

ISSUE NO. 3

composer: rebecca bruton

FALL 2025

MUSE

CELEBRATING COMPOSERS ACROSS THE PRAIRIES



CMC PRAIRIE
canadian music centre
centre de musique canadienne

PERFORMANCE | EDUCATION | PROMOTION

REBECCA BRUTON
CARMEN BRADEN
NORMA BEECROFT
LIDIA KHANER

© Mike Tan

This recording features performances by some of my closest friends and colleagues, whose inspiration has been instrumental in the creation of these works. Over the past seventy-five years, the definition of chamber music has expanded to embrace a wide array of instrumental, vocal and electro-acoustic ensembles. The term “chamber music” is remarkably versatile and adaptive, staying at the forefront of artistic innovation while also honouring its rich history. The compositions presented here pay tribute to the great masters of the past, reflecting both reverence and contemporary creativity. The concept of chamber music as a shared social experience runs throughout these works, and *Game of Pairs* — the title of one of the pieces — serves as a fitting representation of all four compositions, embodying chamber music as a unique form of music drama.

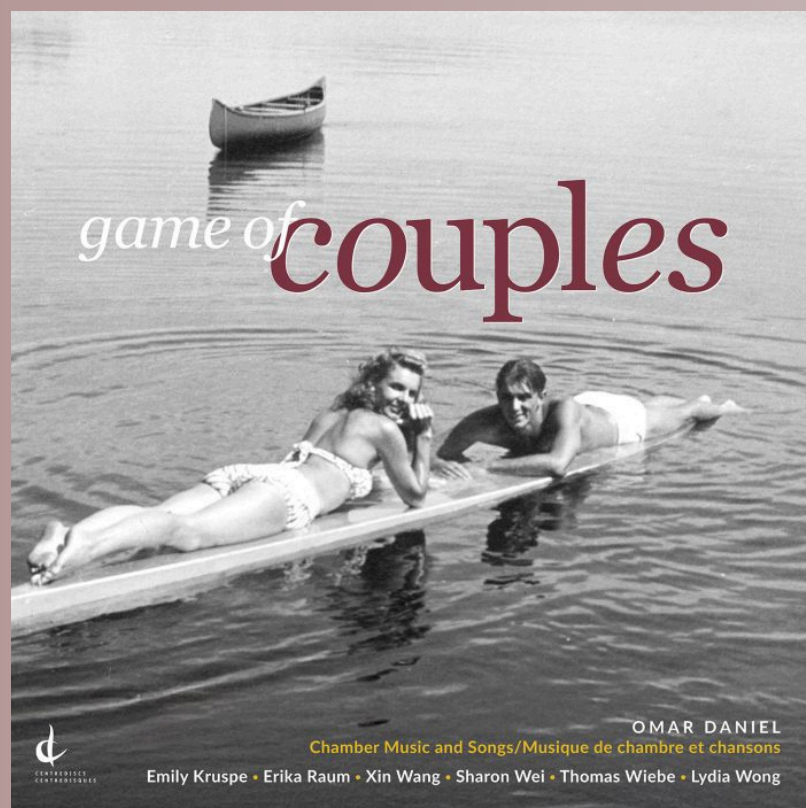
- Omar Daniel

OMAR DANIEL: CHAMBER MUSIC AND SONGS

GAME OF COUPLES



CENTREDISCS



Featuring: Emily Kruspe (violin), Erika Raum (violin), Lydia Wong (piano), Xin Wang (soprano), Sharon Wei (viola), Thomas Wiebe (cello)

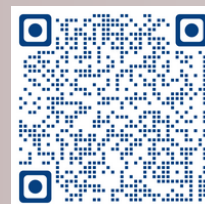
Gioco delle coppie (Game of Couples / Jeu de couples) (2014)

Metsa maasikad (Wild Strawberries/ Fraises des bois) (2009)

Üheksa eesti regilaulud (Nine Estonian Runo-Songs / Neuf chants runiques estoniens) (2008, rev 2021)

Nocturnes (2020–2021)

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Janna Sailor

DIRECTOR, CMC PRAIRIE REGION



Carlos Tinoco

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER
EDITOR OF MUSE

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dear Creative Community,

Welcome to our “back to school” and 3rd edition of MUSE! With each issue we aim to elevate, uplift, and highlight the extraordinary composers and creative work happening in our region and within CMC.

In this issue, we highlight the immense and long overdue task of digitally engraving the works of Violet Archer, (a project taken on by CMC Prairie’s very own Anton Lindenblatt in recognition of the 25th anniversary of her passing), shine a light on Yellowknife composer Carmen Braden (did you know that CMC Prairie extends into the Northwest Territories?), showcase the amazing work of the University of Calgary library archives team...and so much more! With this edition, we premiere a new feature, *Community Spotlight*, which offers members the opportunity to submit their research or highlight a topic/ensemble/work they are passionate about. Do you have an article you would like to submit for future editions of MUSE? Contact us to find out how!

Contact us at: prairie@cmccanada.org.

With best wishes for an inspired and music-filled fall!

