

## WHAT THE NIGHT BIRD TOLD THE WANDERER

Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra

*with*

Laudate Singers

Amir Haghghi, tenor

Yun Song, erhu

John Van Deursen, conductor

Lars Kaario, conductor

*Music by*

Mark Armanini

Moshe Denburg

Produced by Mark Armanini and Moshe Denburg

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<http://www.vi-co.org>

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### A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-PRODUCERS

In 2011, to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra (VICO), we staged several events and concerts. Two of these, namely *Classical Meets Intercultural*, and *Orchestral Evolution*, featured large scale original works – *Night Bird Singing* by Mark Armanini and *Dreams of the Wanderer* by Moshe Denburg – and we took the opportunity at that time to formally record them. The years intervening have been busy ones for the VICO, during which it has developed and grown constantly, in its size and its scope of activities. As 2021 marks the VICO's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we thought it appropriate to release these recordings together, in celebration of this milestone. We have both been with the VICO pretty well from its beginnings in 2001, and, in various capacities we have nurtured it over its first two decades. So, as two vintage director/composers of the orchestra we are proud to be putting this recording out into the world together.

It is not easy to predict the future of any important cultural entity, but let us say that the orchestra has grown in stature over the years, and true to the titles of its concert productions in 2011, it remains dedicated to the principles of having classical sensibilities be enhanced by a world of intercultural possibilities, and, by so doing, enabling the very concept of the orchestra to evolve. This has been and still is the task at hand, and we can only hope that our offerings here will give the listener a new and optimistic vista on this truly Canadian interculturalism.

~ Mark Armanini (Artistic Director) & Moshe Denburg (Founding Artistic Director)

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TRACK LISTING

**Night Bird Singing** (2011)

by Mark Armanini

1. Adagio: Piu Mosso: Encore Piu Mosso: Adagio (10:29)
2. Adagio: Piu Mosso: Cadenza: Adagio (8:18)
3. Adagio: Piu Mosso: Encore Piu Mosso: Adagio: Piu Mosso: Encore Piu Mosso: Allegro (7:09)

**Dreams of the Wanderer** (2011)

by Moshe Denburg

4. Movement I. Ahavat Hadasa (The Love of Hadasa) (9:29)
5. Movement II. You Zi Yin (Song of the Wanderer); The Dying Hours (9:34)
6. Movement III. Nasime Shiraz (Breeze of Home) (7:58)

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PRODUCTION CREDITS

**Night Bird Singing**

Recorded by Don Xaliman in 2011

at Pacific Spirit United Church (formerly Ryerson United Church), Vancouver, BC

**Dreams of the Wanderer**

Recorded by Don Xaliman in 2011

at The Rothstein Theatre, Vancouver, BC

Editing and Mixing:

*Night Bird Singing* – Don Xaliman (Energy Discs) and Sheldon Zaharko (Zed Productions)

*Dreams of the Wanderer* – Sheldon Zaharko (Zed Productions)

Mastering: Sheldon Zaharko

Co-Producers: Mark Armanini and Moshe Denburg

Album cover background image (Earthrise over Vancouver skyline): Alistair Eagle

Album cover design: Melanie Thompson

Photos: Alistair Eagle

Photo of Yun Song: Don Xaliman

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## LINER NOTES

### ***Night Bird Singing*** 夜鶯之歌

By Mark Armanini

- i. Adagio: Piu Mosso: Encore Piu Mosso: Adagio
- ii. Adagio: Piu Mosso: Cadenza: Adagio
- iii. Adagio: Piu Mosso: Encore Piu Mosso: Adagio: Piu Mosso: Encore Piu Mosso: Allegro

John Van Deursen, conductor

Yun Song, erhu

#### *VICO String Ensemble (aka Orchestra Armonia):*

Domagoj Ivanovic, violin I, ensemble leader

Janna Sailor, violin I

Elyse Jacobson, violin I

Sam Tsui, violin I

Kathryn Lee, violin II

Zuzanna Uskovitsova, violin II

John Littlejohn, violin II

Ruth Huang, violin II

Manti Poon, viola

Sarah Kwok, viola

Anthony Cheung, viola

Stefan Hintersteiner, cello

Ben Goheen, cello

Meaghan Williams, double bass

Recorded by Don Xaliman, at Pacific Spirit United Church (formerly Ryerson United Church), Vancouver, on October 16, 2011.

