NEWCOMBE NOTES

NOVEMBER 2026

MANY THANKS TO THESE AMAZING BOARD MEMBERS AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Music Director ..... Kathryn Whitney

Accompanist..... Robert Dukarm

President .....Peter Beliveau

Vice-president ..... Martin Goodwin

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Music Librarian .....Norma Jee

Membership .....Norma Jee

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Social Media..... Treava Kellington

Mailchimp Email Coordinator Myrna Fisher

Newsletter editor .....Marilyn Crump

Grant Committee .....Marilyn Crump, Pam Copley, Jude Morton

Graphic Design..... Beverly van Druten-Blais

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Score PDFs for the website, voice tracks, and video streaming.....John Sease

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME TO THE FALL '26 SEASON

I would like to welcome all the new members as well as returning members to the Newcombe Singers fall season of singing. The choir is slowly evolving under the direction of our welcoming and dynamic Music Director, Kathryn Whitney. We are fortunate to have Robert Dukarm as our versatile and talented accompanist.

Our numbers have reached a plateau of about 80 members over the last few seasons, creating a full balanced sound.

Members of the Board of Directors are responsible for bringing us all together as a choir.

You can check out the new board members in the list to the left of this column.

The Newcombe Singers bring 80 voices together to form a community of individuals with the common interest of choral music. These individuals not only bring their voices but also their knowledge, life experiences, and talents with them. These hidden qualities need to be also brought to light to help the Board harness them to give innovation and new ideas to our choir. I have been amazed at what "hidden talents" that choir members have but are only known to themselves. Please let me know at rehearsal or by email (peteribeliveau@gmail.com) of what you may be able to offer to share with your Newcombe community to improve our choir experiences for all!

The best way to "find yourself" in a community is to volunteer your service to the community and truly become part of that community.

~ Peter Beliveau





A Public Workshop by the Newcombe Singers, Kathryn Whitney, Music Director in collaboration with St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Susanne Reul-Zastre, Director of Music,the Royal Canadian College of Organists, Victoria Centre, and the Victoria Multi-Faith Society

Our world resounds with voices raised, united by a common purpose: to sing songs of hope, gratitude, sorrow and praise. All around the globe, we gather, separated. We sing behind the closed doors of our houses of worship, in untranslated languages, following unique cultural rituals, dispersed and isolate from one another.

CHROSMOS, a public workshop-concert project by the Newcombe Singers, unites these songs under one global roof. Through shared group singing, we emphasize the common human message in our voices raised in hope and faith by those of different religions, or of none.

Our CHROSMOS project was inspired by the multi-faith piece Sun on Water by Canadian composer Dr. Hussein Janmohamed. This beautiful work for SATB chorus combines Hindu, Ismaili Muslim, and Christian texts under one roof with profound results. Sun on Water celebrates the common light illuminating the full spectrum of colours we manifest though singing, uniting us and our world.

Join us for a Choral Workshop to sing Sun on Water with composer Dr. Hussein Janmohamed – all welcome!

Topics covered include:

- A one-hour rehearsal with Dr. Hussein Janmohamed on the beautiful piece Sun on Water
- Vocal warm-ups and improvisations inspired by Ismaili singing
- Sung and spoken explorations of spiritually inspired expression in choral music through our multi-cultural Canadian lens
- Interactive storytelling and narrative listening in Sun on Water and Dr. Janmohamed's compositions and community work
- Re-translating Christian-rooted traditions of choral singing in cross-cultural understanding for Muslim singers, singers from other religions, and singers with no religious background
- The experience of performing Sun on Water for and with one another with new insights at the end of our afternoon together.