Janna Sailor

MUSING

MUSIC
CONVERSATION
INSPIRATION

Hosted by
Janna Sailor



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JUNE FEATURES

Carmen Braden
Jesse Morrison
Indigenous Peoples Celebration

JULY FEATURES

Michalis Andronikou
Zuzana Šimurdová
The Ostara Project

AUGUST FEATURES

Erica Roozendaal
Piotr Grella-Możejko

**SCAN
ME!**



NEW **PRAIRIE** ASSOCIATE COMPOSER



Scan the QR to learn more about her work!

rebecca bruton

rebecca bruton is a composer, arranger, producer, vocalist, and trained violinist who now primarily plays the guitar. Her practice embraces many ways of working, often collaborative, and traverses many genres and cultural settings.

rebecca's chamber compositions are widely performed, having been commissioned by Ekmeles vocal ensemble (NYC), Quasar Quatuor de saxophones (Montréal), Arraymusic (Toronto), Ultraviolet Ensemble (Edmonton), and more. In 2024 she co-released 'a root or mirror; blossom, madder, cracks, together', an LP featuring two twenty-minute works (one by bruton, one by Toronto composer Jason Doell) for the combined mega-ensemble of Quatuor Bozzini (Montréal) and JunctQin keyboard collective (Toronto). She is also the bandleader of song-based experimental ensemble 'Swanherds'.

As a film composer **rebecca** has earned acclaim for her collaboratively produced live scores, featuring improvising ensembles alongside traditional orchestration. For Calgary's Kino Sum Productions she has composed, directed and produced four feature soundtracks (Lucky Star [2024], Orphaned [2021], Everybody Altogether Now [2022], and Circle of Steel [2018]), working with a different co-composer and live ensemble for each project.

rebecca is an avid collaborator, especially across disciplines. She is worked in various configurations with Halla Steinunn Stefansdóttir, Nicole Mion, Angela Rawlings, Heather Ware, Darren Williams, Alexandra Spence, and others. Since 2020 rebecca has served as the Artistic Director of New Works Calgary.

'...deliciously alien, limning elegantly proportioned lines and shapes... a solemn, melancholy reverie of unabashed beauty and deceptive simplicity.' – Peter Margasak for Bandcamp Weekly, on **rebecca bruton's** 'The Faerie Ribbon' (2024).

We are thrilled to welcome **rebecca** as our newest Associate Composer!

A black and white portrait of a woman, Norma Beecroft, with dark hair pulled back, looking slightly to the left. She is wearing large, dark, teardrop-shaped earrings and a dark, high-collared garment. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on her face and hair.

LEGACY COMPOSER

NORMA BEECROFT

(1934 - 2024)



THE BEECROFT PROJECT

BY DAVID JONES

In the Spring of 2024, UCalgary Libraries and Cultural Resources Staff, David Jones, Laura Reid, and Lelland Reed launched the Archival Residency Project (ARP); a three-year initiative funded by the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning that places one student per year in a paid, year-long archival residency to explore and creatively respond to music collections in UCalgary's Archives and Special Collections. Each year focuses on a different archival fonds: electroacoustic composer Norma Beecroft, folklorist Edith Fowke, and Black Albertan musician Melvin Crump. The project aims to dismantle barriers to archival access, foster interdisciplinary research-creation, and develop best practices for archival pedagogy and student engagement. The team selected the above fonds for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the creators represent individuals and communities historically underrepresented in mainstream archival narrati-

ves and all three fall outside the dominant profile of white men in western classical music. Furthermore, these creators engaged with music in distinct and extraordinary ways. From Beecroft's work in technology and broadcasting, Fowke's intervention in national folklore, and Crump's significant legacy in Alberta as a jazz drummer and civil rights activist, each year offers a rich and distinct quarry for inquiry. Finally, the selections were intended to engage the campus community in re-contextualizing the legacies of these figures and highlight stories deserving deeper archival exploration and creative potential. For this reason, the residency was open to students of any discipline, with the unifying feature being the use of music-related archival sources in each iteration.



NORMA BEECROFT

(1934 - 2024)

Norma Beecroft had a varied career, working as a broadcaster (starting with CBC TV in the 1950s and regular work on CBC radio for decades), composer (studied with John Weinzweig, Aaron Copland, Lukas Foss, Goffredo Petrassi, Bruno Maderna; active in early electronic experiments at University of Toronto's Electronic Music Studio and Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center), and arts administrator (co-founding New Music Concert Series with Robert Aitken, Canadian League of Composers, Canadian Electroacoustic Community). Her book "Conversations With Post World War II Pioneers of Electronic Music" was published in 2015 and she was the recipient of several awards and honours, including an honorary doctorate from York University (2016) and two-time winner of the Canada Council for the Arts' Victor Martyn Lynch-Staunton prize for outstanding artistic achievement (1978, 1989).

The team started devising a project in the summer of 2023 to celebrate **Norma Beecroft's** upcoming 90th birthday, which was approaching in April of 2024. Over time, and after researching potential funding opportunities, this investigation developed into the residency project which itself broadened into a multi-year investigation featuring three different music-related archives. The timing worked out to launch the residency in the same year of **Beecroft's** birthday, and the chosen student would spend the year working with her materials. To celebrate **Beecroft's** birthday, the team held an exhibit and presentation at the Glenbow Western Research Centre reading room at the University of Calgary Archives and Special Collections. Artifacts from her life's work were put on display, including early magazine features from her time script assistant at the CBC, concert posters from her time programming and promoting New Music Concerts and other events, correspondence with important composers, her annotated radio scripts, and many of her splendid pencil scores and sketches revealing her

unique methods of composition. At the end of the exhibit launch, the residency was announced and the promotion across campus begun.

