

A person with long brown hair and glasses is leaning over a body of water, their hand reaching towards the surface. The water is dark blue with ripples, and the sky in the background is a mix of orange and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is contemplative and artistic.

A Compositional Recital by

Kelk Jeffery

Featuring:

Michael Robert, Piano

with Anja Kelly • Meruert Bestybay

Holly Ten Haaf • Paula Brewster

Ryan Pfortmueller • John Carpenter

Thomas Dalton • Annis Lee

Charlie Dutton • Tiana Ropchan

Saturday, May 10th, 2025 @ 3:30pm

UBC School of Music

Roy Barnett Recital Hall 6361 Memorial Road, UBC, Vancouver

Free Admission

Third-year Student Recital at Barnett Hall

May 10, 2025

3:30 p.m.

Kelk Jeffery, composer

The Swan* (2023, revised 2025)

Text by Mary Oliver (1935-2019)

Anja Kelly, Meruert Bestybay, *soprano*

Holly Ten Haaf, Paula Brewster, *alto*

Kelk Jeffery, Ryan Pfortmueller, *tenor*

John Carpenter, Thomas Dalton, *bass*

Minashkuat (2024)

Text by Alex Vollant (2000-)

Anja Kelly, *soprano*

Michael Robert, *piano*

Magpie (2024)

Tiana Ropchan, *english horn*

Annis Lee, *violin*

Charlie Dutton, *piano*

Calypso (2023)

Text by Max Maclean (1998-)

Anja Kelly, Meruert Bestybay, *soprano*

Holly Ten Haaf, Paula Brewster, *alto*

Kelk Jeffery, Ryan Pfortmueller, *tenor*

John Carpenter, Thomas Dalton, *bass*

We gratefully acknowledge that we are gathered together for this performance on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the x̱m̱əθḵəy̱əm (Musqueam) people.



~ intermission ~

Constellations* (2025)

- I. Introduction — The Great Bears
- II. Draco
- III. The Canoe (*Kao-Makali'i*)
- IV. The Seven Sisters
- V. The Auspice of Rain (سعد المطر)
- VI. Cassiopeia
- VII. Andromeda — Epilogue

Michael Robert, *piano*

Agnus Dei* (2022)

Text Trad.

Anja Kelly, Meruert Bestybay, *soprano*
Holly Ten Haaf, Paula Brewster, *alto*
Kelk Jeffery, Ryan Pfortmueller, *tenor*
John Carpenter, Thomas Dalton, *bass*

*Indicates Premiere

This recital is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Bachelor of Music degree with a major in Composition.

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ancestral, and unceded territory of the x̱m̱əθḵəy̱əm (Musqueam) people.*



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
School of Music



Kelk Jeffery, composer

Kelk Jeffery is a Composer and Singer pursuing a BMus at the UBC School of Music, and living on the traditional and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples. Inspired by contemporary choral, electronic, and classical music and with an obsession over harmony and form, she has always sought to strike a balance between new and old, the mechanical and the natural. Through her work, she explores the numerous and often complex ways in which we can relate to each other across vast stretches of time, space, and experience.



Michael Robert, piano

Michael Robert is a pianist who holds a BMus and BED in Music Education from The University of British Columbia. Michael has a well-rounded musical skillset as a pianist, educator, and collaborator, working and performing in many different settings, across many genres of music. He is described by his undergraduate piano professor, Dr. Terence Dawson, as “a pianist who performs with intention, unbridled passion, and an understanding of form and structure that reaches his audience.” Michael’s greatest goal as a performer is to inspire and connect with the imagination of his audience.



