



Chorus
NIAGARA

REQUIEM

FOR WATER

CHORUS NIAGARA

PROGRAMME

KATHLEEN ALLAN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Water Connects Us

To one another, to the landscapes we inhabit, and to generations past and future. It shapes ecosystems, sustains communities, and carries cultural and spiritual meaning across time and place. In a moment when conversations about climate change, environmental stewardship, and water sovereignty are increasingly urgent, this programme invites us to listen more deeply: not only to music, but to the world around us.

Across centuries and musical traditions, composers have turned to water as a source of inspiration, a symbol of renewal, transformation, fragility, and power. The works presented tonight reflect this enduring relationship, offering soundscapes that evoke rivers, rain, oceans, and memory itself. Together, they form a meditation on humanity's relationship with the natural world: one that asks us to consider both beauty *and* responsibility.

Music provides a rare space to pause. Within the shared stillness of performance, we can reflect on complex and sometimes overwhelming realities. Around the globe, and here at home, communities are confronting the impacts of climate change, grappling with shifting environmental policies, and reimagining how we protect and share vital resources. Questions of water access and stewardship are inseparable from broader discussions of social justice, Indigenous sovereignty, and collective accountability. Artistic expression does not offer simple answers, but it can create space for empathy, awareness, and dialogue.

Here in the Niagara region, water protection is not an abstract idea; it is embedded in local policy and community action. Ontario's **Clean Water Act**, developed following the Walkerton tragedy of 2000, established a framework to safeguard drinking water at its source through collaboration among municipalities, conservation authorities, industry, agriculture, and the public. By identifying risks within watersheds and implementing science-based source protection plans, communities work together to prevent contamination before it reaches our taps - an approach grounded in shared responsibility and long-term sustainability.

This local commitment reflects a broader truth: protecting water requires collective participation. Whether through policy, stewardship, or everyday choices, the health of our waterways depends on collaboration across sectors and generations. Just as a choir is built from many individual voices coming together to create something larger than any single part, water protection relies on communities working in harmony toward a common goal.

As you listen tonight, we invite you to consider the many ways water shapes your own life. May this music encourage reflection, inspire conversation, and remind us that care for the natural world begins with attention: with listening closely, and with recognizing our role within the larger currents that sustain us all.

We acknowledge ...

that we are on the traditional and unceded territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Attawandaron peoples. This land has been a place of gathering, celebration, and exchange for countless generations of Indigenous communities. We pay our respects to their elders, past and present, and express gratitude for their stewardship of these lands and waters.

The Niagara region holds a rich history deeply interwoven with the Indigenous cultures that thrived here for millennia. For countless generations, singing has been an integral part of Indigenous traditions, serving as a means of storytelling, prayer, healing, and celebration. The melodies have carried the wisdom and knowledge of their ancestors, passing down their history and cultural heritage to the next generations.

Singing has been a vessel for connection, allowing Indigenous communities to maintain their sense of identity and unity with the land, and as we gather on this land, we humbly recognize the profound impact that singing has had and continues to have in maintaining the rich tapestry of Indigenous cultures.

In the spirit of reconciliation, let us commit to honoring and respecting the traditions, knowledge, and contributions of Indigenous peoples. May we learn from their deep understanding of the land and its interconnectedness, and may we strive to be better stewards of this territory that sustains us all.



REQUIEM FOR WATER

February 28, 2026
Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre

Kathleen Allan, Artistic Director and Conductor
Yuan Chen, Associate Conductor
Katie Mariz & Tianna Vanderhoeven, Robert Cooper Choral Scholars

Namratha, Vocalist | Benjamin Done, Tenor
Dhaivat Jani, Tabla | Jamie Drake, Percussion
Austin Hitchcock, Horn | Mark Russom, Cello

PROGRAMME

Reena Esmail

Malhaar: A Requiem for Water (2023)

- I. Holy Water
- II. Requiem Aeternam
- III. Skeptical Bell
Interlude: Sakhi Neer Bharan
- IV. Lacrimosa
Interlude: Sakhi Neer Bharan II
- V. Agnus Dei
- VI. Questions for God
- VII. The Dream of the Waterfall/In Paradisum