Registration Free with Ticket (limited availability). Reserve your place:

https://www.eventbrite.com/o/newcombe-singers-72378395883



Photo: Vincent L. Chan

Dr. Hussein Janmohamed

Educational consultant, singer, choir conductor, artist curator, composer and TEDx Speaker, Dr. Hussein Janmohamed (PhD) is on a mission to foster unity, unleash creative potential and embrace pluralism through the power of music. With a broad background in choral singing, he has performed with renowned choirs such as Chor Leoni, the Phoenix Chamber Choir, the Elmer Iseler Singers and the National Youth choir of Canada. As a choir conductor, he currently leads the Capilano University Choirs, and has led UBC Choirs, Chor Flamae (Vancouver's first queer professional choir), regional and national Ismaili Muslim Youth choirs, the Nai Syrian Children's Choir, the Vancouver Peace Choir and more. As a composer, he is known for exploring the sonic intersections between faith, culture and community, weaving both Muslim traditions and contemporary choral practices. His compositions have been commissioned by organizations such as Dead of Winter, Canadian Chamber Choir, Amabile Choirs of London, the Aga Khan Museum, the Esoterics and Classical Movements Eric Daniel Helms New Music Program. He is dedicated to youth cultural development and cross-cultural belonging, and has been recognized with the Irene Miller and Koshkish Fellowship in Music at the University of Toronto and the BC Choral Federation Malcolm McDonald Youth Leadership Award.

GRANT NEWS; FALL OF 2026



The Victoria Foundation: in March I submitted an application to The Victoria Foundation to support some of the costs of our 60th Anniversary concert celebration, particularly towards the commissioned piece by Sarah Quartel. I also requested funds to go to music purchases and our 2026/27 Choral Conducting Fellowship program.

Unfortunately, our application was not successful. But the VF offers generous feedback, and in speaking to one of their staff, I was encouraged by the news that they liked my application and recommended it for funding. At the next level, we were not chosen to receive support. There are many other organizations looking for funding.

I was encouraged to apply again, which I will. We will offer some complimentary tickets to VF staff for our "Chrosmos" concert to acquaint them with the choir.

Looking ahead to our May, 2027 concert, "Aeros: The Lost Birds"

In September I sent in grant requests to support the financing of a workshop clinician, musicians and scores to 2 private foundations in Vancouver.

The Deux Mille Foundation: This is our first ever application ($5,000) to The Deux Mille Foundation in Vancouver. Their response will come in Dec. 2026.

The Hamber Foundation: I have applied to this foundation before without luck, and they do not provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants. I requested $5,000. We will receive a response in January, 2027.

Grant Team:

I now have a team of grant researchers to help with searching for extra grant funding for our 60th Anniversary Concert costs. Thank you Pam Copley and Jude Morton for offering your help!

Grant Funding Going Forward:

1. CRD Extended Project Grant: I will apply again to the CRD Arts Development Service to fund our 2027 concerts. Generous funding ($10,000) from the CRD supported our May and December concerts in 2026. The application is submitted in January with results in March.
2. The Victoria Foundation: I will apply again to the VF for grant funding for our fiscal year July 2027-July 2028.
3. BC Community Gaming Grants: I will apply for the first time for a CGG for the choir in April. These grants (lottery money!) are generous and can provide serious funding to support an organization: salaries, rent, insurance, internet, etc. They cover the fiscal year Aug. '27 – Aug. '28, and will be wonderful support for the choir in our 60th year!!

~ Marilyn Crump, *Grant Coordinator*
Newcombe Notes Editor

NEWCOMBE MEMBERSHIP REPORT



Thank you to everyone who has said hello or introduced themselves to a new member! People often comment on how easily they transition into our choir. That's because we really care about the community aspect of our community choir.

Our membership seems to be holding at about 80 to 85. Sometimes people have health or commitment reasons that make it hard for them to participate for a season, but most will return I've discovered.

This is the 6th year that I've been doing the membership role in the choir, and while I enjoy it thoroughly, it is always wise to have a back up people. I have asked Helen Scott and Jan Hornford to take over new registrations and payments for the Spring session payments in January since I will not be at the early rehearsals.

But 31 members have paid for the full year, which is a real help to the choir and the registrar. If nothing changes in your circumstances, you do NOT need to fill in another membership form until next September. You DO need to fill one in every year.

This Fall I am happy to report that new and returning members were processed very quickly as most had managed to do everything online. We have lots of paper copies left!

Myrna had nametags ready and John provided lots of extra music. Thanks to both.

Jan and Annette had the tough job of giving out music. Thank you for your help! If anyone can think of a way to improve that process, I'm all ears.

The "incoming team" was very welcoming, but that reception did not always flow into the choir area. New people still need some TLC after they leave the desk.

