



CHOR
AMICA

Among Angels

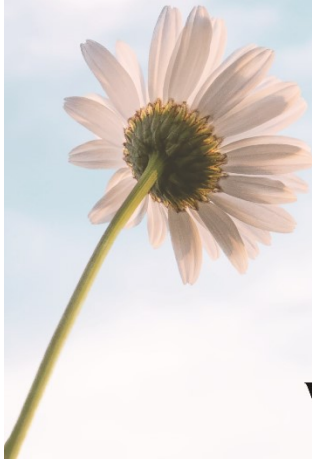
Music for two harps and choir

Featuring the Canadian premiere
of *Among Angels* by Will Todd

Patrick Murray, conductor

Noël Wan, harp

Kathleen Gahagan, harp



Saturday May 27th, 7:30pm
Oakridge Presbyterian Church
970 Oxford St. W., London

www.choramica.ca

From Artistic Director Patrick Murray

Fear not you the dark.

We carry you on soft wide wings.

Find only joy in the golden heavens and the shining earth.

Seek out light and bind it to your own light.

Setting text by poet Ben Dunwell, British composer Will Todd's *Among Angels* is a remarkable evocation of angels as humanity's guide and consolation throughout the ages; we're so pleased to bring you the Canadian premiere of this piece tonight! Written for the unique combination of choir and two harps, Todd spins this short yet sensuous text into a three-movement suite that explores the image of the angel equally as the bringer of wisdom, awe, and comfort. Throughout the piece, delicate repeated patterns in the voices and the harps evoke the fluttering of wings, while soaring melodies and vibrant rhythms hint at musical transcendence. While the association between the harp, angels, and heaven is an old one, Todd somehow finds a way to channel this imagery into music that feels fresh and new.

Around this piece tonight, we've woven a musical tapestry of other allusions to angels and the beyond, music that offers hope to those who are traveling out of this life and to those remain to remember, grieve, or celebrate. Memorial works like *Sing me to Heaven* and *Fourteen Angels*, sacred works like *Ave verum corpus* and *Totus Tuus*, and traditional music like *Hark I Hear the Harps Eternal* and *Angel Band* each offer their own fragment of the divine; we also bring you two other works for two harps and choir, Robert Moran's *Notturmo in Weiss* (Nocturne in White) and Paul Mealor's *A Welsh Prayer*. We're particularly excited to be joined tonight by two fabulous guest artists, harpists Kathleen Gahagan and Noël Wan. We hope this concert helps you see the harp in a new way and brings you comfort and light.

CHOR AMICA Presents

Among Angels: music for two harps and choir

Saturday May 27th 2023, 7:30pm

Oakridge Presbyterian Church, London, Ontario

Kathleen Gahagan and Noël Wan, *harps*

Patrick Murray, *artistic director and conductor*

Emer Montaña, *assistant conductor*

Mitchell Kukura, *apprentice conductor*

“Hark I hear the harps eternal ringing on that farther shore...”

Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal

Southern Harmony, arr. Alice Parker

Fourteen Angels

Jeffrey Van

Ave verum corpus

Stephanie Martin

“Sing me a lullaby, a love song, a requiem...”

Cantique de Jean Racine

Gabriel Fauré

Sing Me to Heaven

Daniel Gawthrop

Prelude in E minor

Johann Sebastian Bach, arr. Gail Barber

Siciliano

“Fear not you the dark...”

Notturmo in Weiss

Robert Moran

Totus tuus

Henryk Górecki

Among Angels

Will Todd

- i. Fear Not
- ii. Find Only Joy in the Golden Heavens
- iii. Seek Out Light

“Bear me away on your snowy wings to my immortal home...”

A Welsh Prayer

Paul Mealor

Angel Band

William Bradbury and Jefferson Hascall

arr. Ryan James Brandau

About the Artists

Kathleen Gahagan

Kathleen Gahagan grew up in Edmonton, where she began harp studies with Nora Bumanis. She pursued further private study with harpists Judy Loman and Lori Gemmell, and completed her Bachelor of Music degree under Jennifer Swartz at McGill University. Since moving to Ontario in 2001, Kathleen performs with orchestras, concert bands, chamber music groups, musical theatre productions, and particularly enjoys collaborations as vocal and choral accompanist. With a view to expanding harp repertoire, she composes and arranges for harp, and works with composers and arrangers interested in writing for harp. As music educator, Kathleen teaches privately and leads the harp ensemble through Forest City String School. She also has a special interest in performers' health, and provided occupational therapy assessment and treatment to the National Youth Orchestra of Canada during their 2016 to 2019 seasons.