Anja Kelly and Meruert Bestybay	Soprano
Holly Ten Haaf and Paula Brewster	Alto
Ryan Pfortmueller	Tenor
John Carpenter and Thomas Dalton	Bass
Tiana Ropchan	English Horn
Annis Lee	Violin
Charlie Dutton	Piano

Production Team and Crew

Yiyang Xue	Stage Manager
Daniel Jeffery	Videographer
Karen Jeffery	Program
Jeffrey Hernandez	Photography and Poster Design
Gopal Bharaj	Graphic Design
Danny Najjar	Language Coach

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Minashkuat

Text and Translation by Alex Vollant

*Dans cette ville où tu m'as conduite
je cherche toujours mes traces
Minashkuat* m'appelle
mais je n'ai pas les jambes*

In this city where you brought me
I'm still looking for my traces
Minashkuat* calls me
but I do not have the legs

*Minashkuat ne bougera pas
mais je ne bouge plus non plus
figée dans cette amertume*

Minashkuat will not budge
but I am not budging either
frozen in this resentment

*s'il y avait une façon de chanter l'amour
j'en ferais un air d'opéra
cet opéra porterait ton nom
car il est doux
comme ma vie l'était dans tes bras*

if there was a way to sing love
I would make it an opera aria
this opera would have your name
for it [Love] is sweet
like my life was in your arms

*Minashkuat est là où l'on se nourrit
c'est là où il faut faire l'amour
car la Mère nous donne la vie
nos envies et notre envie de tout*

Minashkuat is where we feed ourselves
it is where we must make love
for the *Mère* (ocean/mother) gives us life
our desires and our desire for everything

*Minashkuat est là où j'aurais dû te
faire l'amour
enlacée par tes bras
enlacée par la tundra*

Minashkuat is where I should have made
love to you
embraced by your arms
embraced by the tundra

*dans cette ville où je suis partie
il n'y a plus de Minashkuat
mes jambes sont revenues
mais j'ai égaré ton odeur*

in this city where I went
there is no more Minashkuat
my legs returned
but I lost your scent

*j'ai vendu le piano
je ne peux plus jouer l'air opéra
les fréquences ne pourront plus
se rendre à ton visage.*

I sold the piano
I can't play that aria anymore
the frequencies can no longer
reach your face.

*Minashkuat is the Innu First Nations word for "Forest"

The Swan

Text by Mary Oliver

*Did you too see it, drifting, all night, on the black river?
Did you see it in the morning, rising into the silvery air –
An armful of white blossoms,
A perfect commotion of silk and linen,
Biting the air with its black beak?
Did you hear it, fluting and whistling
A shrill dark music – like a waterfall
Knifing down the black ledges?
And did you see it, finally, just under the clouds –
A white cross Streaming across the sky, its feet
Like black leaves, its wings Like the stretching light of the river?
And did you feel it, in your heart, how it pertained to everything?
And have you too finally figured out what beauty is for?
And have you changed your life?*

Calypso

Text by Max Maclean

Your colour,
Love... I see
your eyes in the summer
rains—they fall
through me, finding
no purchase where
your gentle touch
once
traced.

Now you pass me by,
Love, unknowing—now,
the clouds move on.
Your melancholy blue
drains
away

Yet
still, I—
I feel
your colour on
my skin,
Love; it falls
from eyes no longer yours.

Agnus Dei

Text Traditional

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
donna nobis pacem.*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of
the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of
the world, grant us peace.

PROGRAM NOTES

The Swan

I couldn't think of a better way to open my recital than with a highly madrigalistic setting of Mary Oliver's *Swan*, which depicts the journey from mystery to enlightenment through a whirlwind of changing keys, moods, and time signatures. Though this piece is technically based in C major, I never once resolve to the tonic chord – perpetually orbiting through related key areas but never quite sitting still until the very last moment. The *Swan* is a testament to the majesty of nature and the power of curiosity, and is the perfect thesis statement to my recital.

