

# DYNAMIC

Fall 2023 • Volume 52 • Issue 3



Choirs  
Ontario

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	3
Editor's Message	4
New Choirs Ontario board members	5

## FEATURE ARTICLES

Choral and Orchestral Worlds Unite in Album Review and Composer Chat with Colin Eatock <i>By Julia Brotto</i>	8
Retrospective: Lydia Adams, C.M. <i>By Linda Beaupré</i>	11
Unisong Choral Festival Back For Pandemic Delayed 25th Anniversary!	15

## CHOIR NEWS

Monday Morning Singers 24th Anniversary	18
Harmonious Barbershop Singing Resonates Across Canada: From Coast to Coast, Barbershop Enthusiasts Create Melodic Waves of Harmony <i>By: Daniel Berlin</i>	19



Check out our Choirs Ontario  
Events Calendar

**HERE**

# DYNAMIC

*is published three times a year by  
Choirs Ontario. Reproduction or  
translation of any work herein  
without the express permission of  
Choirs Ontario is unlawful.*

### Editor

Dr. Matthew Emery,  
[editor@choirsontario.org](mailto:editor@choirsontario.org)

### Graphic Designer

Olga Petrova

### Choirs Ontario

230 St. Clair Ave. W  
Toronto, ON M4V 1R5  
416.923.1144 or 1.866.935.1144  
f: 416.929.0415  
[info@choirsontario.org](mailto:info@choirsontario.org)

### Charitable registration:

11906 7536 RR0001

### Board of Directors

Charissa Bagan,  
*President*  
Andrew Walker,  
*Past President*  
Dr. Patrick Murray,  
*President-Elect & West-London*  
*Ontario Regional Chair*  
Maureen Clark,  
*Treasurer*  
Elise Naccarato,  
*Secretary*  
Dr. Matthew Emery  
*Editor, Dynamic*  
Dr. Gary Leung,  
*Development Chair*  
Susan Korstanje,  
*Northern Regional Chair*  
Nila Rajagopal,  
*South Central Regional Chair*  
Dr. Bruce J.G. Kotowich,  
*West Ontario Regional Chair*  
Amy Desrosier,  
*Eastern Ontario Regional Chair*

### Cover photo:

OYC 2023





is a stunningly beautiful season across Ontario as choirs in the province shift from the frenzy of their season launch to gearing up for major performances. It is quite a mix of exhaustion and anticipation! Whatever the size and scope of your choir may be, and whatever your role may be in it, Choirs Ontario wants to support you.

Our mission is **to foster vibrant, inclusive and accessible choral communities by providing programs, services and resources; creating opportunities; and engaging Ontario's diverse population in the transformative power of choral music.**

This Fall, we at **Choirs Ontario regional representatives will be reaching out to you, our membership, for input on regional workshops and requests for province-wide resources so that we may better serve you,** helping to fill the common gaps in support experienced by choirs, be it advocacy, professional development, or assistance with local repertoire and clinician connections.

During this transitional time between fall start-up and seasonal concerts **I ask that you take a moment to ensure your Choirs Ontario membership is up to date so that we may keep in contact with you, hear your choral needs, and provide opportunities and resources throughout the 2023-2024 season.**

Thank you for your commitment to community music-making and to choral arts in Ontario. Your contributions are valuable investments in community, creativity, story-telling and the enduring power of collective song.

Sincerely,  
Charissa



## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome back to a new season of Dynamic, the peer-reviewed publication of Choirs Ontario.

In this issue Julia Brotto speaks to composer Colin Eatock about his recent album release which features new choral music. They also discuss his philosophies on music and composition overall. We also celebrate Lydia Adams, C.M. on her recent appointment to the Order of Canada, with an illustrative feature by Linda Beaupré.

There are new faces to the Choirs Ontario board: Andrew Walker now moves into the Past President role and Charissa Bagan moves into President; we welcome Dr. Patrick Murray, President-Elect & West-London Ontario Regional Chair, Amy Desrosier, Eastern Ontario Regional Chair, and Elise Naccarato, Secretary. You can read a bit about their background in this issue. Additionally, a few choirs from across the province have sent news updates about their upcoming season.

Our cover photo for the issue features the 2023 Ontario Youth Choir which had a wonderful three concert tour across the province. The 2023 installment was conducted by Dr. Rachel Rensink-Hoff, and featured Dr. Irene Gregorio, Collaborative Pianist.

Matthew Emery

*...from dust and colours, new butterflies will be born...*



## CHOIRS ONTARIO BOARD MEMBERS



Cornwall native **Amy Desrosiers** is a mezzo-soprano and sings in the Capital Chamber Choir. She completed a Bachelor of Music and minor in Arts Administration in 2011 at the University of Ottawa and recently completed her Digital Marketing Certificate at the Telfer School of Management in July 2019. She is also the only Canadian to be accepted into the Young Event Management Programme (YEMP4) as part of the EUROPA CANTAT XX festival in Tallinn, Estonia in July / August 2018.

Amy loves working behind the scenes as an Arts Administrator and Choir Manager for the Capital Chamber Choir since 2014 and strives to fuse marketing and engagement in Ottawa's rich choral scene.

Amy has served on many committees, notably Choral Canada's bi-annual Podium Choral Conference & Festival since 2016.



Photo: Laura Collins

Conductor and composer **Patrick Murray** is a multi-faceted choral artist whose work reveals an equal commitment to high-calibre performance, education, and community engagement.

