

**The Women & Men of the Tay Chorus**  
**“From Coast to Coast” - Concert Program & Notes**  
**June 7, 2023 at 7:30 PM**

**Conductor & Musical Director: Brent McLaren**  
**Assistant Conductor: Alana Sargeant Cliften (\*)**  
**Accompanists: Raphael Shew & Pam Newton**  
**Special Guest: Mark Mulrenin (Roland Aerophone)**

**The Maple Leaf Forever (SATB)**

"The Maple Leaf Forever" is a Canadian patriotic song written by Alexander Muir (1830–1906) in 1867, the year of Canada's Confederation. He wrote the work after serving with the Queen's Own Rifles of Toronto in the Battle of Ridgeway against the Fenians in 1866.

CBC Radio's ***Metro Morning*** show in Toronto ran a contest to find new lyrics for the song in 1997. The contest was won by Romanian immigrant, mathematician, and now a songwriter, actor and poet, Vladimir Radian, who came to Canada in the 1980s. This version received its first full orchestral treatment on June 27, 1997, at a concert by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. These are the words the chorus will be using tonight.



**Song for the Mira (SATB)**

- soloist: Tineke Doornbosch
- Roland Aerophone: Mark Mulrenin

Allister MacGillivray's peaceful ballad has made the secluded, picturesque Cape Breton community of Marion Bridge and its Mira River famous the world over. It is a favourite song with roots musicians and choirs in Atlantic Canada and far beyond, having been translated into Scots Gaelic, Italian, Japanese and several other languages. **Billboard** magazine has recognized it as a true folk classic.



“Song for the Mira”, written in 1973, is in a contemporary folk Celtic style. Its lyrics speak of a longing for an eventual return to the serenity of the river. Brought to international attention by Anne Murray and covered more than 300 times, the song has become a standard in the Canadian choral repertoire and something of an anthem in Nova Scotia.

**Cape Breton Lullaby (SSA) (\*)**

Kenneth Leslie was an award-winning poet, a farmer, a songwriter, a magazine founder, a lecturer and, as necessary, an itinerant preacher man, high-school teacher and taxi driver. Born in Pictou, Nova Scotia in 1892, Leslie spent much of his life in 1930s and 1940s in the United States.

But his greatest love was writing poetry, music and songs - treasured within his family, loved across Canada and around the world. He wrote "Cape Breton Lullaby" in the 1920's, derived from a tune, known as **Ghillie Callum** or the Scottish Sword Dance, that he played for his three daughters while they danced.

One of these daughters, Rosaleen, was the mother of Jennifer Dickson, one of our choir members. Jennifer showed up at rehearsal with a copy of the book 'By Stubborn Stars' Kenneth Leslie's book, where the poem "Cape Breton Lullaby" was first published. We have made a tiny edit to our lyrics so that we sing the words her grandfather originally wrote.



The lyrics describe a late evening for a young mother, alone with her babe while her husband is out fishing overnight off the shores of Cape Breton (where Gaelic is still spoken). You'll hear her lonely song - driftwood burning in the fireplace may cast wild shadows on a nearby wall. The Mira River flows eastward towards the dawn. **Beinn Bhreagh** (beautiful mountain) is the name Alexander Graham Bell gave to his estate located on a peninsula jutting into Bras d'Or Lake about five kilometres east of Baddeck, where Kenneth Leslie's children played with Bell's grandchildren. The little "lambies" are the flocks on this estate. "*Caidil gu lo*" means to "*sleep on till day.*"

Most men in that part of Cape Breton fished for a living. The last verse recognizes their peril and the challenge that faced a family should the father be lost at sea.

*Caidil gu lo laddie, lo laddie. Sleep the stars away ...*

*Caidil gu lo laddie, lo laddie. Sleep the moon away ...*

*Caidil gu lo laddie, lo laddie. Sleep the dark away ...*

## Three Alberta Cowboy Songs (SATB)

### A. Alberta Homesteader

- soloist: Andy Williamson

### B. Blood on the Saddle

- soloist: Andy Williamson

- Roland Aerophone: Mark Mulrenin

### C. Flunky Jim

These three songs written by **Trent Worthington** were originally arranged for Dr Richard Sparks and Pro Coro Canada as a light interlude for a concert at the Winspear Centre for Music in Edmonton. They became an instant hit with the audience.

