



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF MUSIC

***Of War and Peace***

Monica Whicher, Steven Philcox and Marie Bérard

Monday, November 11, 2019

7:30 pm

Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park

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We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates.

For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat,  
the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across  
Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

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# ***Of War and Peace; Remembrance Day, 2019***

Monica Whicher, *soprano*  
Steven Philcox, *piano*  
Marie Bérard, *violin*

## **PROGRAM**

*This program will be performed without an intermission.  
Kindly hold your applause until the end.*

- Time and the Bell  
*(Hommage à T.S. Eliot, 1987)* Sophia Gubaidulina (b. 1931)  
T.S. Eliot (1888-1964)
- Oh Fair to See (*Oh Fair to See*, Opus 13) Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)  
Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)
- Süsse Stille, sanfte Quelle (*Neun deutsche Arien*, no. 4, HWV 205)  
G.F. Handel (1685-1759)  
Barthold Heinrich Brockes (1680-1747)
- Furie terribili (*Rinaldo*, HWV 7a) G.F. Handel  
Giacomo Rossi
- A Poison Tree (*Songs of Experience*) William Blake (1757-1827)
- The Lads in Their Hundreds (*A Shropshire Lad*)  
George Butterworth (1885-1916)  
A. E. Housman (1859-1936)
- Der Soldat, Opus 40, no. 3 Robert Schumann (1810-1856)  
Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875),  
translated by Adelbert von Chamisso (1781-1838)
- With Rue My Heart is Laden (*Along the Field*, no.8)  
Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)  
A.E. Housman

- Theme from *Schindler's List*, 1993 John Williams (b. 1932)
- Priez pour paix, FP95 Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)  
Charles, duc d'Orléans (1394-1465)
- Noël des enfants qui n'ont plus de maisons, L147  
Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
- The Children, 1995 James MacMillan (b. 1959)  
William Soutar (1898-1943)
- Velvet Shoes, 2007 Raymond Lustig  
Elinor Wylie (1885-1928)
- Farewell to Stromness (*The Yellow Cake Review*, 1980)  
Peter Maxwell Davies (1934-2016)
- Sekhmet the Lion-headed Goddess of War  
(*Morning in the Burned House*, 1995) Margaret Atwood (b. 1939)
- Bessie Bobtail, Opus 2, no. 8 Samuel Barber (1910-1981)  
James Stephens (1880-1950)
- La Bandera (*Neruda Cançiones*, 2005) Omar Daniel (b. 1960)  
Pablo Neruda (1904-1973)
- A Clear Midnight (*Leaves of Grass*) Walt Whitman (1819-1892)
- Walt Whitman in 1989 Chris DeBlasio (1959-1993)  
(*All the Way Through Evening*, 1990) Perry Brass (b. 1947)
- Blowin' in the Wind (1962)/Fragile (1987) Bob Dylan (b. 1941)/Sting (b. 1951)  
Arranged by Stephen Holowitz (b. 1958)
- How Can I Keep from Singing Robert Lowry (1826-1899)  
Additional lyrics, Doris Plenn and Pete Seeger (1919-2014);  
arranged by Richard Walters

## BIOGRAPHIES



**Monica Whicher** has performed with orchestras, opera companies and at chamber festivals across Canada, the United States, Mexico, Europe and Asia. Roles include Mozart's Pamina, Countess, First Lady and Zerlina, Massenet's Thais, Handel's Cleopatra, Purcell's Dido, and Britten's Female Chorus and Governess. She has sung all of the major Oratorios and countless chamber and recital works. Monica was nominated for a Juno Award for *Singing Somers Theatre* (Centrediscs) and two Dora Mavor Moore Awards. Critically acclaimed for her portrayals of Mérope in Lully's *Persée* (DVD) and Tellaire in Rameau's *Castor et Pollux* (both Naxos), she is also featured on the Juno Award-winning CDs *Mozart's Magic Fantasy*, *Beethoven Lives Upstairs* and *Daydreams and Lullabies*. Other recordings include *Lullabies and Carols for Christmas*, with harpist Judy Loman (Naxos), Hatzis' *Erotikos Logos* (Marquis), and Centrediscs recently released, Juno-nominated *Breathe: Music for Voices and Early Instruments* by James Rolfe. She appears on *The Art Songs of Mykola Lysenko*, *The*