I wonder if a few of you would step up to become "Welcoming" members, who meet, greet and shepherd new members through the initial weeks. It's never easy being "the new kid". If you are a person who enjoys meeting and helping new folks, would you please contact me so we can continue to improve?

Thanks Newcombe Singers!

~ Norma Jee

Membership Director

2026 FALL MUSIC LIBRARY REPORT

Welcome to my world of scores, copyright and ethical lending/borrowing practices. Once a Librarian… I was a librarian and teacher for 4 decades. I stay on top of copyright law. We always hold sufficient copies for all singers and instrumentalists.

This season, I have had an interesting time chasing down music to borrow, resulting in some wonderful new partnerships. We've borrowed scores from the Ontario and Saskatchewan Choral Federations for *Chrosmos*, but most scores were purchased because no one else seemed to have them. I try to maintain a healthy balance between buying and borrowing, knowing that our mandate is to support living composers as far as possible. For the *Chromos Concert*, we have borrowed 1/3 and purchased 2/3 of our scores. I start sourcing before our concert ends, sometimes months before.

The *Lost Birds* scores for next Spring are the most expensive we have used. So the hunt has been on since July. I found myself in a flurry of emails with groups across Canada who had performed this amazing piece.

One such group, a Symphony Orchestra, was forced to purchase choral scores separately from the orchestra rental they had arranged. It caused huge financial strain and some nervousness about lending. I was cognisant of their discomfort, so I contacted the composer, Christopher Tin (through his agent) and told him the situation. The answer was affirmative, as he understood the expense and wanted to enable us to perform it. Hoorah! Now we are in possession of 40 borrowed scores, mailed pronto.

When Capriccio performed it, most of their scores were purchased by the singers. So, they lent us the remaining 17, plus the orchestral parts. Then in an amazing twist, they decided to GIVE them to us. Honestly I couldn't believe my ears! That was a very generous gift.

There's a possibility of some of our singers wanting to "own" their own scores. Please tell me now if you would like to do so, as I will be ordering soon. We receive a discounted price from Long and McQuade,. We can pass on that savings. The list price was $58.00 Canadian, last time I checked. We still need to buy 30 more Lost Birds scores at least.

We have also lent music to 3 other choirs. I maintain and share the database and our music is stored in Kristina's home. We thank her for that service. Jan has been helping me with the physicality of the library job too. It is much easier with 2 people. Those filing cabinets are full. Thanks Jan!

Thank you, Newcombe Singers, for the opportunity to continue in a job I love.



SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS

Hello singers! I've taken on the task of social media outreach for the choir, meaning I am creating and sharing posts and videos for our Facebook and Instagram pages. If you use either or both of these platforms, please follow our pages and interact with our posts! The more people interact with our posts, the more our pages will be shared with other users, which translates into free advertising and outreach for the choir.

Recently, I've been sharing information about some of the composers whose works we are performing for "Chrosmos", along with snippets from some of their other works that fit in thematically with our concert program. One of our posts was even "liked" by Laura Jekabsone, the composer of "Father Thunder"! I am also trying to interact with other local choirs and music groups on the platforms and cross-post to promote their events, in the spirit of goodwill and hoping they will do the same.

You can find our page by searching for "The Newcombe Singers" on Facebook and "newcombesingers" on Instagram. Links are also included below. If you see our logo, you're in the right place. Thanks for supporting our choir!

~ Treava Kellington,
Newcombe Social Media

https:www.instagram.com/newcombesingers

https:www.facebook.com/NewcombeSingers

NEWCOMBE SINGERS PUBLIC RELATIONS

Newcombe Singers' communications work (once called PR) continues to expand.

Treava Kellington, Steve and Kathy Switzer have made significant contributions to these efforts, alongside our long-time stalwarts, Myrna, Marilyn and Norma.

Myrna, Norma, Marilyn and I are the Choral Bridges donation team. As you know from our emails, the campaign raises thousands of dollars each year to help fund the instrumentalists and soloists who enrich our concerts.

Now the Choir Bridges team has begun building our 60th Anniversary Fund. We are thrilled that Sarah Quartel has agreed to compose a song for us. Funding this commission is a big leap, and your Choral Bridges donations are helping make it possible.

I have also launched a project to bring more sponsors' logos into our programs. This is an opportunity just waiting for us.