Currently, as Director of Music at Church of St. John the Evangelist in Elora, ON, Murray directs Canada's premiere professional church choir. Additionally, he serves as Artistic Director of Chor Amica (London, ON), Associate Conductor with the Bach Children's Chorus (Scarborough, ON), and as Director of the University of Toronto Scarborough Concert Choir. In these capacities, Murray works with singers of all ages and abilities to enliven and uplift communities through contemporary expression in the choral arts.

Murray has previously served on choral faculty at Western University and Wilfrid Laurier University, and as a teaching artist with the Oakville Choir for Children and Youth, Canadian Renaissance Music Summer School, and Illinois Summer Youth Music. Choirs under his direction have been recognized in the National Competition for Canadian Amateur Choirs and been invited to perform at PODIUM.





A passionate advocate for new music, Murray has premiered over thirty new choral and chamber opera works. His own compositions have been commissioned and premiered by numerous ensembles in Canada and the United States including New York Polyphony, Carmel Bach Festival, College of the Holy Cross, Metropolitan United Church Choir (Toronto), Summer Institute of Church Music, and others. His works have been recognized by the SOCAN Young Composers Award, recorded by the DaCapo Chamber Choir, and published by Cypress Choral Music and Renforth Music.

Murray's academic research focuses on community collaboration in contemporary choral music. He is a graduate of University of Illinois, Yale School of Music, and University of Toronto Faculty of Music.

**Elise** is a conductor whose journey is characterized by a dynamic blend of innovation and an unwavering commitment to empowering women in the arts. Her musical odyssey was ignited by a serendipitous family relocation to Burlington, Ontario, where she was introduced to the magical world of choral music through the Hamilton Children's Choir, led by the inspirational Zimfira Poloz. This fortuitous encounter sparked a lifelong passion for the choral arts.

As the visionary founder and Artistic Director of Myriad Ensemble, an upper-voice choir rooted in Burlington, Ontario, Elise has overseen its remarkable transformation from a small ensemble into a thriving group of over 50 members, a journey marked by resilience even through the challenges of the pandemic. Myriad Ensemble has earned international acclaim for their innovative and socially relevant performances, dedicated to amplifying the voices of women through collaborative exploration and performance of upper-voice choral repertoire. Elise's boundless innovation even garnered her a nomination for the prestigious YWCA's Women of Distinction award as a Pandemic Innovator.

Elise's artistic journey has been enriched by wisdom from world-renowned choral leaders, including luminaries such



as Dr. Hilary Apfelstadt, Jon Washburn, Michael Zaugg, and the ever-inspiring Zimfira Poloz. Yet, it was her apprenticeship under the revered Robert Cooper, CM, that sculpted her into the artistic leader she is today. She is filled with gratitude for the invaluable life lessons, enlightening conversations, and the wealth of knowledge and wisdom that Bob graciously shared.

Elise's academic achievements include an Honours Bachelor's in Music and a Diploma in Voice Performance from McMaster University, followed by a Masters in Music (Choral Conducting) from the University of Toronto under the guidance of Dr. Hilary Apfelstadt.

Elise has been privileged with numerous opportunities to conduct and shape the future of music. She served as the Apprentice Conductor of the 2016 and 2018 Ontario Youth Choirs under the esteemed Robert Cooper, CM (2016), and the Vancouver Chamber Choir's maestro, Jon Washburn (2018). She also lent her talents as the Assistant Conductor of the U of T Women's

Chamber Choir under the guidance of Dr. Hilary Apfelstadt. As a Rehearsal Assistant to Zimfira Poloz, she honed her skills with the Hamilton Children's Choir and Young Voices Toronto.

Presently, she wields her conductor's baton as the esteemed Conductor of the Hamilton Estonian Choir (HESS), a role that led her to the global stage as a Canadian representative at the Estonian Song Festival in Tallinn, Estonia, in July 2019.

In 2021, Elise's exceptional contributions to the world of choral artistry were celebrated when she received the St. Catharines Emerging Artist award. Her multifaceted talents shine as she takes on the role of Managing Director at Chorus Niagara, all while pursuing her MBA in Innovation Leadership at the University of Fredericton.

Elise's journey artfully combines her profound artistic passion with a vision for more streamlined operations within arts organizations, as she eagerly looks forward to sharing these skills in her role as a Board Member of Choirs Ontario.

