THE ESOTERICs
Directed by Eric Banks

Saturday | 11 June 2022 | 8pm
St James Cathedral
804 9th Avenue | Seattle

Sunday | 12 June 2022 | 3pm
Holy Rosary Catholic Church
4139 42nd Avenue Southwest | West Seattle

сестри

the sisters

a choral benefit for ukraine

Богородице Діво (2018)
Отче наш (2018)
Світло тихе (2021, world premiere)
Вірую (2021, world premiere)

бу Богдана Фроляк [Bohdana Frolyak]

Боже мій, нащо мене ти покинув? (2000)
Херувимська пісня (2002)
Молитва (2004)
Нехай воскресне Бог (2004)
Тебе поем (2002)
Все упованіє моє (2006)

бу Ганна Гаврилець [Hanna Havrylets]

THE ESOTERICs
Directed by Eric Banks
Dear friends,

In July of 2019, I had the good fortune to travel to both Kyiv and Odesa, and my memories of my time in those cities are filled with the warmth of the Ukrainian people. Just glancing through the photos I took from that single trip, I remembered the affection that Ukrainians shared with me about their homeland, the beauty of the architecture, the spaciousness of the parks, and the pride with which they spoke of the improvements they had made in the infrastructure of their cities.

In early March, after seeing images of the devastation after just a week or two of Vladimir Putin’s war, I decided that I needed to program a benefit concert for the people of Ukraine. After searching a bit on the internet, I came across the Wikipedia page of Bohdana Frolyak, a composer and professor in Lviv who was about my own age. She had won a number of awards and had written a bunch of a cappella choral music, so I found her profile on Facebook, and wrote her a message (even though we weren’t friends). With a few hours, by some miracle, she answered me! We chatted, and she emailed me a bunch of her scores. I looked through Dana’s music, and decided to start planning this concert with her.

In our next chat, Bohdana told me about her older sister, Hanna, who was a composer and music professor in Kyiv. Hanna was about a decade older than Dana, and cared for her and their brother when they left their village to attend conservatory together. Hanna was not only Dana’s big sister and substitute parent, but also her musical confidante. Even though they were now living in different cities with families of their own, the sisters were able to share so much of their lives with each other - until the war began. On the third day of Putin’s war, Hanna suffered an aneurysm in Kyiv and was not able to receive emergency medical care, so she died.

At the moment I first met Bohdana, she was happy to chat, tell her story, and share her music with me, even though she was in the middle of war zone. Little did I know that she was also grappling with the death of her big sister, and trying to get the ashes of Hanna’s remains from Kyiv back to her family in Lviv - somehow. Her fortitude and grace in the face of great obstacles is quintessentially Ukrainian. Dana’s love for her sister inspired me to include Hanna’s music in this program. So, I asked Dana to send me Hanna’s choral scores, and she did - surprisingly quickly.

In the middle of March, within just a couple of weeks of meeting Bohdana, I was messaging with Joseph Adam, the music director at St James. Joe wondered if The Esoterics had any sacred concert programs that could performed at the Cathedral any time soon - preferably in mid-June. Although I was hoping to perform some of Dana and Hanna’s secular scores, I knew that, in order to sing at St James, our program would have to be entirely sacred Christian texts. So, I let Dana know that I would program a concert of sacred Orthodox music, that I would interweave her music with Hanna’s, and call the concert СЕСТРИ - or THE SISTERS.

After a couple of Zoom calls with Dana and her son Bohdan (who was a great translator), we decided on and spoke about the concert repertoire, and also decided where the funds raised from the benefit would go. Obviously, some of the funds will go directly to Dana and Hanna for the rights to perform their music. More of the funds will go to the conservatories where they teach, to help rebuild after the war. Finally, Bohdana has chosen the charity COME BACK ALIVE. You can read more about what this organization does at: comebackalive.in.ua.

Finally, you should know that this project will not be over after this weekend. The Esoterics has been working with Garrett Lennington and Solark Productions to create a film version of this concert that will be out later in the summer. This film will also include portions of my interview with Bohdana, in which she talks about her sister, and their music. Just as for this concert, you will be able to make a donation to Ukrainian humanitarian relief to see the film of THE SISTERS. More importantly, you will be able to share this concert film with your family and friends who could not make it to the life concert this weekend.