Minashkuat

Minashkuat tells the story of someone who has left their home to follow their loved one to a strange new city. The singer laments about their beloved Minashkuat, which means “forest” in the Innu language, and hears it calling to them far away from the community which they left. Rather than expressing regret over their choices, the singer celebrates the lessons learned and embraces where they have ended up. I imagined this journey of self compassion like a walk through the forest – constantly shifting textures leading the singer from dense groves to open woodlands, never changing abruptly but slowly moving between one or the other. Each note is like an individual tree, coming together with a vitality like the heartbeat of the forest, like a drum calling the singer home.

Magpie

This piece is first and foremost a love song. After a magical trip to see Charli XCX in Seattle last October, I found myself completely in love with the world around me; in love with nature, in love with my friends, and in love with the rebirth of Romanticism I've been witnessing in our broader culture, despite (or perhaps in response to) the looming uncertainties of our world. Inspired by R&B, I sought to craft melodies that felt free flowing and conversational, maintaining the dialogue between the English Horn and Violin. *Magpie* re-examines the age-old Piano Trio from a fresh perspective, aiming to strike a balance between Neo-Romantic and Popular forms, gestures, and styles.

Calypso

Calypso was born out of a discarded piano nocturne I wrote during my first year of composition, but which I had always wanted to take further. I asked a poet friend of mine, Max Maclean, to write a poem that captured the emotion of the nocturne, which I then set for six-part choir using the recycled material of the original piano version. The result is a nostalgic reflection from the perspective of the titular sea nymph from Greek mythology. Calypso received an Honourable Mention from the Vancouver Chamber Choir's 2023 Young Composers' Competition, and was premiered by the Nabi Vocal Ensemble in its current version at the Orpheum Theatre in October 2024. A big thank you to Marko Sukunda and all the folks at Nabi for their support in helping workshop this piece and bringing it to life.

Constellations

The inspiration for this suite came after witnessing the incredible aurora that visited Vancouver last May. I rushed home and plotted that night's sky onto staff paper, and thus the early fragments of Constellations began to take shape. The defining outline of the Big Dipper spelled out the material now part of the introduction, and the rest of the suite began to emerge from there. I carefully chose 7 constellations that I could weave together into a larger narrative, taking into account not only the stories behind these ancient images, but also their role within early human societies. Each movement represents the stars as a tool for a different purpose: divination, navigation, agriculture, spirituality, scientific discovery, and above all a mirror into our collective humanity.

The suite opens with a wandering introduction as the shapes in the sky begin to reveal themselves. These shapes become pictures, and the pictures become stories – first of a family of bears (Ursa Major and Ursa Minor), the music spilling forth as they travel through a dense forest. Between them snakes the great serpent Draco, erupting as an omen of destruction and chaos while also maintaining the balance of creation and rebirth. As the storm parts, we zoom in on The Canoe, which is the Australian Aboriginal name for the constellation of Orion, whose belt (also known as Kao-Makali'i in Hawai'iian astronomy) forms a diamond shape between the outermost stars of Betelgeuse and Rigel. The Canoe depicts the night sky as an invaluable tool for navigation for early explorers on the open ocean, which we know even less about than we do of space.

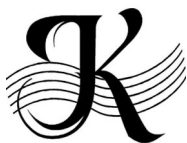
Next, we travel to the Pleiades Star Cluster, also known as The Seven Sisters. This group of 7 stars has been worshipped for its connection to the afterlife, and its transition over the horizon marks the New Year in cultures around the world. While the myths surrounding the Pleiades are numerous across human history, there is a profound similarity in many of the tales, depicting a group of 7 Sisters who encounter a great peril and are lifted into the sky for their protection. Due to the procession of the Earth only 6 stars are visible to the naked eye today, giving rise to variations on the tale in which one of the Sisters is lost forever – marking a turning point in the suite.

