

Crossing Borders: Vertical Labyrinth

June 27, 2022

Virtual Concert Première

Vertical Labyrinth

I. Ascend

II. Disorder

III. Emerge

IV. Enclosed

with Elyse Delaney and Jessica Sharp

V. Still

Maureen Batt, Soprano & Producer
Halifax Camerata Singers
Jeff Joudrey, Artistic Director
Amy Brandon, Composer
Nela Rio, Poet
Hugh Hazelton and Sophie M. Lavoie, Poetry Translation
Jeremy VanSlyke, Recording Producer
Ben B. Creelman, Recording Engineer
Anna Shepard, Director & Additional Editing
Matt Dawson, Audio Mixing
Alexa Kirste, Editor & Camera Operator
Kwasi Asare, Camera Operator
Tom Belding, Graphic Design
Santiago Hidalgo, Poetry Reading

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We gratefully acknowledge the support of Arts Nova Scotia, Music Nova Scotia, and FACTOR for their support of this concert production. Thank you to the Canada Council for the arts for funding this commission. Thank you for watching this broadcast and for celebrating new music with us!

TEXT & TRANSLATION

Poetry by Nela Rio
Translation by Hugh Hazelton and Sophie M. Lavoie

**Con tu voz, mujer de tiempo,
asciendo o descendiendo en el laberinto vertical.**

**Un instante, un desorden de siglos
las lindes dentadas de la historia,
traen el cuerpo que emerge como voz.**

**En los vientres lunares, la marea empuja
hacia la gravedad del centro, el útero,
donde la sangre reposa
y hay ecos de pasos convergiendo en vida.
De los íntimos abismos de la carne
la pubertad descende como río vegetal
desbordándose en los albores de los muslos.**

Luego el vacío se revierte, habita el agua
y el mundo crece en estrechas generaciones.
Entre los veloces giros del derrame
el cuerpo va envejeciendo
hasta que con un signo de adios
llega a la última marea y reina sobre el mar.

La voz adquiere una pasión madura
un disponer de ansiosos vuelos
y aunque la vida larga se hace breve
no acorta la pujanza de las huellas.
**Encerrada en los silencios
hay una voz de huracán en las venas
intensa en su fluir de presencias.**

**El laberinto vertical erige su cabeza
desde las cambiantes raíces conmovidas.
En la apertura aún sin forma, indecifrable,
las múltiples corporalidades de la vida
celebran en su cáliz la inocencia del enigma.**

**With your voice, woman of time,
I ascend and descend in the vertical labyrinth.**

**An instant, a disorder of centuries,
the serrated boundaries of history,
bring forth the body that emerges like a voice.**

**In the lunar wombs, the tide pushes
towards the centre's gravity, the uterus,
where the blood rests
and steps echo, converging into life.
From the intimate abysses of the flesh,
puberty descends like a vegetal river,
overflowing onto the whiteness of thighs.**
Then emptiness reverses, inhabits the water,
and the world grows in close generations.
Amid the rapid spinning of the spill,
the body keeps growing old
until, with a wave farewell,
it reaches the last tide and reigns over the sea.

The voice acquires a mature passion
a preparation for anxious flight,
and though long life becomes fleeting,
it doesn't reduce the force of its footsteps.
**Enclosed in the silences,
there's a hurricane voice in the veins,
intense in its flow of presences.**

**The vertical labyrinth lifts its head
from the shifting shaken roots.
In the still shapeless opening, indecipherable,
the multiple corporality of life
celebrates the enigma's innocence in its calyx.**

BIOGRAPHIES

Maureen Batt (she/her)

Maureen focusses on celebrating Canadian classical contemporary repertoire by collaborating with established and emerging composers to commission, première, and re-perform their works. Her discography includes *Lighthouse* with Grej (ECMA Winner Classical Recording of the Year 2022); *Breathing in the Shadows* (JUNO nomination 2022); *Aunt Helen* (ECMA and Music NS nominations 2021-2); *Mirror, Mirror*; and *Lady of the Lake* (ECMA and Music NS nominations 2017-8).

She is the co-artistic director with Erin Bardua of Essential Opera, an opera company founded in 2010. In 2014, Maureen founded Crossing Borders, a contemporary Western classical music recital series which has toured programs of art song, opera arias, musical theatre, and electronics to the United States, Canada, Colombia, as well as digital broadcasts.