Phase One saw our first successful applicant, graduate composition student Shea Iles, draw inspiration from **Beecroft's** correspondence, scores, and audio materials to compose a new work, a piece entitled *fonds*, which drew from his affective encounter with the archive. In the first months of the residency, the sad news of Beecroft's passing reached us. However, we were happy that we were in the process of creatively activating her archive and that our student found the materials inspiring for his own work. Shea's piece was grounded in the concept of fragmentation and reflected his experience navigating the archives through various access points including the finding aids, digital asset management system (DAMS), physical interaction and our own efforts at instruction and guidance. 9

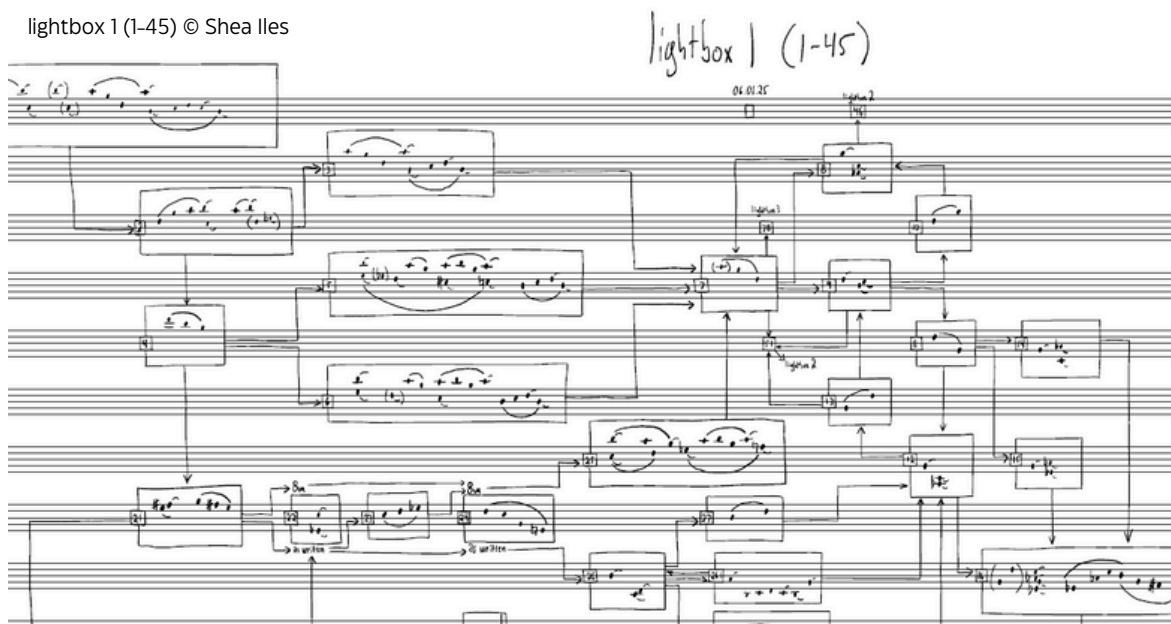


Pictured: David Jones speaking at the Glenbow Western Research Centre for **Norma Beecroft's** Birthday © Andy Nichols

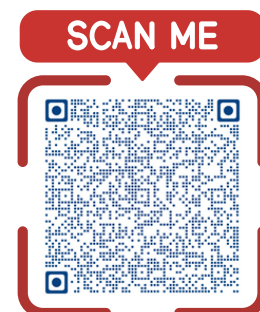
Confronted with the exciting but overwhelming dimensions of the archive (about 45 boxes of materials, huge finding aids and a complex DAMS), Shea often chose materials at random, letting the arrangement of the archive guide his exploration. He was drawn particularly to **Beecroft's** correspondence, where he found resonance in how snippets of her life, and the people, places events, issues and feelings revealed, could be encountered in short, intriguing fragments. Fonds referenced this process by scoring a variety of miniatures, to be performed by flute and violin, in no distinct order. Performers could agree on paths through the miniature modules beforehand or not, leading to unexpected results. Shea recorded many variations of the piece with performers Laura Reid on violin and Jiajia Li on flute. Shea also brought his work into an undergraduate class composition class, where he gave a lecture on miniatures and had students contribute their own miniature compositions.

The ARP initiative emphasizes an iterative, co-inquiry process, between the student, archivists, and librarians, encouraging creative and scholarly collaboration between the staff and student. This approach aims to unite theory and practice through experiential learning, ensure the student's perspective and expertise are valued, and avoid relegating the student to either a passive support role or an overwhelming leadership role. By maintaining open dialogue, exchanging feedback in both directions, and adapting processes based on the student's experience, the team hopes to create a personalized, immersive archive experience that informs both the student's creative output and the institution's archival practices. Over the three-year span, comparing the experiences of multiple residents will help refine archival pedagogy, improve access systems, and model inclusive, researcher-centered engagement.

lightbox 1 (1-45) © Shea Iles



See the full score [HERE](#)
© Shea Iles





Amuksism.

You really have to listen.

