

ART SONG LAB | 2020

PRESENTS

SONG
LAUNCH

10 new art songs by composers and poets
from around North America

Friday, July 31st, 2020
6:00pm Pacific via Facebook Live

Letter from the Directors

This is a time of unprecedented challenges for creative and performing artists. In March 2020, we began seeing an avalanche of cancellations by arts organizations and venues, forced to shut down live performance activities that are central to their missions. It was, and continues to be, devastating to our communities.

Art Song Lab decided to go forward in an all-digital format for two reasons: The unwavering commitment of our performing faculty to deliver new songs, and the clear desires of our poets and composers to continue their creative collaborations in any way possible. It went without saying (although we said it, often) that the arts are more important than ever during this fractured time, to reach out to those in isolation and bridge the gaps in distance, culture, and vital human connection.

This year has been personally difficult for members of our Art Song Lab family, and we recognize the deep losses of several members of our community:

J.J. Lokshtanov (Jack Joseph Locke), 1957-February 17, 2020

Georges Philippe Rouget, Sept. 1, 1964 - June 8, 2020

Inger Iwaasa, April 25, 1930 - June 12, 2020

Dr. Sharon Dougan McMurtry, January 6, 1943 – July 7, 2020

We share our hopes and determination to make things better through meaningful collaborations and creative support. Thank you and HURRAH to all the people who made ASL 2020 possible!

—Alison d’Amato and Michael Park

About Art Song Lab

ASL is a 6-month collaborative opportunity for composers and writers that culminates in a week-long intensive program in Vancouver. Since 2011, ASL has connected 58 writers with 72 composers, presenting world premieres of 94 new Art Songs.

For more info + artist bios, please visit

www.artsonglab.com

PROGRAM

Magic for Soprano and Piano

Music by Kara Gibbs
Text by Dawna Silver

Nature's Noise for Baritone and Piano

Music by Diane Berry
Text by Bill Evans

Lake Song for Contralto and Piano

Music by Mickie Wadsworth
Text by Angela Rebrec

Eye of an Ice-Storm for Soprano and Piano

Music by JD Daniel
Text by Tawahum Bige

Curling Water for Baritone and Piano

Music by Sierra Wojtczack
Text by Bill Evans

Blackmud for Contralto and Piano

Music by Yi-Ning Lo
Text by Kim Trainor

Unwise Love for Baritone and Piano

Music by Kamran Shahrokhi
Text by Ludmila Uhde

Juniper Sky for Soprano and Piano

Music by Hope Salmonson
Text by Tawahum Bige

Listen for Baritone and Piano

Music by Ashley Weckesser
Text by Carrie Jenkins

Love for Contralto and Piano

Music by Christopher Thomas Emery
Text by Anne de Nada

Performed by

Steven Bélanger, baritone and Corey Hamm, pianist
Lynne McMurtry, contralto and Alison d'Amato, pianist
Robyn Driedger-Klassen, soprano and Karen Lee-Morlang, pianist

2020 Faculty

Co-Directors

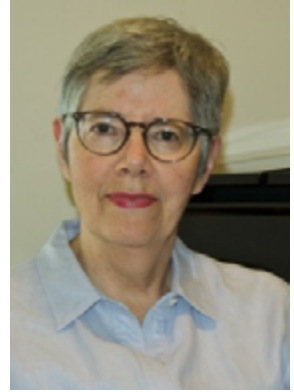


Michael Park, composer
Alison d'Amato, pianist

Guest Artists

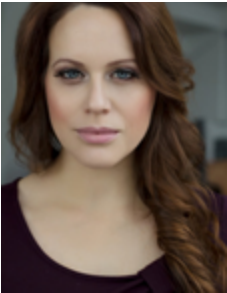


Aislinn Hunter,
poet



Leslie Uyeda,
composer

Performers



Robyn Driedger-
Klassen, soprano



Karen Lee-
Morlang, pianist



Lynne McMurtry,
contralto



Alison d'Amato,
pianist



Steven Bélanger,
baritone



Corey Hamm,
pianist

PARTICIPANTS



Bill Evans lives in the Eastern Townships, Quebec, in an old Stone farm house dating to 1840s. He has 3 children and 7 grandchildren and has been writing since his teenage years and more seriously since the 1990s. “Bill is almost illiterate on paper and yet he apparently remains blissfully unaware of the fact” Maths Tutor, School report 1963 His Welsh and Irish descent, Canadian and English public schooling battle it out to produce his pithy humorous verse.