I researched how cultural non-profits like Newcombe Singers attract sponsors and learned that businesses are interested not so much in the quality of the performances as in the organization's value to the community. That is what they want to support.

So we are not simply selling space for a logo. We are offering businesses an opportunity to support a treasured Victoria institution.

Our history and community role make us an ideal organization for sponsors who share our values. Already, 55 choir members have nominated local businesses as potential sponsors.

Steve and Kathy Switzer have contributed their IT, promotional and graphic design skills which are critical to the project.

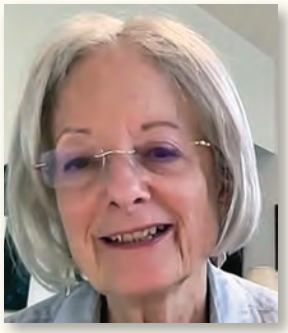
We are starting gradually, working out the kinks before a larger launch. We already have some sponsors lined up!

Our initial goal is to approach 10 to 20 businesses and secure five to ten new sponsors. Their logos will appear in our 2026–27 winter and spring concert programs, as well as in the smaller, inexpensive programs we will make available at our free performances.

We will learn from this first effort, refine our approach and launch a larger campaign next year.

Newcombe Singers members have been asking us to bring more sponsors into our programs. They have helped identify potential supporters, and now we are on our way.

~ Ellen Godfrey



Alto 2 Ellen Godfrey
(ellen@ellengodfrey.com)



Alto 1 Myrna Fisher
(myrnafisher@mac.com)

OUR EXCITING 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION CONCERT

In July, 2026 we held a "60th Anniversary Concert" Brainstorming session at Lissa's Zala's lovely lavender farm to launch plans for our special anniversary.

The Newcombe Singers will be celebrating our 60th year as a non-auditioned community choir during our 2027/28 season. To celebrate officially, we will be holding a 60th Anniversary concert in May, 2028. Exciting things are planned.

We have commissioned Sarah Quartel, one of Canada's leading composers, to write a multi-movement work for choir and orchestra, especially the Newcombe Singers. Although it has not yet been written, we know that the piece will last about 25 minutes and will feature a string orchestra, piano, and some wind players to accompany the choir. We hope to be able to hire the musicians and hold this significant concert in a larger venue. All of this requires careful planning and extended fundraising on our part.

On the 'brainstorming' afternoon, we established some 60th Anniversary teams for that planning. Many hands make light work, and we aim to make planning and preparation as collaborative as possible.

Teams:

1. Sponsorships: Ellen Godfrey, Kathy Switzer, Steve Switzer
2. Media & PR: Treava Kellington
3. Fundraising: Jan Hornford, Kathy Switzer
4. Grants: Marilyn Crump, Pam Copley, Jude Morton
5. Archival Research: Merle Campbell, Jude Morton, Kathleen Ramage, John Sease
6. Photos: Zoya Coodin
7. Special Invitations (Lt. Governor, Victoria Mayor, etc.)
8. Invitations to former choir members: _____
9. Post Concert "Bash": _____

We need your help!

Some teams need members, and some need more helpers.

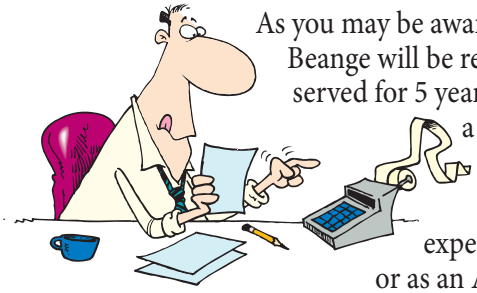
"60th Anniversary Organizing Person/Team":

At this time it is important to have a "60th Anniversary Organizing Team" to oversee all the other teams and keep the momentum going.

The job of the organizing team would be to liaise with the BOD and all the teams and make sure things are running smoothly. The BOD's work is to manage costs and decisions with Kathryn about musicians, venues, etc.

Our VP Martin Goodwin has agreed to be the organizing person for our 60th concert.

LOOKING FOR A NEW TREASURER



As you may be aware, our Treasurer Keith Beange will be retiring after having served for 5 years. We are seeking a replacement.