“Amuksism. You really have to listen.” is a thought-provoking documentary that examines the cultural appropriation and misuse of Indigenous song and ceremony and how to broach a move towards reparation and redress.

The film sheds light on the legal, cultural, and ethical ramifications of misappropriation.

Through interviews with Indigenous composers, musicians, artists, and scholars, and representatives from the Canadian Opera Company and Canadian Music Centre, this documentary calls for meaningful reparations, accountability, and a deeper respect for Indigenous sovereignty in the arts.

Scan the QR below to watch the film!



COMPOSERS IN CONVERSATION

Janna Sailor, CMC Prairie Region Director and host of the *MUSING* podcast, sat down with composer and performer **Carmen Braden** to discuss composing, creative evolution, parenting, and life in the far north!



Janna: How do you describe yourself and your creative output?

Carmen: I generally just call myself a musician. and it's really these streams of writing, collaboration, and work that gets in front of people's bodies on the stage, or in their ears through recordings. And then, compositions in the line of contemporary-classical, or just the classical tradition where it's works that are written down on a piece of paper, and then I can give them to somebody else and exist without me there...My songs can {exist independently of me} as well. But {these} are also more in the tradition of singer-songwriter works, where either I perform them or they're in a recording-captured medium, with bands, synthesizers, and drums. Sometimes those two areas blur in some of my work, but other times they're firmly entrenched in one or the other. At the same time, I would love it if somebody started to cover my singer-songwriter songs, but that definitely doesn't happen as often as, say, a string quartet playing my works without me there...

Insights as a Singer-Songwriter

Janna: Diving into your singer-songwriter career a bit more, what was the process with your latest album?

Carmen: So this one is a studio album. I think nine songs on it from myself and my producer/collaborator, Mark Adam, who's been with me through so much of my output over the last 10 to 15 years. We did this together and it is probably my strongest output of this kind of singer-songwriter work. The songs themselves, they've been crafted and inspired over different lengths of time. Some of them are very new, and others are older. Some of them could have grown out of my previous album called Seed Songs, and so some of them are arrangements or adaptations of older songs. It was years of work put into this one; over many geographies with different players adding to it. And for me, it is the deepest and strongest of my singer songwriter output. But I will also say, like most of my other work in this vein, it is not extremely unified, as in, it doesn't all sound like one genre. For example, it's not just a country album, folk roots album or a jazz-inspired album...So while fun in the creation and the listening, I think sometimes it difficult in terms of describing it or advertising it in an industry "nuts and bolts" type of approach.

Janna: We do like categories don't we?

Carmen: We do! Once in a while the categories are great, and in this case, it's own genre that you might attribute it to. When you're in the studio, it's quite exhilarating and there's very little boundaries. We've worked to tie these all together into a cohesive album, and I think we've done a really great job. I'm also excited to try something in the future, where I have the exact same instrumentation for every song, or I'm going in with a genre, essentially a history of music I'm drawing on and digging in for each song.

If I'm doing another album of this style, where it's a more traditional album of 8-12 tunes in this kind of singer-songwriter, pop-music length approach. This is what I'd do next.

Janna: You have mentioned that this was your strongest album. How do you gauge your strengths, and that this was a higher standard for yourself than your others?

Carmen: It's a great question, and not to knock any of my previous work, but maybe it has to do with this honeymoon phase, where you're in love with it for a while. until you do something new. If I look back at my first album I released in 2017, I was a very different person then, and so was my writing, which is not the same way it is now. It's like looking back at an old photo from 10-15 years ago, and seeing that haircut you would never wear now. Those kinds of reflections probably have an impact on it.

I can also feel the kind of patience that went into this, going over things, editing it and making it as strong as we could, and not just accepting it because of a deadline. Giving it that space to really grow. Its bark and its trees, and its leaves, and being strong in all those parts. I'll also accredit that to the things I've learned over the years of bringing people into the projects, who are better than me at different things, and telling me when it's not strong. Going back to my producer Mark, who's also a drummer, and has produced multiple albums, and worked with many different people in classical, jazz, pop, and rock genres. Being able to lean on his wisdom, after building the rapport we've had for so long.

I also have an album which is almost exclusively instrumental chamber music works. That was an interesting one because some of that music was really new, and not stage tested, or hadn't been edited past a premier, for example. Others were years and years old and it had multiple performances, so the players on that did a deadly job. But as a composer sitting in the room, being able to either want to change things that I maybe wouldn't have done when I wrote that piece, or make compositional changes to things because of an uncertainty of something in that moment. Those kinds of hesitations and decision making processes of recording that album, became a very different kind of stress, I say stress in a good way, a different challenge. but also I could always feel that devil on the shoulder, in the room of self-doubt as a composer who's always looking back at old works and thinking, what could I do differently now to make it better and should I? Or is it just a stamp in time and I just leave it alone? The existential composer question.

Audience Takeaways

Janna: So when folks listen to you and interact with your music, whether that be in a live performance, or at home in the intimacy of their space, what do you hope that they hear and take away from it?

