kirchner

Tamako Fan, violin

❧ PROGRAM NOTES ❧

The central idea of the powerful song **Keep Your Lamps!** is the preparation for salvation. “The time” relates to the apocalyptic prophecies of the New Testament, and the lamps are an allusion to the biblical Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1–13). They may also refer to the lamps kept burning in the windows of the “safe houses” that were secret rest stops on the Underground Railroad to Canada. The song is frequently sung in call-and-response format.

Josef Rheinberger, a prolific composer of masses, symphonies, operas, and many choral and organ works, was born in the principality of Liechtenstein but lived in Germany for most of his life. A child prodigy, he wrote the **Abendlied** in 1855 when he was only sixteen. The text is from the Bible and concerns the post-Crucifixion appearance of Christ on the road to Emmaus. A serene atmosphere is maintained throughout, with no pauses in the harmonic flow.

Canadian composer Stephen Hatfield has a particular interest in ethnomusicology. About his arrangement of the Tamil song **Ödi Ödi** he has written: “Usually singers take pains to project their sound, [but] the opening hum of ‘Ödi Ödi’ is a more inward sound ... as if the voice were planted deep within the human head ... The drone is tremendously important—it is the endless breath of life, ... the dreamy repetition that helps the listener break free of the usual definitions of time, and float into a meditative world.”

Fernando Moruja was an Argentine composer, choral director and singer. Both his own compositions and his arrangements of traditional music have attracted great interest and performances by musicians around the world. His five *Piezas sacras* include **Lux Aeterna**, which is a musical evocation of Eternal Light. Never rising above double piano in volume, its legato line creates the intense effect of a serene stillness in which time is suspended.

The young American composer Jake Runestad has written that “Rabindranath Tagore’s **Fireflies**’ is a collection of quirky, humorous, wise, and profound aphorisms offering powerful poetic punches. Each mini-poem expresses a world of its own, so I assembled five of these morsels to create a multi-movement musical work illuminating thoughts on life, love, joy, empathy, and beauty.” Tagore was a Bengali polymath who in 1913 became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Ola Gjeilo is a Norwegian composer who has worked in the U.S.A. since 2001. Of **Northern Lights** he has written that “most of all, this piece and its text is about beauty. About a ‘terrible’, powerful beauty, although the music is quite serene on the surface.” The placid opening section features repeated eighth-notes. An arching phrase on the words “pulchra es” then dominates the central part, which reaches a dramatic climax before a return to the opening section.

The contemporary Latvian composer Ēriks Ešņvalds has enjoyed considerable acclaim for his choral and orchestral music. **Lux Aeterna** was written for a choral competition in 2017. The gentle beauty of its opening begins to gather momentum with the words “requiem aeternam” and reaches a surprising level of intensity at “dona eis, Domine” before

subsiding to a final, luminous chord that seems suspended in air.

Morten Lauridsen's beautiful **Sure on This Shining Night** is one of three *Nocturnes* composed in 2005. Lauridsen has remarked that it "is set as a song from the American musical theater, a genre which I have highly esteemed throughout my life." The words are by James Agee—novelist, journalist, screenwriter, film critic,—who was also a very fine poet. This particular text, a kind of pantheistic benediction, has been set by several major American composers.

Despite succumbing to intestinal cancer when she was just twenty-four, Lili Boulanger left an impressive body of vocal and choral music. Her **Hymne au soleil** was composed in 1912, when she was nineteen. Its harmonies reflect the tremendous impact of Debussy's music, but its declamatory chords evoking the sun's progress up from darkness are the confident work of a composer who the following year would be the first woman to win the prestigious Prix de Rome.

English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote relatively little piano music, but most of it is of very high quality. **The Lake in the Mountains** was extracted by the composer from his first film score, for 1941's *49th Parallel*, a war adventure set in Canada starring Leslie Howard, Laurence Olivier and Raymond Massey, no less. The music depicts an idyllic lake in the Rocky Mountains and features the composer's characteristic triplet figures. This was Vaughan Williams' last piano composition.

The delicately beautiful textures of **Clair de lune**, the third movement of Claude Debussy's *Suite bergamasque* of 1890, have made it one of his best-known compositions. The piece

was inspired by Paul Verlaine’s *commedia dell’arte* poem, in which the maskers’ song “mingles with the moonlight, / With the calm moonlight, sad and lovely, / Which makes the birds dream in the trees, / And the plumes of the fountains weep in ecstasy.”

