

On Marriage (2003) text by Kahlil Gibran

Psalm 23 (from *The Lord is My Light*) (2005) RSV

There are those who sleep through the drifts of Winter (from *Tilt!*) (2007) text by Lawrie Crawford

Rain Again (finale from *River Flow*) (2017) text by Rae Crossman

Slagflower Songs (2020) poems by Thomas Leduc – WORLD PREMIERE

Tremors

Shiftwork

Piano Interlude (inspired by *Cigarette Satellite*)

My Calendar

Slagflower

Stepping Stones (for Stephanie)

All music by Owen Bloomfield

Marion Samuel-Stevens, soprano

Irene Gregorio, piano

Tilly Kooyman, bass clarinet

Sound and video by Earl McLuskie, Chestnut Hall Music

Acknowledgements: Region of Waterloo Arts Fund and Latitude 46 Publishing



Program Notes

On Marriage was written for the wedding of a cousin of mine and was performed by a close mutual friend.

On Marriage from *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran

You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore.

You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.

Ay, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.

But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.

Love one another, but make not a bond of love:

Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.

Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.

Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.

Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,

Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.

Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.

For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.

And stand together yet not too near together:

For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.

Psalm 23 is a movement from the cantata **The Lord is My Light**. This cantata was written in memory of a dear uncle. It uses scripture that has been important to my family for a couple of generations. This aria has been performed at a number of funerals and other services.

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want;

² he makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters;^[a]

³ he restores my soul.^[b]

He leads me in paths of righteousness^[c]

for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,^[d]

I fear no evil;

for thou art with me;

thy rod and thy staff,

they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

thou anointest my head with oil,

my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely^[e] goodness and mercy^[f] shall follow me

all the days of my life;

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD

for ever.^[g]

There are those who sleep through the drifts of winter is an “aria” from the interdisciplinary piece **Tilt!** It was my second partnership with Yukon writer and artist Lawrie Crawford. **Tilt!** Is written for narrator, soprano, piano and recorder or clarinet. The narrator examines their personal existence within the context of the drastic shifts of seasonal light and dark that are present above the Arctic Circle due to the tilt in the Earth’s axis. This becomes a metaphorical and literal touchstone for the piece.

(*recit.*) Odd angles frame my existence
 Keep drinking drank life away

There are those who sleep through the drifts of winter, and grasp at the light in the dark. No, not me, I remember the heat of love one summer, steamed together, now shivered apart.

Stay still

—stalled, breathe in the dark.

I stall,

words form

... unspoken.

Rain Again is the finale from **River Flow: Confluence of Music, Words, and Dance**. It is another interdisciplinary work, this time with writer Rae Crossman and choreographer Michele Hopkins, with support from the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund. It was written for narrator, soprano, piano, and clarinet, with professional and student dancers. The work looks at the life of a river hydrologically and temporally from its beginnings at its headwaters and its geological birth all the way through to its mouth and exploitation by humans.

rivers flow into rivers
 into lakes
 into oceans
 into our bloodstream

rivers rise into clouds
 fall as rain again
 fall as music again
 words again
 dance again

come... step into the river

feel the current flow around you

Quickening the senses
 Buoying the spirit
 River in the blood

Feel the current flow
 River all around you

Lifts and carries you
 Lifts and carries you

Sweeps you away

Eddies you back again
 Part of the cycle

Quickening the senses
 Buoying the spirit
 River in the blood

Eddies you back again
 Part of the cycle

Quickening the senses
 Buoying the spirit
 River in the blood

You change the river;
 the river changes you
 River in the blood

You are the river; the river is you
 River in the blood

Slagflower Songs is song cycle using poems from the collection **Slagflower: Poems Unearthed from a Mining town** by Thomas Leduc. The chosen poems don't deal directly with being in the mines, but instead confront the psychological toll on the person and the life of the family. At the same time the poems celebrate the proud history of miners and the community that grows up around the mines. While the direct subject in these poems is mining, they contain a universal truth about all hard labour and the expectations to carry forward traditions.

Tremors

It's late and she can't sleep.
So she climbs out of bed
and thinks of him,
her other half, down
in a dark mine.

Her body is tired, but her
thoughts
are trapped with him in
the centre of the earth.
She won't know if he's alive or
dead
until the sun cracks the room
open
until he holds her in his arms.