CONNECT CHORALLY. MAKE LIFE *Sing!*

## Donate to Choirs Ontario

*To help strengthen and celebrate the choral arts in Ontario*



**DONATE THROUGH  
CANADA HELPS**

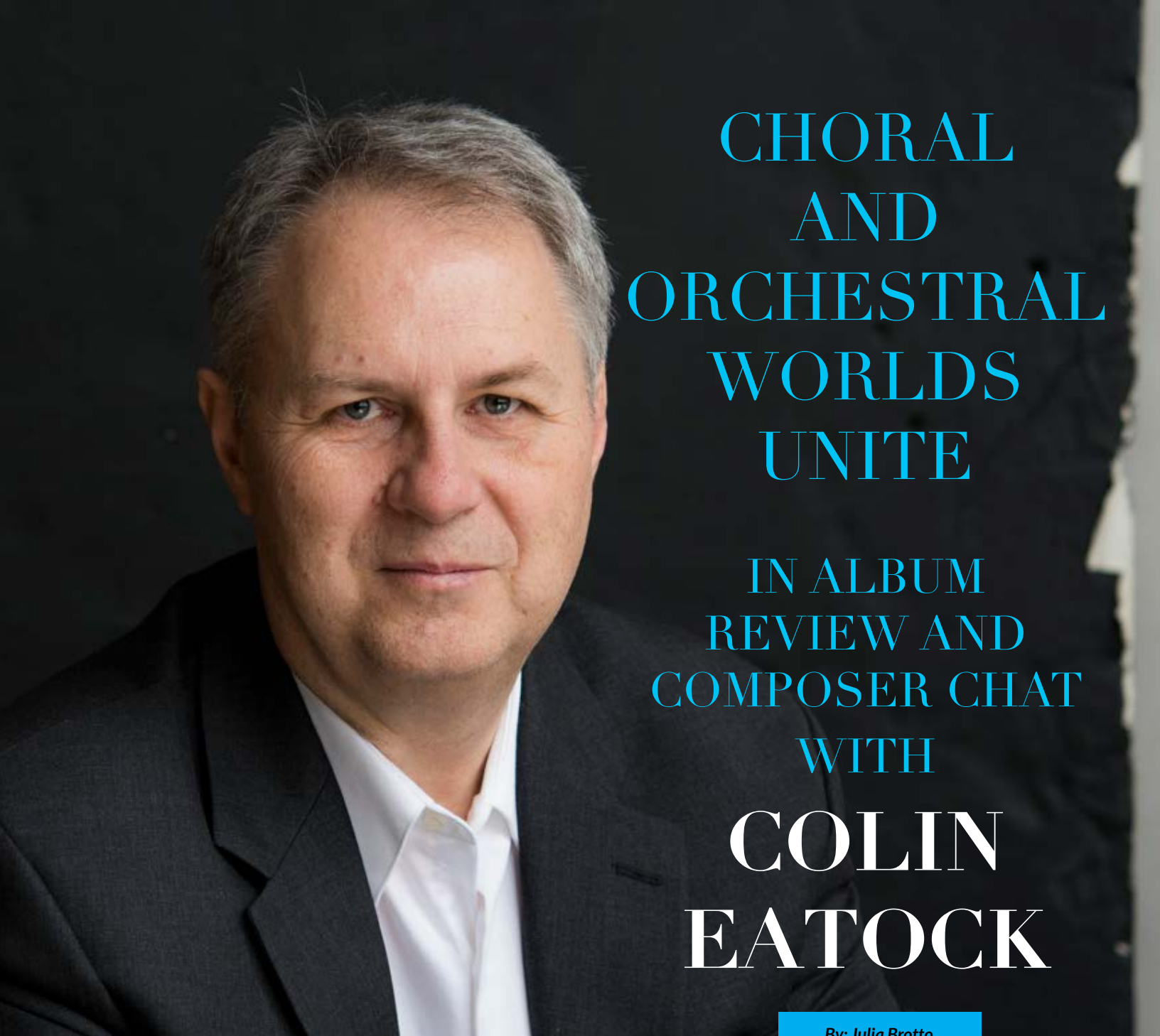


**DONATE DIRECTLY TO  
CHOIRS ONTARIO**

 @choirsontario

 @choirs\_ontario

*Follow the links above!*



# CHORAL AND ORCHESTRAL WORLDS UNITE

IN ALBUM  
REVIEW AND  
COMPOSER CHAT  
WITH  
**COLIN  
EATOCK**

By: Julia Brotto

## “COLIN EATOCK: CHORAL AND ORCHESTRAL MUSIC”

is the Ontario-based composer's newest album released in May 2023. Eatock highlights the full scope of his compositional portfolio in this album which includes sacred and secular works for choir and works for chamber orchestra. The album features musicians of Sinfonia Toronto led by conductor Nurhan Arman, and Soundstreams' Choir 21, conducted by David Fallis.



One will not want to miss the breadth and depth of music Eatock thoughtfully imparts in this album. Among his choral selections, Eatock includes his setting of the famous Rossetti text, “In the Bleak Mid-Winter”, and shares personal dedications and homages to his ancestors in “Ashes of Soldiers” and “The Lord is Risen”. Eatock includes his setting of “Alleluia” on the album which, unlike other composers, features an incipit, “Benedictus es”. His “Two Poems by Walt Whitman”,

*Tears and Darest Thou Now, O Soul*, take listeners on a journey into a metaphorical depiction of both the physical and metaphysical world, respectively.

Audiences will begin and end their listening journey with orchestral works. In the first, “Ashes of Soldiers”, Eatock redesigns his previous iteration of the work for solo soprano, clarinet, and piano by replacing the piano with strings and harp. The last piece on the album,

“Sinfonietta”, is inspired by early classical symphonies but has modern instrumentation, such as paired horns instead of wind instruments and assigning one player per part, to convey colour and chamber-like textures.

I had the opportunity to interview Eatock and learn more about his background in composition and the details of his new album.

**(JB): Can you tell us a bit about your musical background?**

**(CE):** I grew up in Hamilton, with piano lessons and high school band. But I never really wanted to be a performer: from my late teens, I was attracted to composition.

