

THE WOLF OF LAFONTAINE: SONG & DANCE

April 25, 2024 • 7:30 PM

Featuring:

Alex Prior, Curator & Conductor – *see bio on page 8.*

Ballet Edmonton (Wen Wei Wang, Artistic Director) – *see bio on page 8.*

Chronos Vocal Ensemble (Jordan Van Biert, Artistic Director) – *see bio on page 8.*

To read the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra roster, see page 9.

JOCELYN MORLOCK

Night, herself (2017) (ESO premiere) (12')*

“One Black Spike” (2008) – text on page 6. (3')*

STUART BEATCH

Chosen Family (Text: John Barton) (2024) – text on page 6. (22')*

I - “Inside the Frame”

II - “Oxygen”

III - “What She Gave Me”

IV - “Chosen Family”

INTERMISSION (20 minutes)

EMILIE CECILIA LABEL

They do not shimmer like the dry grasses on the hills, or the leaves on the trees (2018) (ESO premiere) (8')*

IAN CUSSON

Le Loup de Lafontaine – Suite for Orchestra in Three Scenes (2019) (ESO premiere) (22')*

Program subject to change.

*indicates approximate performance duration

One Black Spike
Night, herself
Jocelyn Morlock

(b. St. Boniface, MB, 1969 / d. Vancouver, 2023)

First performance of *Night, herself*: 2017 in Vancouver

This is the ESO premiere of the piece

One Black Spike composed 2008

This work is for a cappella choir. Chronos Vocal Ensemble performed the Alberta premiere of the work in September 2018.

Born in Winnipeg, Jocelyn Morlock studied piano at Brandon University, and later earned a master's degree and a Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of British Columbia, where she was an instructor and lecturer of composition. The inaugural composer-in-residence for Vancouver's Music on Main Society (2012–14), she took on the same role for the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra from 2014 to 2019. She also had close ties with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, which in 2015 commissioned *My Name is Amanda Todd*, a powerful work about the teen from Port Coquitlam, BC, who took her own life due to cyberbullying. It subsequently won the 2018 JUNO Award for Classical Composition for the Year.

Most of Morlock's compositions are for small ensembles, many of them for unusual combinations like piano and percussion (*Quoi?*), cello and vibraphone (*Shade*), bassoon and harp (*Nightsong*), and an ensemble consisting of clarinet/bass clarinet, trumpet, violin and double bass (*Velcro Lizards*). *Cobalt*, a concerto for two violins and orchestra, was her first commission for the National Arts Centre Orchestra, in 2009. CD releases featuring Morlock's work include her Centrediscs orchestral CD, *Halcyon*; the National Arts Centre Orchestra's Analekta CD, *Life Reflected*; Duo Concertante's Marquis Music release, *Incarnation*, and Chronos Vocal Ensemble's *Fresh*.

We will hear two works by Jocelyn Morlock. Of *One Black Spike*, for unaccompanied choir, Ms. Morlock wrote :

One Black Spike was commissioned by the Canadian Music Centre, B.C. Region with the aid of a BC150 grant from the BC Gaming Commission. Five works were commissioned with this grant, each representing a period in British Columbia's history. Thanks to CMC-BC region for their assistance, and especially to Alan Ashton for his help in making the list that comprises the text of this song. *One Black Spike* represents the time period 1914 – 1945. It takes as its subject the Grand Trunk Pacific railway, which was opened in 1914 and connects Port Hardy and the B.C. interior. The last spike (made of black iron ore) of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway was driven one mile east of Fort Fraser, British Columbia, Canada on April 7th, 1914.

Of *Night, herself* for orchestra, Ms. Morlock wrote :

Night, herself takes as its starting point some of the melodies and harmonic progressions found in Purcell's *See, even night herself is here*. The calm, mysterious, and nocturnal qualities of Purcell's song are evident at the start of my piece, which begins with a slow, deliberate chaconne (repeating bassline). As it progresses, more voices are added and the music becomes faster and more energetic. At the close of the piece, the starting chaconne returns.