Carrie Jenkins is a writer living and working on unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. Her poetry has been shortlisted for the Indiana Review 1/2K Prize and the Malahat Review Far Horizons Award. She won the New Philosopher Writers Award for her short story, ‘The Woman at Home’, and her first novel, *TimeLike*, will appear with *Strange Light* (Penguin Random

House Canada) in 2021. Carrie’s first collection of poetry, *Uninvited*, co-authored with Carla Nappi, will be published by McGill-Queen’s University Press in 2020.



Angela Rebrec is a writer, singer and graphic artist whose work has appeared widely in journals such as *GRAIN*, *Prairie Fire*, *EVENT*, the *Dalhousie Review*, *Pulp Literature* and *NationalPoetryMonth.ca* 2020 *Ode to the Small*. Her writing has been shortlisted for several awards and contests including *PRISM International’s Nonfiction Contest*. Angela’s most recent art can be viewed online with Chicago’s *Woman Made Gallery*. Angela currently facilitates writing and expressive arts workshops for kids and adults of all ages. She lives in Delta, BC with her husband, three children and dog on unceded Musqueam and Tsawwassen lands.



Anne de Nada was born in Sydney Australia, traveled to Canada in her early twenties, married, became a Mother of three and was entrepreneur. Her poems are calming, the voice is soft, simple with expressions of love, nature and spirituality. She enjoys deep meditation, sacred geometry and energy healing. Her poems express at times the warmth of one's mother's arm. She is enchanted with the wonders of assorted colours in various shapes and sizes as seen in her many beautiful paintings. It is Anne's belief that she is only the holder of the space for the word nymphs to weave their magic.



Tawahum Bige Łutselk'e Dene, Plains Cree, Two-Spirit, & Nonbinary poet, Tawahum Bige resides on unceded Musqueam/Tsleil-Waututh/Squamish territory. Featured in over-10 lit-journals including Prairie Fire, Contemporary Verse 2, Grain Magazine and EVENT Magazine, their Scorpio-moon-ass poems expose

growing, resisting and persisting as a hopeless sadboy on occupied Turtle Island. Tawahum completed KPU's Creative Writing BA-program and Banff Centre's first-ever Indigenous Spoken Word Residency. Choir, Prairie Voices Choir, Exultate Chamber Choir, and at the Conservatory of Music Giuseppe Tartini in Trieste, Italy. He currently works as a full time composer, audio engineer and collaborative pianist.



Kim Trainor is the granddaughter of an Irish banjo player and a Polish faller who worked in the logging camps around Port Alberni in the 1930s. Her second book, *Ledi*, a finalist for the 2019 Raymond Souster Award, describes the excavation of an Iron Age horsewoman's grave in the steppes of Siberia. Her next book, *Bluegrass*, will appear with Icehouse Press (Gooselane Editions) in 2022. She lives in Vancouver, unceded homelands of the x^wməθk^wəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.



Dawna Silver They say not all who seek are lost. This statement accurately defines Dawna Silver's journey thus far. Having moved through numerous and distinct chapters in life, Dawna has gained awareness of what is of greatest importance to her. As a counsellor, Dawna helps people find the meaning and purpose in life that so many seem to lament the lack of. Finding authentic connections and soulful significance has become the primary focus of Dawna's life. She aims to lead a fully creative life as a poet, songwriter counsellor or whatever before the journey is over and to live life with joy!



Ludmilla Uhde I was born in Czechoslovakia where I graduated with M.A. degree in Czech language and literature. From an early age I entered numerous poetry public readings competitions. After I emigrated to Canada in 1968 I completed another M.A. degree, this time in Russian language and

literature. I started to write poetry in English in the early eighties and I had some work published. At the present I am a member of Westmount Poetry Group (Montreal). I write poetry intensively and I participate in public readings. I am attracted to the form of the ballad.