*Art Songs of Yakov Stepovyi*, and *The Galicians I and II*, all for the Ukrainian Art Song Project. Monica was a member of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio, studied at the Banff School of Fine Arts, the Britten-Pears School of Music, and the Steans Institute, and was a recipient of the George London Award. She is a graduate of the University of Toronto, where she studied with renowned Canadian soprano, Lois Marshall. Monica Whicher is a Lecturer in Voice at the University of Toronto and is on the Voice Faculty of the Glenn Gould School.



One of Canada's finest collaborative pianists, **Steven Philcox** is a partner of Canada's vocal elite and continues to perform in leading concert halls both at home and abroad. Steven was a celebrated member of the Canadian Opera Company for 11 seasons where he served as répétiteur, conductor and orchestral continuo player on more than 35 productions. He is regularly invited to mentor young artists at prestigious institutions including: Opera on the Avalon, The Banff

Centre, Chautauqua Summer Institute, Centre for Operatic Studies in Italy (COSI), Butler School of Music- University of Texas/Austin, as well as university residencies across Canada.

Alongside tenor Lawrence Williford, Steven Philcox is co-artistic director of Canadian Art Song Project (CASP), an organization committed to engaging composers, poets, performers, and audiences in the shared goal of preserving, promoting and building Canada's rich body of song literature. He is director of Toronto Summer Music's Art of Song program and is currently Associate Professor and head of Collaborative Piano Studies at the University of Toronto.



Best known as the concertmaster of the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra, **Marie Bérard** is also a sought-after chamber musician, soloist, recording artist and teacher. She is a member Trio Arkel and of the Grammy nominated ARC ensemble and is a regular performer at numerous chamber music festivals such as the Mainly Mozart festival in San Diego, California, and the Bravo International Chamber Music Festival. Marie is on faculty

at the University of Toronto, the Glenn Gould School and the Taylor Academy, as well as with the National Youth Orchestra. Marie Bérard plays a 1767 Pietro Landolfi violin.

## PROGRAM NOTES

With this program, we find ourselves in the midst of the beautiful, brutal contrast which has always been – which *is* – our world: somewhere, in some country or some home, there is war; and somewhere, possibly in a similar country or home, there is peace. This peace may be longstanding or momentary or tenuous or hard-won; perhaps it is even the kind of peace which is noticed and revelled-in and commented upon, as tonight's poets and composers were compelled to comment. Their words and music show us, again and again, what we willfully entitle ourselves to; what we inflict or endure; what we transcend; what we choose; and, ultimately – simply - what is at stake.

We begin with Sophia Gubaidulina's setting of **Time and the Bell**, part of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* (1935). Here is a starting or an ending, a transcendence or a decay, very much depending on us – on our perspectives and our actions. Eliot's "fingers of yew" can represent death and life; past and present; either an insistence on power and victory or an offering of sanctity and introspection. The Kingfisher's flash

of light followed by its silence (“the still point of the turning world”) is, perhaps, our moment to decide. Gerald Finzi and Christina Rossetti choose clearly, with their mutually declared “**Oh Fair to See**”, a moment of a song encompassing a world of nature’s grace. Handel’s **Süsse Still, Sanfte Quelle ruhiger Gelassenheit** follows this earthly peace and rejuvenation towards a restful, spiritual conclusion. Lest we imagine that this peace is more than temporary, Handel and Rossi’s sorceress, Armida, arrives, demanding that the Furies and their fire (**Furie terribili**) uphold her malevolent intentions to vanquish the enemy.