INTERMISSION

Cris Derksen

Mass for Nîpîy: A Prayer for Water (2023)

- I. Prayer for Nîpîy's Spirit
- II. Prayer for Poisoned Water
- III. Prayer for the Rivers (Prayer for the Disappearing Water)
- IV. Prayer for Oceans (Prayer for Home)
- V. Interlude
- VI. Prayer for Mist
- VII. Never Dry

Stephen Hatfield

One Drop (2001)

Featuring students from Niagara region high schools

A MESSAGE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, KATHLEEN ALLAN

Water defines this place. The Niagara River, the Falls, Lake Ontario, and the unseen systems beneath our feet shape our daily life here. Yet water is not guaranteed. It can be damaged, diverted, poisoned, and withheld, and those realities are not evenly shared. *Requiem for Water* emerges from that tension, between beauty and loss, abundance and responsibility.

I was drawn to this music because it speaks to the power of water, the awe humanity holds for it, and our failure to properly protect it for generations to come. Each of the composers featured on this program brings a unique perspective on water protection and asks us to listen more carefully to water itself: Reena Esmail, an Indian-American composer, reconnects with the music of her family heritage in Northern India to pray for rain in her home of Los Angeles, California. Cris Derksen is a cellist and composer who comes from a lineage of chiefs from the North Tall Cree Reserve on her father's side and strong Mennonite homesteaders on her mother's. She highlights the Indigenous stewards of this resource for millenia, and does not mince words in her demands for change.

Reena Esmail's *Malhaar: A Requiem for Water* opens the concert by reimagining the Western requiem through the lens of Hindustani classical music. As Esmail writes, "In Hindustani music, *Malhaar* refers to a family of raags that beckon rain. As the legend goes, the greatest musicians could cause a downpour from even the most severely parched skies by the power of their song." This legend became the emotional seed for the work as drought intensified in Southern California, and Esmail "yearned for a way to process the rising panic."

The piece weaves together the Latin Requiem Mass, Hindi text, and contemporary poetry by Wendell Berry and William O'Daly, tracing, in Esmail's words, "a trajectory of beauty and awe of water, the fear and devastation around its loss, an answered plea of atonement, and eventually a promise of a new cycle of life, as the water returns to the skies." She describes the work as "a hopeful requiem," suggesting that "if we change our relationship to the earth, we might beckon the rain back." In a striking postscript, Esmail notes that the week the work was rehearsed and premiered in Los Angeles, the city received record rainfall.

After intermission, Cris Derksen's *Mass for Nîpîy: A Prayer for Water* brings us a similar message with a different tone. *Nîpîy* is the Cree word for water, and Derksen addresses the human history around water and its relationship to policy and power. The work speaks directly about poisoned water and the structures that have allowed that poisoning to persist. In the spoken text, Derksen names the distance many of us feel from the issue, "that's over there and we are over here," while insisting that this separation is the result of deliberate decisions. She traces poisoned water back through Canadian treaty history, resource extraction, and land dispossession, reminding us that "these treaties were always about resources and always about water," and that many communities have been "relegated to land, and relegated to the water that's on the land."

These words land with particular force in Canada, and in a region whose prosperity has long depended on controlling water. *Mass for Nipiy* centers Indigenous water sovereignty and insists that environmental harm cannot be separated from colonial history or ongoing inequity. It's not just a "prayer for water," but it's a wakeup call and a call to action.

Stephen Hatfield's *One Drop* closes the program with urgency and insistence. Written more than two decades ago, it feels unsettlingly current. Through repetition, spoken fragments, and driving rhythm, the piece confronts pollution, political inertia, and the human cost of environmental neglect, returning again and again to a simple reality. No one lives without water. The repeating phase in the sopranos holds a hidden message: "dot dot dot, dash dash dash, dot dot dot. . ." or "SOS" in Morse code.

Together, these works form a journey from pleading, truth telling, to reminding us of our collective power to make change and the joy and optimism there is to find in that. They invite us to grieve what has been damaged, to acknowledge whose voices and stewardship have been ignored, and to consider what collective action looks like going forward.