Kara Gibbs lives in Vancouver, BC. She was recently commissioned by McGregor-Verdejo Duo to write a piece for flute, guitar and soprano that was premiered as part of VICO's 2019 Global Soundscapes Festival, featuring text by poet Carolyn Nakagawa. Her piece "Untitled Scenes: Two Remembered and One Imagined" was featured on the Tiresias Duo's 2014 Trade Winds album, a composition WholeNote Magazine called a "discovery" that "covers the gamut from playful to meditative and serene." Kara studied composition at UBC with Keith Hamel, and is currently continuing her studies with composer Jennifer Butler. She performs with the Balinese ensemble Gamelan Gita Asmara.



Kamran Shahrokhi born in Vancouver, BC in 1993, relocated to Tehran, Iran at the age of 8 years old with his family where he started his music education in 2008 by learning how to play the classical guitar. In 2012, Kamran moved back to his hometown, Vancouver, with a purpose and drive to make his dreams come true. To further expand his knowledge and sharpen his raw skills, Kamran enrolled in Douglas College's Basic Musicianship program in 2014. Under the influence of Doug Smith, Kamran was inspired to start creating his own music and ultimately switched from majoring in classical guitar performance to music composition. Kamran is currently finishing his Bachelor's Degree in Music Composition at the Vancouver Academy of Music under the mentorship of Michael Park. He has also had the opportunity to study Edward Top and Benton Roark. Perseverance, focus and determination. These are the words Kamran lives by.



Mickie Wadsworth is a soprano and composer from Upstate New York. They are currently pursuing their B.M. in Music Composition from SUNY Fredonia. The most recent performance of their work was a performance of a micro-opera in collaboration with composers Sierra Wojtczack and Joseph Buck as well as librettists Jamie Leigh Sampson and Andrew Martin Smith by Fredonia's Student Opera Theater Association at the Fredonia Opera House. Their work *Sonder* premiered last fall at Electronic Music Midwest in Kansas City, Kansas. They're looking forward to their upcoming participation in Art Song Lab 2020 based out of Vancouver, Canada.



JD Daniel (they/he) is a composer-performer based in Kansas City, Missouri. JD's humanistic and intersectional approach to creation manifests in the theatrical and existential qualities of their work. Known especially for his treatment of poetry and the voice (both spoken and sung), JD participated in Art Song Lab 2018, and then a chamber arrangement of the work he and poet-collaborator Irina Rakhilkina created that summer,

“universe is trying to tell me something but it’s mute,” was commissioned and premiered by the Erato Ensemble in 2019. JD holds a musicology-focused BA in Oxbridge Music and Philosophy from William Jewell College ('19).



Diane Berry grew up in Toronto, and graduated from the music program at York University. Her work includes pieces for small chamber ensembles, student chorus, orchestra, and string quartet and has been performed in Vancouver, Victoria, Seattle, Kamloops, Halifax and Toronto. In 2018 she was commissioned to write “Gaslight 1904” for Open Doors Milwaukee, and “October Blaze” for the Whispering River Strings in Parry Sound, Ontario. That same year she had her European debut with her piece for solo flute and electronics, “Calling” in Dublin, Ireland. She is an Associate of the CMC, the CLC, and the Associate of Canadian Women Composers.



Ashley Weckesser is an Edmonton, AB-based composer and instrumentalist. Young in her career, her instrumental and graphic score works have been premiered at the University of Alberta’s

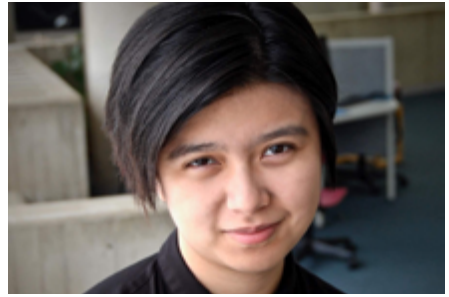
Convocation Hall by the University’s Experimental Improvisation Ensemble (“XiMe”) and Contemporary Music Ensemble. She studies composition at the University of Alberta with Dr. Mark Hannesson and Dr. Scott Smallwood. Her current interests involve producing animated graphic scores, composing electroacoustic works, and working with advanced music software such as Max/MSP.