William Blake’s poem **The Poison Tree** (*Songs of Experience*) counters his and our own “songs of innocence” absolutely; here, indeed, is a turning point, one which sees the emergence of war, including the World Wars which we remember on this very day. Off go **The Lads in their Hundreds**, to the war from which, like composer George Butterworth, “they will not return”. Butterworth was moved to set A. E. Housman’s *A Shropshire Lad* and was moved to enlist as a soldier in the First World War; how could this man, a composer, decorated in that war, know that he would join ten million souls in death? Bitter irony continues in **Der Soldat**, Hans Christian Andersen’s tale of an ultimate misery: ending the life – being ordered to end the life – of one’s dearest friend.

Schumann’s remarkable, and remarkably strange, setting of this barbarous “duty” cannot help but reveal some of this composer’s own, inner, war. Housman returns now, with voice and violin revealing equal loss in Ralph Vaughan Williams’ **With Rue My Heart is Laden**. Oskar Schindler, a Nazi businessman, had a profound re-evaluation of the meaning of “loss” when, during World War Two, his motivation moved beyond finance and toward true intercession: he saved over one thousand Jews from certain death in the Nazi camps. This action, small only in the relative context of unimaginable losses, finds a greater generosity in John Williams’ **Theme from Schindler’s List**. As World War Two loomed, Francis Poulenc was moved to set **Priez pour paix**, the centuries-old prayer of Charles, duc d’Orléans. This simple, fervent, *request* is countered by a child’s horrifyingly detailed *demand* for vengeance in **Noël des enfants qui n’ont plus de maisons**. This “carol for homeless children”, for which he wrote the words and the music in 1915, was Claude Debussy’s last song. James MacMillan’s **The Children** is neither request nor demand; it is simply a description – with the words of William Soutar - which haunts, almost beyond bearing. Out of this misery comes American composer Ray Lustig’s 2007 setting of that childhood staple, **Velvet Shoes**, by Elinor Wylie. This magical world and simply *being* in it are cause

for utmost gratitude. As in the following works, this experience of gratitude may mean protesting the loss of what has inspired it: Peter Maxwell Davies wrote **Farewell to Stromness** (part of *The Yellow Cake Review*), to protest a proposed uranium mine threatening Davies' Orkney Island home; in **Sekhmet the Lion-headed Goddess of War**, Margaret Atwood's now-sculpted, museum-bound goddess comments on our past and present, pondering an outcome which might include mercy; **Bessie Bobtail**, she of James Stephens' poetic observations and Samuel Barber's haunting music, is a bullied, broken being, desperate for a human response from the people who merely "nudge and smile" as she passes; **La Bandera**, Omar Daniel's wonderful setting of Pablo Neruda's politically and personally inspired poem, requires that we "stand up", all of us, against that which oppresses us.

In **A Clear Midnight**, Walt Whitman returns us to thoughts of Time, with a moment of absolute, suspended clarity and transition; Chris DeBlasio's **Walt Whitman in 1989** (part of the *AIDS Quilt Songbook*), is a setting of Perry Brass's poem wherein Walt Whitman – with all he dared to express about being human – returns to act as the benevolent, transporting angel of those young men who, as Brass writes, represent "a generation taken by our war". This return to compassion, to community, to

the questions we ask and to the choices we are given leads us to two iconic songs of peace: Bob Dylan's **Blowin' in the Wind** and Sting's **Fragile**, arranged for this occasion by my old friend Stephen Holowitz. Our last song provides us with a question which our good fortune allows us to answer, literally or otherwise, in each moment of our lives: **How Can I Keep from Singing?** How, indeed, at this particular "still point of the turning world", with all its troubles and graces, can we keep from singing, and remembering and choosing? Of course, the answer is: we can't.

*Program notes by Monica Whicher.*

*Please note that photography and recording are strictly prohibited during the performance.*

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