In a place defined by water's power and presence, my hope is that this concert offers a chance to reflect, a shared space to listen more deeply to what sustains us, and to what water, quietly and persistently, asks of us in return.

Kathleen Allan



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A MESSAGE FROM CN'S BOARD CHAIR

On behalf of the Board of Directors, welcome to this important, meaningful and unique concert titled **Requiem for Water**. This is the third of our four performances in our 62nd season and we are delighted you are here tonight.

Arts organizations, like Chorus Niagara and its Children's Choir, operate with a combination of revenue sources – ticket sales, fundraising, grants, donations and sponsorships. We hope you will join us at Seaway Mall on March 14th between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm for our annual Singathon! Between now and then, please sponsor a chorister, scan the QR code below, or donate to us directly through our website chorusniagara.org. Click the "Donate" button!

Making choral music shine takes creativity, talent and dedication to the craft. My sincere thanks to our artists, staff and many volunteers. And my thanks to you for your support of this fine organization.

Jeff Baker, Chair of the Board

CN Artistic Team

Kathleen Allan, Artistic Director
Robert Cooper, C.M., Conductor Emeritus
Yuan Chen, Associate Conductor
Vlad Soloviev, Collaborative Pianist

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TEXT & TRANSLATIONS

Malhaar

A Requiem for Water

I. Holy Water

Sakal jal hai pavan
is amrut ko naman.

(All water is holy water.

Bow in reverence to this divine elixir)

The cloud is free only
to go with the wind.

The rain is free
only in falling.

The water is free only
in its gathering together,
in its downward courses,
in its rising into air.

– Wendell Berry
(from “The Law That Marries All
Things”)

Kyrie eleison.
(God have mercy.)

II. Requiem Aeternam

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine:
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

*(Grant them eternal peace, Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.)*

III. Skeptical Bell

Skeptical bell, fierce certainty of dust,
the snow-covered mountain
no longer hears its own ringing.

It knows no fear.

In its language
will does not exist.

Its rivers carry
the bast in snow
that no longer falls.

– William O’Daly
(“The Dream of Mount Liberty”)

Interlude I

Sakhi Neer bharan kaise jaaoo?

Sookhi Nadiya ki pyaas kaise bujhaaoo?

(O Friend, how will I go to fill water?

*How will I extinguish this thirst from a dry
stream?)*

IV. Lacrimosa / This ever-descending water

Is this ever-descending water
human tears? Do they mean nothing?

Will the stone heads that weep
in the late afternoon fade away?

Without you, how will we weep
when we need to?

How will the earth smell
after the last drops of rain?

– William O’Daly
(“In Franconia Gorge”)

Lacrimosa dies illa,
Qua resurget ex favilla.

ludicandus homo reus:

Huic ergo parce, Deus.

Dona eis Requiem.

*(Full of tears shall be that day
when from the ashes shall arise*

the guilt man to be judged:

Spare them by your mercy, Lord.

May they rest in peace.)

Interlude II (reprise)

Sakhi Neer bharan kaise jaaoo?

Sookhi Nadiya ki pyaas kaise bujhaaoo?

(O Friend, how will I go to fill water?

*How will I extinguish this thirst from a dry
stream?)*

V. Agnus Dei / He Kartar

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona eis requiem sempiternam.
*(Lamb of god, who takes away the sins of
the world, grant them eternal peace.)*

He kartar karunaghan
Sakal bihgan kar vinash
De shanti, de prakash
*(O God, full of mercy
Please take away all our sorrow
Give us peace, give us light)*

VI. Questions for God

Have I arrived?
Why am I here?

When will I leave
for the other shore?

Who will I be there
where I once was?

And what sea is this?
is it mine, is it yours?

