

L I G E T I

györgy ligeti centennial

Bujdosó (*The fugitive*) (1946)
Drei phantasien (*Three fantasies*) (1982)
Éjszaka (*Night*) (1955)
Haj, ifjuság! (*Ah, youth!*) (1951)
Hortobágy (*Songs from Hortobágy*) (1951)
Inaktelki nóták (*Songs from Inaktelke*) (1953)
Kállai kettős (*A double-dance from Kálló*) (1952)
Két kánon (*Two canons*) (1947 & 1952)
Lakodalmas (*A wedding dance*) (1950)
Lux aeterna (*Eternal light*) (1966)
Magány (*Solitude*) (1946)
Magos kősziklának (*On the highest cliffs*) (1946)
Magyar etüdök (*Hungarian etudes*) (1983)
Nonsense madrigals (1988–93)
Pápainé (*Widow Pápai*) (1953)
Reggel (*Morning*) (1955)



THE ESOTERICS
Directed by Eric Banks

Saturday | 20 May 2023 | 8pm
Plymouth United Church of Christ
1217 6th Avenue | Seattle

Sunday | 21 May 2023 | 3pm
Christ Episcopal Church
310 North K Street | Tacoma

T H E E S O T E R I C S

Now celebrating its 30th concert season, Seattle's most innovative chorus has drawn local, national, and international praise for performing rarely-heard compositions of contemporary music for unaccompanied voices, for infusing elements of the literary, theatrical, and visual arts into the typical concert experience, and for inspiring and performing new *a cappella* choral settings of poetry, philosophy, and spiritual writings by composers around the world. In early 1992, Eric Banks brought together a group of friends to perform his Master's and Doctoral recitals in Choral Studies at the University of Washington. After Banks' recitals were completed, the group wanted to keep singing together, so Banks chose a name for his ensemble based on the Greek adjective εσοτερικος – which describes a close-knit community and the secret knowledge that its members share. Since incorporating with this name in 1993, The Esoterics has performed hundreds of concerts throughout the Pacific Northwest, has commissioned and premiered hundreds of new works for *a cappella* voices in myriad languages, and has mastered many of the most virtuosic choral works of the last century in concerts described as “compelling,” “crafted,” “luxuriant,” “lyrical,” “sumptuous,” and “superb.” The Esoterics has released twenty-one CD recordings on its own label (Terpsichore) and has been honored to compete at the 2000 Cork International Choral Festival (Ireland), the 2001 Certamen Coral de Tolosa (Spain), and the 2006 Harald Andersen International Choir Competition in Helsinki (Finland). As well, The Esoterics has demonstrated its continuing commitment to choral education in becoming the only choral ensemble in Washington State that grants continuing-education credit to its members who also teach in the public schools. In recognition for its efforts in choral education and innovation, The Esoterics has been honored five times with the ASCAP and Chorus America Award for the Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music (in 2001, 2003, 2006, 2008, and 2017). The Esoterics has been honored to receive grants from the arts commissions of Washington State, King County, and the City of Seattle, as well as funding from Amazon, Google, Microsoft, the Seattle Foundation, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the BMI Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Esoterics is a proud member chorus of ACDA (the American Choral Directors Association), Chorus America, IFCM (the International Federation for Choral Music), and GALA (the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses).

M I S S I O N S T A T E M E N T

The Esoterics is a Seattle-based vocal ensemble that is dedicated to performing and perpetuating contemporary *a cappella* choral settings of poetry, philosophy, and spiritual writings from around the world.

While cultivating artistic expression and cultural understanding among its singers and audience alike, The Esoterics aspires to reflect the beauty, power, and significance that are inherent in the music of our time.

E R I C B A N K S

As a conductor, composer, clinician, vocalist, linguist, and ethnomusicologist, Eric Banks has garnered significant acclaim as one of the most creative and compelling choral directors in the United States for his unwavering commitment to new music for unaccompanied voices. In 1992, Eric founded The Esoterics, a professional-caliber chamber chorus in Seattle whose mission is to perform and perpetuate contemporary choral music beyond the scope of the established *a cappella* canon. After completing his BA in Composition at Yale University in 1990, Eric relocated to Seattle to study in the departments of Choral Studies and Music Theory at the University of Washington. His MM thesis (1992) is a performance edition of *Dixit Dominus* by Chiara Margarita Cozzolani; his MA thesis (1995) is a postmodern analysis of Arvo Pärt's *Credo*; and his DMA dissertation (1996) surveys the choral music of Mexican composer and Aztec ethnomusicologist Carlos Chávez. In 1997, at the conclusion of his graduate study, Banks traveled to Sweden as a Fulbright Scholar and Lois Roth Fellow in order to learn more about its contemporary choral culture. While in Stockholm, Eric performed with several ensembles, including the Swedish Radio Choir and the Eric Ericson Chamber Choir. In his music, Eric is drawn to ideas that are 'esoteric' in origin, and chooses to express concepts that are undiscovered, under-represented, or not easily decipherable to a wider audience. As a composer, Banks has been able to combine his love of poetry, foreign language, classical civilization, social justice, comparative religion, and the natural sciences to create a growing repertoire of new works for *a cappella* chorus. Several of Banks' commissioned works have been recorded by The Esoterics, and can be found on CDs released on the Terpsichore label. Eric was a visiting scholar at the Royal Conservatory of Music and Swedish National Radio in Stockholm, as well as at the Cama Oriental Institute in Mumbai, India. Winner of the 2010 *Dale Warland Singers Commission Award* from Chorus America and the American Composers Forum, Eric has received composition and research grants from 4Culture, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Artist Trust, the Atwood Foundation, New Music USA, the San Francisco Arts Commission, Seattle City Artists, the Washington State Arts Commission, and three “creativity” grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. His upcoming premieres include pieces for the International Federation for Choral Music, the Taipei Philharmonic Chorus, and the Vancouver Chamber Choir. Eric lives in Seattle with David Gellman, his husband of 26 years (who is also The Esoterics' graphic design guru). You can read more about Eric's work on his own webpage: www.ericbanks.com. Eric is a member of ASCAP.