The work is dedicated to Bramwell Tovey and the musicians of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

Chosen Family

Stuart Beatch

(b. Yorkton, SK, 1991)

This is a work for unaccompanied choir, commissioned and premiered by Edmonton's Chronos Vocal Ensemble.

It was premiered in its entirety in Edmonton on January 21, 2024.

Stuart Beatch is a Canadian choral composer currently living in Edmonton. He received a Master of Music in Composition from King's College London, studying with composer Rob Keeley, and is the former composer-in-residence for The Fourth Choir (an LGBT chamber choir in London, UK). Beatch previously studied composition at the University of Alberta and has also received mentorship from Scottish composer Sir James MacMillan and Latvian composer Uģis Prauliņš. While Beatch has a special affinity for the Canadian choral community, his music has frequently been sung by vocal ensembles across North America and Europe, including the BBC Singers, Voces Nordicae, Pro Coro Canada, National Youth Choir of Canada, Luminous Voices, musica intima, Chronos Vocal Ensemble, Spiritus Chamber Choir, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Cantabile Chamber Singers, Chorus Austin, and Choral Arts Initiative. He is an Associate Composer with the Canadian Music Centre and a member of the Canadian League of Composers.

Of his work, Stuart Beatch writes :

Chosen Family is a four-movement choral cycle adapting poetry by Victoria-based poet John Barton. The text is taken from his most recent book *Lost Family*, a memoir in sonnets. The four poems recall important people in his life, both friends and family, who have since passed away. Together, they form a narrative of life, love, and coping with loss through the support of our chosen families.

Inside the Frame remembers James Gordaneer, a well-known artist in Victoria. Following a stroke in 2011, James was wheelchair-bound but continued to paint until his final days. The music transitions from quiet solitude into a rollicking sea shanty, celebrating the liberation he felt through his art.

Oxygen recounts the final time John visited his favourite aunt Barbara in hospital. Despite the bittersweet emotions in retrospect, the music is filled with joy and tender moments, celebrating the beauty of her character.

What She Gave Me describes the birthday cakes John received in the mail each year from his mother, meant to bridge the divide between them as adults. The music is highly colourful and rhythmic, using vivid text painting to bring these gifts to life.

The final movement, **Chosen Family**, begins with an extended image of eagles coasting through the summer sky as friends are gathered down below, sharing food and drink together. Weaving together moments and themes from across the entire work, the piece ends by recognizing the connection we all share – between people, in nature, and across the Earth.

Chosen Family is dedicated to the memory of James Gordaneer (1933-2016), Barbara Preston (1931-2016), Nancy Barton (1922-2014), and Eva Wynand (1940-2019).

They do not shimmer like the dry grasses on the hills, or the leaves on the trees

Emilie Cecilia LeBel

(b. Montréal, 1979)

First performed: January 16, 2019 in Toronto

This is the first work by Emilie LeBel performed by the ESO.

Canadian composer Emilie Cecilia LeBel specializes in concert music composition, the creation of mixed works that employ digital technologies, and intermedia concert works. Described as a creator whose music “reflects her intelligence and audaciousness” (Sir Andrew Davis), and is “restrained and beautifully coherent from beginning to end” (barczablog), as well as “impressively subtle and sensuous” (ConcertoNet), LeBel’s work inhabits sonic worlds that are primarily concerned with textural landscapes, resonance, and variances in colour.

LeBel’s artistic practice has been recognized through several significant awards and appointments, including RBC Affiliate Composer with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (2018–2022), Composer-in-Residence with the National Youth Orchestra of Canada (2015), TD SoundMakers Composer in Residence with Soundstreams Canada (2015–2016), Land’s End Ensemble Composers Competition (2016), Toronto Arts Foundation Emerging Artist Award (2015), Canadian Music Centre Toronto Emerging Composer Award (2012), and Canadian Federation of University Women Elizabeth Massey Award (2012).