Mixed by Don Xaliman and Sheldon Zaharko

#### ABOUT THE MUSIC

*Night Bird Singing* is a classic western concerto, featuring the erhu, a traditional Chinese 2-string violin. Poetically, *Night Bird Singing* is a cry for human compassion. The melodic motive is a passionate plea, articulated by the haunting, soulful vocal cry of the erhu. The work, 8 years in the making, is a musical essay in concerto form on the balance between the individual and the power of the many. The listener follows the erhu in its eloquent struggle against the darker shades of the string orchestra, as soloist Song Yun's erhu artistry paints a dazzling array of instrumental colour: string harmonics, liquid glissandi and seamless melodic lines with baroque-like ornamentation, all transform and intertwine into fresh musical figures.

A dramatic first movement climaxes with an accompanied cadenza, and is followed by an adagio with a major unaccompanied cadenza as the central movement; and in the final movement, a gentle rhythmic dance transforms into a passionate swirling finale fueled by a final accompanied cadenza.

*Night Bird Singing* takes a classic musical form and infuses it with intercultural content. In Song Yun's hands, the instrument explores the outer regions of the erhu's expression and technique. The cadenza explores the intimate sonic character of the erhu including a vivid pungent pizzicato, and strategic placing of 'bird song', a contemporary version of a traditional erhu improvisation featuring an improvised combination of glissandi and harmonics.

#### FEATURED ARTISTS

**Song Yun (erhu)** began violin and erhu study in childhood. In 1982, she won the First Prize in the nation-wide Instrumental Competition hosted by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China, becoming a rising star of Chinese Instrumental music. The song, "A flower — 枝花" that she performed in the competition became one of the most successful contemporary erhu compositions and been used ever since in many erhu publications. In 1983, she won Best Performer in The Erhu Performing Arts Association of Beijing. In the same year, she was admitted to the Central Conservatory of Music as an undergraduate, studying under Master Mr. Liu Ming-yuan. In 1989, Song Yun won the Grand Prix of the Central TV Erhu Excellence Award; this is the top award for erhu performances in the world. She then was invited to become a member of the Chinese Musicians' Association. In the early nineties, Song Yun went to Japan to continue her career in Chinese music performance and as a teacher. During her time in Japan, she released over one hundred CDs. She also hosted the NHK lectures in Chinese culture on Educational TV.

Song Yun performs music with a profound feeling. With her erhu technique and western violin background, she naturally adapts her musicality to both traditional Chinese and Western musical ways - an ideal intercultural artist. Song Yun immigrated to Canada in 2007, and she currently lives in Richmond, B.C and continues to engage in a variety of artistic and educational activities. She is erhu soloist with the BC Chinese Music Ensemble and the strings mentor of the BC Youth Chinese Orchestra.

**Mark Armanini (composer)** (b. 1952), a native Vancouverite, studied composition with Elliot Weisgarber and piano with Robert Rodgers at the University of British Columbia, graduating with a MMus. in 1984. In 1990 Mark began composing for various combinations of Oriental and Western instrumentation. Major works included *...of Wind and Water*, recorded in 1995 with the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic and Qiu Xia He (pipa); and in 2003 *Incense and Flowers*, *Rain in the Forest*, and *Dance of Many Colours* with the Latvian National Symphony and Vivian Xia (yangqin), Heidi Krutzen (harp), and the Khac Chi Bamboo Ensemble under the direction of Maestro John Zoltek. These pieces are collected on the album *Rain in the Forest*, available on

the Centrediscs label. In 2000 Mark traveled to Taipei and in 2003 to Beijing and Shanghai as part of composer exchanges. In 2006 he performed at the Nanjing Jazz Festival and in 2007 travelled to Wuhan to study the ancient Marquis Yi Bell Set. During the years 2009- 2016 Mark attended the Atlas Academy, a two week intercultural orchestra intensive in Amsterdam, where his composition *Chroma* premiered at the Concertgebouw concert hall, as did *Decor* at the Amsterdam Conservatory. In 2009 Mark became the Co-Artistic Director of the Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra (VICO), and in 2014 the Artistic Director. In 2009 he also took on the position of producer for the BC Chinese Music Ensemble, the largest professional Chinese traditional instrumental ensemble in Canada. In 2015 Mark produced *Fingertips to Freedom*, an improvised piano concerto with pianist-improviser Paul Plimley, at Sono Recording Studios in Prague CZ. In November 2018 he travelled to Hanoi Vietnam for the 3rd Asia Europe Music Festival where his double dan bau concerto, *Dance of Many Colours*, was given its Vietnamese premiere. In 2019, he attended the Voix Etouffées European Festival in Brussels where his *...of Wind and Water* for pipa and string quartet was performed, with pipa virtuoso Qiu Xia He and the Selini Quartet. The festival also hosted a talk with Qiu Xia He, Andre Thibault, and himself. Currently Mr. Armanini is getting ready to present the BC Chinese Music Ensemble at the Bamboo and Maple Festival in Edmonton, in April 2022. Mark is currently the Artistic Director of the Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra (VICO), producer of the recently released VICO CD *In the Key of the World*, and an associate of the BC Chinese Music Ensemble. He is on faculty at Capilano University in North Vancouver.