Yi-Ning Lo born in 1995, is a composer and a pianist from Taiwan. Over her career, she has shown particular interests in harmony, structures, the joint evolution and combination of sounds. As a pianist, she plays pieces from a variety of periods and styles, including contemporary music and pieces created by herself. Yi-Ning holds a Master of Music in composition at the Eastman School of Music, and a Bachelor’s degree of Fine Arts from National Taiwan Normal University. She had studied composition with Professor Robert Morris, Professor Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, and Professor Gordon Chin.



Composer **Hope Salmonson** (she/her), from K'jipuktuk (Halifax), is driven by community and by sharing her love of music. Her compositions frequently reflect her own queerness and transness, as well as her surroundings in the natural and unnatural world. Her essay, "Not Quite Romeo: Berlioz, Smithson and the Unspoken Truth," was published in the 2019 issue of *Nota Bene: Canadian Undergraduate Journal of Musicology*. An undergraduate student at Mount Allison University, she is excitedly developing her composition portfolio while studying with Dr. Kevin Morse. Outside of music, Hope enjoys experimental cooking, video games and time spent with her chosen family.



Sierra Wojtczack is a composer and cellist from Long Island pursuing her bachelor's degree in music composition at SUNY Fredonia. She has studied with Jamie Leigh Sampson, Andrew Martin Smith, and Paul Coleman. She is an active member of the new music community, serving as President of Ethos New Music Society and interning at the Institute for Composer Diversity. In 2020, she was the 2nd place winner of I Care if You Listen.com's annual essay contest for her writing on composer diversity and was also selected as a semi-finalist for the SUNY PACC Prize for a proposed outreach concert.



Christopher Thomas Emery is a New York based composer, tenor and educator. Writing in a tonal but chromatic idiom, Emery seeks to pose more questions than answers. As a composer of vocal music, Emery is fascinated by the capacity and flexibility of the human voice as a vehicle of expression.

Magic
By
Dawna Silver

Above
Below
Within
Without
Dark
Light
Up
Down

The wonder between
Unknowable, untouchable
And often
unseen

Parts are not separate
from the whole
Which takes its shape
from mystery
beauty
shadow
and from light

It is all around us now
As we sink into
The blindness of
What could have been

And when transformation comes
A whisper...
From behind the veil
Will it be surrender
Or remembrance
That allows the end
To begin again
The end begins again

Slowly
Softly
Sweetly
Gently

Be

Nature's Noise

The fall floating leaf
the breath of Zephyr on pond so flat
ripples
even that can interpose
and interrupt
splendid sanctity in the empty space of silence
or tall cathedral trees;

of these why choose
the hurry hum of highway ?

The byway buzz
is bee or chick-a-dee
or robin red
or crow so rude
or cat not viewed on felt paws so soft
whispering-

The competition of the Robin
Turkey and the Crow
supported by the breeze
ruffling the trees
encourages soporific
review.

The sky is blue or mauve
no cloud in sight-

follows moonlight so bright
that shadows so precise
are etched twice
day and night.

This music so pure
is hard to endure
perfection fleeting
hold hard, hold dear.

Lake Song

poem by Angela Rebrec

The sun spun on the lake's surface stirred by the nuthatch's song.
Our boat bobbed in tempo. We sang Michael Row Your Boat Ashore
in a round while dad threaded red devils into our lines,
three fishing hooks chaine-turning around their floats.

As pike flashed their mocking pas de deux from under our hull
you showed us how your body carries the sun,
showed us how to make visible your trajectory of brilliance—
I held my breath as you plucked my miscast hook from your thigh.

Wisdom burns from your outstretched arms
so even wolves with their half-moon cries may see.
Where silence is never summoned lives an anthem
for us to leap into remarkable songs.

Show me before autumn frosts set in how you made my heart
a table-less kitchen in which to dance, our sisterhood,
tighter than a boat's ribbing, a shanty louder
than squawking gulls along a shore.

Eye of an Ice-Storm

poem by Tawahum Bige

It is a loud silence to see that ice breaking
the smell of cold splintering the air.
The land here could not produce noise
if it tried.

Washed my hands today,
noticed droplets refracting light
curved into yellowed
porcelain sink basin—
the crystalline kaleidoscope
shot me a vision
of Great Slave Lake thawing—
my temple: the frozen coast meeting sea.