L I G E T I

györgy ligeti centennial

P R O G R A M

Please turn off all noise-making devices, and refrain from talking during the performance.

This program includes all of the compositions for mixed chorus by György Ligeti (1923-2006)

With intermission, the running time of this concert is about 100 minutes.

Éjszaka (*Night*, 1955)

Bujdosó (*The fugitive*, 1946)

Pápainé (*Widow Pápai*, 1953)

Nonsense madrigals (1988-93)

- I. Two dreams and a little bat
- II. Cuckoo in the pear-tree
- III. The alphabet
- IV. Flying Robert
- V. The lobster quadrille
- VI. A long, sad tale

Kállai kettős (*A double-dance from Kálló*, 1952)

- I. Felülről fúj az őszi szél (*Up above the autumn winds blow*)
- II. Eb fél, kutya fél (*The dogs are afraid, the hounds are afraid*)

Lakodalmas (*A wedding dance*, 1950)

Két kánon (*Two canons*, 1947 & 1952)

- I. Ha folyóvíz volnék (*If I were a river*)
- II. Pletykázó asszonyok (*Gossiping women*)

Magány (*Solitude*, 1946)

Lux aeterna (*Eternal light*, 1966)

INTERMISSION

Magos kősziklának (*On the highest cliffs*, 1946)

Drei phantasien (*Three fantasies*, 1982)

- I. Hälfte des Lebens (*The middle of life*)
- II. Wenn aus der Ferne (*If from a distance*)
- III. Abendphantasie (*Evening fantasy*)

Hortobágy (*Songs from Hortobágy*, 1951)

Magyar etüdök (*Hungarian etudes*, 1983)

- I. Spiegelkanon (*Mirror canon*)
- II. Árnyak sora (*A row of shadows*)
- III. Vásár (*At the market*)

Haj, ifjuság! (*Ah, youth!*, 1951)

Inaktelki nóták (*Songs from Inaktelke*, 1953)

Reggel (*Morning*, 1955)

THE ESOTERICS

Eric Banks *Founding director*

Aaron Moore

Allison Fortenberry

Avery Wong

Bayta Maring

Betsy Baeskens

Brittni Lyanage

Casey Elkins

Christi Corey

Christine Dove

Curtis Man

Daniel Powers

Danya Clevenger

Dave Doody

David Akers

Erin Bathurst

Erin Harlan

Gillian Dockins

Jeremy Evans

Jim Peterson

Joe Scott

Jonathan Haynes

Jonathan You

Julia Jay

Kathy Arpin

Kelly Baker

Lillian Ashworth

Livia Lennington

Logan Cox

Luke Hartley

Maria Drury

Marjorie Gómez

Matt Bonner

Michael Saunders

Mitchell Baier

Nathan Wasner

Nora Allen

Patricia Lahtinen

Patrick Clark

Sam Beckert

Sarah Haynes

Sarah Lewontin

Sari Breznau

Shawna Avinger

Tristain Holmes

Special thanks to:

Tim Fosket | *Supertitlist*

Daniel Powers | *Audio Producer*

Mitchell Baier | *Facilities Coordinator*

Matthew Bonner | *Volunteer Coordinator*

Texts and translations

Éjszaka (*Night*, 1955) poem by Sándor Weöres

Rengeteg tövis: csönd.
Infinite wilderness: hush.
Én csöndem: szívem dobogása... Éjszaka.
I am silent: my heart is beating... Night.

Bujdosó (*The fugitive*, 1946) a traditional Hungarian poem

Fölkelt már a csillag Lengyelország felé,
The stars are now shining over Poland,
Magam is elmegeyek, babám, arra felé.
Where I must go myself, my darling.
Megvetették nekem a megfogó hálót,
For those who hate me have cast a net,
Megfogtak engemet, mint egy utonállót.
Megfought me like an outlaw.

Lám, megmondtam, rózsám, ne szeress engemet,
See, I told you not to love me, sweetheart,
Mert Somogy vármegye hajszoltat engemet;
For all Somogy county has been chasing me;
A tömlőc feneke az én vetett ágyam,
The floor of the dungeon is my bed,
Annak a teteje takaró vánkosom.
And its roof my only blanket.

Pápainé (*Widow Pápai*, 1953) a traditional Hungarian poem

Jaj de széles, jaj de hosszú ez az út,
This road is long, this road is wide,
Kiön ez a kilenc betyár elindult,
As we travel it we find nine outlaws,
Kilenc betyár, kilenc fegyver a váltán,
With nine weapons in hand, and like this,
Úgy sétálnak Pápainé udvarán.
They arrive in the yard of the Widow Pápai.

"Pápainé, adjon Isten jó estét!"
"Widow Pápai, God grant you a good evening!"
"Fogadj Isten, kilenc betyár, szerencsét!"
"God bless you, nine outlaws, good luck to you!"
"Pápainé, ne kívánjon szerencsét,
"Widow Pápai, we don't need your luck, for
Még az éjjel nagy kés járja a szívé!"
Before night's end, a knife will pierce your heart!"

