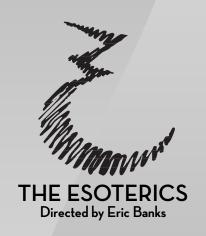
SHADOWS & SUN a calendar of light

A calendar of light

(World premiere commission, 2023) composed by Dale Trumbore on poems by Barbara Crooker with photos by Krysti Sabins



Saturday | 9 December 2023 | 7:30pm Plymouth United Church of Christ 1217 6th Avenue | Seattle

Sunday | 10 December 2023 | 7:30pm Christ Episcopal Church 310 North K Street | Tacoma

SHADOWS & SUN a calendar of light

PROGRAM

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

A calendar of light (2023)

by Dale Trumbore (b 1987)

World premiere commission

Prelude

- 1. January
- 2. Late February
- 3. Let us believe in the resurrection of the earth
- 4. March
- 5. Planting
- 6. Is it impossible to plant change?
- 7. April
- 8. May
- 9. June
- 10. Happiness
- 11. Jow can we let it all slip through our fingers?
- 12. July
- 13. We give what we can
- 14. August
- 15. O September
- 16. Some October
- 17. How can we believe that these days will end?
- 18. This blue morning
- 19. Light of late November
- 20. Winter will return
- 21. December light
- 22. The light gives up too early

Postlude

Gillian Dockins, mezzo-soprano (in 7, 10, 16, and 18)

After a brief talk with Dale, the **Calendar** will be performed without intermission. The running time of the concert is about 65 minutes.

Special thanks to:

Patricia Lahtinen | Supertitlist Daniel Powers | Audio Producer Mitchell Baier | Facilities Coordinator Matthew Bonner | Volunteer Coordinator

THE ESOTERICS

Lora Korper

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THE ESOTERICS

Now at the end of 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 Andersén 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).

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

ERIC BANKS

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 CityArtists, the Washington State Arts Commission, and three "creativity" grants the National Endowment for the Arts. His upcoming premieres include pieces for the International Federation for Choral Music, the Taipei Philharmoic 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.

DALE TRUMBORE

Dale Trumbore is a Los Angeles-based composer and writer whose music has been called "devastatingly beautiful" (The Washington Post) and praised for its "soaring melodies and beguiling harmonies deployed with finesse" (The New York Times). Trumbore's compositions have been performed widely in the U.S. and internationally by the Chicago Symphony's MusicNOW ensemble, Conspirare, and the Miró Quartet, soprano Liv Redpath, Los Angeles Children's Chorus, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Modesto Symphony, Pasadena Symphony, Phoenix Chorale, and Tonality. Recently, she released The Gleam, her second album with soprano Gillian Hollis, and She Only Remembers, a ballet for solo piano about memory loss and forgetting. The recipient of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA)'s inaugural Raymond W. Brock Competition for Professional Composers, an ASCAP Morton Gould Award, and a Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Grant, Trumbore has also been awarded artist residencies at Copland House, the Helene Wurlitzer Foundation, and Ucross. Her choral works have been commissioned for premieres at the national conferences of ACDA, American Guild of Organists, Chorus America, and National Collegiate Choral Organization, and her music is available through Boosey & Hawkes, G. Schirmer, and Graphite Marketplace. Trumbore has written extensively about working through creative blocks and establishing a career in music in essays for Cantate Magazine, the Center for New Music, and NewMusicBox. Her short stories are featured or forthcoming in Southern Indiana Review, PRISM International, New Delta Review, and F(r)iction, among other journals. Trumbore's first book, Staying Composed: Overcoming Anxiety and Self-Doubt Within a Creative Life, was hailed as a "treasure trove of practical strategies for moving your artistic career forward" (Angela Myles Beeching, author of Beyond Talent). Trumbore holds a dual degree in Music Composition (B.M.) and English (B.A.) from the University of Maryland, as well as a Master of Music degree in Composition from the University of Southern California. Originally from New Jersey, Trumbore currently lives in Azusa, CA with her spouse and their three cats. Learn more about Trumbore's music and writing at daletrumbore.com.