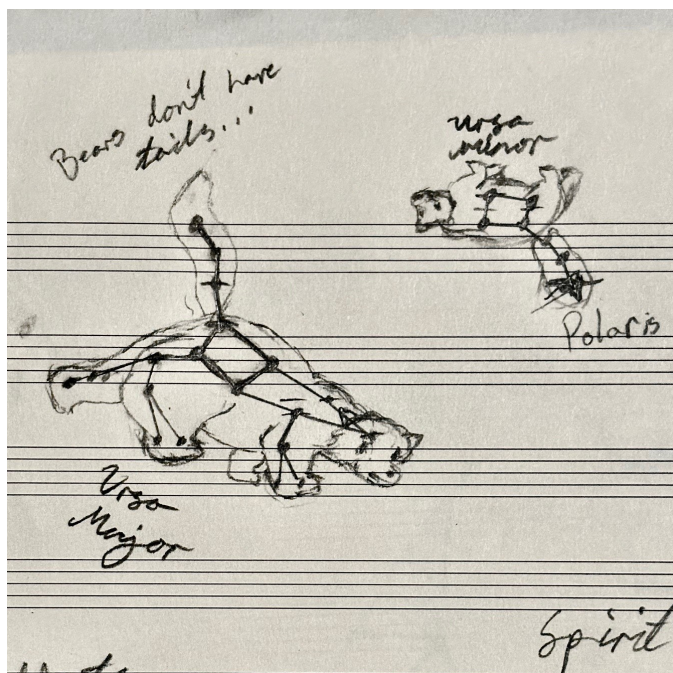
From this place in the sky we encounter The Auspice of Rain, an ancient Arabic asterism (سعد المطر) announcing the late-summer rains which nourish the Autumn harvest. The suite culminates in the penultimate movement, Cassiopeia, a powerful Queen from Greek mythology punished by Poseidon for her vanity. As the sea monster Cetus comes to destroy her kingdom, Cassiopeia offers up her own daughter, Andromeda, as a sacrifice in order to spare herself. Though this myth is thousands of years old, it maintains a poignant relevancy as we face a similar threat of rising sea levels today.

Over the course of writing Constellations it became abundantly clear that I was not writing about the stars at all, but in fact, I was writing about people. The stories that our ancestors have left for us are just as relevant now as they were when they were first told, and I hope that by linking them in this way I am able to shed light on the importance of learning from the past. May we all see ourselves in the tragedy of Andromeda. In the Greek telling of her story she is rescued; in this version I have left her fate ambiguous. It is how she got there in the first place that concerns me most.

Agnus Dei

The first piece I ever completed, this setting of the Agnus Dei began as an exercise in voice-leading that I simply had to see all the way through. While so much of my compositional style and philosophy has evolved since I first wrote it, I am constantly surprised by how clearly it foreshadows where I have ended up. After several thwarted attempts, I am excited to finally see its premiere as the poetic end to my recital.