I spent a lot of time studying music at three Ontario universities: Western, McMaster and U of T. And my studies have been quite broad, including composition, theory and musicology. My degree in music criticism from McMaster was useful to me when I worked as an editor for the Canadian Opera Company, and later as a freelance music critic. I’ve also dabbled in teaching and the music management business. But again, my main musical interest was always composition.

**(JB): What inspired you to compose for choirs?**

**(CE):** I didn’t really have anything to do with choirs, or choral music, until I arrived at Western to study music composition. Much to my dismay, I found myself thrust into a choir. At first I hated it, and I was a terrible chorister! But by the end of my fourth year, I developed an affinity for choral music. I should also say that in all my years of composition studies, choral writing was rarely even touched upon. So if I now know anything about writing for choir, it’s because of those years I spent singing in choirs.

**(JB): How does your process for choral compositions compare to your instrumental works?**

**(CE):** I have a very consistent harmonic language, which I apply to both my choral and instrumental works. In that respect, they are similar.

But the process can be very different. The biggest difference is the selection and setting of a text in choral music. When working with the text the

challenge is to find a way to wed the writer’s literary ideas to my own musical ideas – so that the text and music become like two streams joining together to create a single, creative “river.”

With purely instrumental music, the challenge is the absence of a text. I sometimes find myself looking at a completely blank sheet of manuscript paper and thinking, “What am I going to do with this?”

**(JB): What was the inspiration behind this album?**

**(CE):** Back in 2012 I released a CD that included some of my chamber music: half-a-dozen pieces for one to four performers. And at the time, I remember thinking it would be nice to someday record some of my choral and orchestral music, so that the full scope of my compositional activities would be available on compact disc.

That’s when the idea for my choral and orchestral CD was born. I knew that to make such a disc, I’d have to compose some more music – so I wasn’t ready to act on the project until about four or five years ago. Once the overall form of the project was clear to me, I was determined to make it happen.

The recordings, made by Sounstreams’ Choir 21 and also Sinfonia Toronto, were done in 2021 and 2022. And, believe me, recording large ensembles in the midst of a pandemic lockdown was an experience I hope I’ll never repeat!

**(JB): What can listeners expect from this album?**

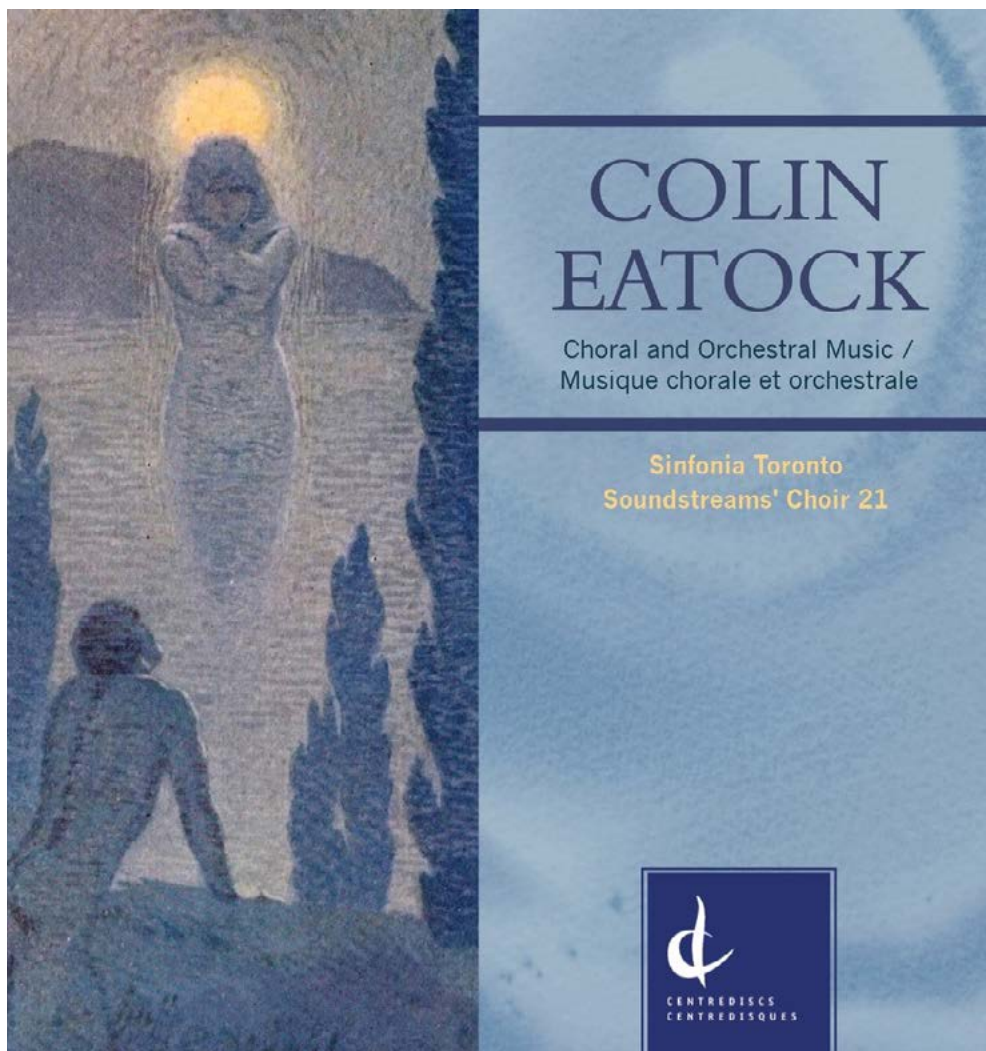
**(CE):** I hope they’ll like it! At the very least, they will get a very clear sense of what kind of composer I am and where my musical values lie. And if any of those listeners happen to be choral conductors, I also hope they’ll find some repertoire they can use on future programs.