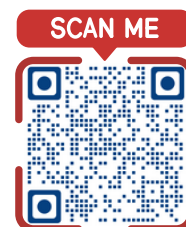
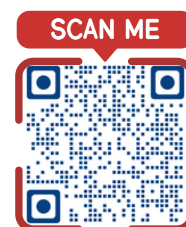
Carmen: With both my newest album A Hard Light, and my music overall, I hope they're hearing a curiosity and a confidence now, but also a real embrace of both the joy of all the beautiful things in life, and an embrace of the hardness, the sorrow, or the awkwardness of the life that sometimes happens in the same moment. I hope that realness, that connection to the every day is what they hear.

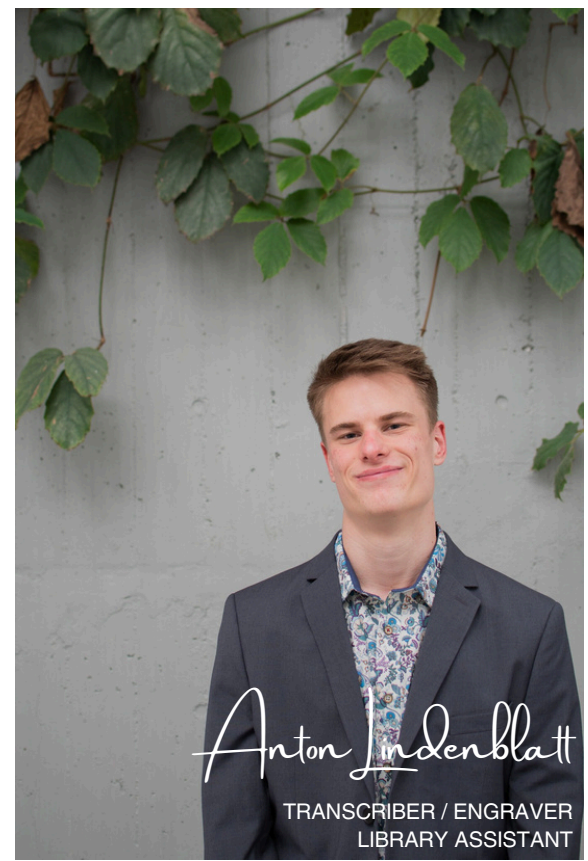
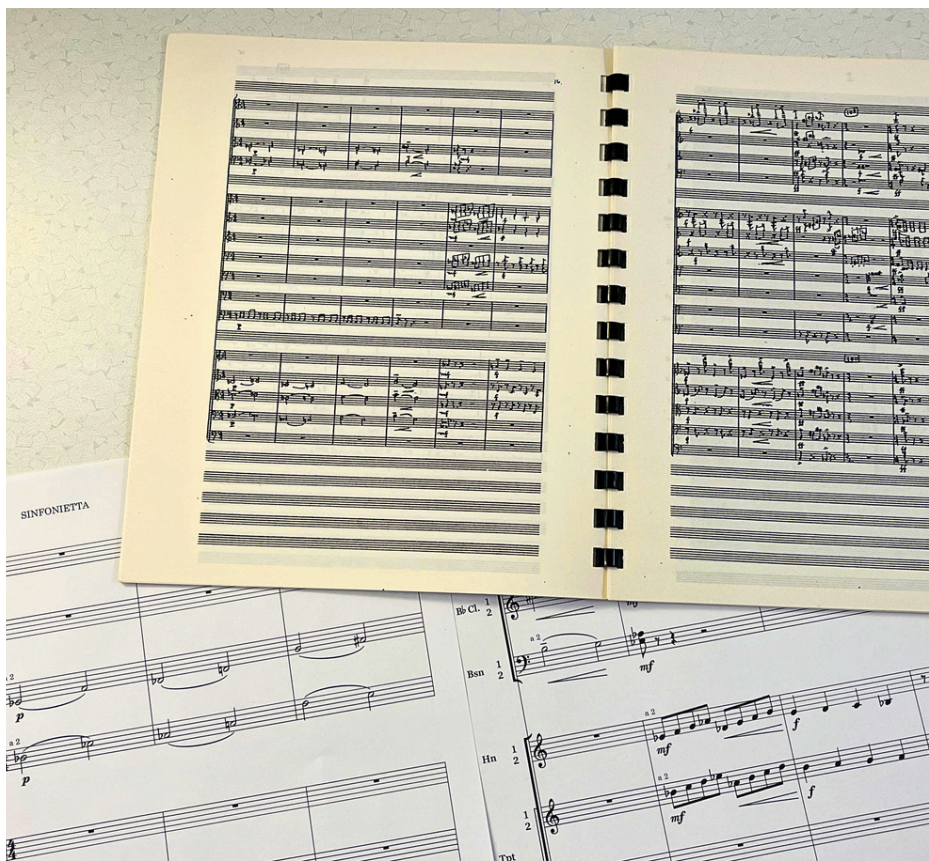
Janna: That sounds like beautiful vulnerability and authenticity to me.

Carmen: I wouldn't argue with that at all, but I would also couch it in the fact that we've put these feelings in real bangers, groovy tunes and sounds that are from old synthesizers or a big harmony moment. I'm also not a professionally-trained singer, although I've done a lot of choral singing. So I have this weird, kind of neutral sounding voice, that I would consider most of the time. And it's taken me a long time to stop trying when I sing, and just let it be there. If people are hearing this voice on the album, that is one of the main through sounds of it, this kind of thread that goes through it – both my voice and Mark's voice. Those have an authenticity for me, that I've worked hard to stop working so hard at getting. Get that moment of realness, being there, and being as clear as I can. That's what we were aiming for, in the midst of all this beauty, sound, grit, groove and sometimes unexpectedness.