"Marcsa lányom, szaladj le a pincébe,
"Hurry, daughter, run to the cellar,
Hozzá föl bort az aranyos iccébe!"
Bring up our sweetest wine for them!"
"Pápainé, nem köll nekünk a bora,
"Widow Pápai, we don't need your wine, for
Még az éjjel piros vérét kiontja!"
Before night's end, your red blood will be spilled."

Pápainé kiszaladt az udvarra,
Widow Pápai ran into the yard,
A két kezét a fejére kapcsolta.
Hands upon her head, she cried out:
"Jaj, Istenem, bocsásd meg a bűnömet!
"Oh my God, forgive me my sins, for
Kilenc betyár veszi el életemet!"
These nine outlaws will take away my life!"

Megkésztült már a hetényi nagy ucca,
It's a week later, and on this long, wide road,
Pápainét most viszik végig rajta;
The Widow Pápai is now being carried;
Fekete a temetőnek kapuja,
Once you are through the black graveyard gate,
Pápainé, nem jöhetsz vissza soha.
Widow Pápai, you can never come back.

Nonsense madrigals (1988-1993)

I. Two dreams and a little bat (1988)

In upper two voices (alto):

Seven sweet singing birds up in a tree;
Seven swift sailing-ships white upon the sea;
Seven bright weather-cocks shining in the sun;
Seven slim race-horses ready for a run;
Seven gold butterflies, flitting overhead;
Seven red roses blowing in a garden bed;
Seven white lilies, with honey bees inside them;
Seven round rainbows with clouds to divide them;
Seven pretty little girls with sugar on their lips;
Seven witty little boys, whom everybody tips;
Seven nice fathers, to call little maids joys;
Seven nice mothers, to kiss the little boys;
Seven nights running I dreamt it all plain;
With bread and jam for supper
I could dream it all again!

In tenor:

Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!
How I wonder what you're at!
Up above the world you fly,
Like a tea-tray in the sky.

In lower three voices (baritone and bass):

Nine grenadiers, with bayonets in their guns;
Nine bakers' baskets, with hot-cross buns;
Nine brown elephants, standing in a row;
Nine new velocipedes, good ones to go;
Nine knickerbocker suits, with buttons all complete;
Nine pairs of skates with straps for the feet;
Nine clever conjurors eating hot coals;
Nine sturdy mountaineers leaping on their poles;
Nine little drummer-boys beating on their drums;
Nine fat aldermen sitting on their thumbs;
Nine new knockers to our front door;
Nine new neighbours that I never saw before;
Nine times running I dreamt it all plain;
With bread and cheese for supper
I could dream it all again!

— *simultaneously setting The dream of a girl who lived at Seven-Oaks, The dream of a boy who lived at Nine-Elms by William Brighty Rands (1864), and Twinkle, twinkle, little bat by Lewis Carroll (1865)*

II. Cuckoo in the pear-tree (1988)

The Cuckoo sat in the old pear-tree. Cuckoo!
Raining or snowing, naught cared he. Cuckoo!
Cuckoo, cuckoo, naught cared he.

The Cuckoo flew over a housetop high. Cuckoo!
"Dear, are you at home, for here am I? Cuckoo!
Cuckoo, cuckoo, here am I."

"I dare not open the door to you. Cuckoo!
Perhaps you are not the right cuckoo. Cuckoo!
Cuckoo, cuckoo, the right Cuckoo."

"I am the right Cuckoo, the proper one. Cuckoo!
For I am my father's only son, Cuckoo!
Cuckoo, cuckoo, his only son."

"If you are your father's only son – Cuckoo!
The bobbin pull tightly,
Come through the door lightly – Cuckoo!

"If you are your father's only son – Cuckoo!
It must be you, the only one –
Cuckoo, cuckoo, my own Cuckoo! Cuckoo!"

— *William Brighty Rands (1864)*

III. The alphabet (1988)

[*The names of the letters of the English alphabet.*]

IV. Flying Robert (1988)

When the rain comes tumbling down
In the country or the town,
All good little girls and boys
Stay at home and mind their toys.
Robert thought; "No, when it pours,
It's better out of doors." Rain it did,
And in a minute Bob was in it;
Here you see him, silly fellow,
Underneath his red umbrella!

What a wind! Oh! How it whistles
Through the trees and flowers and thistles!
Oh! It has caught his red umbrella!
Now look at him, silly fellow,
Up he flies to the skies!
No one heard his screams and cries!
Through the clouds the rude wind bore him,
And his hat flew on before him;
And the hat went up so high,
That it really touch'd the sky.

Soon they got to such a height,
They were nearly out of sight.
No one ever yet could tell
Where they stopp'd or where they fell.
Only this one thing is plain,
Bob was never seen again...

— *The story of flying Robert, adapted from Struwelpeter by Heinrich Hoffmann (1845)*

V. The lobster quadrille (1989)

"Will you walk a little faster?"
said a whiting to a snail.
"There's a porpoise close behind us,
and he's treading on my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters
and the turtles all advance!
They are waiting on the shingle –
will you come and join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you,
will you join the dance?"

"You can really have no notion
how delightful it will be
When they take us up and throw us,
with the lobsters, out to sea!"
But the snail replied "Too far, too far!"
and gave a look askance –
Said he thanked the whiting kindly,
but he would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not,
would not join the dance.