BARBARA CROOKER

Barbara Crooker's poems have appeared in magazines such as The Sun, The Hollins Critic, The Christian Science Monitor, Smartish Pace, The Beloit Poetry Journal, Nimrod, The Denver Quarterly, The Tampa Review, Poetry International, The Christian Century, America and anthologies such as The Bedford Introduction to Literature, Good Poems for Hard Times (Viking Penguin), Boomer Girls (University of Iowa Press), and Commonwealth: Contemporary Poets on Pennsylvania (Penn State University Press). She is the recipient of the Pen and Brush Poetry Prize, the Ekphrastic Poetry Award from Rosebud, the WB Yeats Society of New York Award, the Pennsylvania Center for the Book Poetry in Public Places Poster Competition, the Thomas Merton Poetry of the Sacred Award, the "April Is the Cruelest Month" Award from Poets & Writers, the 2000 New Millenium Writing's Y2K competition, the Karamu Poetry Award, and others, including three Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Creative Writing Fellowships, twenty-one residencies at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts; two residencies at the Moulin a Nef, Auvillar, France; and two residencies at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Annaghmakerrig, Ireland. A sixty-one time nominee for the Pushcart Prize and seven time nominee for Best of the Net, she was a 1997 Grammy Awards Finalist for her part in the audio version of the popular anthology, Grow Old Along With Me -- The Best is Yet to Be (Papier Mache Press). Recently, she received an award for outstanding ekphrastic achievement, a body of ekphrastic work in and outside of the journal The Ekphrastic Review. One of her poems won The Pandemic Poetry Contest, sponsored by Garrison Keillor.

K R Y S T I S A B I N S

Krysti Sabins is a photographer and videographer with a penchant for all things outdoorsy. Through creativity, curiosity, and imagination, Krysti highlights the joys of exploring nature from minuscule worlds of the forest floor to expansive mountain landscapes. She hopes to infuse others with this feeling so they, too, will become captivated by and eager to protect our environment. Krysti loves to travel, especially to natural curiosities, and is a proud New Jersey native.

Texts and translations

A calendar of light (2023) by Dale Trumbore (b 1987)

World premiere commission, setting poems by Barbara Crooker with images by Krysti Sabins

Prelude

Is it impossible to plant change?
Let us believe in the resurrection of the earth.
Look how the light is beginning to dim.
There's so much to love in this undoing.
I will not be silent.

1. January

Mornings come slowly, the sun reluctant, its pale face scarcely warming.
We linger at coffee, watch birds at the feeder.
Their foliage is dull, muted.
The sky is barely blue.
We wrap ourselves in layers of wool, withdraw.

January's not the season of love. Up on the hill, each black tree is etched, clean and sharp, whittled down to limb, branch, twig. Glass ferns cover the windows, their fronds blur the thin light.

And here we are, poised on the rim of the year, every breath visible, this icy globe turning. The silence between us deepens, blue as the shadows in snow.

2. Late February

Late February, and light begins to soften around the edges. Snow's flannel sheets recede, fold back, and look, the grass is still there, a fresh green quilt waiting to be hung on the line.

Crocus cut their teethin perennial beds.
Spring holds her breath.
White-throated sparrows whistle up the sun.
Every day, another cup of light.

3. Let us believe in the resurrection of the earth

Let us believe in the resurrection of the earth. Forgive us now our unbelief.

4. March

There is no color anywhere, in the fields, in the woods, only the monotony of buff and brown, fawn and dun, smoke, slate, steel, and now, coming into March, the coldest nights of the year.

But each day, we climb a few more inches up the ladder of light, and grackles and redwings return, bringing postcards of tropical sun.

The eye of the pond widens, and geese scribble messages across the grey sky: "Hold on. Hold on. It's coming."

5. Planting

Amidst the horror, the steady rain of bad news, the worry over climate change, coastlines drowned as ice caps melt, oceans rise,

the only thing I know how to do is tend my garden, turn over the dirt in even rows, drill in the seed, pat it down, let the spade sink into gravelly ground.

6. Is it impossible to plant change?

Is it impossible to plant change?

7. April

[April slips on her green silk dress] a soft lilac shawl across her arms, and dances to the small fine music of the rain.

I was away for a week, writing, happy to be alone and working again, but then home began to tug at me, the way the earth pulls the rain down to meet it.

And I love the road, the journey, the whole difficult trip of it, the long slow uphill climbs, the unexpected bends, the side roads, the false starts, every wrong turning.

Dogwoods fill the woods with their white light, kid gloves worn at a ball. I'm going down the road, singing the radio. And my heart is as green as the rain.

8. May

How many times have I forgotten to give thanks? The late day sun shines through the pink wisteria with its green and white leaves as if it were stained glass, there's an old cherry tree that one lucky Sunday bloomed with a rainbow: cardinals, orioles, goldfinches, blue jays, indigo buntings,

and my garden has tiny lettuces just coming up, so perfect they could make you cry: Green Towers, Red Sails, Oak Leaf. For this is May, and the whole world sings, gleams.

9. June

It is one of those soft summer nights, after a day of bake oven heat, the air playing with the hair on your neck, the bare skin of your arms and legs. In the grass, fireflies rise in their sultry dance, little love notes that flicker, that burn.