**John van Deursen (conductor)** is that rare musician who combines both classical and jazz experience and training at the highest international levels, attested by both his appearance as conductor with the Taipei Sinfonietta in the prestigious Prague Spring Festival, and as a guest instrumentalist in the Singapore International Jazz Festival. As conductor, John has worked with the Taipei Philharmonic Orchestra, Taiwan National Symphony, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Prince George Symphony, Symphony of the Kootenays, and conducted in such venues as the Rudolfinum in Prague, and in the main concert halls of Helsinki and Stockholm. As jazz performer, John has shared the stage with Ernie Watts, Jeremy Monteiro, Hino Terumasa, Dee Dee Bridgewater and more while his arrangements have been performed by Randy Brecker, New Orleans great Ronnie Kole, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, the Taipei Philharmonic and other esteemed ensembles and performers. His work as composer and arranger includes a Concerto for Jazz Piano and Orchestra, and many pops arrangements for orchestra, brass quintet concert band, piano trio and other ensembles. Currently residing in Ceske Budejovice in the Czech Republic, John is working on a multi-genre project to bring new repertoire to chamber ensembles, including new arrangements of jazz classics, and Asian folk songs.

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***Dreams of the Wanderer***

By Moshe Denburg

Lars Kaario, conductor

Amir Haghghi, tenor solo

*Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra:*

Ali Razmi, tar

Amy Stephen, tin whistle, accordion, celtic harp

Charlie Lui, dizi

Geling Jiang, zheng

Jonathan Bernard, vibraphone, hand percussion

Jun Rong, erhu

Lan Tung, erhu

Mohamed Assani, sitar, tabla

Navid Goldrick, santur, oud

Niel Golden, tabla, kartal

Mark McGregor, flute

Mike Brown, clarinet, bass clarinet

Paul Luchkow, violin I, concertmaster

Janna Sailor, violin I

Kathryn Lee, violin I

Susan Cosco, violin II

Zuzanna Uskovitsova, violin II

Sarah Kwok, viola

Manti Poon, viola

Finn Manniche, cello

Stefan Hintersteiner, cello

Tim Stacey, bass

Russell Sholberg, bass

*Laudate Singers:*

Soprano: Heidi Ackermann, Marina Bennett, Yasmine Bia, Catherine

Crouch, Elyse Kantonen, Maureen Nicholson, Jenny Vermeulen

Alto: Tami Copland, Miriam Davidson, Elspeth Finlay, Mavis Friesen, Katie  
Horst, Intan Purnomo

Tenor: Kristopher Benoit, Tristan Chalcraft, Sam Elgar, Paul Jungwirth,  
Chris Robinson

Bass: Ian Dives, Elliot Harder, Charlie Louie, Troy Martell, George Roberts,  
Adam Turpin, Dheni Walsh

Lars Kaario, Director  
Margaret Hill, Accompanist

Recorded by Don Xaliman, at The Rothstein Theatre, Vancouver, on November 13, 2011  
Mixed by Sheldon Zaharko

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

The person of the wanderer reminds us of separation and disconnection, and is reflected in the lives of individuals as well as in the historical experiences of entire peoples. These two aspects of wandering are actually inseparable, though the one refers more to personal feelings and the other relates to feelings shared by a collectivity. In this work the wanderer is represented by the tenor soloist, though his dreams and his message are conveyed by the entire ensemble. The texts chosen for the work deal with different aspects, or views, of the wanderer's experience. *Ahavat Hadasa* (The Love of Hadasa), speaks of the longing for a homeland, and was penned, in the 17th century, by the Jewish-Yemenite poet Shalem Shabazi. *You Zi Yin* (Song of the Wanderer) by the 8th century Chinese poet Meng Jiao, is a reflection on the melancholy at the beginning of the journey, the origins of the wandering. *The Dying Hours*, a poem written by the composer, reflects upon the utterly human longing to overcome isolation and disconnection in the sphere of love. Finally, in *Nasime Shiraaz* (Breeze of Home) by the great Persian 14th century poet Hafez, we obtain a glimpse of the most inward homecoming - the mystic's yearning to unite with the divine beloved. The wanderer's dreams are our dreams, the ineluctable desire to overcome our psychological, spiritual, and physical isolation.