Check out the full conversation with Carmen HERE ->

Learn more about Carmen and her work HERE ->





VIOLET ARCHER DIGITIZATION PROJECT

As part of an ongoing initiative to promote the works of **Violet Archer**, CMC Prairie library assistant Anton Lindenblatt has undertaken the monumental task of engraving and digitizing her handwritten scores.

*“Getting to work with **Archer’s** original manuscripts is such an exciting experience. To write out your scores by hand requires you to be deliberate and precise in your choices, and this intentionality really shines through in her work. Every dynamic, articulation, or chord has its place, and it’s been fun to discover how everything fits within the larger tapestry of the music.”*

Anton’s two current projects include **Archer’s** setting of *Green Rain* by Canadian poet Dorothy Livesay, for mezzo-soprano and piano, and *Sinfonietta* for chamber orchestra.

*“Musically, they’re very different works, so my approach to each has been different. *Green Rain* is a traditional art song, and requires me to pay attention to both text setting and vocal music engraving conventions. Meeting with previous performers of *Green Rain*, including emerging Canadian soprano Camryn Dewar, has been a tremendous help for knowledge regarding performance practice, and finding champions of **Archer’s** music to further her legacy.*

*With *Sinfonietta*, I’m working from a pocket-sized study score to generate both a full conductor’s score and a complete set of orchestral parts to perform from. There’s definitely a larger list of inconsistencies and errata to sort through, but notes and markings from previous conductors have been a huge asset to the process. It’s like creating a Urtext Edition, where you’re building on all this previous research and knowledge to construct a scholarly-informed version that will accurately reproduce Archer’s intentions.”*

Anton is currently wrapping up the second movement of *Sinfonietta* and hopes to finish the work by January 2026 in preparation for a performance by the Kensington Sinfonietta in May 2026. His next project will be Archer’s *Soliloquies* for solo B-flat and A clarinet.

You can follow Anton’s progress on our social media channels, under our *Transcription Thursday* series!



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COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Lidia Khaner: Promoter of Canadian Music

an article submitted by: [Piotr Grella-Możejko](#)

Despite her quiet, even subdued demeanour, Lidia Khaner possesses an energetic, rich, and fascinating personality. A graduate of the Academy of Music in Warsaw (now the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music) in oboe (1987, graduating with distinction), she initially performed with eminent Polish ensembles such as the Polish Chamber Orchestra and Sinfonia Varsovia. In 1990, she began a two-year additional study in Stuttgart and then, starting in 1992, she was invited to take the position of principal oboist of the Sinfonia Helvetica, a summer orchestra featuring “top musicians from Europe and beyond”—a testament to her exceptional talent. Again, on an invitation, this time from the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra (ESO), she settled in Canada in 1996 and a year later, after winning the orchestra’s competition, became their principal oboist. Lidia has recorded several albums, including one of Mozart’s chamber music, which features an excellent interpretation of the *Oboe Quartet in F major, KV 370*. Thanks to her

beautiful, subtle tone, exquisite phrasing, highly nuanced agogics, and profound interpretive wisdom, her playing on the modern oboe in eighteenth-century classicist works transcends conventions. While I generally prefer the sound of original period instruments or their replicas—an organic choice based on the acoustic properties of the instruments used at the time—Lidia’s exceptional technical skills and artistry make her performances captivating.

Two decades of work with the ESO did not entirely fulfil Lidia’s ambitions. An active musician always striving for more, she decided to look at music from the other side—that of conductor. Although our orchestras try their best programming contemporary Canadian works, the ESO being an admirable example, their hands are often tied by the overwhelming tradition of presenting the classics.

Even before leaving the ESO, Lidia founded the Chamber Orchestra of Edmonton (COE). In 2017, she earned her conducting degree from the University of Alberta. Then, in 2019, she left the ESO for good and devoted herself full-time to working with her new ensemble.

Edmonton is a rather strange musical place, where grand ambitions often do not match practicality. While there is a very good orchestra (ESO), and one can find here outstanding chamber ensembles (the first-rate WindRose Trio comes to mind instantly!), as there are non-profit artistic organizations such as, among others, the Alberta Baroque Ensemble, Early Music Alberta, and Mazurka Music and Art Society, which do their best, much is left to be desired due to their limited budgets.

Consequently, the founding of the chamber orchestra by Lidia Khaner was groundbreaking, as a significant, high-calibre programming alternative finally emerged. Ever wondered why symphony orchestras perform so few pieces scored just for strings? Bingo! Yes—the money! The money is always short, hence the tendency to maximize it by engaging all available core musicians. This problem—one of many—is solved very neatly by the Chamber Orchestra of Edmonton. Moreover, it opened the door to exploring the hidden (and not so hidden) gems of Canadian music.