If it is ours,
where are we?
– William O'Daly
("Questions for God")

VI. The Dream of the Waterfall / In Paradisum

The old stones stream in the arteries
of the gods, and every moment the river
changes, our bodies change, love changes
everything and we will never be the same.
(O'Daly)

In paradisum deducant te Angeli
Chorus Angelorum te suscipiant, et
cum Lazaro quondam paupere
aeternam habeas requiem.
*(May the angels lead you into paradise
May the choir of angels receive you
and with Lazarus, once poor,
May you have eternal rest.)*

The river empties into the burning field,
collides in light and shadow,
where in the caves of forgotten animals
the prehistoric dream is in motion.
It flows on in darkness. It does not stop.
– William O'Daly
("The Dream of the Waterfall")

The water is free only
in its gathering together,
in its downward courses,
in its rising into air.
– Wendell Berry (reprise)
*(from "The Law That Marries All
Things")*

Mass for Nîpîy: A Prayer for Water

I. Prayer for Nîpîy's Spirit

When you respect water,
that water will respect you.

Nîpîy, our grandmother
Nîpîy, our life-giver
Water is life
No nîpîy, no life.

II. Prayer for Poisoned Water

Contamination is hidden in
our land, our veins, our blood
Nîpîy.

We hack the ground
til it bubbles up
to the surface
and hurts us again
our land, our veins, our blood
Nîpîy.

Contamination hidden inside our land
active engagement
ignorance is bliss

Paradox
addiction
a cycle
society suckles from diesel
our land, our veins, our blood
Nîpîy.

III. Prayer for the Rivers (Prayer for the Disappearing Water)

There is a stone buried in a river
it says
if you read this, then weep.

Hunger stone, famine, severe drought, drying up
the Rhine, the Danube, Mississippi, Rio Grande,
Yangzhe, Lake Mead, Colorado, the Po

Mighty, thirsty, disappearing
Rivers
Mighty, thirsty, vanishing
Nîpîy

Indus, Teetsa, Arkansas, the Loire,
The Greats shrinking
Oh, how the mighty fall.

IV. Prayer for Oceans (Prayer for Home)

We mourn what is to come.
We mourn what we have done.
We know not what we have done.
We mourn what is to come.

Nîpîy feeds us,
Nîpîy holds us,
Nîpîy is our home.
We are so grateful for her
Nîpîy brings us home.

Oceans deep, worlds wide,
Nîpîy is our home.

Her waves lapping on the sand
welcoming us home.
Her life ever-giving
Giving life home.

VI. Prayer for Mist

Rainbows
sparkling, twinkling
cleansing, clearing, cleaning.

Smudge, sage
purifying
cleansing, clearing, cleaning.

Water remembers.

VII. Never Dry

We thought the rivers would never dry
We thought the rain would always come
We thought the rivers were strong and wide
We thought her tears would always come.

We thought the wheels would always turn
and water could always breathe
We thought we were invincible
We thought her rain would always come.

Hear me now, raise your glass
Don't forget about our past
Don't treat her right and she will go.

Like the waves on the sand,
It's our own hourglass.
Don't treat her right and she will go.

When you respect our nîpîy
she will respect you back.
When you don't respect water,
that's when she will take you.

Water is life, all of our lives.
No nîpîy, no life.

One Drop

Dot dot dot, dash dash dash, dot dot dot...

Millions, no one,
We're serving millions...

Step up to the tap.
Make your demands.
You got hot 'n' cold silver running over your hands.

A genie in a bottle,
honey in the skies.
Just because it falls doesn't mean it's gonna rise.

The desert trickles in;
The lake goes dry.
The animals choke and the people fry.

The factory has come;
Work for everyone;
The river is gone.
The birds don't drink and the fish don't spawn.

A million people live without love
But no one lives without the water.

When they need your vote
Then they're happy to shout
"It's for the kids, kids, kids, yeah that's what it's all about
'Cause they're the only future that there's ever gonna be,
That's why we're dedicated to the family."

Well you can talk about kids.
You can boast and boast.
But everybody knows that it's money talks the most.

You can talk about kids,
but may we suggest
That the country means bizness and the bizness knows best.

It's money that you need to clean the seas,
An awful lotta money to replace the trees.
Money to build a solar battery car,
Just how stupid do you think we are?

Whatchu got? Cold cash in your hand.
You got hot 'n' cold silver running over your hands.

A million people live without love
But no one lives without the water.