Please be sure to sign up for The Esoterics’ email list if you would like to be notified when THE SISTERS film is ready! There is a QR code in the bottom right corner of this page. This code will send you to the CONTACT page of our new website, where you can send us a message and/or sign up to get future concert announcements. Although the website isn’t completely finished yet - it’s another of my summer projects - enough is there now for you to enjoy...
Please turn off all noise-making devices, and refrain from talking during the performance.

**THE ESOTERICs**

**Eric Banks**  
Founding director

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<td>Aaron Moore</td>
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<td>Allison Fortenberry</td>
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<td>Alexandra King</td>
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<td>Betsy Baeskens *</td>
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<td>Christine Dove *</td>
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<td>Leigh McGill</td>
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<td>Will Dean</td>
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* denotes soloist

**THE SISTERS PROGRAM**

**INTERMISSION**

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*a choir concerto in three movements*

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<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Вірую [I believe] (2021, world premiere)</td>
<td>Богдана Фроляк [Bohdana Frolyak] (1968)</td>
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**Special thanks to:**

Shawna Avinger & Matthew Bonner | Box Office Coordinators  
Daniel Powers | Audio Producer  
Garrett Lennington | Technical Producer  
Mitchell Baier | Facilities Coordinator
**THE ESOTERIC S**

Now on the cusp 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 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).

**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 CityArts, the Washington State Arts Commission, and three “creativity” grants the National Endowment for the Arts. His upcoming premieres include pieces for Ember in New York City, Mikrokosmos in Paris, and the San Francisco Girls Chorus. Eric lives in Seattle with David Geillman, his husband of 25 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.

a choral concert, setting Psalm 67:2-4, an evening prayer to the Holy Cross to ward off evil spirits.

I.

Нейхай воскресне Бог нєхай воскресне бох
May God rise,
I розвіться вороги його;
і розвійтеся вороги його;
And his enemies be scattered;
Нейхай побіжать від лица його нєхай побіжать від лица його;
let them flee from before him
Всі ненависники його
існі ненависники його;
All who hate him.

II.

Як ще здаем дим, хай його дим, як ще здаем дим, як ще здаем дим; As the smoke disappears, let them disappear,

Як тане віків від лиця воєн, як тане віків від лиця воєн, As wax melts from the face of fire.

Так нєхай згинуть гіршники так нєхай згинуть гіршники
So let sinners perish
Від лиця Божого. від лиця Божого. From the face of God.

III.

А праведники нєхай звесьться, а праведники нєхай звесьться,
And let the righteous rejoice.
Нейхай радять перед Богом, нейхай радять перед Богом,
Let them rejoice before God,
Нейхай святають у радості, нейхай святають у радості,
Let them celebrate in joy.
Нейхай воскресне Бог! нейхай воскресне Бог!
May God rise!

INTERMISSION 

Херувимська пісня
[Song of the cherubim] (2002) by Ганна Гаврилиць [Hanna Havrylets]

setting a Modern Church Slavic version, based on the prophetic visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel.

Іже херувими тайно образуючи, іже херувими тайно образуючи, The cherubim are secretly gathering.

I живописуючи Трокні із троїцю{і}троїцю,
And to the life-giving Trinity

Трискільну пісню припиваючи, трискільну пісню припиваючи, The three holy songs are sung.

Всюку ниж нíжньої отвергнуті печаль. Нíж нíжньої отвергнуті печаль. Amen.
Who is escorted by the invisible ranks of angels.

Алелюя, алелюя, алелюя!
‘алелюя, ‘алелюя, ‘алелюя!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Вірую [I believe] (2021) by Богдана Фроляк [Bohdana Frolyak]

setting the Nicene creed, the “Symbol of faith” 

Вірую в єдиного Бога Отця, всевидітелю, вірую в єдиного Бога Отця, всевидітелю, I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
Творця неба і землі, Творця неба і землі, Creator of heaven and earth,
I всього видимого i невидимого. I всього видимого i невидимого. And of all visible and invisible.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS


Canon prayer to the Blessed Virgin, in anticipation of battle, attributed to Cyprus John.

Пресвята Богородиця, висхайди нас.
Presvatarа bohoroadtsa, vissluxai nas.

Blessed Virgin, listen to us.

Пресвята Богородиця, будь нам заступницею.
Presvatarа bohoroadtsa, budь nam zastupnite/su.

Blessed Virgin, be our patron saint.