Noël Wan

Lauded as “a huge talent [with] hidden power and amazing maturity” (Bart van Oort), Taiwanese-American harpist Noël Wan made her international debut with the Utrecht Symphony Orchestra in 2010. An acclaimed soloist, she has performed across North America, Europe, and Asia and has been featured at Carnegie Hall, het Muziekgebouw, Eslite Hall, and the Yellow Barn Summer Festival. Noël is the first Taiwanese harpist to win Gold Medal in the USA International Harp Competition, one of the world's most prestigious harp competitions, and she is the youngest First Prize winner in the history of the World Harp Competition. Her 2023–24 engagements include a Debut Atlantic Concert Tour and concerts presented by the Virginia Harp Center Festival, Taiwan Harp Festival, Harpenning Festival, Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society, and St. John's Elora Recital Series. An active scholar and educator, Noël has been on faculty at the University of Notre Dame, Saint Mary's College, and Western University; she currently serves as Assistant Professor of Harp and Entrepreneurship at Florida State University.

Patrick Murray

Conductor/composer Patrick Murray is Director of Music at Church of St. John the Evangelist in Elora, ON, where he directs the professional Parish Choir. Additionally, Murray serves as Artistic Director of Chor Amica (London, ON), Director of the University of Toronto Scarborough Concert Choir, and Associate Conductor with the Bach Children's Chorus. Equally committed to performance, education, and community engagement, Murray has served on choral faculty at Western University and Wilfrid Laurier University, as a teaching artist with the Ad Astra Music Festival (KS), Illinois Summer Youth Music, Oakville Choir for Children and Youth, and the Toronto Children's Chorus, and as a community singing facilitator for the London InterCommunity Health Centre. A passionate advocate for new music, Murray has premiered over thirty new works for choir, ensemble, and chamber opera. His own compositions have been commissioned by noted ensembles in both Canada and the United States including the Carmel Bach Festival Chorale, New York Polyphony, College of the Holy Cross Chorale (MA), Metropolitan United Church Choir (Toronto), and the Summer Institute of Church Music. Murray's academic research focuses on practices of community engagement in contemporary choral composition, and he holds degrees from University of Illinois, Yale University, and the University of Toronto. He splits his time between Ontario and Florida with his wife, harpist Noël Wan. Please visit www.patrickmurraymusic.net.

Emer Montaña

Born in Bogotá, Colombia, Emer is currently pursuing a MMus in Choir Conducting at Western University under the tutelage of Dr. Mark Ramsay. He holds a bachelor's degree in Piano Performance from the National University of Colombia, and holds a Service Playing Certificate in organ from the RCCO. Emer has actively performed as accompanist for both soloists and choirs in Colombia and Canada, and he also has a vast experience as a chorister for different organizations. His growing interest in liturgical music led him to pursue organ studies under the

guidance of Dr. Ronald Fox. Emer is currently the organist and director of the Traditional Choir at Holy Family Parish in London, Ontario. He has a private piano studio in the city.

Mitchell Kukura

Mitchell Kukura holds a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from Western University in London, Canada. He has actively participated in the London music community as Conductor of the Student Choral Initiative at Western 2021–2022, and Conducting Intern to the King’s University College Chamber Choir during their 2022–2023 season. Mitchell is Organist and Area Music Coordinator at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in London. Over the years, he has participated in notable ensembles such as the Bluewater Chamber Choir, Western University Singers, and UWO opera productions. He is delighted to be involved with Chor Amica for this concert. This fall, Mitchell will begin his Masters of Music in Conducting at Utah State University under the direction of Dr. Craig Jessop.

Chor Amica

Soprano

Estel Brown
Ai-Linn Chua
Aimee Gavin
Melissa
Hambleton
Meggie McKay*
Karianne Pasma
Michelle Sauve
Madeleine Shiell
Danielle Sirek

Alto

Laura Altenmueller
Caroline Breedyk-
Tanner
Pat Brown*
Nancy Corbett
Raquel Dahlberg
Shannon Kuiack
Jen Paterson

Tenor

Tony Gartshore
Scott King
Lisa Philpott
Chris Ryan

Bass

Roger Brown
Richard Corner
Tim Firth
Mitchell Kukura
SungHoon Lee
Brian McMillan
Emer Montaña
Bruce Morton

**on leave*

Do you sing?

Chor Amica is open for rolling auditions throughout the year, with new members accepted as balance permits. If you are looking for a welcoming community choir that will challenge and inspire, please reach out to us at auditions@choramica.ca.

Donating to Chor Amica

Donations help Chor Amica keep making music for our community. As a registered charity, Chor Amica issues tax receipts for donations. To donate, please visit www.choramica.ca/donate.

Targeted donation opportunities are available to sponsor guest artists, venues, and specific concerts throughout our season. For more information, please email info@choramica.ca.

Thank you to all our donors

Chor Amica would like to thank the following donors, whose generosity has helped make this concert possible:

Corporate donor: CIBC Mellon

Individual donors: Ankie Adriaanse, Susan Allen, Caroline Breedyk-Tanner, Sarah Brooks, Beverley Brown, Pat and Roger Brown, Nancy Corbett, Richard Corner, Anton Gartshore, Tim Lentz, Amanda Longfield, Ashleigh Memarzadeh, Sandy McKay, Patrick Murray, Douglas Robinson, Jane Skinner, Patricia Snyder, Joshua Sutherland, Gail and Neville Thompson, Frances Turner.



www.choramica.ca