24 - Erik Visser (www.erikvisser.com)

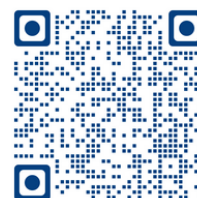
The ensemble's daily bread is, understandably, standard works written predominantly for strings (sometimes expanded by adding a few winds), with a special emphasis on late 18th-century, Romantic, and proven 20th-century works, as well as contemporary titles, including a significant number of Canadiana. In the case of the latter, Lidia demonstrates considerable ingenuity and a knack for selection. Even if the titles are uncompromisingly conservative, they are well-composed works that are genuinely listenable, most often by lesser-known composers, which benefits education and popularization. A difficult task, because everything costs a lot, while listeners and potential donors are supposed to prefer hearing canonical Western music. But hold on! I think exactly the opposite is the case, and the COE listeners—what a beautiful crowd!—do enjoy discovering rarely performed music made in Canada, no matter the period and style. I am convinced that the listeners do possess an innate sense of beauty and are able to recognize its presence even in the most “difficult” piece, if the latter is a product of talent.

Indeed, I am deeply impressed by this particular aspect of Lidia's programmatic activities, i.e. promoting our own composers. Here the conductor's imagination and energy are truly admirable. This is evidenced by numerous performances of various newly written (commissioned) and older pieces representing practically all creative orientations, most notably the very warmly (or rather, fervently?) received works by the likes of **Alissa Cheung**, **Jean Coulthard**, **Airat Ichmouratov**, **Sir Ernest MacMillan**, and others. All in all, over a dozen Canadian composers have already written works for the orchestra, including the abovementioned **Alissa Cheung**, as well as **David Dykstra**, Joseph Lai, Claude Lapalme, Geoff Li, John McPherson, Wayne Toews, to mention just a few. In early 2026, some of these pieces will be recorded and released by the COE on their first CD.

Another area of beneficial efforts is facilitating the debuts (or rare appearances with larger forces) of young, even very young (teenage) artists, both composers and performers. These events invariably demonstrate surprisingly high standards. The amount of talent we have here [Edmonton] is astounding. For example, several highly skilled Canadian soloists such as Maya Budzinski, Gabrielle Després, Margo Hornett, Emily Luo, Andrea Pedro, Sonya Shin and Jonah Hansen already deserve special attention—and they all appeared with the COE.

Lidia Khaner is an exceptionally talented conductor—already outstanding, yet modest, sympathetic, and kind. She decisively rejects artificial stardom and the contemptuous inaccessibility of today's “stars.” With each season, her orchestra's playing grows in polish, interpretative depth, and confidence. Hearing it in action leaves one wanting to hear it more and more, especially in Canadian repertoire, which is indisputably its forte.

To learn more about the Chamber Orchestra of Edmonton, scan here!