These songs were a fun addition to our program and we loved rehearsing them. It marked a completely “new sound” for the chorus and pushes the limits of our abilities. We hope you will enjoy the humour and their performance.



## A Choral Tribute to the music of Stan Rogers

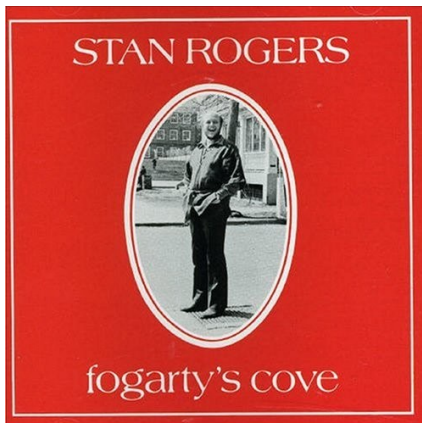
**Stan Rogers** was one of Canada’s finest singer-songwriters. He was known for his rich baritone voice and finely crafted folk songs, often written and performed in a traditional Celtic style. He is perhaps best known for the rousing a cappella anthem “Northwest Passage.”

Concerned with themes of honour, loyalty and hope, Rogers drew on historic and poetic aspects of the Canadian experience. His music never received widespread radio airplay and was largely unknown outside of folk music circles during his lifetime. His legend grew after his tragic death in an airplane fire in 1983.



Born and raised in Hamilton, Stan spent childhood summers in Nova Scotia, mainly in his mother's hometown of Canso. The musical culture of the region, from country artists like Hank Snow and Wilf Carter to traditional fiddle music, left a lasting impression on him. He showed an ear for music at an early age and taught himself to play guitar on a homemade instrument built by his uncle. In 1963, at age 14, Stan made his professional debut at the Ebony Knight coffee house in Hamilton, performing songs by American country star Jimmie Rodgers and earning five dollars.

Stan began his professional career in 1969, working the Ontario and Maritime folk club and festival circuits. In 1973, Stan's brother Garnet (guitar, fiddle, flute) became his principal sideman, and in 1975 they performed at the Winnipeg Folk Festival. There, Stan made an impression on the festival's artistic director, Mitch Podolak.

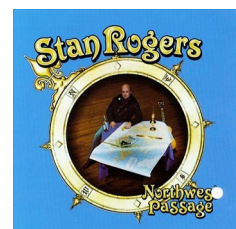


In 1976, he recorded his first album, **Fogarty's Cove** which was released on Podolak's independent record label. The album reflected Stan's early Maritime influences and included signature songs like the barroom singalong "Barrett's Privateers" and the love song "Forty-Five Years."

Stan released three more albums during his life. **Turnaround** (1977) reflected more contemporary influences, particularly the songs of Joni Mitchell, and included the popular ballad "The Jeannie C." "Between the Breaks . . . Live" (1979) was recorded at a restaurant in Toronto. The live album captured the energy of Stan's performances and introduced a new standard to his repertoire: "The Mary Ellen Carter."

His final album, **Northwest Passage** (1981), saw his songwriting skills mature and his focus expand beyond the Maritime experience. Many of the songs, including "The Idiot" and "Free in the Harbor," were to become folk festival staples, but it was the title song that eventually captured the public imagination. Widely considered one of the finest songs ever produced in Canada, "Northwest Passage" was ranked the fourth greatest Canadian song of all time in 2005.

Touring with his brother Garnet and bass player Jim Morison, Stan filled large halls on Canada's East Coast and headlined folk venues across Canada and the U.S. After gaining increasing popularity in New England, Chicago and Los Angeles, he seemed on the verge of stardom, destined for the kind of crossover success that few folk artists achieve.



On June 2, 1983, Stan was returning home on Air Canada Flight 797 following a performance at the Kerrville Folk Festival near San Antonio, Texas. En route from Dallas to Toronto, an electrical fire broke out on the plane, filling the cabin with smoke and knocking out electrical cables and cockpit instruments. The crew made an emergency landing at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport. Ninety seconds into the evacuation on the tarmac, fresh oxygen coming through the open exit doors caused a flash fire that quickly engulfed the plane, killing 23 of the 41 passengers, including Stan Rogers. Stan was 33 years old.

He was inducted into the **Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame** in 2019.