# A CHORAL WORK ON THE ALBUM YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

It is worth noting that all but two chamber choral works on the album are sung a cappella. I will take this opportunity to spotlight one of the two accompanied choral pieces, “Out of My Deeper Heart”, which Eatock writes for SATB choir and cello. The librettist, Kahlil Gibran, speaks of humans’ inability to understand the universe as we are fully enveloped in the worlds we inhabit. It is only when we listen to our deeper hearts that we can gain the perspective to know what is true and real.

Eatock was drawn to the text by the image of a rising bird, which is characterized by the cello. The piece begins a cappella with the choir word painting the text in beautiful, flowing melodic lines. Then, the bird takes flight and we hear the first cello interlude. Throughout the piece, Eatock plays with juxtaposition by having simpler, chorale-like textures interwoven with florid and embellished cello interludes.

At around six minutes in length, this piece is suited for experienced ensembles with flexible and agile singers. It is not often that choral works are accompanied by solo cello; as such, this piece would enhance any concert programme and give audience members a sonic experience they may have never encountered before.



## TO CONCLUDE

The rich musical landscape paved by Eatock in his second studio album will draw in listeners from choral and instrumental backgrounds alike. Eatock’s consistent harmonic language throughout is an exemplary model of compositional integrity amidst the breadth of music Eatock creates.

All should make time to listen to “Colin Eatock: Choral and Orchestral Music” on SoundCloud, Spotify, or Apple Music. To support Canadian composers, I encourage all to explore Eatock’s catalogue and purchase his music at <https://www.colineatock.com/>.



*Julia is an Ontario-certified teacher pursuing a Master of Music in Choral Conducting at Western University. She assistant conducts with Les Choristes and sings in the JUNO-nominated Canadian Chamber Choir.*



*Sir David Willcocks  
and Lydia Adams*

## *Lydia Adams, C.M.*

*By Linda Beaupré*

When Lydia Adams was recently named as a new member of the Order of Canada, there was much rejoicing. Lydia is well known to the Canadian choral music community and beyond, and has touched singers on every level from untrained amateur to professional, and from child to adult. Lydia has a magnetism that comes from a genuine wish to share the joy of making excellent music, from her incredible level of musicianship, and from her talent in drawing out a high standard of musical excellence from her performers. Singers and instrumentalists of all ages and levels of ability unfailingly find that singing or playing for Lydia is an uplifting musical experience. She has the gift of taking any musical piece and immediately elevating it to its highest level. New compositions, whether by amateurs or professionals, take on a more musical shape. In the process of working with Lydia, many singers are inspired to higher musical ability and dedication. Her innate musicianship helps the inexperienced to sing more musically, and often those who are new to choirs are inspired to take voice lessons and to learn to sightread.

Growing up in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, Lydia had two very strong mentors: her mother, Florence Adams, a church musician and a musical force within the Glace Bay community; and Marguerite MacDougall, an amazing performer and piano teacher (who also taught Stuart Calvert, another Glace Bay musician whose name many will recognize). After completing her degree at Mount Allison University, Lydia began five years of post-graduate work in England at the Royal College of Music and

the National Opera Studio. It was in England that Lydia began her professional career, as she quickly became a valued pianist with the Royal College of Music and the Bach Choir of London, both under Sir David Willcocks. Sir David also occasionally offered Lydia extra experience, when he would have her take over conducting in rehearsal at a moment's notice. When Lydia returned to Canada she had already been contracted to play for the Elmer Iseler Singers (EIS) under their namesake, Dr. Elmer Iseler. Sir David and Elmer greatly valued Lydia's high level of musicianship and her joyful personality, and each quickly became personal friends and valued mentors to Lydia.

Lydia's long relationship with Elmer Iseler began when she played for an adult summer camp of the Nova Scotia Choral Federation, which Elmer was conducting. Elmer was quickly smitten with Lydia and offered her a position as accompanist with EIS....which he held for her until she finished her studies in London. Years later, it was a natural succession when Lydia took on the conducting of EIS, carrying on Elmer's tradition of encouraging new Canadian music through commissioning and performing. Lydia is now in her 25th year as conductor of the Elmer Iseler Singers.

While working with EIS, Lydia began conducting the Amadeus Choir (AC). Over her 35 years with the AC, the choir grew to its current stature as a well-known choir on the Canadian scene, performing, recording and commissioning many new Canadian works. In 1987, Lydia borrowed an idea from Sir David, who ran an annual competition for a Christmas Carol, with one winning piece to be sung each