Is there a choir member who has experience as a Treasurer or as an Accountant?

Recently we brought on board choir member, Bianka Macedo, as the Bookkeeper, so the Treasurer's workload is much lighter than it has been in the past.
The revised role is a Board position focused on:

- Budget preparation and management
- Overseeing the bookkeeper's work
- Managing access to banking/donation/revenue services
- Supporting grant preparation and reporting
- Signing cheques
- Supporting negotiation of contracts (e.g. music director)

It is a FUN job. Please contact Keith Beange. Email: pay.newcombesingers@gmail.com

SENSE AND SENSIBILITIES



Scents are everywhere in personal products, soaps and laundry products. Do you know what our present day scented products are made of and why they can be harmful? Chemicals are the culprit.
We have a water processing plant here in Victoria and that is wonderful. However, the processing cannot clean chemicals or pharmaceuticals out of the water.

As in all life, there are cycles that go round and round. When we use scented products on our clothes and bodies, those chemicals stay on our clothes and bodies until the next shower or washing. Then they go down the drain, through the water station and are the dumped into the surrounding waters – The Salish Sea, Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Here the sea life lives amongst the rising levels of chemicals and when caught and eaten, those chemicals come back to us. These chemical levels have been studied around these islands for over 30 years.

(Notes from one of our soprano singers who is extremely allergic to scents and chemicals. It is very much appreciated when everyone remembers NOT to wear scented products to rehearsals and concerts.)

~ Merle Campbell,

ABOUT SARAH



Composer Sarah Quartel is one of Canada's most internationally celebrated and widely performed living choral composers. Her music is programmed globally, and her commissions have premiered in spaces such as Carnegie Hall, Canterbury Cathedral, Cité de la Musique Paris, and the famed Temppeliaukio Church in Helsinki. Raised as a choral singer herself, Sarah is inspired by the life-changing relationships that can occur in group singing. Known for her fresh, exciting, and chorister-centred approach to music making, Sarah writes in a way that connects singer to singer, ensemble to conductor, and performer to audience.

Sarah grew up the daughter of a church organist. She began singing in choirs from the age of six and studied piano from an early age. She recalls that she was eight years old before she realised that not everyone had a harpsichord in their basement. Her earliest memory of writing music, aged three or four, is of making up harmonies to a funny sound their family washing machine made. Her love of making music continued and she became a singer-songwriter before later returning to her choir roots as a choral composer.

Now based in London, Ontario with her family, Sarah has become Canada's most internationally recognized choral composer. Published by the world's most prestigious printing house, Oxford University Press, she has been commissioned by many prominent ensembles in many countries around the world, including: the Orchestre de Paris, The National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, the American Choral Directors Association, The National Children's Chorus of the USA, Hamilton Children's Choir, and New Dublin Voices. Sarah has served as Composer-in-Residence for Vox Anima (London), National Concerts (New York City), Singing Girls of Texas (Fort Worth), and The Cathedral of St. John (Albuquerque). Her music is performed by a wide variety of ensembles ranging from professional groups to community and school choirs. Notable performances and recordings include those by VOCES8, Chanticleer, London Voices, Rajaton, The Swingles, The Gesualdo Six, New York Polyphony, The Nathaniel Dett Chorale, the global mega-choir the Stay at Home Choir and in Canada by the virtual choir, Sing the North.

Sarah is proud of her collaborations with exceptional artists that have fuelled exciting new works. Her arrangement of Iesous ahatonnia' was created in partnership with Wendat poet Andrée Levesque Sioui and ethnomusicologist Dr. Jeanette Gallant. This ground-breaking score premiered at Podium 2024 and aims to decolonize and Indigenize the Canadian icon "The Huron Carol". (The Newcombe Singers performed this in our 2025-26 Season - Dr Jeanette Gallant attended the performance!) Her 60-minute staged choral work Be Like the Bird with story by Kate Colebrook, premiered in Paris by Chœur d'Enfants de l'Orchestre de Paris. This innovative choral work brings together music, movement, and visual storytelling to follow a bird's journey through a changing world. It will be published in 2027.