The choirs will be performing:

**A. Fogarty's Cove (TTBB) (\*)**

**B. Make and Break Harbour (SATB) (\*)**

**C. The Field Behind The Plow (SATB)**

- Aerophone: Mark Mulrenin

**D. Watching the Apples Grow (TTBB)**

**Log Driver's Waltz (SSAA) (\*)**

- soloist: Jennifer Hoy

- Roland Aerophone: Mark Mulrenin

The song, written by Wade Hemsworth, celebrates the profession of log driving, a practice in the lumber industry which involved transporting felled timber by having workers walk or run on the logs as they floated down rivers. This occupation required a great deal of strength and physical agility, and Hemsworth was struck by how much the sight of log drivers at work resembled dancing.



The song's familiar chorus is:

*For he goes birling down, a-down white water  
That's where the log driver learns to step lightly  
It's birling down, a-down white water  
A log driver's waltz pleases girls completely.*

The lyrics are often misheard as "whirling" or "twirling" instead of "birling". "Birl" is an old Scots verb meaning "to revolve or cause to revolve", and in modern English means "to cause a floating log to rotate by treading". Today, birling survives as a competitive sport.

The song also contains considerable double-entendre, beginning with the sentiments of the opening stanza:

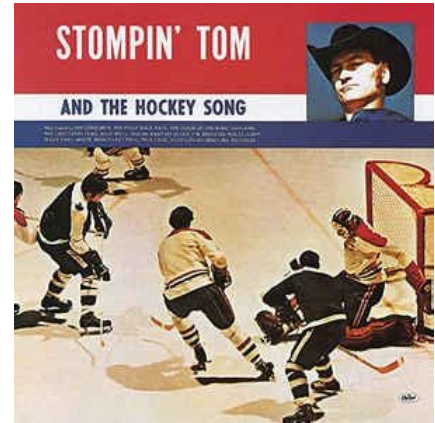
*If you ask any girl from the parish around,  
What pleases her most from her head to her toes;  
She'll say, "I'm not sure that it's business of yours,  
But I do like to waltz with a log driver."*

Many artists have recorded renditions of the song, which is an enduring classic of Canadian music. The most famous version, by Kate & Anna McGarrigle and the Mountain City Four, was the soundtrack for a 1979 animated short film by the National Film Board.

Our arrangement for the women's chorus was written by Ron Smail and literally pushes the envelope of their voices with close harmonies, difficult rhythms and yes, the largest range the chorus has ever performed.

## The Hockey Song (SATB)

"The Hockey Song", sometimes mistakenly called "The Good Old Hockey Game," is a song written and originally performed by Canadian folksinger Stompin' Tom Connors. The song's first release was on Connors' 1973 album, **Stompin' Tom and the Hockey Song**. The song was played at Ottawa Senators games in 1992, after which Pat Burns, then coach of the Toronto Maple Leafs, insisted it be played in Toronto as well. The song is now played throughout both Canadian and American NHL arenas, as well in the home arenas of European hockey teams (e.g. Dinamo Rīga).



You probably know the words so feel free to sing along!

## We Rise Again (SATB)



"Rise Again" is a song recorded by Canadian music group The Rankin Family. It was released in 1993 as the first single from their third studio album, **North Country**. It peaked in the top 10 on the RPM Adult Contemporary Tracks chart, and was a Top 20 hit on the magazine's pop chart and a Top 40 hit on its country chart. It received an East Coast Music Award nomination for best song in 1994.

The song was written by Leon Dubinsky, a songwriter from Sydney, Nova Scotia, for a 1984 stage musical titled *The Rise and Follies of Cape Breton*, as an anthem of resilience and hope at a time when Cape Breton

Island was going through an economic crisis. According to Dubinsky, the song is about "the cycles of immigration, the economic insecurity of living in Cape Breton, the power of the ocean, the meaning of children, and the strength of hope given to us by our families, our friends and our music."

## O Canada (SATB)

"O Canada" (French: Ô Canada) is the national anthem of Canada. The song was originally commissioned by Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, Théodore Robitaille, for the 1880 Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day ceremony. Calixa Lavallée composed the music, after which words were written by the poet and judge Sir Adolphe-Basile Routhier. The original French lyrics were translated to English in 1906. Multiple English versions ensued, with Robert Stanley Weir's version in 1908 gaining the most popularity, eventually serving as the basis for the official lyrics enacted by Parliament. Weir's English-language lyrics have been revised three times, most recently when An Act to amend the National Anthem Act was enacted in 2018 restoring the wording back to "*in all of us command*." The French lyrics remain unaltered.