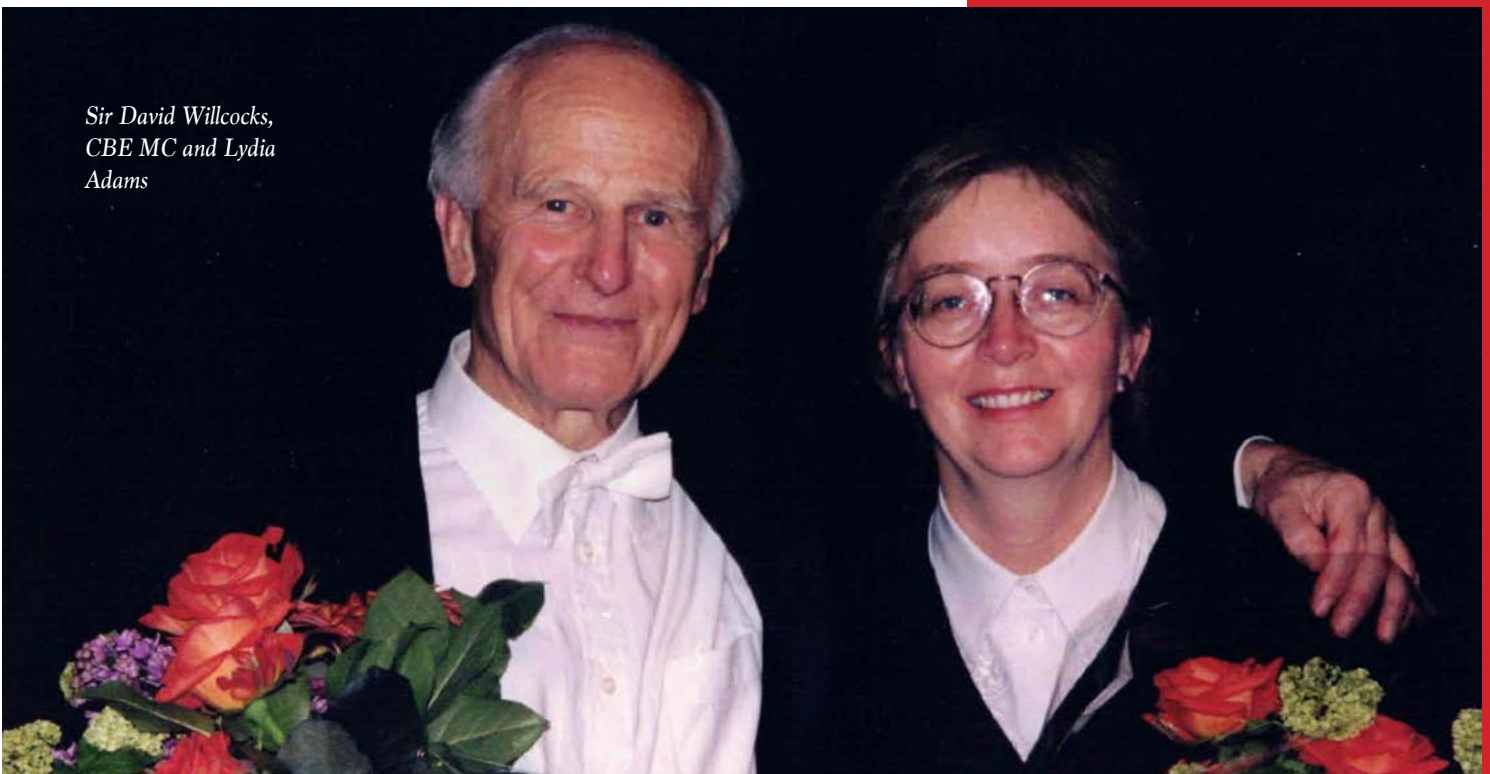
year by The Bach Choir. Lydia adapted this into the annual Amadeus Song Writing Competition.... a 30-year success that engendered hundreds of new compositions. Lydia expanded the idea to include several separate categories for all ages, and in each of the 30 years of the annual competition, compositions were submitted by children, teens, adult amateurs and professionals. The top prize for each of the winners was a certificate and a modest amount of cash, but the best part was a performance of the work by the Amadeus Choir, along with a recording of the performance. Chanukah song categories were soon added and later, briefly, a solstice category. If a song was a simple melody needing accompaniment, the winning composer had the added perk of either Lydia or Eleanor Daley writing an accompaniment for the song. Lydia or Eleanor would gently work with young composers if a rudimentary arrangement needed a little tweaking to make the song work in performance. Many of the songs were absolutely remarkable, and up to 9, or 11, or even 13 new songs might be performed in a single concert. Many winning songs were ultimately published and thereby shared well beyond those initial performances.

Lydia's gift of bringing outstanding premieres of new works to audiences and championing new compositions has become a hallmark of her work. Through an instinctive understanding of the composer's wishes and a superlative level of musicianship, Lydia inspires each performer to feel the essence of each new composition from the first notes of the initial rehearsal. She has a generosity of spirit that she brings to her treatment of both the performers and the music. The hundreds of works that Lydia has premiered include the world's first Cree opera, "Pimootewin: The Journey," by Tomson Highway and Melissa Hui;

"Music of the Land," by Kathleen Allan, featuring a children's choir, dancers and throat singers; "Om Saha Navavatu," a meditative work by Timothy Corlis based on Vedic mantras; and "Nur: Reflections on Light," by Hussein Janmohamed, based on Islamic chant. Lydia's own choral arrangements include two of the most beloved songs of Canadian choirs: "We Rise Again" by Leon Dubinsky and "Here's to Song" by Allister MacGillivray.

Lydia has received many honours in her career, including Honorary Doctorates from the University of Cape Breton and her alma mater, Mount Allison University; the title "Ambassador of Canadian Music" from The Canadian Music Centre; and the Ontario Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts. It is with great pleasure that we congratulate her on this prestigious, very well-deserved award, that of becoming a member of the Order of Canada.