Sarah is deeply thankful for her relationship with Oxford University Press (OUP), where her 100+ titles are exclusively published. Sarah has held many roles in various music communities internationally including editor for the OUP publication Breath of Song: 10 concert works by women composers, editor and mentor to early career composers and composition students, artistic director of youth and adult choirs, and music educator to hundreds of children in schools across Canada. She values choral community, exceptional music education for all learners, and supporting fellow composers. Sarah continues to work as a clinician and guest composer at music education and choral events at home and abroad.

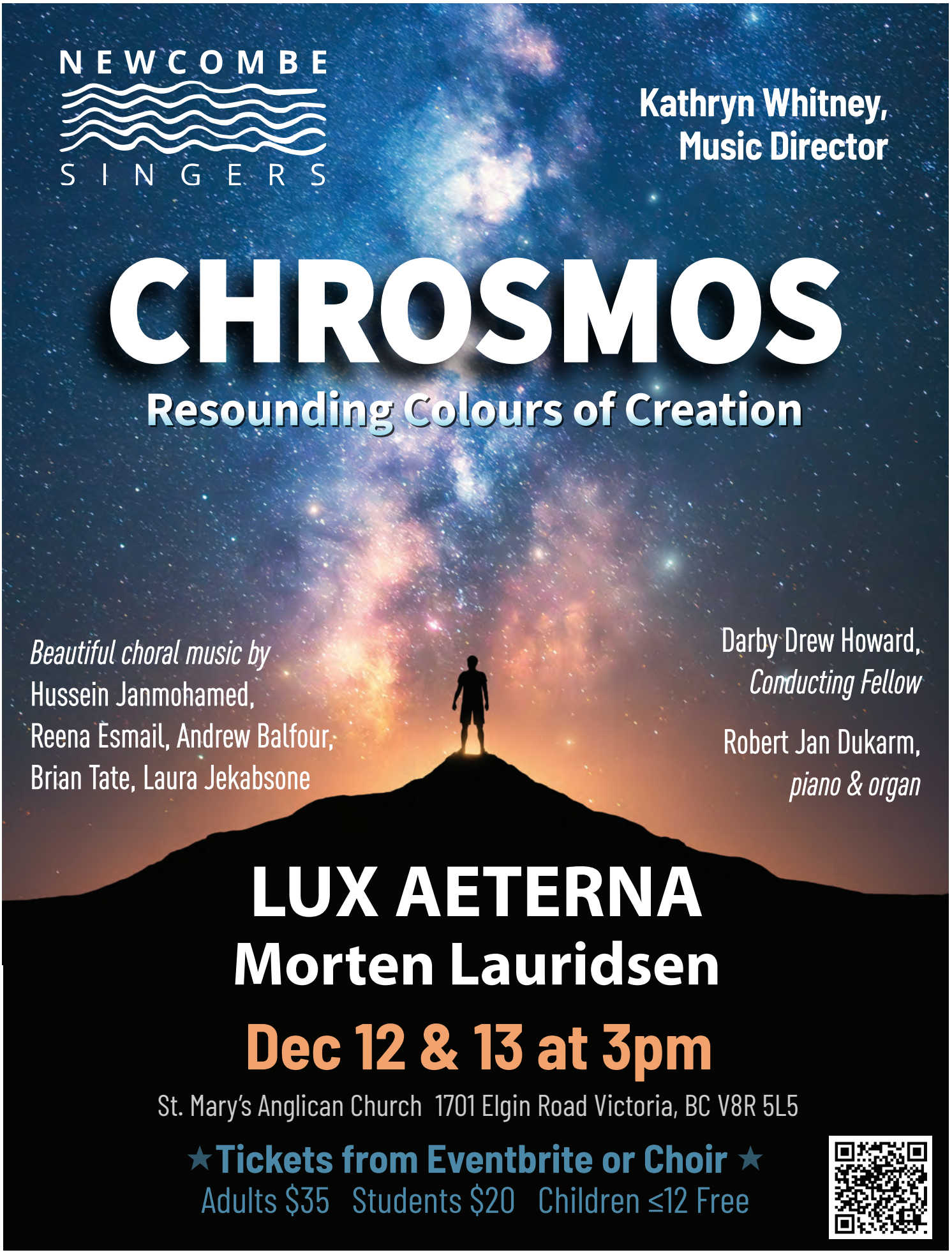
Sarah's words to Kathryn about the new commission with the Newcombe Singers:

Kathryn, I am just so honoured to receive your email and know that you and your community at Newcombe Singers would consider me for this exciting commissioning project. I'd be absolutely delighted to partner with you and the group on a significant new work.