"O Canada" had served as a de facto national anthem since 1939, officially becoming the country's national anthem in 1980 when Canada's National Anthem Act received royal assent and became effective on July 1 as part of that year's Dominion Day (today's Canada Day) celebrations.

The choir will perform two complete versions of O Canada, the first in French and the second in English.

### **Song for Peace (SATB) (\*)**

- soloist: Beth McNamee
- Roland Aerophone: Mark Mulrenin

We started our program with a work by Allister MacGillivray, and we bring to an end our time together with another one of his wonderful compositions.



MacGillivray is a singer/songwriter, guitarist, and music historian from the Cape Breton region of Nova Scotia. He was born January 17, 1948, in the coal-mining and fishing town of Glace Bay. He has lived close to the village of Marion Bridge, also known as *Drochaid Mhira* which remains strongly Canadian Gaelic-speaking.

One of Allister's most popular folk tunes originally written for solo voice has been arranged for solo and choir by Diane Loomer. The tune has the typical "*MacGillivray lilt*" and the harmony is correspondingly uncomplicated, open and beautiful.

*Cast your nets on these waters, your lines on the sea,  
Your sights on horizons wherever you please,  
For together we'll weather the tide that prevails,  
With the sun on our shoulders, the wind in our sails.*

### **About this Concert**

This concert was originally slated for performance in the spring of 2020 but the pandemic intervened and the choruses had to step aside. It turned out to be the last concert Shelley McLaren would program. She specifically decided to make it a tribute to Canadian music "**From Coast to Coast.**"



Photo Credit: Stephen Shew

Preparing for any program begins well over a year in advance and between the time the program was decided, the music ordered and the first rehearsals started, Shelley was struck with cancer. She passed away in July of 2021. **It is a special tribute to her for the choirs she loved so dearly to perform this concert exactly as she set it out, including having Alana to help.**

Shelley carefully chose the final piece of music, "Song for Peace", ironically her parting message to all of us. It was the song that concluded our time together at her home-going celebration held in Stewart Park.

***"Now it's your turn to shine."***

## About the Women & Men of the Tay Choruses

Formed in 1999 by **Shelley McLaren** as a bimillennial project, the **Men of the Tay** gave their first performances in 2000. In 2008 the **Women of the Tay** would follow. Both choirs are true community choirs, open to anyone interested in being a member. No member, conductor or accompanist is remunerated for their services. The choirs receive no funding or grants but rely on the generosity of people attending their two concerts each year. Any additional costs for music, rentals and insurance are evenly shared among all choir members, usually costing each member around \$30-\$40 for the season.

Since their founding, **Brent McLaren** has been the Chorus Manager, taking over the conducting when Shelley was battling cancer. Traditionally the Men have practiced on Monday night, the Women on Wednesday. We thank the team at **St. James the Apostle Anglican Church** for accommodating our rehearsals and this concert.

Looking ahead, the **Christmas Concert**, based around the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication “***Twas the Night Before Christmas***”, will take place on Wednesday evening, December 6, 2023. Our spring concert, “***There’s No Business Like Show Business***,” based on Broadway themes, is scheduled for Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

The choirs now recess for the summer, restarting in the third week of September. If you are interested in becoming a member simply email [musicofthetay@gmail.com](mailto:musicofthetay@gmail.com) and your name will be added to the list for the fall session. There are a limited number of spaces open each year, filled on a first-come basis. No audition is required, but a basic ability to read music will prove helpful.

A special thank you ...

**Annie Dalton Design Network** ... for yet another amazing poster  
**St. James the Apostle Anglican Church** ... for our rehearsal and concert space  
**Raphael and Pam** ... our gifted, and long-serving accompanists  
**Tineke, Andy, Jennifer and Beth** ... our soloists for the evening  
**Lara Klymko** ... who teched and monitored our sound for the evening  
**Roxanne Shew** ... our proofreader

our special guests ...

**Mark Mulrenin** ... and the instrument of 1000 voices  
**Alana Sargeant Clifflen** ... for making Shelley’s dream come to life

... to our families and friends  
and to you for your support.