"What matters it how far we go?"
his scaly friend replied.
"There is another shore, you know,
upon the other side.
The further off from England
the nearer is to France –
Then turn not pale, beloved snail,
but come and join the dance.
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you,
will you join the dance?"

– Lewis Carroll (1865)

VI. A long, sad tale (1993)

"Off with her head!"

Head, heal, teal, tell, tall, tail...

"Mine is a long and a sad tale!"

"It is a long tail, certainly,
but why do you call it sad?"

*Turn witch into fairy.
Witch, winch, wench, tench,
tenth, tents, tints, tilts, tills,
fills, falls, fails, fairs, fairy!*

Fury said to a mouse,
That he met in the house,
"Let us both go to law:
I will prosecute you. – Come,
I'll take no denial;
We must have a trial:
For really this morning
I've nothing to do."

*Furies, buries, buried, burked,
barked, barred, barrel...*

Said the mouse to the cur,
"Such a trial, dear Sir,
With no jury or judge,
would be wasting our breath."
"I'll be judge, I'll be jury,"
Said cunning old Fury:
"I'll try the whole cause,
and condemn you to death."

*Quilt, guilt, guile, guide, glide,
slide, slice, spice, spine, spins,
shins, shies, shier, sheer, sheet...*

– from *Alice's adventures in Wonderland* (1865),
and *Original games and puzzles* by Lewis Carroll

Kállai kettős (A double-dance from Kálló, 1952) two Hungarian folk dances

I.

Felülről fúj az őszi szél,
The autumn winds are blowing up above,
Zörög a fán a falevél.
And the leaves are rustling in the trees.
Ugyan babám, hová lettél?
But darling, what has become of you?
Már két este el nem jöttél,
You have not come by for two evenings,
Talán a verembe estél?
Talán a verembe estél?
Maybe you have fallen into a pit?
Nem estem én a verembe.
I have not fallen into a pit.
Véled estem szerelembe.
I have fallen in love with you.

II.

Eb fél, kutya fél,
The dogs are afraid, the hounds are afraid,
Még a kopasz ipam él...
My bald father-in-law is still alive...
Él meg az én öregapám, öreganyám,
Grandpa and grandma are still alive,
Meg annak a nagyapja, nagyanyja,
So are their grandpas and grandmas,
De még annak öregapja, öreganyja az is él!
And even their grandparents are still alive!

Eb fél, kutya fél,
The dogs are afraid, the hounds are afraid,
Hugyagon mindenki él:
Everyone is still alive in Hugyag:
Öregapám, öreganyám, ipam, napam,
My grandpa, grandma, father-in-law, mother-in-law,
Meg annak az öregapja, öreganyja.
And all of their grandfathers and grandmothers.

Nem vagyok én senkinek se adósa,
I have nothing to complain about,
Él még az én feleségem édesanyja édesapja,
My wife's mother and father are still alive,
Meg annak az édesanyja, édesapja,
And so are their mothers and fathers,
Meg annak a, de meg aztán:
And also theirs... But what's more:

Szép vagyok én csak a szemem fekete,
I am handsome, my eyes are inky black,
Nem vagyok én az erdőbe remete,
I am not like a hermit in the woods,
Szomszédasszony pirosbarna leánya
My neighbor's daughter, with the chestnut hair,
Annak vagyok szeretője, babája.
She is my darling, my love.

Eb fél, kutya fél,
The dogs are afraid, the hounds are afraid,
Még a kopasz ipam él!
My bald father-in-law is still alive!
Öreganyja, az is él!
And his grandma is still alive too!
Hugyagon mindenki él!
Everyone is still alive in Hugyag!

Lakodalmas (A wedding dance, 1950) setting an adapted Hungarian folksong

Menyasszony, vőlegény, de szép mind a kettő,
The bride, the groom, both so beautiful,
Olyan mind a kettő, mint az aranyvessző,
Standing like two stalks of goldenrod
Hej, mint az aranyvessző.
Yes, like goldenrod.

Jeges a sudárfa, nehéz vizet merni,
The well is frozen, it's hard to draw water,
Ösmeretlen kislányt nehéz megölelni,
It's hard to hold a maiden who's a stranger,
Hej, nehéz megölelni.
Yes, she's hard to hold.

Vetettem ibolyát, várom kikelését,
I planted the violets, I wait for them to sprout,
Várom a rózsámnak visszajövetelét,
I wait for my sweetheart's return,
Hej, visszajövetelét.
Yes, I wait for her.

Van széna, van szalma a szénatartóba,
There are hay and straw in the haystack,
Megölellek rózsám a pitarajtóba!
I will greet you at the entry gate,
Hej, a pitarajtóba.
Yes, at the gate.

Két kánon (Two canons, 1947 & 1952)

I. Ha folyóvíz volnék (If I were a river, 1947)

Ha folyóvíz volnék,
If I were a river,
Bánatot nem tudnék.
I would not know sorrow.
Hegyek közt, völgyek közt,
Between mountains, within valleys,
Szép csendesen folynék,
I would flow beautifully and quietly,
Bánatot, haj, nem tudnék.
Yes, I would not know sorrow.

II. Pletykázó asszonyok (Gossiping women, 1952)

Juli néni, Kati néni
Auntie Julie, Auntie Kathy,
Letye-petye-lepetye!
Chitter-chatter-chitty-chat!
Üldögélnék a sarokba,
They sit together in the corner,
Jár a nyalvük, mint a rokka
And flap their gums like a spinning wheel,
Letye-petye-lepetye!
Chitter-chatter-chitty-chat!