I've had the joy of writing single pieces for choir + string quartet and choir + chamber orchestra this year and after deeply enjoying those projects, I've been dreaming bigger! I would be thrilled to have the opportunity to compose a multi-movement choral work for you with accompaniment/ forces as you've described. What a gift to receive your commission query at this particular time!

Thanks so much, Kathryn. It's such a pleasure to discuss this possibility with you. I love partnering with conductors and choral communities on bringing new work to life. If I have the opportunity to work with you and the Newcombe Singers, I would greatly enjoy deepening our choral relationship and collaborating together. With thanks and warm greetings to your board members and choristers, Sarah.

Main text sourced in part from https://sarahquartel.com and https://www.worldchoir.org/a-day-in-the-life-of-choral-composer-sarah-quartel/


NEWCOMBE
SINGERS
Kathryn Whitney,
Music Director
CHROSMOS
Resounding Colours of Creation
Beautiful choral music by
Hussein Janmohamed,
Reena Esmail, Andrew Balfour,
Brian Tate, Laura Jekabsone
Darby Drew Howard,
Conducting Fellow
Robert Jan Dukarm,
piano & organ
LUX AETERNA
Morten Lauridsen
Dec 12 & 13 at 3pm
St. Mary's Anglican Church 1701 Elgin Road Victoria, BC V8R 5L5
★Tickets from Eventbrite or Choir ★
Adults $35 Students $20 Children ≤12 Free


ensemblelaude.org
Ensemble Laude
Kathryn Whitney
Artistic Director
SCATHACH OF SKYE
DINOGAD'S SMOCK
Songs & Tales of Warrior Women of the Ancient Celtic Tribes
Saturday Nov 28, 2026, 2:30 pm Metchosin - St Mary Incarnation
Saturday Dec 5, 2026, 2:30 pm Victoria - St Andrew's Presbyterian
Tickets: $35, students $20 Eventbrite or at the door. Children 12 and under free with ticket.
BRITISH COLUMBIA


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DIDO & AENEAS - HENRY PURCELL
& 500 YEARS OF ENGLISH CHORAL GEMS

Saturday March 14, 2026

7:30PM, St. Mary the Virgin Church (Oak Bay)

The Victoria Philharmonic Choir, conducted by Peter Butterfield, presents some top crown jewels of the English choral tradition, from the country's earliest known opera to the present time.

Dido & Aeneas, set to music in the 1680s by baroque composer Henry Purcell, is a tragic love story from Virgil's epic, The Aeneid. The Queen of Carthage falls for a heroic Trojan Prince, but their union is doomed by duty, ambition, and a mean spell placed on them by interfering witches. Purcell's music is full of incredible maturity for the 19 year old composer, and the closing aria, Dido's lament, is especially well known. A song so bleakly beautiful it is regularly performed at present-day Remembrance Day ceremonies in the UK. The VPC and soloists are accompanied by a chamber orchestra, featuring period instrument specialists, including Douglas Hensley on theorbo.

The second half of the evening skips here and there in several other centuries of the repertoire, and includes The King Shall Rejoice; one of Handel's Coronation Anthems, and his first commission as a naturalized British citizen, for the coronation of King George II.

Shakespeare's text appears in Song for Athene, (brought to global attention at the funeral of Princess Diana) by 20th century composer John Tavener, whose music is inspired by Greek Orthodox chant. Also contemporary are the profound words of German pastor, theologian and pacifist Dietrich Bonhoeffer, executed in a Nazi prison camp two weeks before its liberation by the Allies. Morning Prayers is a poignant section of a longer work by Philip Moore, formerly the Director of Music at York Minster.

There will also be more than one surprise in this choral cornucopia!

Online tickets are $36 (regular) and $11 (student), plus fees; FREE for children under 13, from vpchoir.tickit.ca

The VPC is grateful for the support of this season from Le fonds Chantal-Berard and the NRS Foundation (through the Victoria Foundation), and Nature's Path Organics.