Весь світю твоєю рукою допоможи нам
Vesevlyi tvoyyi rukoy dopomozy nam
With your almighty hand, help us

Призомити ворогів, що напали на нас.
Prizomityi vorgoi, што napali na nas.

Defeat the enemies who attacked us.

Пресвята Богородиця, Пресвята...
Presvatarа bohoroadtsa, presvatarа...

Blessed Virgin, blessed one...

Отче наш [Our Father] (2018) by Богдана Фроляк [Bohdana Frolyak]

Отче наш, ти, що на небесах!
Отче наш, ти, що на небесах!
Our Father, you, who are in heaven!

Нейхай святиться ім’я твое.
Neyxay svyatitsia im’ia tvoe.
May your name be hallowed.

Нейхай прийде царство твое.
Neyxay prinji tsarstvo tvoe.
May your kingdom come.

Нейхай будь воля твоя.
Neyxay bude volya tvoia.
May your will be done.

Як на небі, так й на землі.
Jak na nebii, tak й на zemli.
On earth as it is in heaven.

Хліб наш насущний дай нам сьогодні;
Hlib naх nasuyi da’i nam sьogodnii;
On this day give us our daily bread;

I прости нам провинні наї.
I prosti nam provini naji.
And forgive us our sins.

Я ки пишемо вінівців нашим;
I kи prisi vynivtsi/iam naim;
As we forgive our perpetrators;

I не введи нас у спокук,
I ne vedii nas u spokuk,
‘i ne vведi nas ‘i spokuku,
And lead us not into temptation,

Але визові нас від лукавого.
Ale vizev’i nas vid lukavovo.
But deliver us from evil.

Bo tvoe je царство, і сила, і слава на віки. Amin.
Bo tvoe je tsarstvo, ‘i sila, ‘i slava na viki. ‘amini.
Yours is the kingdom, power, and glory forever. Amen.

Мой Боже, мояще мене ти покину?’
My Bоже, my bozhie mi, bozhie mi,
My God, my God,

Нашо мене ти покину?’
Nasho men’i ti pokinuv?
Why did you forsake me?

[My God, why did you forsake me? (2006) by Ганна Гаврилиць [Hanna Havrylets]

setting Psalm 21:2-3
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, who (And I believe) was born of the Father, one with the Father, from whom all things have been, and through whom all things come to pass.

Від Отця від світа, світло вид світла, Ліght from light, Бога істинного від Бога істинного, boha ‘istinnova wid boha ‘istinnova.

I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. (And) in a single, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

To judge the living and the dead, I look forward to the resurrection of the dead, I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. (And) in a single, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

And (I believe) in the Holy Spirit, And his kingdom will have no end.

And he ascended into heaven, And rose again on the third day, And became a man.

And sat at the right hand of the Father, and is interceding for us by Pontius Pilate, and we pray to you, our God, to save us from tribulation.

And (I believe) in the one Lord Jesus Christ, who (And I believe) was born of the Father, one with the Father, from whom all things have been, and through whom all things come to pass.
THE ESOTERICs
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The Esoterics’ continued success as an arts organization is directly related to you and your generosity. If you are committed to the future of the choral art, then please consider supporting The Esoterics: invite friends to our performances, purchase our CDs, or make a tax-deductible contribution to the group. Thank you!

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

The Esoterics | 1815 24th Avenue | Seattle WA 98122-3014 | 206.551.1379 | info@TheEsoterics.org

The Esoterics would like to acknowledge our generous rehearsal and concert venues, as well as their staff, for their contributions to The Esoterics’ success this year:

Mary Palmer, Tom Kirkland, and the entire parish at Queen Anne Christian Church in Seattle

The Most Reverend Paul D. Etienne, the Very Reverend Michael Ryan, Director of Music Joseph Adam, and Administrative Assistant Marjorie Bunday at St James Cathedral in Seattle

Father Matthew Oakland, Pastoral Assistant for Music and Liturgy Paul Dolejsi, and Administrator Melissa Tuthill at Holy Rosary Catholic Church in West Seattle

The Esoterics’ last concert season was sponsored by generous support from:

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ART WORKS.
THANK YOU

The financial contributions of those listed below have been instrumental to the success of The Esoterics in the last year. To all of you who have given so generously, The Esoterics extends its warmest thanks.

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- 4Culture
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