She paces the house, can't
recall
if she let the cat in or not.
She stands with the door
open
stares into the night
and calls for the cat.

He appears on the fence,
she takes the cat in her arms
her bare feet kissing
the cold earth through which
she senses his heartbeat.
She can sleep now.

He's alive.

Shiftwork

When my mother sent me
downstairs
to wake my father for dinner,
I'd stand
at the foot of his bed, the hot
afternoon sun

dripping off me, his room dark
and quiet,
the angles of his body rigid,
even in his sleep.
He was a bear in a cave, and I
was
a curious boy with a stick.

I'd grab his toes, shake them,
yell "Dad," then pull back.
If I stood too close,
I'd be struck by his darkness,
knocked to the floor by a man
desperate for something to
hold on to,
frightened of the dark hole
beneath him.

He'd jump out of bed,
swing his arms and legs
as if he was trying to
catch himself mid-fall,
then he'd sit on the edge of
his bed,
determined to find his
bearings.
His mind digging for a safe
place,
searching for something solid:
the day, the time, one of us.

I'd watch, as he'd
bolt himself back together
with grains of sand
and bright shards of light.

My mother said
his working shiftwork
kept him off balance.
She would tell us
he needed to reset his
soul with the sun.

My Calendar

They took down the art
calendar
the only window with a view
out of this warehouse
paintings of perfection and
possibility
timeless snapshots from
another world.

Instead, they've left me with a
cold
hard numbered year devoid of
emotion
all steel precision and math
a worthless flap of dead skin
hanging off the wall.

A scab that begs to be picked
at
peeled off and tossed.

There is nothing here
to pry open my mind's eye
to peek at who I might have
been.

Where will I go to hide
when the snakes come
slithering in
when the ants go marching by
when the bear charges, and
the lion roars?

I want to slice my finger
and smear blood on the wall
where my calendar should be
but they wouldn't understand.

Instead, I will fade
and leave no stamp on the
world.
Crumpled up like a wasted
piece of paper
like this memo about
calendars, and
my life, lost in a mountain of
blank days.

Slagflower

Our fathers who came before
us
men from many nations
braved the task of altering
stone to seed.

Their nickel-plated pollen
was hauled to the surface
and scattered about to form
pockets of change, the start
to an industrial revolution.

We were harvested from the
minerals
of their calloused hands,
planted
in the long shadow of our
fathers' slag
raised to the common core of
a mining town
then smelted into a life of iron
and ore
to meet the needs of industry.

We have been milled in
metaphor
and left rusting in the rain, but
together
we've sprouted upon this rock
into a new shade of green
with sulphur speckled leaves
and a sky-scraping stem
we bend to the light
and beg to bloom.

Stepping Stones

(For Stephanie)

On the seventh day
God was skipping stones
across the universe and
one landed in our back yard.
My daughter picked it up and placed
the misshapen, stone heart into her
tiny hands.

She leaned in close and whispered
the secret wishes of a child.
She is teaching me
how to speak with the earth
how to decipher the art of nature.
For her, minerals are memories
every stone tells a story
every rock speaks poetry.

Words unearthed from the
driveways of friends and family
from hiking paths and riverbeds
souls picked from the soil
and named by a child

In her room she piles them
in the shape of a grave
invites each stone to whisper
its secrets while she plays
hovering above like an angel.
So, this is heaven.

If she could, she would pick
the moon from the sky
and slip it into her pocket
and I would let her.

Thomas Leduc, "Shiftwork", "Tremors", "My Calendar", "Slagflower" and "Stepping Stones" from *Slagflower: Poems Unearthed From a Mining Town*. Copyright © 2019 by Thomas Leduc. Use with permission by Latitude 46 Publishing (www.latitude46publishing.com)

Writers' and Performers' Biographies

Owen Bloomfield



Owen Bloomfield is an active Cambridge, Ontario based community musician and composer. He has written for and been performed by a variety of ensembles and soloists from Whitehorse to Honolulu and to Amsterdam. Recent large projects include *River Flow: Confluence of Words, Music and Dance* with writer Rae Crossman and choreographer Michele Hopkins, *Woman of the Drum* a unique piece for the Indigenous drum group Mino Ode Kwewak N'Gamawak and the community singing group Inshallah.

Owen completed his Bachelor of Music composition at Wilfrid Laurier University with Peter Hatch, Glenn Buhr and James Harley, and his Master of Music in Composition at the University of British Columbia studying with Keith Hamel. He is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre and a member of the Canadian League of Composers.