"Hallotta, hogy letye-petye?"
"Have you heard about thus-and-such?"
"Ne mondja!"
"Don't you say a word!"
"Mit szol, letye-petye,
"And what about, pitter-patter,
Petye-letye-petye?"
Chatter-chitty-chat!"
"Hallatlan!"
"That's absurd!"

"Bárki inge, rokolyája,
"His shirt and her skirt,
Letye-petye-lepetye,
Chitter-chatter-chitty-chat!"
Lyukat vágnak középebe,
Torn down the middle,
Kitűzik a ház elébe,
Right in front of the house!"
Jajj! Jajj! Jajj!
"Oh! My! God!
Letye-petye-lepetye!
Chitter-chatter-chitty-chat!"

Magány (Solitude, 1946) poem by Sándor Weöres

Sej, elaludtam,
Oh, I fell asleep,
Állóvíz partján.
On the banks of the river.
Füvön fektemben,
While I lay in the grass,
Ottan álomban,
I saw in my dream,
Nőtt lilemszál.
A single white lily.

Le kéne tépni,
I should have picked it,
Mellemlre tűzni,
And pinned it to my breast,
Az én rózsámat
Just like my darling rose
Kéne csókolni.
That I should have kissed.
Sej, ellankadok,
Oh, But I digress,
Lassan bágyadok,
I'm slowing down,
Holnap meghalok.
For tomorrow I shall die.

Lux aeterna (Eternal light, 1966) *text from the Latin Requiem*

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,
May everlasting light shine upon them, O Lord,
Cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es.
With your saints in eternity, for you are merciful.
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine;
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord;
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.
And may perpetual light shine upon them.

INTERMISSION

Magos kősziklának (On the highest cliffs, 1946) *a Hungarian folksong*

Magos kősziklának,
Atop the highest cliffs,
Oldalából nyílik,
Within the deepest crevices,
A szerelem orvosság.
Blooms the love that heals all.

Ki az én szívemet
This blossom will live forever,
Gyenge termetemet
Renewing my faint heart
Mindenkor megújítja.
And my feeble body.

Aki a szerelmet
And all the people
Soha nem próbálta,
Who have never tasted love,
Csak álomnak álitja.
Will think it's just a dream.

Drei phantasien (Three fantasies, 1982) *excerpts from three poems by Friedrich Hölderlin*

I. Hälfte des Lebens (The middle of life, 1804)

Mit gelben Birnen hänget
Laden with yellow pears
Und voll mit wilden Rosen
And replete with wild roses
Das Land in den See,
The land hangs over the lake,
Ihr holden Schwäne,
You fair swans,
Und trunken von Küssen...
So drunk on kisses...

Weh mir, wo nehm' ich, wenn
Woe is me! When is it winter,
Es Winter ist, die Blumen, und wo
Where can I find flowers,
Den Sonnenschein,
And where is the sunshine,
Und Schatten der Erde?
And the shade of the earth?
Die Mauern stehn
The walls are standing
Sprachlos und kalt, im Winde
Speechless and cold, and in the wind
Klirren die Fahnen.
The weathervanes rattle.

II. Wenn aus der Ferne (If from a distance, 1824)

Wenn aus der Ferne, da wir geschieden sind,
If from a distance, although we have been apart,
Ich dir noch kennbar bin...
I am still recognizable to you...

So sage, wie erwartet die Freundin dich
Tell me, how does your beloved wait for you
In jenen Gärten, da nach entsetzlicher
In those same gardens, where after that terrible
Und dunkler Zeit wir uns gefunden?
And dark time we found each other?

Wie flossen Stunden dahin, wie still
How the hours glided by, and how calm
War meine Seele über der Wahrheit daß
My soul was with the truth that
Ich so getrennt gewesen wäre?
I had been away for so long?

War's Frühling? war es Sommer? Die Nachtigall
Was it spring? Was it summer? The nightingale
Mit süßem Liede lebte mit Vögeln, die
Kept his sweet song alive with the other birds,
Nicht ferne waren im Gebüsch,
Not so far away in the bushes,
Und mit Gerüchen umgaben Bäum' uns.
And the trees surrounded us with their scents.

Um Wänd und Mauern grünte der Efeu, grünt'
On the walls and bowers the ivy grew green,
Ein selig Dunkel hoher Alleen. Oft
A blissful darkness in tall avenues.
Des Abends, Morgens waren dort wir
Often we spent evenings and mornings there
Redeten manches und sahn uns froh an.
Talking so much and gazing at each other with joy.

...Ach! wehe mir!

...Oh, woe is me!
Es waren schöne Tage. Aber
These were such beautiful days. But,
Taurige Dämmerung folgte nachher.
They were followed by such a sad twilight.

III. Abendphantasie (1799)

Am Abendhimmel blühet ein Frühling auf;
A blossom of spring opens in the evening sky;
Unzählig blühen die Rosen, und ruhig scheint
Countless roses bloom, and the golden world
Die goldene Welt; O dorthin nehmt mich,
Seems to be at peace; Oh transport me there,
Purpurne Wolken! Und möge droben
Purple clouds! And while I am up above

In Licht und Luft zerrinnen mir Lieb' und Leid! –
May my love and sorrow dissolve into light and air!
Doch, wie verscheucht von törichter Bitte, fliehet
Then, as if frightened away by my foolish plea,
Der Zauber; dunkel wird's und einsam
The spell vanishes; it becomes dark and lonely
Unter dem Himmel, wie immer, bin ich –
Beneath the sky, and as ever, I remain –

Komm du nun, sanfter Schlummer! Zu viel begehrt
Come now, sweet slumber! For there is too much
Das Herz; doch endlich Jugend! Verglühst du ja,
Yearning in my heart! In the end, youth will burn
Du ruhelose, träumerische!
Itself out, the restless, dreamy one!
Friedlich und heiter ist dann das Alter.
Old age is so serene and peaceful.