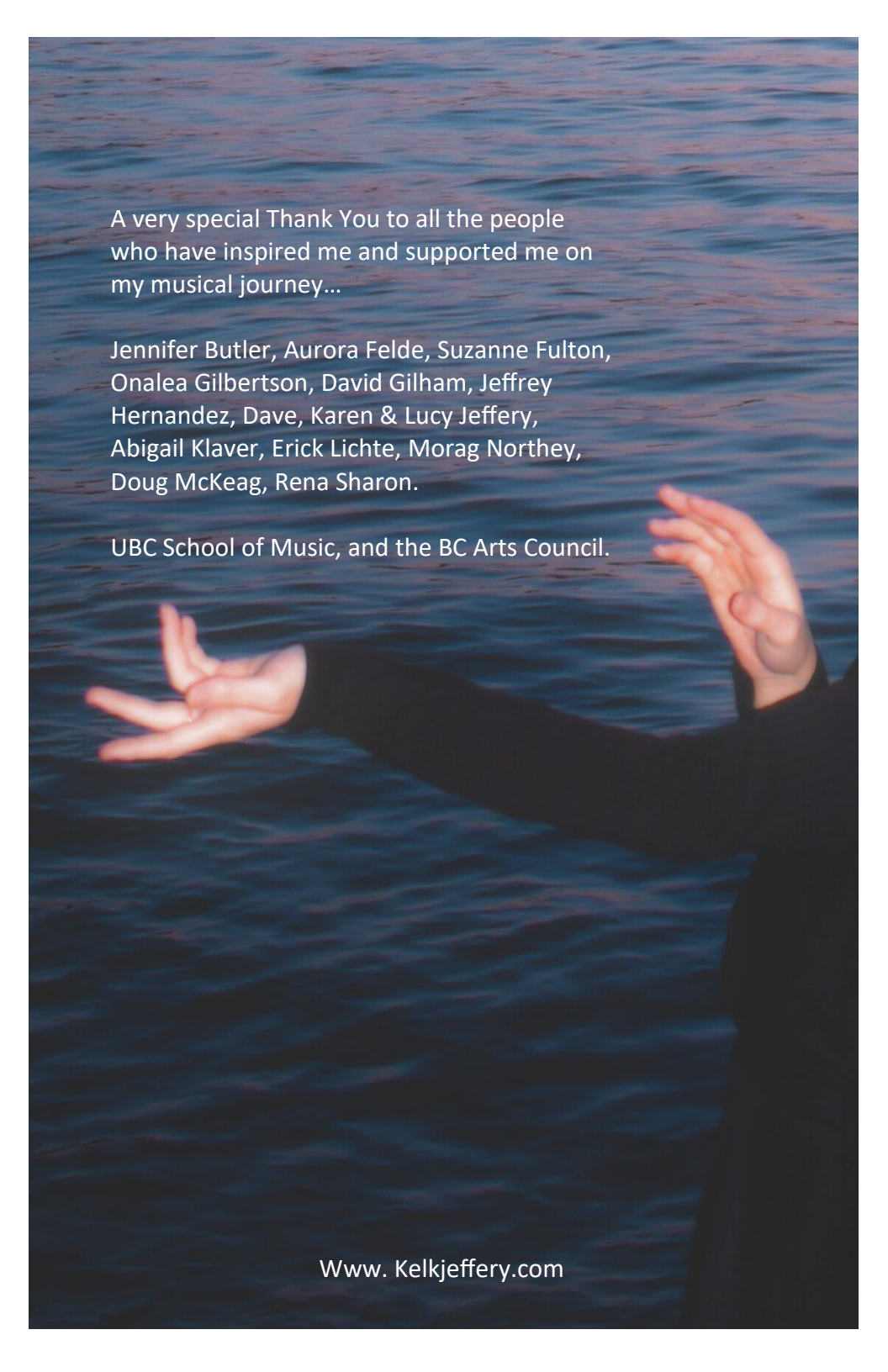




Early Sketch of
Ursa Major and
Ursa Minor.

A rough draft of the second movement, "Draco". The page contains handwritten musical notation on a staff, including notes, rests, and various markings. The title "Draco" is written at the top center. The notation includes a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a time signature of 2/4. There are several annotations and corrections throughout the draft, such as "Recap.", "Repeat", "too long get down", and "too long get down". The draft is marked with "A" and "B" at the beginning of sections. The word "Draco" is written at the top center. The notation includes a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a time signature of 2/4. There are several annotations and corrections throughout the draft, such as "Recap.", "Repeat", "too long get down", and "too long get down". The draft is marked with "A" and "B" at the beginning of sections.

Rough draft of the second movement, "Draco"

A person wearing a black wetsuit is shown from the chest down, with their arms outstretched horizontally. They are positioned over a body of water with small, dark blue ripples. The lighting is soft, suggesting a sunset or sunrise, with a warm glow on the person's hands and the water's surface.

A very special Thank You to all the people
who have inspired me and supported me on
my musical journey...

Jennifer Butler, Aurora Felde, Suzanne Fulton,
Onalea Gilbertson, David Gilham, Jeffrey
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