But the environment's fine, says commander in chief.
Well bless my soul, isn't that a relief?

Just you watch me, I can live without truth, I can live without trust.
Stick me in a camp: I'll eat the garbage, I'll eat the garbage, and sleep in the dust.
But not the water.
I can't live without the water.

The desert trickles in;
The lake goes dry.
We'll meet at the levee and we'll wave goodbye.

The factory has come; Work for everyone; the river is gone.

Aquarius was here, but it didn't last long.

A million people live without love
But no one lives without the water.



KATHLEEN ALLAN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Kathleen Allan is the Artistic Director of Chorus Niagara, Artistic Director of the Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto, and a member of the music faculty at the University of Toronto. In high demand as a guest conductor, commissioned composer, and clinician, she is equally comfortable working in early, contemporary, and symphonic repertoire.

Since the beginning of her tenure with the Amadeus Choir in 2019, the Choir has commissioned over a dozen new works, founded the Choral Creation Lab for emerging composers and poets, and formed new partnerships with diverse artists and ensembles throughout the GTA and beyond. From 2016-2023, she served as the Artistic Director of Canzona, Winnipeg's professional Baroque choir, with whom she conducted many of the masterworks of the Baroque era. A devoted interpreter of early music and steeped in the practice of historically-informed performance, she is passionate about finding relevant contemporary context for the works of the past and sharing their universal power with broad audiences. Recent guest conducting engagements include the Luminato Festival, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Victoria Symphony, Regina Symphony Orchestra, Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, and Early Music Vancouver. In 2015, Ms. Allan made her Asian debut conducting Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in Japan, and in 2016, she was the recipient of the Sir Ernest MacMillan Prize in Choral Conducting.

Her compositions have been commissioned, performed and recorded by ensembles throughout the Americas and Europe and have been featured at two World Symposiums on Choral Music. Her music is published by Boosey and Hawkes, Oxford University Press, and Cypress Choral Music, and she is a MusicSpoke composer. Inspired by her Celtic roots and musical upbringing in Newfoundland and Labrador, her compositions often fuse contemporary rhythms and harmonies with undertones of ancient folk music. Also an accomplished soprano, she has appeared as a soloist with the National Broadcast Orchestra, Berkshire Choral Festival, and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. In addition to freelancing regularly in Canada and the US, she has performed as a member of the Vancouver Chamber Choir, the Arnold Schoenberg Chor (Vienna), Skylark Vocal Ensemble (Atlanta), Clarion Choir (New York), and the Yale Schola Cantorum (New Haven).

As a passionate educator, she served as Visiting Professor of Conducting at Western University from 2019 to 2021, and now teaches conducting to undergraduate and graduate students and directs the Chamber Choir at the University of Toronto. She holds a degree in composition from the University of British Columbia and a master's degree in conducting from Yale University.



YUAN CHEN, ASSOCIATE CONDUCTOR

Yuan (Alba) Chen holds a Bachelor of Music Education from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and a Master's degree in Choral Conducting from Memorial University. She is currently in the Doctor of Musical Arts program in Choral Conducting at the University of Toronto.

As a former Assistant Conductor of Orchestra Toronto, Yuan earned wide recognition and praise for her musicianship and leadership. She previously served as Music Director at Nomad Stages in Stephenville, Newfoundland, where she led her choir to win the Best Choir Award at the Stephenville Rotary Music Festival. During her tenure, she took on the role of Music Director for eleven musical theatre productions. Yuan continued to

broaden her artistic work as Music Director for the 46th Stephenville Theatre Festival, a role that highlighted her collaborative spirit and clear artistic vision. She also serves as a guest conductor for the Atlantic Boy Choir.

In addition to her choral accomplishments, Yuan brings a diverse artistic background, having worked for five years as an improvisational theatre actress, film producer, and director, enriching her approach to storytelling and performance.



VLAD SOLOVIEV, COLLABORATIVE PIANIST

Vlad Soloviev is a Hamilton-based pianist, conductor and operatic vocal coach.