*Sir David Willcocks,  
CBE MC and Lydia  
Adams*



## NOTE FROM LYDIA:

*Dear colleagues: Thank you so much to Matthew and Choirs Ontario, and to Linda for writing this very kind article. I am greatly honoured to have been appointed to the Order of Canada. Matthew kindly gave me an opportunity to say a few words when I realized that Linda was going to miss one extremely important part of my choral voyage - and that is Linda Beaupré.*

*The truth of the history is that Linda was with me from the very beginning of my tenure with the Amadeus Choir, and was an integral part of building the choir.*

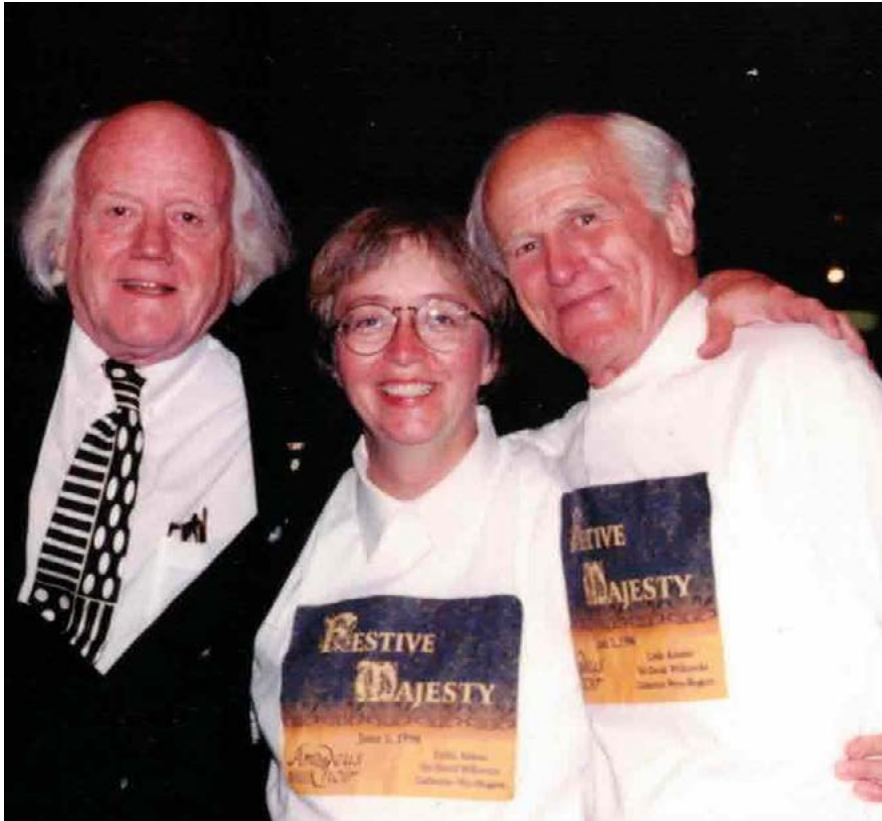
*Linda supported me in taking on the choir, and became the choir's first (unpaid) administrator, organizing the choir and doing all the applications for Charitable Status, etc., etc. She founded and developed the Bach Children's Chorus into one of the finest choirs in Canada, beginning with a small group of children of Amadeus singers. Its original name was The Amadeus Children's Chorus of Scarborough. She co-founded the Amadeus Song-Writing Competition with me, and this competition would not have had the impact for so many emerging composers, from age 4 years to international professionals, had it not been for Linda and her stunningly beautiful performances with the BCC of so many carols and other works written for children's voices.*

*That is the short list of what she did.*

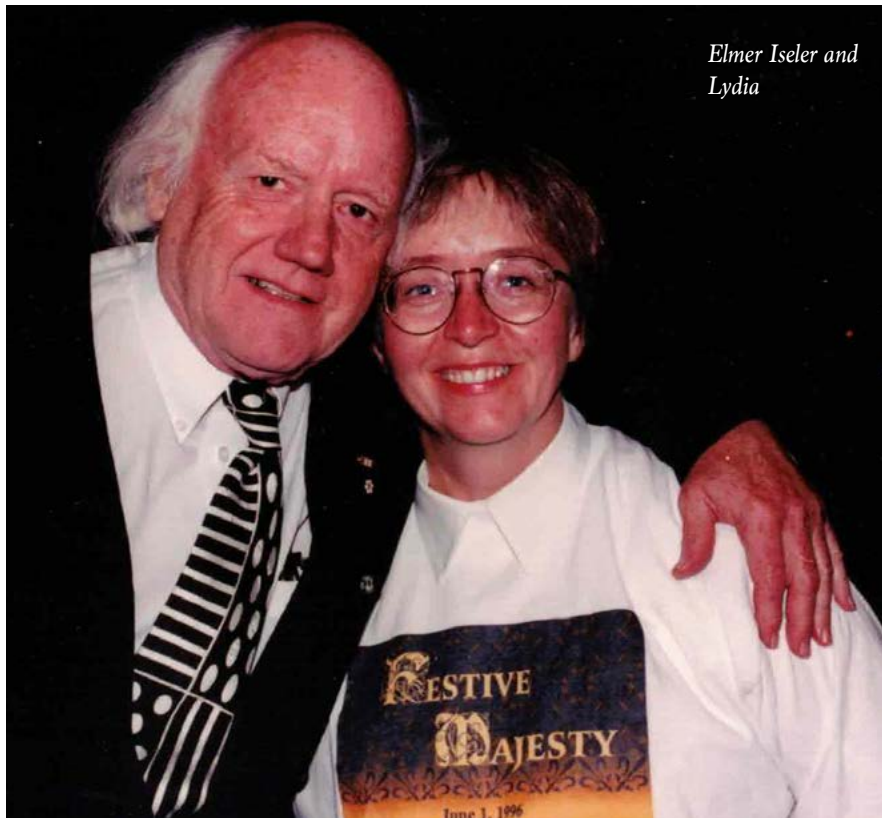
*All to say that I did nothing on my own - it all happened because of such marvellous people with me, and Linda and her friendship, work and artistry, enthusiasm and excellence, was a huge part of any success that might be attributed to me. I just thought that should be noted.*