## FEATURED ARTISTS

**Amir Haghighi (tenor)** was born and raised in Tehran, Iran, and grew up singing traditional Persian music. He has lived in Canada since 1983. Amir has been performing Persian music and composing original songs based on the mystical poetry of Hafez, Rumi and other great Persian poets. Amir has appeared at the Vancouver International Folk Festival, the Vancouver International Jazz Festival, the Vancouver International Children's Festival, the Chan Centre with the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra, the Vancouver Sacred Music Festival, Global Discoveries Festival, Inter-spiritual Chantfest, Persian Cultural Conferences and events in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Seattle, Geneva, Paris, Amsterdam, Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto.

**Moshe Denburg (composer)** (b. 1949), who hails from a well-known Montreal Rabbinical family, came to the west coast in 1982. His musical career has spanned over 5 decades and his accomplishments encompass a wide range of musical activities, including Composition, Performance, Music Education, and Artistic Direction. He is the founder of the *Vancouver Inter-*

*Cultural Orchestra* (VICO) and has been a driving force behind the ensemble's many activities since its inception in the year 2000. He has studied music extensively, both formally and informally, and for the past 40 years has been engaged in exploring the musical resources of the non-Western world, creating music that challenges musicians of differing disciplines to work together across aural/written cultural divides, and to find a common musical aesthetic. He has traveled worldwide, living and studying in the United States, Israel, India and Japan. From 1986 to 1990 he studied composition with John Celona at the University of Victoria. He has written a large number of works for a variety of instruments from non-Western cultures (East Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and more), which have been performed and broadcast at festivals and on the radio both in Canada and abroad. He is the recipient of numerous Canada Council grants and commissions. He is an associate composer of the Canadian Music Centre, and presently serves as an artistic advisor for the Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra.

**Lars Kaario (conductor)** founded the professional-level chamber choir *Laudate Singers* in 1995 and has been its sole Artistic Director. His vision for the choir has always been multi-faceted – offering the community the experience of exciting and varied choral performances, giving trained singers the enjoyment and challenge of singing in a high calibre choir, and exploring the vast choral arts repertoire while adding to it through compositional commissions. Mr. Kaario retired in 2021 after a 35-year career at Capilano University where he was Director of Choral Studies in the Diploma of Music Program and head instructor in the University's Conducting Certificate Program. He continues to teach voice and conducting in his private studio and is enjoying directing *Laudate Singers* as well as the new *Paragon Singers*, an intermediate-level choir under *Laudate Singers Society's* banner.

**Laudate Singers**, founded in 1995 by current Artistic Director Lars Kaario, is a chamber choir based on the North Shore of Vancouver that strives to foster the development of professional musicians and enrich the cultural fabric of our community. *Laudate Singers* presents repertoire across periods, cultures and genres such as Baroque, Celtic and tango. A committed champion of Canadian choral music, *Laudate Singers* commissions and performs new Canadian works. Since 1995, the choir has been mentoring and nurturing young composers through its composer-in-residence programme. *Laudate* has worked with many of the region's finest instrumentalists including long-time collaborators Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra and North Shore Celtic Ensemble. <http://www.laudatesingers.com>

## TEXTS

***Ahavat Hadasa*** (Love of Hadasa)  
by Shalem Shabazi (17th Century, Hebrew)

Ahavat hadasa al l'vavi niksh'ra,  
va-ani b'tokh gola p'amai tsol'lim.



Lu yesh r'shut' li e-ele etkhab'ra  
tokh sha-arei tsiyon asher hem nah'l'lim.

Shakhrit v'arvit bat n'divim ezk'ra  
libi v'ra'yonai b'kheshek niv'halim.

Bi-n'-im z'mirot min'dod et-or'ra  
va-ani v'ra'yati b'rina tsohalim.

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My heart is bound to Hadassah\* in love,  
but my feet are sinking in the depths of exile.

When will He give me leave to go up and make my home  
within the extolled gates of Zion?

Morning and evening I call to mind the Princess.\*\*  
My heart and my mind reel with desire.

With sweet song I shall shake off the pain of separation,  
and then my dearest and I will loudly rejoice.

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\* The Land of Israel (Esther 2:7)

\*\* The Shekhina (the feminine aspect of divine presence)

- Translation and notes by T. Carmi

**You Zi Yin** (Song of the Wanderer)  
by Meng Jiao (A.D. 751 - 814, Mandarin Chinese)

Ci mu shou zhong xian  
You zi shen shang yi  
Lin xing mi mi feng  
Yi kong chi chi gui  
Shui yan cun cao xin  
Bao de san chun hui.