Hortobágy (Songs from Hortobágy, 1951) *three Hungarian folksongs from Hortobágy*

I.

Kiszáradt a tóból mind a sár, mind a víz,
The pond's muddy water has all dried up,
A szegín barom is csak a pásztorra níz:
And the poor flock gazes at its shepherd:
Istenem, teremtöm, adj egy csendes esőt,
Oh God, our maker, send us a soft rain,
A szegín jószágnak jó legelő mezőt,
Provide the suffering beasts with green pasture,
A szegín bojtárnak hű, igaz szeretőt.
And bring this boy a sweetheart, faithful and true.

Esik eső, esik, a lovam kinn ázik,
Now it's raining, and my horse is soaked outside,
Sallangos kantárja hej, de nagyon ázik!
His fancy bridle, oh, it's completely drenched!
Esik eső, esik, nem lehet elbújni:
It's pouring down, there is nowhere to hide:
Ezt a szilaj minest szélnek kell fordítani.
Surely, my wild horse will be released to the wind.

És a hideg eső, rakáson a gulya,
The rain is so cold, the herd huddles together,
Rí a veres bornyú, bőg az ídesanyja.
The russet calf cries out, its mother cries too.
Sér a veres bornyú, bőg az ídesanyja.
Her calf is injured now, so she calls for help,
Bort iszik a gulyás számadó bojtárja.
And the shepherd's helper drinks his wine inside.

II.

Még azt mondják, nincs asztalom, székem.
They say I don't have a table or chairs of my own.
Hercegnének nincs olyan, mint nékem.
But the princess herself has nothing on me.
Mindenem van, amire szükségem.
I have everything I need.
Van egészig, ahhoz eleségem.
I have my health, and plenty of food to eat.

Magamban is helyin van a lílek,
My heart's spirit is healthy too,
E világon senkitül se félek.
And I fear no one in this world.
Megeszem a jó heti kenyeret.
I will eat good bread this week,
Főzeliket, szalonnát eleget.
With plenty of vegetables and meat as well.

Ha látom a fergeget idejít,
When I see a storm coming towards me,
Begyűröm a süvegem tetejét.
I throw my hat on my head.
Csak úgy nízem az üdőt alúla,
And just watch it from under my cap,
Még a jég is visszapatann rúlla.
While the hail bounces off its rim.

Ha felkelek magam megfrissítve,
And after I wake up and wash up,
Elballagok danolva, füttyölve.
I go out whistling and singing.
Gulyámat sétálva legeltetem,
I bring my cattle to pasture on foot,
Az itató felé téregetem.
And drive them to their watering hole.

Vízmerissel mozgatom testemet,
I stretch across and gather clean water,
Megújítja vízmeris éltetem.
Because it renews my energy.
Majd szalonnát sütök vacsorára,
Then I fry bacon for my supper,
Ótán gyújtok tűz mellett pipára.
And light a pipe by the fireplace.

Azír, hogy én ily könnyesen ílek,
Truly, I have an easy life,
Szíp színt, erőt mással nem cserélek.
I wouldn't trade my looks or strength with anyone.
Ha valaki nem hiszi ezt nékem,
And if you don't believe me,
Jöjjik véllem birkózni a gyepen.
We can settle it with a wrestle in the grass.

III.

Éz az eső fú a szél,
Rain is falling, wind is blowing,
Hull a fáról a levél, csuhajja!
Leaves are dropping from the tree, hey ho!
Káromkodik a juhász,
The shepherd is cursing,
Hogy a juha széjjel mász, csuhajja!
For his sheep are running amok, hey ho!
Ha nem esik, nem fú szél,
But when there is no rain or wind,
Sej, a juhász vígan él, csuhajja!
The shepherd's life is happy, hey ho!
Iszik, eszik kedvre,
He drinks and eats to his heart's content,
Nem romlik el a vére, csuhajja!
So his blood doesn't get weak, hey ho!
Estére, ha teheti,
And in the evening, when he can,
Szeretójét öleli, csuhajja!
He hugs his sweetheart, hey ho!

Így a juhász vígan él,
The shepherd has a happy life,
Fél világgal nem cserél, csuhajja!
And he wouldn't swap for the world, hey ho!
Ó, te szíros Kánahán,
Oh, fertile Caanan (land of milk and honey),
Hortobágyak mellyike, csuhajja!
Steppes of Hortobágy, hey ho!
De sok magyar legínnek
Surely, you have become
Ídesanyja lettél te, csuhajja!
The godmother of all Hungarian lads, hey ho!

Kenyeret adsz kezibe,
You put bread in their hands,
Pízt adsz az erszínnyibe, csuhajja!
And money in their pockets, hey ho!
Úgy ereszted újtjára,
And when you send them on their way,
Nyalka legín módjára, csuhajja!
They are handsome young men, hey ho!

Magyar etüdök (*Hungarian etudes, 1983*) *four poems (etudes) by Sándor Weöres*

I. Spiegelkanon (*Mirror canon, #9*)

Csipp, csepp, egy csepp, öt csepp, meg tíz:
Drip, drop, one drop, five drops, and then ten:
Olvad a jégcsap, csepereg a víz.
The ice caps are melting, as the water drips.