Lawrie Crawford



Lawrie is an interdisciplinary artist and former government analyst who has lived in the Yukon for over 35 years. Her artistic practice spans many disciplines, each coming to the fore at different times in her life. In the mid-nineties painting gave way to theatre and writing, which soon merged with music into interdisciplinary performances with compositions by Owen Bloomfield.

Restorations of derelict houses became sculptures and art installations, and then she returned to abstract paintings. Now, after many decades of experiments and transitions, Lawrie has settled back into writing in Carcross, Yukon. She holds two post-graduate degrees, one in literary non-fiction and, the other, a MFA in interdisciplinary arts.

She remains astounded by, and connected to place and context.

Rae Crossman



Living on the Haldimand Tract in Kitchener, Ontario, Rae Crossman writes poetry both for the page and for oral performance. He has published poems in literary magazines and dramatized them on theatre stages, in classrooms, and around campfires on canoe trips. Working with dancers, musicians, and visual artists, he is particularly interested in the collaborative process of creativity. Joint projects include storytelling, choral compositions, and theatrical pieces set in natural environments.

Website: raecrossman.com Twitter: @RaeCrossman

Kahlil Gibran



Gibran Khalil Gibran (January 6, 1883 – April 10, 1931), usually referred to in English as Kahlil Gibran was a Lebanese-American writer, poet and visual artist, also considered a philosopher although he himself rejected the title.^[4] He is best known as the author of *The Prophet*, which was first published in the United States in 1923 and has since become one of the best-selling books of all time, having been translated into more than 100 languages. (from *Wikipedia.com*)

Irene Gregorio



Dr. Irene Gregorio enjoys a diverse and active musical life as a pianist, educator, and music director. As a pianist and chamber musician, Dr. Gregorio has collaborated in recital with members of the LA Phil and San Francisco Symphonies. Her performances as a collaborative pianist have taken her throughout North America, Europe, Cuba, and the Philippines, and she has also appeared on PBS, CBC Radio 2, and on numerous film soundtracks in the LA area. Dr. Gregorio has over 10 years of working in the university academic setting, serving as staff pianist and lecturer at the campuses of the California State University, East Bay and Los Angeles. She earned her DMA at the University of Southern California and recently returned home to Canada, where she serves as the Director of Music Ministry at Dublin St. United Church.

Tilly Kooyman



Tilly Kooyman is an active solo, chamber and orchestral musician, with particular interests in contemporary music, interdisciplinary works and acoustic ecology. She has performed across Canada and toured Japan with the Higashi-Hiroshima Clarinet Ensemble. An advocate for Canadian music, Tilly has premiered new works at the International Clarinetfest in Vancouver, the World Bass Clarinet Convention in the Netherlands, the International Bohlen-Pierce Symposium in Boston, and on CBC and West German radio. Tilly will always cherish the three decades of collaboration with celebrated Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer and his extraordinary Patria Cycle, a series of multidisciplinary works often staged in unconventional spaces or natural environments. (RIP R. Murray Schafer, Aug. 14, 2021)

Thomas Leduc



Thomas Leduc lives in the City of Greater Sudbury, he was Poet Laureate from 2014-16, and is currently the President of The Sudbury Writers' Guild. Tom has put poetry on city buses and on City hiking trails, he's performed at the Gore Bay Jazz festival, Northern Lights Festival Boreal and on the CBC. He's been published in numerous anthologies and magazines. Recently, Tom published his premier book of poetry with Latitude 46 publishing, *Slagflower Poems Unearthed From A Mining Town*.

<https://tomleducpoetry.wixsite.com/home>

Marion Samuel-Stevens



Soprano Marion Samuel-Stevens has been described as an engaging, direct performer and actress. Her performances range from the intimacy of recital performance to the grandeur of opera. She was a semi-finalist in the prestigious Eckhardt-Grammatté competition which gives special attention to new Canadian music.

Marion has performed across Canada and the United States and Europe. She is a graduate from the University of Toronto's Voice Performance program. As well as studies at Wilfrid Laurier University she has attended many prestigious enrichment programs across North America and Europe where she had the pleasure of studying with many acclaimed musicians including Elly Ameling, Rudolph Jansen and Martin Katz.

www.marionsamuelstevens.com