Toronto-based composer, choral artist, and educator Hussein Janmohamed believes in the power of singing to bridge differences and spark intercultural dialogue. **Light: Unveiled** is the first movement of his two-part choral soundscape *Nür: Reflections on Light*. He writes that he was inspired by the Qur’an *Verse of Light* (24:35), which speaks of the divine light that belongs to neither the West nor the East.

Lux Aurumque—light and gold—links the birth of Christ with those images. Eric Whitacre writes that when he found the short poem “Light, / warm and heavy as pure gold,” by American poet Edward Esch, he liked it so much that he asked the Latin scholar Charles Anthony Silvestri to translate it. Whitacre employs tight harmonies, often with added dissonances, matched to precise dynamics to make the sound shimmer and glow, like light or gold.

El cant dels ocells is a traditional Catalan Christmas song and lullaby. It depicts the joy of nature, particularly that of birds, “upon seeing the dawning of a great light”: the birth of Jesus Christ. The haunting melody, with its shift from minor key to major and back again, was made famous by the great cellist Pau Casals. During his long exile from Francisco Franco’s Spain he began each of his concerts by playing this song, and it became for many a symbol of Catalunya.

John Rutter’s **Star Carol** was written in 1972 for Sir David Willcocks’s Bach Choir Christmas concerts in London’s Royal Albert Hall. Its refrain, beginning at “See his star shining

bright,” was designed to be learnt and sung by children at the concerts. A popular and prolific composer, Rutter has written major works such as the *Requiem* but is best known for his shorter pieces, especially his carols and carol arrangements.

This Little Light of Mine is of unknown origin, but it seems to have emerged in the American South in the 1920s and was first recorded in 1934, sung by Jim Boyd in a Texas State Penitentiary. It has acquired many verses over the years and was adopted by activists during the U.S. civil rights movement. It is sung in African-American churches, and in 2018 Meghan Markle and Prince Harry chose it for the close of their wedding ceremony

Nineteenth-century America saw the publication of a number of shape-note hymn and song books. The shape-note system used different shapes of note-heads to indicate different musical pitches and had been developed in England as an easy teaching method. One of the most important of these collections was *The Southern Harmony*, published by William Walker in 1835. **Brightest and Best**, from that book, is sung to a vigorous tune called “Star in the East.”

Program Notes by Carol Chin & Norm Martin





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TRANSLATIONS

Abendlied

(Evening Song)

Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day
is far spent.

Ödi Ödi

(Running Running)

Untold millions of people run and run,
constantly seeking,
growing desperate
and die looking for
the light that is within them.

Lux Aeterna

(Eternal Light)

May eternal light shine on them, Lord,
with your saints for ever, for you are good.
Give them eternal rest, Lord,
and may light perpetual shine upon them,
for you are good.

Northern Lights

Thou art beautiful, O my love,
Sweet and beautiful daughter of Jerusalem,
Thou art beautiful, O my love,
Sweet and comely as Jerusalem,
Terrible as an army set in array.
Turn away thine eyes from me,
For they have made me flee away.

Hymne au soleil

(Hymn to the Sun)

Let us bless the power of the reborn sun.

With all the universe let us celebrate its return.
Crowned with splendor, it rises, it soars.
The waking of the earth is a hymn of love.
Seven rushing steeds that the God scarcely holds back
Ignite the horizon with their scorching breath.

Oh, fertile sun, you appear!
With its fields in bloom, its mountains, its thick forests,
The vast sea set ablaze by your fires,
The universe, younger and fresher,
Morning vapours are glistening with dew.

Light: Unveiled

Light upon Light.

**Lux Aurumque
(Light and Gold)**

Light,
Warm and heavy as pure gold
And the angels sing softly
to the new-born baby.

**El cant dels ocells
(The Song of the Birds)**

Upon seeing the dawning
of a great light
on this most joyous night,
the birds come singing
to celebrate
with their delicate voices.

The bird who is king of the air
goes flying on the breeze
singing his melody
saying: "Jesus is born

to free us from sin
and bring us joy.”

The partridge sings:
“I’ll go make my nest
inside that stable
to see the Child
as he lies shivering
in Mary’s arms.”



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We are glad you could join us
tonight; however, ticket sales
cover only a fraction of our
regular season costs.