LeBel’s compositions have been performed across North and South America, and Europe by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Mark Takeshi McGregor, Continuum Ensemble, Women on the Verge, Duo Nyans, Voices of the Pearl, Cecilia String Quartet, Plumes Ensemble, Quatuor Bozzini, Arditti Quartet, Land’s End Ensemble, Cheryl Duvall, Luciane Cardassi, National Youth Orchestra of Canada, Thin Edge New Music Collective, Onyx Trio, and junctQín keyboard collective, among others. LeBel’s work appears on 12 commercial recordings, including her debut album of chamber music, *field studies* – released on Redshift Records in May 2023.

Active as an educator and mentor, LeBel has served as a mentor composer for several early-career artist programs, including HATCH (Continuum Ensemble, Toronto), PIVOT (Canadian League of Composers), ConneXions (Canadian New Music Network), Explore the Score and NextGen Composers (Toronto Symphony Orchestra), and Young Composers Project (Edmonton Symphony Orchestra). Presently, LeBel is Composer Advisor at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and a faculty member at MacEwan University.

LeBel holds degrees in music composition from the University of Toronto (DMA) and York University (MA, BFA Hons.), and in audio engineering and music production from the Harris Institute for the Arts (Dip. Hons). Her composition teachers include Gary Kulesha, David Mott, William Westcott, and Michael Finnissy.

Of *They do not shimmer like the dry grasses on the hills, or the leaves on the trees*, Ms. LeBel writes :

“... and how the structures we make are static and not all that complex. They do not shimmer like the dry grasses on the hills, or the leaves on the trees. There are not as many examples in the city of the impossibly far and the impossibly close ...”

Sheila Heti, *Motherhood*

This work is a contemplation on a period of time where I was untethered to a specific place, and of the solitude experienced in the vast swaths of the North American landscapes that I traversed over the past three years: the open, lonely vistas of the Canadian Prairies, Northern Ontario, Montana, and the American Midwest.

***Le loup de Lafontaine* – Suite for Orchestra in Three Scenes (2019)**

Ian Cusson

(b. Midland, ON, 1981)

First performed: September 27, 2019 in Ottawa

This is the first work by Ian Cusson performed by the ESO.

Ian Cusson is a composer of art song, opera, and orchestral work. Of Métis (Georgian Bay Métis Community) and French Canadian descent, his work explores Canadian Indigenous experience including the history of the Métis people, the hybridity of mixed-racial identity, and the intersection of western and indigenous cultures.

He studied composition with Jake Heggie (San Francisco) and Samuel Dolin, and piano with James Anagnoson at the Glenn Gould School. He is the recipient of the Chalmers Professional Development Grant, and grants through the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, the Canada Council, Ontario Arts Council, and the Toronto Arts Council.

Ian was an inaugural Carrefour Composer-in-Residence with the National Arts Centre Orchestra for 2017-2019 and was Composer-in-Residence for the Canadian Opera Company for 2019-2021. He was a Co-artistic Director of Opera in the 21st Century at the Banff Centre and the recipient of the 2021 Jan V. Matejcek Classical Music Award from SOCAN and the 2021 Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize. Ian is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre and a member of the Canadian League of Composers.

He lives in Oakville with his wife and four children.

Of his work, Ian Cusson writes :

Le loup de Lafontaine is a dance work based on a story, part-legend and part-history that takes place in the small French-speaking Ontario community of Lafontaine in 1902. The story is a cautionary tale of a diverse but divided community ravaged by a lone wolf.

Lafontaine lies on the banks of Georgian Bay and has long been a meeting place of different peoples. In the time of the story, various settler and indigenous communities live in close proximity one to the other, rarely intermixing. Each has a deep mistrust of the other.

It is only with the arrival of the wolf – an outsider – that the community comes to terms with their divided nature. They unite, despite their differences, with the common goal of ridding the land of the intruder.

But a young girl in the community befriends the wolf. The tenderness of their friendship betrays the community's belief that the wolf is the bloodthirsty savage they imagine him to be.

The wolf ultimately is the testing place of the community's fears, rivalries, and hatred. As the outsider, he becomes the scapegoat whose expulsion from the community will be the means by which the divided peoples come together.