10. Happiness

And I love this ordinary summer afternoon, sitting under my cherry tree full of overripe fruit, too much for us to pick, an abbondanza of a tree, I love this dark grey catbird singing its awkward song, and the charcoal clouds promising rain they don't deliver.

I love the poem I've been trying to write for months, but can't; I love the way it's going nowhere at all. I love the dried grass that crackles when you walk on it, leached of color, its own kind of fire.

Way off in the hedgerow, the musical olio of dozens of birds, each singing its own song, each beating its own measure. This is all there is: the red cherries, the green leaves, sky like a pale silk dress, and the rise and fall of the sweet breeze.

Sometimes, just what you have manages to be enough.

11. How can we let it all slip through our fingers?

How can we let it all slip through our fingers?

12. July

It's still summer, and the breeze is full of sweetness spilled from a million petals; it wraps around your arms, lifts the hair from the back of your neck.

The salvia, coreopsis, roses have set the borders on fire, and the peaches waiting to be picked are heavy with juice. We are still ripening into our bodies, still in the act of becoming.

13. We give what we can

We give what we can, but not so much it hurts.

14. August

Summer sings its long song, and all the notes are green.

But there's a click, somewhere in the middle of the month, as we reach the turning point, the apex, a Ferris wheel, cars tipping and tilting over the top, and we see September up ahead, school and schedules returning.

And there's the first night you step outside and hear the katydids arguing, six more weeks to frost, and you know you can make it through to fall.

Dark now at eight, nights finally cooling off for sleep, no more twisting in damp sheets, hearing mosquitoes' thirsty whines.

Lakes of chicory and Queen Anne's lace mirror the sky's high cirrus. Evenings grow chilly, time for old sweaters and sweatpants, lying in the hammock squinting to read in the quick-coming dusk.

A few fireflies punctuate the night's black text, and the moonlight is so thick, you could swim in it until you reach the other side.

15. O September

O September!
When the rest of the garden dwindles to meager,
when the trees begin their strip to the bones, you come to fruit bearing rubies on your canes, and we're on our knees, stained in crimson, our garnet fingers praising the earth.

16. Some October

Some October,
when the leaves turn gold,
ask me if I've done enough
to deserve this life
I've been given.
A pile of sorrows, yes,
but joy enough to unbalance the equation.

When the sky turns blue as the robes of heaven, ask me if I've made a difference. The road winds through the copper-colored woods; no one sees around the bend.

Today, the wind poured out of Canada, a river in flood, bringing down the brilliant leaves, broken sticks and twigs, deserted nests.

Go where the current takes you.

Some twilight, when the clouds stream in from the west like the breath of God, ask me again.

17. How can we believe these days will end

How can we believe these days will end, that cold winds will blow, that snow will fall?

18. This blue morning

[It's Monday morning] mid-November, the world turned golden, preserved in amber.

I should be doing more to save the planet plant a tree, raise a turbine, put solar panels on the roof to grab the sun and bring it inside.

Instead, I'm sitting here scribbling, sitting on a wrought iron chair, the air cold from last night's frost, the thin sunlight sinking into the ruined Appalachians of my spine.

I know it's all about to fall apart; the signs are everywhere.

But on this blue morning, the air bristling with crickets and birdsong, I do the only thing I can: put one word in front of the other, and see what happens when they rub up against each other.

It might become something that will burst into flame.

19. Light of late November

Praise the light of late November, the thin sunlight that goes deep in the bones.

Praise the crows chattering in the oak trees; though they are clothed in night, they do not despair.

Praise what little there's left: the small boats of milkweed pods, husks, hulls, shells, the architecture of trees.

Praise the meadow of dried weeds: yarrow, goldenrod, chicory, the remains of summer.

Praise the blue sky that hasn't cracked yet.

Praise the sun slipping down behind the beechnuts, praise the quilt of leaves that covers the grass: Scarlet Oak, Sweet Gum, Sugar Maple.

Though darkness gathers, praise our crazy fallen world; it's all we have, and it's never enough.

20. Winter will return

Winter will return.
Will we see another spring?

21. December light

In this icy light, the ghostly fronds of ice ferns cover the glass, as the sky descends, erasing first the far blue hills, the cornfield hatchmarked with stubble, coming to our street — the sky flinging itself down to the ground.

These winter nights are never black and dense, but white, starlight dancing off the land.
And then the luminous dawns, the pearled skies full of hope no matter what else we know.

22. The light gives up too early

The light gives up too early.
We light candles in the coming dark.

Postlude

Is it impossible to plant change?
Let us believe in the resurrection of the earth.
Look how the light is beginning to dim.
There's so much to love in this undoing.
I will not be silent.

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