Little bathroom rattles,
jerks me to swelling jackhammer symphony:
urban beeping, blue-light iris-burning,
every morning beside my home,
construction feeding me
buzzing cacophonies—

same techniques mine our ore
or drill boreholes in mountain's basement
to river's plumbing.
I hear it, anticipating
the 7:30am hammer in my sleep.

Now, I ain't never heard aurora borealis
in mountain's shadow
or on a river's paddle
guiding me to catch
up on a lifetime of missed sleep.

The methodical metal scraping has me unravel,
the only hammer I want to hear is from a hunting rifle
to calm in the shower from ceremony offered
drilling bullet gunpowder, shot in the eye of an ice-storm.

It is a loud silence to see that ice breaking
the smell of cold splintering the air.
The land here could not produce noise
if it tried.

Curling Water

Tell about the sound of water:
the soft whispered caress on sand so flat,
the slip slap on rock so old,
that lip of wave cresting bold,
the ripple of pond so dark the lily barely shimmers.

The lake is silent
save the lamenting loon,
hollow haunting under autumnal moon.

Then comes the wisp of wind
to press aside
the fluff or tuft of mist.
Its everywhere
surrounding life
filling my head with empty noise-
silence is so peaceful.

Wilpoet April 15,2020

Blackmud

Maybe it went like this: where the Whitemud
and the Blackmud join, a blank spring light.
You and me in sorrow.

Maybe you'd said
it would be an easy hike and it was hard,
as soon as we'd crossed the turquoise metal bridge
scrubbed raw by seasons of cold –
mud, then slush, wet snow, slick ice, mud.
The rushing creek below.

And in the night of this long day
before the day of my leaving, I cry in the dark.
And maybe you turn to me and sing Kol Dodi –

*I was asleep but my heart was awake.
The voice of my beloved knocks, saying, open to me
my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled.*

My eyes filled with dew. I was drowned in sleep.

Kim Trainor

kimtrainor7@gmail.com

www.kimtrainor.ca

UNWISE LOVE

Poem by Ludmila Uhde

Come back, come back to me...
You are not water under the bridge...
I am trying to catch you
As you seep through my fingers.

Catch you and hold you
In my reservoir of love
Ever so empty
With your absence.

How unwise- the silly chase,
The desire for what was either
Too early or too late
I know, oh I know...

I want to let the water flow
Leave the bridge for life
But I can't, I can't
Come back, come back to me...

Juniper Sky

poem by Tawahum Bige

Imagine the time and distance of lightyears:
How long I waited, travelled
to align an astrology between Leo & Aries
and I found a flux—synchronous with her:
a star from Dene nebula
floating and forming
her own constellations

like I once charted my own.
Our contact blew an explosion of juniper sky—
marvelled at the marble etched into your crown—
this swirling moment—
returned to our own galactic quadrants.

Through our own constellation:
the conjunct became square, sextile,
this shape of lines weaving silver gossamer
out across parsecs of empty space—

how could I lock an eternity
around only one body in night skies
when I want this Milky Way to thrive.
Faint rays and flares, from you to me:
Astral projected aurora.

Don't Look

poem by Carrie Jenkins

come here

come here

come here, listen

listen

I think this house is on fire

don't look now

don't look

come here, don't look

come here without looking

listen, this whole town

listen, this whole town listen listen this whole planet

living through this you learn to stop listening

the news the next patient

the sirens

you

just you

come here patiently

quietly

don't look

until i tell you

wear this

blindfold

and come here

don't look at the screen

never

look at the screen

distractions

diversions

gameplayers

catfishers

come here

blank screen

blue eyes

white noise

listen

I think this house is

under water

Love

poem by Anne De Nada

Love is boundless
Love is felt, times unseen
Love is creation
Love is magnificent

Love comes from within
Love is peacefully present
Love is pure, unrelenting
Love is constant, unwavering

Love finds many expressions
Purity of thoughts, feelings, actions
Love is anchored within
Love is opposite of evil.

Love is freeing
Love is beauty
Love is vital and dreamy
Love is everywhere.

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Performers

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Lynne McMurtry, Alison d'Amato,
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Participants

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Kim Trainor	Yi-Ning Lo
Dawna Silver	Hope Salmonson
Ludmilla Uhde	Sierra Wojtczack
Kara Gibbs	Christopher Thomas Emery

Co-Directors

Michael Park
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