-----

Thread in the hand of a loving mother

Is worked into the coat of her wayward boy.  
Firm and close she sets  
the stitches now  
For she fears he will be  
slow, slow to return.  
Who can say that the heart of  
an inch-long grass  
Will repay the sunlight of full  
Spring?\*

\* The last two lines are stock metaphors, readily comprehensible in Chinese. "The heart of an inch-long grass" means the most exiguous and ardent affection, and "the sunlight of full Spring" means the tender and benign influence of a parent's love.

***The Dying Hours***

by Moshe Denburg

Time was when i loved you  
in my dreams  
of silent wandering  
oh how i wish  
to lie with you again  
like the earth and the rain like the sun and the flowers  
to see all worlds pass before our eyes  
and embrace far beyond the dying hours.

***Nasime Shiraaz*** (Breeze of Home)

by Hafez (14th century, Farsi)

Namaaze shaame gharibaan  
cho geriye aaghaazam  
be muyehaaye gharibaane  
ghesse pardaazam.

Be yaade yaar-o diyaar  
anchenaan begeryam zaar  
ke az jahaan raho rassme  
safar barandaazam.

Man az diyaare habibam

na-az belaade gharib  
mohaimena be rafighaane  
khod rasaan baazam.

Havaaye manzele yaar  
aabe zendegaaniye maast  
sabaa biyaar nasimi  
zekhaake shiraazam.

-----  
(Translation in paraphrase)

I begin my prayer in tears  
In my tears I tell stories.

In the memory of home and friends  
I cry so hard and sadly  
that I cause all separation to vanish.

I am from the home of the beloved  
not the place of strangers  
oh god, take me to my friends,  
believers like me in the beloved.

The breath of the home of the beloved is  
water of life,  
north wind, bring a fragrant breeze  
from Shiraz (my home).

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#### ABOUT THE VICO

*The VICO acknowledges that our work takes place on the traditional and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Nations, including the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-waututh Nations.*

The Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra, founded in 2001, was one of the world's first concert orchestras devoted specifically to performing new intercultural music on a grand scale. It is currently the only professional ensemble of its kind in Canada. Through composition, performance and educational outreach to both music professionals and the general public, the VICO supports the development of Canadian composers and musicians of diverse backgrounds (including Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese, Indian, Persian (Iranian), Latin and South American, Vietnamese, North American and European), and fosters the creation of musical works that

fuse and transcend cultural traditions.

The ensemble's annual activities include major concerts, a festival (Global Soundscapes), a free public educational series (Music of the Whole World), programs for high school and university students, workshops for professional musicians and composers, and more. Since repertoire for the VICO's uniquely diverse instrumentation does not already exist, creating new work is an integral component of our programming. Developing new commissions provides a necessary framework for bringing musicians and composers together to learn from each other, in a uniquely collaborative process. We are developing, refining and modelling pathways toward a more diverse and inclusive contemporary Canadian classical music scene.

Since its inaugural performance in 2001, the VICO has developed and performed over 50 new intercultural pieces by ground-breaking Canadian composers such as Elliot Weisgarber, Trichy Sankaran, Jin Zhang, Mark Armanini, Farshid Samandari, Moshe Denburg, Nikki Carter, Ed Henderson, Larry Nickel, Jeffrey Ryan, Rita Ueda, Lisa Cay Miller, Jim Hiscott, Lan Tung, Michael O'Neill, John Oliver, Grace Lee, Neil Weisensel, Joseph "Pepe" Danza, Niel Golden, Stephen Chatman, Rodney Sharman, Dorothy Chang, Neelamjit Dhillon, Jennifer Butler, Kara Gibbs, and Leslie Uyeda.

The VICO launched an artist-in-residence program in 2007, and has since hosted 30+ A-list international guest artists from India, China, Taiwan, Japan, the Netherlands, Iran, Azerbaijan, and the United States. The orchestra has also collaborated with the Chutzpah! Festival, Vancouver Pro Musica, Laudate Singers, Pacific Baroque Orchestra, the NOW Orchestra, Open Space (Victoria), and Pacific Rim Arts Society (Tofino) among many others.

The VICO builds bridges of imagination. We approach diversity as a fascinating challenge and a creative call to action. We make connections, between performers and audiences of all ages and backgrounds, across the Lower Mainland, throughout Canada and the world. We create and perform orchestral and chamber music that transcends boundaries: cultural, social, political, geographical. A 2012 recipient of the City of Vancouver Cultural Harmony Award, the VICO has been described as "the United Nations of music" (CBC Radio) and "music that sounds like Vancouver looks" (Georgia Straight). <http://www.vi-co.org>