Maureen has created many Canadian opera roles: Helen (*Aunt Helen*), Dorothy Parker (*Etiquette*), Bride (*Cake*), and Top Priority Air Customer Service representative and security guard (*December*) by Monica Pearce; Anna (*Regina*) and Keri Ferrell (*Hipster Grifter*) by Elisha Denburg; Cindy (*Heather: Cindy + Mindy = BFBS 4EVER*) and Hannah (*Hannah & Paige and the Zombie Pirates*) by Christopher Thornborrow; Lorelie Henderson (*Stockholm Syndrome*) by Fiona Ryan; and Sister Mary Francis (*Time of Trouble*) by Elizabeth Raum.

She has a Master of Music from the University of Toronto, a Bachelor of Music from Dalhousie University, and a Bachelor of Arts from St. Thomas University. Maureen is regularly on faculty at the Halifax Summer Opera Festival, she is a frequent festival adjudicator, and she offers masterclasses and workshops/playshops on voice and movement. For more information and to listen to Maureen's music visit maureenbatt.com and [@maureenbattsoprano](https://www.instagram.com/maureenbattsoprano)

Amy Brandon (she/her)

Composer and guitarist Amy Brandon's pieces have been described as "...gut wrenching and horrific" (Critipeg), and "otherworldly, a clashing of bleakness with beauty" (Minor Seventh). Her performances, installations and acoustic works have been presented at the Gaudeamus Festival (Screen Dive), National Sawdust (NYC), Trinity College (Dublin), the mise-en Festival, and the Winnipeg New Music Festival. She has received Canadian and international composition awards and honourable mentions including the Leo Brouwer Guitar Composition Competition (Grand Prize 2019) and a JACK Studio Artist commission.

In addition to performance and composition, she is completing an interdisciplinary PhD examining augmented reality, motor control and guitar performance at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Most recently, Amy won the ECMA for Classical Composer of the year.

Jeff Joudrey (he/him)

Artistic Director Jeff Joudrey founded the Halifax Camerata Singers in 1986, and under his leadership the choir has developed an enviable reputation for performance excellence, innovative programming, and support for Canadian composers. Jeff is Director of Music at Trinity-St. Stephen's United Church, Amherst, and Chorus Master of the Symphony Nova Scotia Chorus. He is a past president of Choral Canada and a former president of the Nova Scotia Choral Federation. In addition to serving on juries for the JUNO and East Coast Music Awards, the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, and Choral Canada, he is in demand nationwide as a choral clinician, teacher, adjudicator, and guest conductor. Jeff was the recipient of Sing Canada Harmony's 2017 Dr. Paul E. Tamblyn Music Educator Award, and in 2018 was honoured to conduct the National Youth Choir of Canada on its tour of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Halifax Camerata Singers

The **Halifax Camerata Singers** is Atlantic Canada's premier chamber choir. Founded in 1986 by Artistic Director Jeff Joudrey, the Nova Scotia ensemble has distinguished itself by performing exciting choral repertoire that covers all periods and styles, with a special focus on Canadian music. The choir collaborates frequently with chamber ensembles, Symphony Nova Scotia and other musicians, and since 2001 has been the core choir of the Symphony Nova Scotia Chorus. Awards and honors include Choral Canada's Healey Willan Grand Prize; Music Nova Scotia's Classical Recording of the Year (2016), and several nominations for East Coast Music Awards. The choir's recordings include *A Time for All Things* (2015), *Solace: Songs of Remembrance* (2009), *Songs of the Stable: Christmas Music from Canada* (2006), *Songs of Home* (1997), and *Celtic Mass for the Sea* (1993). The upper voices from Camerata are also featured on Maureen's debut album, *Lady of the Lake* (2017) singing "Coronach" by Schubert.

HISTORY OF CROSSING BORDERS

Crossing Borders is a concert series founded by Batt in 2014 that features contemporary music by living Canadian composers and musical artists from around the world. With themes of compassion, contemplation, beauty, loneliness, darkness, healing, and warmth, the pieces presented in this series mirror both modern societal views and ancient cultural contexts through the lenses of humour, hope, and nostalgia. Art song is a featured genre on this recital series, but programs also often include opera, musical theatre, and electroacoustic pieces. One of the cycles that Crossing Borders commissioned and premiered, *Breathing in the Shadows* (September 2020) by Saman Shahi, recently garnered him a JUNO nomination for Classical Composition of the Year (2022). Another cycle commissioned by Crossing Borders, *Four Ladino Folk Songs* by Elisha Denburg, was premiered in December on our *Shifting the Lens* concert and is set for commercial release later this year.