II. Árnyak sora (*A row of shadows, #49 and #40*)

Árnyak sora ül a réten.
A row of shadows rests in the meadow.
Nyáj zsong be a faluvégén.
The flock murmurs at the edge of town.
Zúg-dong suru raj a fákon.
A dense swarm buzzes in the trees.
Békák dala kel az árkon.
The song of the frogs rises from the ditch.
Bim-bam! Torony uregében
Ding-dong! From the heart of the tower
Érc-hang pihen el az éjben.
A metallic tone finds distant rest in the night.

Brekekex, brekekex, brekekex!
[Sound imitation for the croaking of frogs]
Gyere bujj viz alá ha szeretsz!
Come and hide under the water, if you wish!
Ideleenn soha sincs vad idő!
Down here it is never a wild time!
Ideleenn sose hull az eső!
Down here the rain never falls!

III. Vásár (*At the market, #90*)

In bass I:

Olcsó az alma! Itt van halomba!
Cheap apples! Here in a pile!
Aki veszi, meg is eszi! Olcsó az alma!
Buy 'em and eat 'em up! Get your cheap apples!

In alto I:

Fut a kutya-szán, kutya-szán!
Dog sleds! Get your flying dog sled!
Szalad igazán, igazán!
This thing races like a dream!
Köszörüs vagyok én!
I should know; I'm the driver!
Kutya-szánon futok én!
I know how this dog sled glides!

In soprano I:

Van-e csizma eladó szélbe-fagyba mindig jó?
Who is selling boots that are good in snow and mud?
Van kis csizma eladó, szép varrás a szarán!
Here are some boots with fine stitching on the leg!
Hogyha ilyet hordanék, bizony sose bánám!
Wear them home, and never regret it!

Van-e ködmon eladó hóba-sárba mindig jó?
Who is selling fur coats that are good in wind and frost?
Van kis ködmon eladó, szép himzés a vállán!
Here are some coats with fine embroidery on the shoulder!
Hogyha ilyet hordanék, bizony sose bánám!
Wear them home, and never regret it!

In tenor I:

Jó márc a cseberben! Csuprom telimertem!
The mead here is so good! I just filled up my jug!
Teli van a csuprom! Idd már, ki ne fusson!
Now I'm a little drunk! Try some; don't run away!

In choir II:

Érkezik a vándrocirkusz!
The traveling circus is coming!
Hoznak elefántot!
They have an elephant!
Tarka bohóc vezet!
And colorful clowns!
Füsti Pisti követi,
Smoky Steve is following them,
Ílyet sose látott!
You've never seen anything like it!

Haj, ifjuság! (*Ah, youth!, 1951*) *two pieces based on Hungarian folk texts*

I.

Azt hallottam rózsám, hogy el akarsz hagyni!
Darling, I heard you wanted me to leave!
El hát!
Go ahead!
Hogy kell már szegén fejemnek új árván maradni?
How can I stay here alone, with a bow to my head?
Könnyen.
Easily.
Oh, én édes rózsám, hát már hova legyek?
Oh sweetheart, where should I go?
Látom, hogy már megvetettél, azért hát elmenyek.
I guess you hate me now, so I will go.
Jó utat!
Bon voyage!

Megmáslottam, rózsám, minapi mondásom.
Sweetheart, I regret what I said the other day.
Késő már!
Too late!
Vissza hoztam lábaid hoz igaz megbánásom.
I humbly return to you; I'm so sorry.
Vidd vissza.
I take it back!
Vigyázz, rózsám, mert maradhatsz könnyen eladóba!
Careful, darling; you can always stay on the market!
Bízd reám.
Trust me.
Isten uccse mást keresek még ma a fonóba!
I swear to God, I'm looking for someone new today!

Jere bé, jere bé, üssön meg a szösz-menkő.
Let's go! Hurry up! Strike while the iron's hot!
Hej, haj! Hajda haj! Haj! Hajda hopp!
Hey ho! Come on how! Hey! Hurry up!

II.

Nem láttam én télbe fecskét,
In winter, the swallows are scarce,
Most óltem meg egy pár csirkét;
So I slaughtered a couple of chickens;
Ettem annak zúját, máját,
I dined on their gizzards and liver,
Csókolom a rózsám száját.
Csókolom a rose's mouth.
And went over to kiss my darling.

Látod rózsám, látod mégis
You see, my rose, I came
Hozzad jöttem, hakésón is,
To see you, late in the evening,
Eljöhettek minden este,
I can come to you every night,
Mer nem lakom olyan messze.
Since I don't live so far away.

Haj, ifjúság szép ifjúság!
Ah, youth, beautiful youth!
Az ifjúság nem bolondság;
Youth is not foolishness;
Ki nem tudja fölhasználni,
For those who don't enjoy it,
Késő lesz majd vénen bánni.
Soon it will be too late to complain.

Haj csillagom, gyócs ingesem,
Ah, my star, I'm so in love with you,
Pillants reám szerelmesen,
Look upon me lovingly;
Ne fordulj el, ha meg foglak,
Don't turn away when I hold you,
Ne pirulj, ha megcsókollak.
Don't blush when I kiss you.

E legén csak hozzá nyúlt,
The lad just has to touch his lass,
Ba kisleány elpirult!
And she cannot help but blush!
Ne nézz rózsám a szemembe,
My dear, don't look me in the eyes,
Meghalok szégyeltembe.
For I shall die from shame.

