



For immediate release: June 4, 2020

The Elora Singers Launch New CD – This Love Between Us

“The lamps may be different, but the light is the same. All religions, all this singing, one song.” (Rumi)

Elora, ON – The Elora Singers’ Artistic Director Mark Vuorinen is pleased to announce the launch of the choir’s new recording, entitled *This Love Between Us*.

Reena Esmail’s *This Love Between Us* explores Eastern and Western musical soundscapes, even as it focusses our attention on a truth of many of the worlds’ religious traditions. Though it is not an easy path, there is still more that unites us than divides us.

Barbara Croall’s *Giishkaapkag (Where the Rock is Cut Through)* responds to a recurring tragedy befalling women and girls in Indigenous communities of this country, but also of those around the world. Her powerful elegiac text and music hears their missing voices in the rocks, believed to be the oldest beings of the earth, and is transmitted through the haunting traditional cedar flute, the *pipigwan*, the voices of the choir and percussion. This is an important piece for our time, and Mark Vuorinen and The Elora Singers are humbled to be part of it.

Excerpts from the recording will be presented **for one week starting at 8:00 pm on Thursday, June 4 on The Elora Singers’ YouTube channel**, where there are also interviews with Mark Vuorinen and the two featured composers. It is also available on [Spotify](#) and [iTunes](#) and **may be purchased through The Elora Singers’ website** starting on Friday, June 5. As we continue to observe social distancing in Ontario, all CDs will be shipped free of charge for the month of June.

This is Mark Vuorinen’s first recording with The Elora Singers and it was important for him to tell these stories at this time: “The release of this new album comes at a time none of us could have predicted when we encountered these works for the first time almost a year ago. One thing this global pandemic has illuminated is that we are all of this same earth. Borders are erased by disease, even as our instinct is often to build them stronger and higher to try and contain the virus.”

Jordan Scholl, a member of The Elora Singers and soloist on this recording, shared his thoughts about the timeliness of these important works: “With all that is going on in the world right now, I think this is the music that needs to be heard - not just because it is beautiful, but because it’s time. It’s time to be reminded that love isn’t the easy way out. Love isn’t comfortable. But love sparks change. And that change is only possible when we set aside what we feel and know and embrace a perspective different from our own. Not just acknowledging it, but truly seeing it (the best we can).”

This recording has been supported by a generous donation from The Estate of Rick Durst. The Elora Singers are also grateful to anonymous donors for supporting the commissioning of Barbara Croall’s new work.

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The Elora Singers, an all-professional Grammy- and Juno-nominated chamber choir, was founded in 1980 and is the ensemble-in-residence of the Elora Festival for three weeks each summer. Through regular concert series, recordings and touring, The Elora Singers has established a reputation as one of the finest chamber choirs in Canada. With twelve releases on the NAXOS label, The Elora Singers is known for its rich, warm sound and clarity of texture. The choir is renowned for its diverse styles, for its commitment to Canadian repertoire, and for its diverse collaborations with other Canadian and international artists. www.elorasingers.ca

Mark Vuorinen is Artistic Director of The Elora Singers and Festival and Waterloo Region's Grand Philharmonic Choir. He is also Associate Professor and Chair of Music at Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo. A recipient of many awards, Mark was the 2016 Laureate of the Ontario Arts Council's Leslie Bell Prize, and received a 2016 National Choral Award from Choral Canada for his research on Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. Mark holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Toronto and Master of Music degree from Yale University's School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music. Recent concert highlights include performances of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Arvo Pärt's *Passio* and *Credo*, Canadian premieres of Jonathon Dove's *There Was a Child*, Craig Hella Johnson's *Considering Matthew Shepard*, Anna Thorvaldsdottir's *Ad Genua* and Reena Esmail's *This Love Between Us*.

Mark's research interests include the study of contemporary choral literature from the Baltic States and, in particular, the music of Arvo Pärt. Mark was an invited lecturer at the Arvo Pärt Project's Sounding the Sacred conference in New York City in May 2017. He is published in *Circuit Musiques Contemporaines*, the *Research Memorandum Series* of Chorus America, and *Principles of Music Composing* of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre.

Indian-American composer Reena Esmail works between the worlds of Indian and Western classical music, and brings communities together through the creation of equitable musical spaces. Esmail's work has been commissioned by ensembles including the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Kronos Quartet, Richmond Symphony, Town Music Seattle, Albany Symphony, Chicago Sinfonietta, River Oaks Chamber Orchestra, San Francisco Girls' Chorus, The Elora Festival, Juilliard 415, and Yale Institute of Sacred Music. Upcoming seasons include new work for the Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Amherst College Choir and Orchestra, Santa Fe Pro Musica, and Conspirare.

Reena was Composer-in-Residence for Street Symphony (2016-18) and is currently an Artistic Director of Shastra, a non-profit organization that promotes cross-cultural music connecting music traditions of India and the West.

www.reenaesmail.com

Active internationally since 1995, **Odawa First Nation composer Barbara Croall** has had commissions and performances from leading orchestras, ensembles and soloists across Canada, the US, the UK, Europe, Latin America and Asia. Apart from performing and composing on the *pipigwan* and for voice in the traditional Anishinaabe way, Croall's classical training includes music degrees and diplomas from Centre Acanthes (France), the Musikhochschule in Munich (Germany), The Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto) and the University of Toronto. The child of a residential school survivor, Croall is also a direct descendant of hereditary chiefs who signed the major treaties in Ontario and who fought in major battles of the Indian Wars and War of 1812.

Recording credits of her music and performances include: CBC Radio One, CBC Radio Two, Bayerische Rundfunk-Bayern 3, Deutsche Radio Swiss (DRS-II), Radio France, Italian National Television, APTN (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, Canada), Kennedy Center Live Broadcast (Washington, DC). Awards include: the Glenn Gould Award in Composition (1989), scholarships at the Royal Conservatory of Music / Glenn Gould School (1992-96) and awards from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (1993-98). (www.barbaracroall.ca)