

**Canada's Memory Lane**

**Thursday, November 8 – 8 pm**

**Lucas Waldin**, conductor  
**Dr. José Francisco Salgado**, narrator  
**Mallory Chipman**, vocalist

<b>HALES</b> (arr. Ruhland) <i>The Beachcombers</i>	(3')*
<b>CAMPBELL</b> (arr. Farnon) Symphonic Suite from <i>Anne of Green Gables</i>	(8')*
<b>FARNON</b> <i>À la claire fontaine</i>	(6')*
<b>KOFFMAN</b> (arr. Wilkins) <i>Swingin' Shepherd Blues</i>	(3')*
<b>ESTACIO</b> <i>Borealis</i> (1997 ESO commission) Borealis Wondrous Light	(16')*
<b>INTERMISSION</b> (20 minutes)	
<b>MacLELLAN</b> (arr. Kymlicka) <i>Snowbird</i>	(3')*
<b>VIGNEAULT</b> (arr. Lapalme) Fantasie on <i>Mon pays</i>	(4')*
<b>RATHBURN</b> (ad. Waldin) <i>The Railrodder</i>	(24')*
<b>HEMSWORTH</b> (arr. Pellett) <i>Log Driver's Waltz</i>	(3')*

program subject to change

\*indicates approximate performance duration

### Canada's Memory Lane – Program Notes

Canada's contributions to popular culture have occasionally exploded on the international stage, but most of the time, it's been quiet, homegrown, and more likely to have fringes or toques than sequins. Tonight's program is proof of that, and it goes from coast to coast – more than once!

Take our concert starter. ***The Beachcombers*** debuted on CBC television in 1972 and still stands as the third-longest-running English language Canadian TV series. It took place along the Pacific coast of British Columbia, and was a lighthearted look at the lovable scoundrels who made their living salvaging logs. **Robert Hales** wrote the theme music for the show – recognizable to at least two or three generations of Canadians who can still picture Nick, Relic, and the rest of the crew hanging out at Molly's Reach.

Jumping to the opposite coast, there is a movement afoot to determine if Canada's ***Anne of Green Gables*** qualifies as the longest-running musical in history. What began as a made-for-TV musical production in 1956 has become an annual tradition, headlining the Charlottetown Festival every year since 1965. The music is by **Norman Campbell** (1924-2004), with a book by **Don Harron** (b. 1924), and lyrics by Harron, Campbell, **Mavor Moore**, and **Elaine Campbell**. We'll hear a suite of music from the show, arranged by the esteemed Canadian-English composer Robert Farnon.

Speaking of **Robert Farnon** (1917-2005), there are some in Farnon's adopted nation of England who regard the Canadian-born composer as a creator of so-called "light music" of a quality to match Eric Coates, Haydn Wood, and Albert Ketèlbey. Having cut his musical teeth in the orchestra of fellow Canadian Percy Faith, Farnon's stint in the Canadian Army during World War Two brought him to the U.K. It was there that Farnon gained experience as director of the Canadian Army Show. It was also there that Farnon discovered his talent for creating light music, and the British appetite for it led him to settle in England following the war. But Canadian sources of inspiration were ever in Farnon's mind, and many of his works have their origins in his native land. ***À la claire fontaine*** is a fantasia built around the melody of the famous French folksong, regarded as almost the national song of New France when Québec was being settled. In the song, a young man who has been spurned by his love turns to a forest to find comfort. There, near a natural fountain, a nightingale sympathetic to his plight takes his message of love and apology, encased in a rose, to his beloved. The forest gently rouses to life as the work begins, and the familiar melody is given a sweetly lush string setting. The nightingale is never long out of sight – chirping in solo flute moments throughout. Farnon's orchestration is sweeping and grand, building to a stirring climax about two-thirds of the way into this seven-minute work, and ebbing gently away as gently as it began.

"It wasn't meant to be a hit parade song and nobody expected it to be.... Jazz people would like it and jazz stations might play it. But that was all." That's how **Moe Koffman** (1928-2001) described his surprise

when his jazz number, originally called *Blues à la Canadiana* and thrown together on his 1957 debut album, became an unexpected pop hit. Re-titled ***Swingin' Shepherd Blues*** by the album's producer, Morty Palitz, the song peaked at 23 on the *Billboard* Pop chart in 1958. Tonight's orchestration was arranged by Rick Wilkins.