As an operatic repetiteur, Vlad has worked at the Canadian Opera Company, Wolftrap Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Opera Arizona, Opera Sarasota, Highlands Opera Studio and University of Toronto Opera School and more. As a conductor, Vlad has worked at Wolftrap Opera, Opera Arizona, Berlin Opera Academy, Mississauga Symphony Orchestra and Mississauga Festival Choir. As a concert pianist, Vlad has played at institutions like Carnegie Hall (New York), Salle Cortot (Paris), Bohemian National Hall (New York) and more. As a collaborative pianist, Vlad has performed at institutions like Koerner

Hall (Toronto), National Arts Center (Ottawa), Richard Bradshaw Amphitheater, the Kaufman Center (NYC), Toronto Summer Music Festival and more. Vlad has worked at institutions like the Eastman School of Music, Mannes College of Music, University of Toronto and the Glenn Gould School, performing over 200 recitals over the past ten years. As a vocal coach, Vlad helped singers prepare for successful auditions at institutions like the Paris Opera, Deutsche Oper, Metropolitan Opera, Merola, Santa Fe, Canadian Opera Company, Vancouver Opera, Opera de Montreal, and more.

GUEST ARTISTS



NAMRATHA, VOCALIST

Namratha (she/they) is a genre-bending vocalist, singer-songwriter, beatboxer, and multi-instrumentalist with over a decade of professional experience. Born and raised in Chennai, India, she was immersed in Carnatic music from a young age and later trained in Hindustani and Western music at A. R. Rahman's KM Music Conservatory. Namratha's musical journey has included performances across India and Malaysia, collaborating with renowned South Indian artists such as Maestro Ilaiyaraaja. After moving to Canada in 2021, Namratha focused on blending the diverse traditions she has studied, leading her to further her training in Jazz Vocals at Humber Polytechnic. Based in the GTA, she has worked with ensembles such as the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and Myriad Ensemble and performs & records with several jazz-Indian fusion projects. She currently works as an early

childhood educator and music teacher, continuing to explore new sounds & hoping to inspire new voices.



DHAIVAT JANI, TABLA

Dhaivat Jani is a Toronto-based, award-winning drummer, tabla player, and composer from Ahmedabad, India. He began his musical journey at age five, focusing on Indian classical music, and earned his tabla Visharad at 16 with three gold medals. A Humber College graduate with a Bachelor of Music, Dhaivat has called Toronto home since 2018.

In 2023, he released his debut album *Sum // Parts* with his contemporary jazz ensemble, Dhaivat Jani PLUS, earning praise from All About Jazz, Paris Move, and Jazz.FM91. Alongside leading his ensemble, he performs widely on drums and tabla across genres. Recent collaborators include Pat LaBarbera, Hamid Motebasseem, Kiran Ahluwalia, Roberto Occhipinti, Rez Abbasi, Mike Downes, and Adam Rudolph.

Dhaivat's multimedia work includes *Transmigrations* with software artist Ryan Kelln, and *Offerings at Ishpadinaa* with Nova Dance. His honors include the Nuit Blanche and Aga Khan Museum Fellowships, the CCRT Scholarship, and awards from Yamaha Music Canada and Jazz.FM91.

Dhaivat's vision is to push creative boundaries through music.



BENJAMIN DONE, TENOR

Benjamin Done, tenor, completed his Master of Music degree in Opera at the University of Toronto. Originally from Georgetown, Ontario, Ben completed his Bachelor of Arts (honours) in Music, majoring in Piano, and his Bachelor of Education at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario. In addition to singing with the Canadian Opera Company Chorus and Tafelmusik Baroque Chamber Choir, his operatic credits include Mr. Splinters (*The Tender Land*), Babylas (*Monsieur Choufleuri*), Ein Weiser (*Hin und Zurück*), Hamlet in the student-composer-collective premiere of *Disobedience*, Charles Darnay (*A Tale of Two Cities*), John Adams (*The Mother of Us All*), "Casey" Baldwin (*The Bells of Baddeck*), Marco Palmieri (*The Gondoliers*), and Colonel Fairfax (*Yeoman of The Guard*). On the concert stage Benjamin has been featured as tenor soloist with various ensembles including the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra and Tafelmusik in Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and *Magnificat*, Mozart's *Solemn Vespers*, and Haydn's *Paukenmesse*. Other upcoming appearances as tenor soloist in the 2025/26 season include *Messiah*, *Christmas Oratorio*, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, Schubert's *Mass in G*, and *Carmina Burana*.