Az én szivem jaj, hogy dobog!
My heart is pounding with passion!
Hogy ilyen szép leánt fogok.
Such a beautiful woman is mine!
Éget a szemed, rólam el ne vedd.
Your eyes are burning, don't hide them from me.

Ifjak vagyunk, nem tehetjük
We are young, we cannot
Hogy mi egymást ne szeressük.
Hide our love for each other.
Éget a szeméd, rólam el ne vedd.
Your eyes are burning, don't hide them from me.

Mondd meg nekem fürge Ferenc,
Tell me more, young Frank,
Eccerre hány leánt szeretsz?
How many girls can you love at the same time?
Hogy megmondjam, nem tehetem,
I cannot not answer you truly,
Nem szólhatok, bérekedtem.
For I cannot speak; I'm hoarse.

Inaktelki nóták (*Songs from Inaktelke*, 1953) *three Hungarian folksongs*

I.

Sej! Hideg sincsen, mégis befagyott a tó,
Hey! It's not cold, but the lake is still frozen,
Szeretöm sincs, mégis rólam foly a szó.
I have no lover, but they still talk about me.
Hát hogyha még szeretőt is tartanék,
And surely if I had a lover of my own,
Sej! Inaktelke lakósa nem lehetnék.
Hey! I would never live here in Inaktelke.

Sej! Elmennék én tinálatok az este,
Hey! I would go to your place in the evening,
Ha jaz anyád az ablakba nem lesne.
If your mother wasn't watching out the window.
Mit csinálnék tinálatok egyebet?
What could I do at your place?
Sej! Két válladra hajtánám bús fejemet.
Hey! I'd rest my sorry head on your shoulder.

II.

Úri bicsok, nincsen nyele,
Like a knife without a handle,
Kartan felsin', nincs pendelye.
Like a camisole without arms.

Fenn a magos ég, a csillagos ég,
Swear on the starry heavens above,
Kisangyalom, szeretsz még?
Tell me little angel: do you still love me?

Túri vásár sátor nélkül,
Like a traveling fair without tents,
Mit ér a lány legény nélkül?
What is a girl without her mate?

Ezt a táncot ki nem járja,
No one can do such a dance,
Száradjon le keze lába.
Without their hands and feet getting dry.

III.

Én az uccán már végig se mehetek,
I can't walk down the street anymore,
Még azt mondják, hogy szeretőt keresek.
Because they say I'm looking for a lover.
Nem kell nekem, van már nekem egy barna,
But I am not; I already have a brunette,
Hej! Jobbról balra göndörödik a haja.
Hey! Whose hair is curly everywhere.

Igaz voltam, babám hozzád, mint a nap,
I've been true to you, darling, like the sun,
Ki az égen ragyogva jár egész nap.
That sparkles in the sky all day long.
Ragyogva jár, meleget süt a földre,
It shines, and brings warmth the earth,
Hej, Köszönd meg, hogy szerettelek ennyire.
Hey! And thanks me, for loving you so much.

Reggel (*Morning*, 1955) *poem by Sándor Weöres*

Már üti, üti már, a torony a hajnalban.
It's ringing now, the tower at dawn.
Az időt bemeszeli a korai kikeriki:
The rooster's early crow tells you the time:
Reggel van! Már üti már! Reggel!
Rise and shine! It's already here! Morning!

UPCOMING ESOTERICA

Please join us for the remaining concerts of our thirtieth season, and have a sneak peek at concerts we are planning for next year!

R O R E M

Ned Rorem centennial

21 | 22 October 2023

In the modern era, if there were a single American composer whose intuitive lyricism triumphed over systemic dogma, it would be Ned Rorem. Rorem, who died in November at age 99, never aligned himself with a particular composition school, and preferred to write music he "wanted to hear." His output includes over 500 art songs, dozens of published diaries, and of course: choral music. The Esoterics will mark Rorem's 100th birthday by performing all of his secular compositions for a *cappella* chorus!

SHADOWS & SUN

A calendar of light

9 | 10 December 2023

The Esoterics will bring its thirtieth season to a close with the world premiere of *A calendar of light* by former POLYPHONOS winner and Los Angeles composer, Dale Trumbore. One of our favorite composer friends, Dale has been working on this concert-length choral calendar on texts by Barbara Crooker since before the COVID-19 pandemic began, and The Esoterics will finally be able to welcome her back to the Pacific Northwest to join us for its world premiere performances. We hope that you will join us too!

LIGHT & TRUTH

With the Yale Glee Club

9 | 10 March 2024

For the first concert weekend of our 31st season, The Esoterics is excited to be able to welcome Jeffrey Douma and the Yale Glee Club to the Pacific Northwest! We will be sharing a concert program with this world-renowned undergraduate chorus, with which Eric cut his teeth as a 20-year-old conductor, right before he moved to Seattle and started The Esoterics!

SPLENDOR&SOLACE

To have been there before

8 | 9 June 2024

Commissioned in 2018, *To have been there before* sets a series of texts that describe the wilderness of Southeast Alaska by the American naturalist John Muir. Scored by Eric Banks for chamber orchestra and triple-chorus, Muir's texts about sky, sea, field, forest, and aurora borealis are accompanied by texts in Tlingit, to honor those who made Muir's journeys possible. This concert will also include two world premieres for chorus and orchestra -- *Anges nus* and *Fleurs d'artifice* by the Parisian composer, Philippe Bodin.

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If you would like to receive information about future concerts, or are interested in volunteering, please contact us:

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