The wolf is hunted and killed. The town is rid of the intruder and the community is united – but at a cost.

Program notes © 2024 by the respective authors. Notes edited by D.T. Baker

Texts

One Black Spike (text: Jocelyn Morlock)

One black iron spike
One mile east of Fort Fraser
Three thousand miles of track, standard gauge
Three thousand days of immigrant labour
One resource economy
One black spike

Chosen Family (text from “Lost Family: A Memoir” by John Barton [b. 1957])

I. Inside the Frame

Kept to one floor, he rolls his chair from bed
To easel, weekdays spent
behind windows
Houseflies walk across, the light-torn, rain-bleed
Squares of glass they lift from, blankly going
Where he cannot, grandchildren in and out
Wife opening her florist's shop, daughter
Attentive, busy, wheeling him around
Time an island trapped by shallow water
He paints his mornings out of, each canvas
A sail catching what flails inside a frame
He turns windward to make bell out, nexus
Of what could albatross the picture plane
Unbound by able brushstrokes, an old man's
Youthful sightlines stretched life-sized, a life's span.

II. Oxygen

We were close. My iPhone scrolling us through
Photos I took to show you, a last glimpse
In your final days, though we had no clue
Or would not see or must have look askance.
I did, at least. In your hospital room
Chair drawn up to your bed. Oxygen tank
Hung overhead, not unlike a vacuum
Cleaner canister, you breathing in banks
Of purifying air; cheerful, loving
While affirming the flora you knew well
Camas, grape hyacinth, dogwood, quince—spring
Weeks old, as if its efflorescent spell
When stemmed, could carry forward still; grateful
For your poised life with us; as I'm grateful.

III. What She Gave Me

Their arrival forthright as a stopwatch
Every March slid inside my bachelor
Apartment's milk chute by whistling postmen
Boxes my mother winged over divides
Mountains would incline between us, candied
Peel and cherries drunk on brandy or rum
Eggs beaten in after siftings of flour
Baked, then swathed in bubble wrap and dispatched
Uniced, candles if unpacked set aflame
The years I'd blow out seldom passed alone
Consumed in thick slices before they went
Stale, my Murphy bed springing back unmade
Inside the wall on mornings stomachached prone
The crumbs scattered from two plates not misspent.

IV. Chosen Family

Coasting above the sun-drenched sequoias
Anchored in your backyard, wingtips touching
Shadows turning—skydivers with hands joined
Who've yet to come to ground—the thermals quaffed
Pouring them through ellipses, tipped spirals
Uncoiled and rewind, feathers wind-tethered
Kaleidoscopic when light-struck, a braille
The eye runs across, the air read lower
Down where we sit brimming, gazing up thrilled
Your table holding us to a circle
Buoyant with cheeses and glasses of chilled
Tequila, words unplanned, luffed vertical—
A prayer held in beaks of like-minded steel
The Earth spinning, four eagles a sun wheel.

*Text from "Lost Family: A Memoir" © John Barton, 2020.
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Biographies

Alex Prior

Conductor

London-born, 29-year-old Prior has performed in orchestras from Munich to Seattle, Hong Kong to St. Petersburg. His first season as ESO Chief Conductor began in 2017, which coincided with the Winspear Centre's 20th anniversary. His final season as ESO Chief Conductor wrapped up in 2022. He has amassed an impressive list of accomplishments, both as a conductor and composer. At the age of 13, his ballet *Mowgli*, commissioned by the Moscow State Ballet, received international critical acclaim. He was the youngest student since Sergei Prokofiev to graduate with distinction as a conductor from the Conservatoire in St. Petersburg at the age of 17. He has been awarded Conducting Fellowships at the Boston Symphony's Tanglewood Music Center and the Aspen Music Festival and has conducted numerous orchestras, including the Seattle Symphony, the Victoria Symphony, and the New World Symphony.