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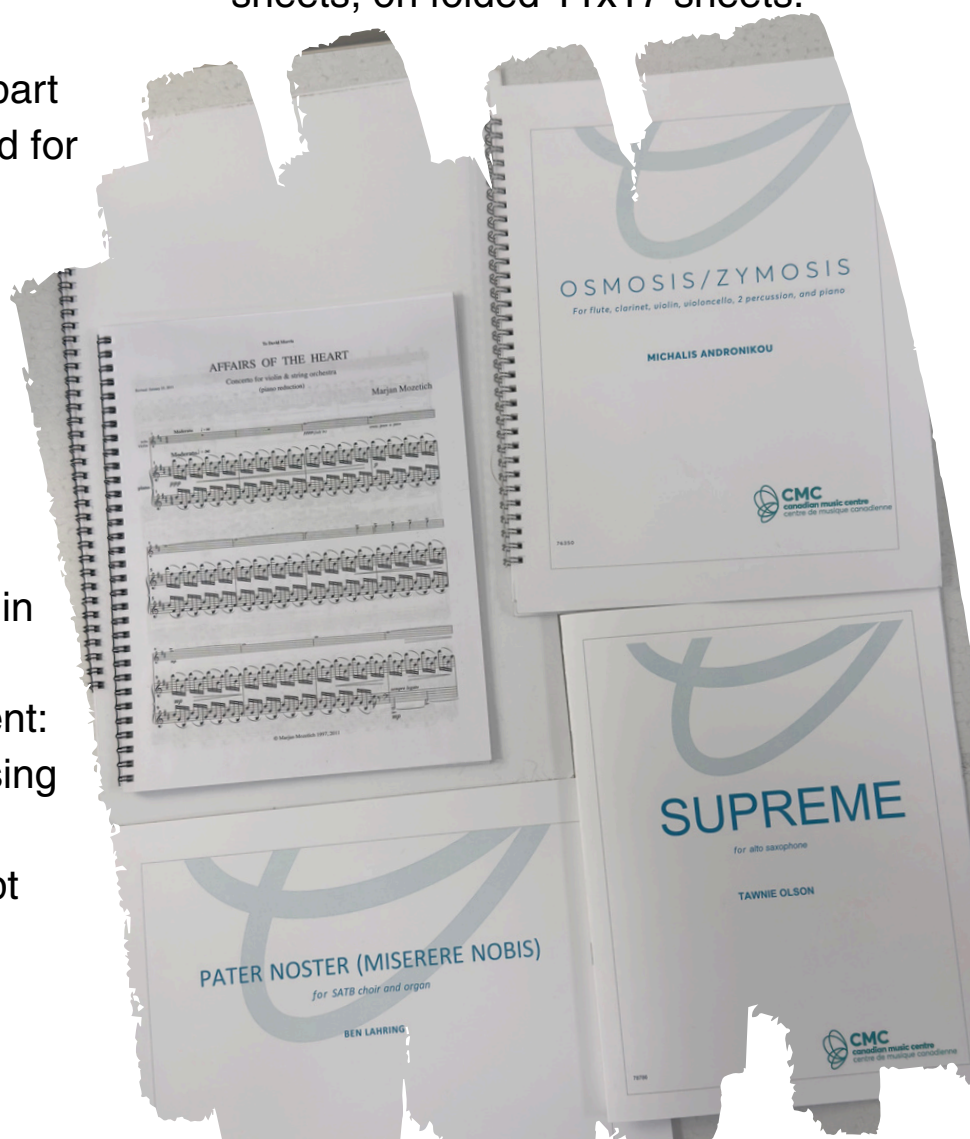
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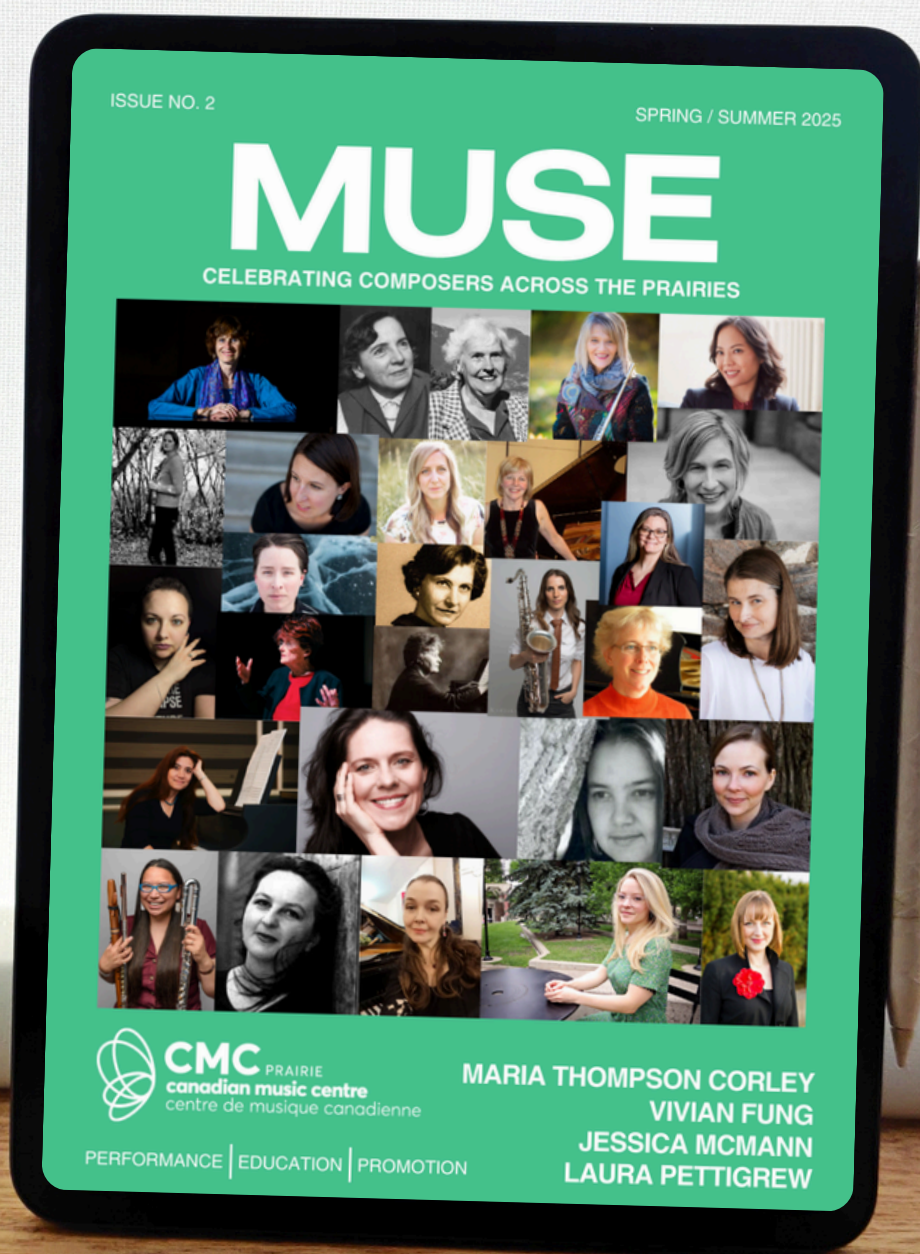
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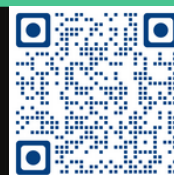
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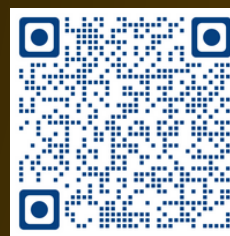
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“This collection of songs was born out of an opera I have in development. One of the characters is faced with the question of whether they have truly experienced love in their life. It points to the existential nature of love. However, every time I tried to address the question head on, it quickly became too big, too on-the-nose. Instead, I found myself circling around it, articulating the many kinds of love: romantic love, rejected love, intimate love, unrequited love, insecurity in love, parental love, brotherly or sisterly love, etc., as a way of approaching this central question.”

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