JAMIE DRAKE, PERCUSSION

Jamie Drake is a percussionist, drummer, composer and educator, whose musical interests span from environmental chamber music to Motown. A member of TorQ Percussion Quartet, he has performed across North America and as a featured soloist with ensembles including the Toronto Symphony, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, and the Buffalo Philharmonic. Jamie is a frequent collaborator with choirs, and is the percussionist for both the Toronto Children's Chorus and the Hamilton Children's Choir. He also performs regularly with orchestras, chamber groups, pop and jazz singers, and for musical theatre (most recently *The Sound of Music* and *Kimberly Akimbo* for Mirvish). Jamie's compositions and arrangements have been performed by Musical Stage Company, TorQ Percussion Quartet, the Hamilton Children's Choir, Talk is Free Theatre, and others. He received his Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of Toronto, and has served as Adjunct Assistant Professor at Queen's University, as well as an Artist-in-Residence at Western University.



AUSTIN HITCHCOCK, HORN

Austin Hitchcock is a Canadian classical musician known for bringing energy, precision, and artistry to every performance. He serves as Principal Horn of the Niagara Symphony and has held principal positions with orchestras across Canada and abroad, performing with leading ensembles including the NAC, TSO, OSM, and COC.

Beyond the concert hall, Austin has toured and recorded with the Canadian Brass, and as a core member of Euphonia, he brought inventive Indie Classical projects to Toronto's Queen Street West, blending tradition with contemporary creativity.

Through his career, Austin champions music as a shared, transformative experience, connecting with audiences through both technical mastery and genuine warmth. His curiosity, commitment, and respect for the communities he performs with shine in every performance, making each concert not just an experience, but a vibrant dialogue between artist and listener.



MARK RUSSOM, CELLO

Growing up in Ancaster, Mark Russom had a poster of Garfield on his bedroom door, in which the cherubic cat, bedecked as a one-man band, proclaims “music is my life.” Although not quite a one-man band, the similarity is evident today. Mark’s musical studies have included the organ, cello, piano, and clarinet. Since the late 80’s, Mark has also been putting his vocal cords to great use as both a tenor and a baritone. Mark has been performing with the Niagara Symphony since 1988, and has been an active member of the organization behind the scenes as well. In 2005, Mark’s dedication and volunteer efforts were recognized with the inaugural Jack Silverstein Memorial Volunteer Award. Beyond his role with the Symphony, Mark is also a founding member of the Serenata String Quartet, and enjoys an active freelance career, performing both as a vocalist and

instrumentalist. Away from his music, Mark is an avid curler, cyclist, and golfer, on those rare occasions when spare time avails itself.

ROBERT COOPER CHORAL SCHOLARS



KATIE MARIZ

Katie Mariz is an emerging soprano vocalist based out of Hamilton, Ontario. She graduated from Queen’s University with an MA in Arts Leadership and a BA (Hons.) in Art History and Film and Media. During her time in Kingston, Katie was a chorister and Youth Mentor with the Cantabile Choirs of Kingston. She has also performed in a number of musical theatre productions in the Kingston area, including *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The Addams Family*. As an arts administrator, Katie has worked with Tapestry Opera, Kingston WritersFest and Blue Canoe Theatrical Productions. She also just spent the last year teaching English in Spain. Katie is thrilled to be continuing her vocal and choral journey as a Robert Cooper Choral Scholar with Chorus Niagara!