Ballet Edmonton

Wen Wei Wang, Artistic Director

Ballet Edmonton is a contemporary ballet ensemble of company dancers under the leadership of Artistic Director Wen Wei Wang. They commission original work each season from a variety of choreographic voices for their main stage performance series. Their repertoire is primarily Canadian, with new creations by nationally recognized and emerging choreographers with distinctive voices. Ballet Edmonton is committed to advancing the work of female and diverse creators to ensure their artistic product reflects the world in which they live. They contribute to the evolution of ballet in Canada by expressing the unique narratives of the artists whose vision they help bring to life.

Chronos Vocal Ensemble

Jordan Van Biert, Artistic Director

Chronos Vocal Ensemble was founded in 2013 by Jordan Van Biert. Combining a commitment to traditional choral repertoire with a passion for new Canadian choral music, the ensemble has delighted large audiences through its concerts in Edmonton, tours of four provinces, and at Podium, Canada's national choral festival. The choir has released three successful recordings. Chronos has performed with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and the Alberta Baroque Ensemble, and collaborated with choirs including Vocal Alchemy, Spiritus Chamber Choir (Calgary), Da Camera Singers, and Edmonton Youth Choir. Other appearances include multimedia productions in Edmonton and Calgary such as National Geographic: *Symphony for our World* and *Zelda: Symphony of the Goddesses*.

In March 2020, the ensemble undertook its first international tour, anchored by an appearance as the only Canadian choir invited to perform at the Northwest Division Conference of the American Choral Directors Association in Spokane. Since the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the choir's innovative video projects and commissions of new Canadian choral music have garnered national attention. In 2015 the choir was awarded the Healey Willan Grand Prize in the National Competition for Canadian Amateur Choirs, and in 2016 given a performance award in the City of Edmonton's Salute to Excellence for bringing recognition to the City.

Meet the Musicians

Michael Stern, Artistic Advisor

Cosette Justo Valdés, Resident Conductor and Community Ambassador

William Eddins, Music Director Emeritus, Conductor

Violin I

Robert Uchida, Concertmaster

The John & Barbara Poole Family Concertmaster Chair

Eric Buchmann, Associate Concertmaster

Broderick Olson

Ewald Cheung

Joanna Ciapka-Sangster

Laura Veeze

Anna Kozak

Aiyana Anderson-Howatt

Anita Walsh

Violin II

Dianne New – Principal

Susan Flook – Assistant Principal

Heather Bergen

Yue Deng

Danielle Greene

Buon Park

Yeeun Ha

Zoë Sellers (on leave)

Viola

Keith Hamm – Principal

Ethan Filner – Assistant Principal

Clayton Leung

Rhonda Henshaw

Stefan Jungkind

Cello

Rafael Hoekman – Principal

The Stuart & Winona Davis Principal Cello Chair

Julie Hereish – Assistant Principal

Ronda Metzies

Meran Currie-Roberts

Victor Pipkin

Bass

Hilda Cowie – Principal

Chris Jones – Acting Assistant Principal

Janice Quinn

Rob Aldridge

Chantel Leung

Douglas Ohashi (on leave)

*The ESO works in proud partnership with the AF of M
(American Federation of Musicians of the United States
and Canada) Local 390.*

Flute

Elizabeth Koch – Principal

Sarah Pollard – Assistant Principal

Oboe

June Kim – Principal

Paul Schieman – Assistant Principal

The Steven & Day LePoole Assistant Principal Oboe Chair

Clarinet

Julianne Scott – Principal

David Quinn – Assistant Principal

Bassoon

Bianca Chambul – Principal

Edith Stacey – Assistant Principal

Horn

Allene Hackleman – Principal

Megan Evans – Assistant Principal

Ryan Garbett – Assistant Principal

Donald Plumb – Assistant Principal

Trumpet

Robin Doyon – Principal

Frédéric Payant – Assistant Principal

Trombone

John McPherson – Principal

Kathryn Macintosh – Assistant Principal

Bass Trombone

Tyler Cairns – Principal

Tuba

Scott Whetham – Principal

Timpani

Barry Nemish – Principal

Percussion

Martin Bui – Principal

Harp

Nora Bumanis – Principal