**John Estacio** (b. 1966) was the first-ever Composer in Residence for the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, arriving to assume that post in September 1992. Of his work ***Borealis*** (a 1997 ESO commission), he writes: "The first time ever I experienced the glorious spectacle of the Aurora Borealis was a few short years ago when I arrived in Edmonton. I was completely captivated and awestruck by the magical sight; how could I not be inspired to compose a piece of music?! Having recently completed two serious compositions, it was the right time to revisit a style for unabashed lyrical melodies and joyous bright orchestral colours that *Borealis* would require.

"The first movement is meant to be awe-invoking; the ephemeral nature of these celestial happenings is represented by the sudden colourful outbursts followed by movements of near silence. The movement begins with the strings playing a major chord and then gradually glissing (bending the pitch) until they all arrive at a different chord; for me, this musical gesture captures the essence of bending curtains of light and serves as a recurring motive throughout this movement. A solo flute introduces fragments of a melody; this melody is not heard in its entirety until later in the piece when it is performed by a solo bassoon and then an English horn. The strings perform the melody and the composition swells to its climax featuring the brass and the sound splashes provided by the percussion. The movement concludes with a unique auditory effect in the percussion section that again attempts to convey the enchanting and magical quality of the borealis.

"For the second movement, I wanted something that would be a formidable contrast to the subtle nature of the first movement, a celebrated dance of celestial light. The music for *Scherzo* (meaning 'playful') has more of a fervent and animated energy to it being inspired by the notion of dancing celestial lights (title changed to *Wondrous Light*, 2004). A nimble melody introduced by the oboe is developed intervallically and rhythmically throughout the composition. Sudden swells in volume accompanied by quick glissandos were inspired by the swirling curtains of green light which twist and turn and vanish suddenly in the night sky. Towards the conclusion of this movement the nimble theme is transformed into a noble melody performed as a traditional chorale by the trombones, and then repeated by the full orchestra."

Legendary Canadian singer Anne Murray and songwriter **Gene MacLellan** (1938-1995) knew each other before Murray made MacLellan's song ***Snowbird*** world-famous. They were both part of a CBC variety program called *Singalong Jubilee*. MacLellan joined the show in 1970, the same year Murray's 1969 recording of the song became a huge hit. The song was inspired by MacLellan's recollection of snow buntings on a beach in his native Prince Edward Island. Subsequent to Murray's version, *Snowbird* was covered by many others, including Lynn Anderson, Bing Crosby, and Elvis Presley. Tonight's instrumental arrangement is by Milan Kymlicka.

**Gilles Vigneault** (b. 1928), an unapologetic Québec nationalist, is on record as saying that his now-legendary song *Mon Pays* (“My country”) is not political in nature. Yet since its first appearance – in the soundtrack of a 1966 National Film Board movie *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* – has been adopted by sovereigntists as an anthem. In 2008, the ESO commissioned Claude Lapalme to arrange *Mon Pays* for a concert honouring the Francophonie in Alberta. His arrangement is a lush orchestral setting of the familiar tune, concluding with the song in a waltz tempo. Listen also for another Vigneault tune – the even more nationalist *Le gens de mon pays* (“The people of my country”) – rising above the original theme.

Buster Keaton was one of the greatest silent film comedy stars. For many years, his never-changing expression – that of a man reluctantly accepting the unfairness of situations beyond his control – earned him the nickname, The Great Stone Face. By 1965, of course, the era of the silent film was long past. But the National Film Board of Canada brought Keaton back, for his final film role, in the silent-film short comedy, *The Railrodder*. Part showcase for Keaton’s affable hard-luck case character and part travelogue of Canada, the film features Keaton in a coast-to-coast journey by rail, with plenty of Canadian vistas on display. The film was co-written and directed by Gerald Potterton and Keaton himself – although his name never appears in the credits.

Eminent Canadian composer **Eldon Rathburn** (1916-2008), who composed music for dozens of NFB films, wrote the lighthearted and apt music to accompany Keaton’s journey. Tonight’s conductor, former ESO Resident Conductor and Community Ambassador Lucas Waldin, has adapted the score for live orchestral performance as the film is shown on screen.

If there is one National Film Board short film which has earned classic status, it may well be the delightfully animated short, *Log Driver’s Waltz*. Here is how the NFB website describes the 1979 film: “Easily one of the most often-requested films in the NFB collection, this lighthearted animated short is based on the song *The Log Driver’s Waltz* by **Wade Hemsworth** (1916-2002). Kate and Anna McGarrigle (and the Mountain City Four) sing along to the tale of a young girl who loves to dance and chooses to marry a log driver over his more well-to-do competitors.” Once again, the popular film will be shown as the music is performed live.

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