Our next concert will feature
a spectacular array of guest
artists from diverse musical
traditions, and we will take this
program into schools during
Black History month. You can
help make this ambitious
project a reality!

Financial contributions of any
size are gratefully appreciated.

On Nov. 29, please make a
donation directly to the choir
or through CanadaHelps.

[https://www.canadahelps.org/en/
charities/jubilate-singers](https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/jubilate-singers)

*Thank you in advance for
your kind support.*

Jubilate Singers

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BIOGRAPHIES

ISABEL BERNAUS was born in Catalunya, Spain, and trained as a musician in Europe and North America. She obtained her Diploma in Willems Music Education in France, followed by the completion of her master's degree in Music Education from Laval University in Quebec. Isabel studied conducting with Manel Cabero in Catalunya, Dr. James Jordan of Westminster College, Rider University, and with Noel Edison and the Elora Festival Singers. Her education and experience have established her as an accomplished and highly regarded conductor and music educator.

In Toronto, Isabel has conducted three other choirs (Common Thread Community Chorus of Toronto, Settlement Community Choir, and the University of Toronto Spirit Singers) in addition to the Jubilate Singers. She has also taught music at Sheridan College, the Haliburton School of the Arts of Fleming College, and the Summer Institute for Creative Adults of the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. She has participated as a guest conductor in choral events and workshops, often sharing her love of world music. She was awarded an honourable

mention in the 2006 Leslie Bell Prize for Choral Conducting, granted by the Ontario Arts Council. Isabel speaks several languages and is familiar with classical and folk music traditions from many cultures. A strong believer that music should be accessible to everyone, she has conducted several choirs with a wide range of singing experiences as part of her lifelong involvement in community projects promoting education and music.

IVAN JOVANOVIC's music education began in Serbia at the Belgrade Faculty of Music, where he completed his B. Mus. and M. Mus. in piano performance. In 2004, he joined the Belgrade Opera Orchestra as a répétiteur and concert pianist. In 2013, he came to Toronto to complete his M. Mus. in collaborative piano from the University of Toronto under Prof. Steven Philcox. The same year, he won the prestigious Gwendolyn Williams Koldofsky Prize in Accompanying. Presently, he is a regular vocal coach and harpsichordist in U of T's Early Music Department. Since 2014,

Ivan has been the accompanist for Toronto City Opera, and in 2017 he extended his role to Music Director.

THE JUBILATE SINGERS, founded in 1969, are a mixed-voice community choir. Under the musical direction of Isabel Bernaus, the choir specializes in eclectic international music and takes pride in singing in the original languages—everything from Arabic to Zulu. The Jubilate Singers enjoy collaborating with a variety of other performing groups from Toronto and beyond. In recent years the choir has performed with Maryem Tollar (Middle Eastern); the drummers and dancers of Ottawa-based Baobab Youth Performers (Ghanaian); Suba Sankaran and Autorickshaw (South Asian); the Esmeralda Enrique Dance Academy (Spanish); Cassava Latin Rhythms (Latin American); Vox Finlandiae (Finnish); Toronto Jewish Folk Choir; Proyecto Altiplano (Chilean); the Shevchenko Choir (Ukrainian); Ubuntu Drum and Dance Theatre (African); Denise Williams (African/Jewish/Muslim diaspora); and Sikuris St. Lawrence (Latin American).

The Jubilate Singers rehearse on Tuesday evenings, September through June, at St. Leonard's Anglican Church near Yonge and Lawrence. Interested singers are encouraged to talk to a member of the choir

at the concert, contact us for more information, and/or sit in on a rehearsal.

Jubilate Singers' members are all volunteers and, with non-singing supporters, put in as many as 3,200 volunteer hours each year. The choir also donates free tickets to settlement houses, seniors' centres, and other community organizations for people who would not otherwise be able to attend cultural events. Ticket sales cover only a fraction of our costs, so additional support is appreciated in order to achieve our musical goals. The Jubilate Singers gratefully acknowledge support from from the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council.

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Jenny Jenkins

Poornima Kadambari

Stephanie Leung

Catherine Maguire

Joan Moss

Deborah Park

Karen Paul

Inga Pechersky

Kathleen Wong

Susan Wong

Alto

Mimi Beck

Yael Brotman

Susan Craig

Martine Dubreuil

Yelena Garber

Judith Hayes

Kathryn Humphrey

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