TIANNA VANDERHOEVEN

Soprano Tianna Vanderhoeven is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Performance at Brock University, and is preparing her first solo recital, under Dr. Leanne Vida. She recently performed in several “Arias Concerts” at Bach-Millennium Music’s Summer Opera Program, performing with orchestra under Alexander Katsman, and studying with Milena Bach and Jane Randolph. Tianna first began her studies with Vicky Vlassis-Radulovich, making her professional debut as the soprano soloist in the Combined Voices in Praise concerts. More recently, Tianna has performed as a guest performer with the Niagara Voice of Praise Choir, and has been a featured performer in the RBC Music at Noon series multiple times. She also enjoys performing in various festivals and competitions, where she

has won several awards. In addition to performing, Tianna also enjoys teaching voice and piano lessons to all her wonderful students.

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Our Choral Family

Chorus Niagara

Chorus Niagara is an auditioned adult choir dedicated to performing a wide spectrum of choral music to a high standard of excellence and fostering an appreciation for the choral art in the Niagara Region.

Robert Cooper Choral Scholars

The Robert Cooper Choral Scholars program supports and encourages aspiring post-secondary voice students. Scholars perform with Chorus Niagara for an entire season, work with one of Canada's top choral conductors, further their solo experience and receive a stipend. Scholars must apply and will be invited to audition.

Associate Conductor

Chorus Niagara offers young conductors the opportunity to work with an auditioned SATB choir under the tutelage of one of Canada's foremost choral conductors. They will gain hands-on conducting experience both in rehearsals and performances.

Side-by-Side High School Chorale

Each season Chorus Niagara invites motivated young adult singers from Niagara Region high schools to rehearse and perform alongside Chorus Niagara in one regular season concert. Participants take part in weekly rehearsals with Chorus Niagara and perform in the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre.

Conductor Emeritus

We are honoured to share that Robert Cooper, our longtime Artistic Director, has been appointed Conductor Emeritus. In this new role, he will continue to lend his insight and support to Chorus Niagara, ensuring a meaningful continuity of leadership and artistry within the organization.

Chorus Niagara Children's Choir

Chorus Niagara Children's Choir encourages children in the Niagara Region to develop their musical knowledge, build relationships, and share their love of music with others.

For more information about any of these programs, please contact Elise Naccarato, Managing Director at chorusniagara100@gmail.com or by calling 905.932.6642

Voices of Chorus Niagara



Soprano

Gemma Bishop
Nancy Boese
Teresa Cole
Thomasin Cooper**
Michelle Cumiskey
Renate Dau-Klaassen
Katalin Dekany
Emily Denney
Holly Dunning
Marlene Dykstra
Cindy Ellis
Kathleen Foster
Laura Lynn Harry
Fiona Loughheed
Katie Mariz*
Annie Schulz
Michaela Scrimger
Margo Taras
Jane Thomas Yager
Alison Thomson
Tianna Vanderhoeven*
Judy Willems

Alto

Rosemarie Arseneau
Allison Baker**
Deb Bergen
Joan Campbell
Ava Cattran
Kristin Chow
Jamie Church
Beth Cooper
Trish Crawford
Julia D'Amico
Suzie Findlay
Michelene Hauber
Miriam Hauber
Laura Huh
Susan Lewis
Ruth MacVicar
Gillian Mazzetti
Patricia McKenzie
Joan Medina
Claudia Meyer
Nancy Moffett
Annie Montgomery
Gabriella Paquette
Mi-Hyang Park
Laurie Reimer
Maija Saari
Karen Toppila
Julianna Vanderline
Virginia Vickers
Debbie Vreken
Ruth Wiebe
Ursula Witkowska
Katie Zartman

Tenor

Christopher Bee
Charlie Dufton
Bill Durksen**
Albert Heemskerck
Leandro Isidro
Daniel McColgan
Daryl Novak
Chris Sullivan+
Hugh Thomson
Daniel Titone

Bass

Lydell Andree-Wiebe**
Jeff Baker
Dean Bonsma
Warren Booth
Gordon Froese
Hugh Gayler
Chuck Greenham
Jonathon Hauber
Peter Hauber
Dick Holden
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*Robert Cooper Choral Scholar

**Section Lead

+ Guest Singer

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Please email Managing Director, Elise Naccarato, at chorusniagara100@gmail.com to notify us of any edits.

A person stands on a rock in a mountain landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the mountains and valleys. The sky is a mix of blue and orange. The person is seen from behind, looking out over the landscape.

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