*Thank you, Linda!*

*Best wishes to you all for a brilliant choral season ahead!*



*Sir David Willcocks, Lydia Adams, Elmer Iseler*



*Elmer Iseler and  
Lydia*

*All photos: Maura McGroarty*





# UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

## FACULTY OF MUSIC



### WE VALUE:

*Excellence and equity of opportunity, developing individuals to the best of their and our ability*

*Diversity and fostering individuality in our students*

*Tradition and innovation, reaffirming fundamental practices while creating new ones*

*Academic and artistic freedom of expression*

### DEGREES

#### UNDERGRADUATE

Advanced Certificate in Performance

Artist Diploma

Diploma in Operatic Performance

Bachelor of Music

Bachelor of Music in Performance

#### GRADUATE

Master of Arts

Master of Music

#### DOCTORATE

Doctor of Philosophy

Doctor of Musical Arts

### CHORAL FACULTY

**Dr. Jamie Hillman**, *Elmer Iseler Chair in Conducting/ Director of Choral Studies/Associate Professor, MacMillan Singers*

**Dr. Shireen Abu Khader**, Undergraduate Choral Conducting

**Kathleen Allan**, Soprano-Alto Chorus, Undergraduate Choral Conducting

**Thomas Burton**, Tenor-Bass Chorus

**Dr. Lori-Anne Dolloff**, *Associate Professor, Music Education, Chamber Choir*

**Zimfira Poloz**, Voice Pedagogy for Young Choirs

**Dr. Hilary Apfelstadt**, *Professor Emerita of Choral Studies*

With a world-renowned faculty and comprehensive programs, we are committed to developing the boundless potential of our students. Start your journey here. Contact us at [undergrad.music@utoronto.ca](mailto:undergrad.music@utoronto.ca) / [grad.music@utoronto.ca](mailto:grad.music@utoronto.ca).

[music.utoronto.ca](http://music.utoronto.ca)

 **Instagram @uoftchoralstudies**

Photos: Lisa Sakulensky



# UNISONG



## *Choral Festival Back For Pandemic Delayed 25th Anniversary!*

The Unisong Choral Festival, an annual choral tradition of unifying Canadian's through song, is returning in 2024 for a delayed 25th anniversary celebration. Founded in 1997, the Unisong Choral Festival invites choirs of all ages to join a massed ensemble of hundreds in a performance at the heart of Canada Day festivities in Ottawa on Canada Day. Their 25th anniversary was scheduled to take place during the pandemic, and after several years on hold, the festival returns in glorious form in 2024 under the guidance of Guest Conductor, Kathleen Allan.

Mike Greenwood, the Festival Director, notes "It has been a slow build back for many choirs. In talking to choirs that participate regularly in Unisong, many are only just now getting back to normal numbers, and are starting to tour. We are excited to finally have the numbers to return with the Festival!"

Scheduled to be the Guest Conductor since the pandemic hit in 2020, Kathleen Allan is excited to finally have her chance to lead this annual event. "I can't wait to be part of Unisong 2024!" notes Allan. "This festi-



val has become such an important part of the Canadian choral network, and I'm honoured to be the Guest Conductor next year. I believe that choral music is one of the most powerful tools for bringing people together. By combining voices in Ottawa, choirs from across the country will be able to experience this power on a national level."

The festival gives participants the chance to combine their voices with choirs from across the country in one massed ensemble performance, typically hosted in the





grand Southam Hall at the National Arts Centre. The festival is an official part of Canada Day festivities in Ottawa, and typically plays to standing room audiences. Unisong has also built strong relationships with their host the National Arts Centre, as well as Heritage Canada and the City of Ottawa, allowing participating choirs unique performance opportunities that has included concerts in Parliament, Rideau Hall, Embassies, and even taking part in the nationally broadcasted Canada Day Concert!

Unsong's creative team, led by Artistic Director, Robert Filion, have been working year over year to make the festival a unique celebration of Canadian culture and unity. The repertoire is a mix of Canadian composed or arranged works, in both official languages and in at least one indigenous language. Over the years, Unisong has been fortunate enough to welcome choirs from every Province and Territory, with many choirs being regular participants. Says Greenwood "Robert has been an exceptional driving force in helping the festival be representative of the unique cultures and sounds from across the country. He has also done wonders in attracting leading conductors each year to guide the festival."

As part of the upcoming milestone celebration, Unisong has invited for the first time a Guest Composer to also work with the choirs. The multitasking indigenous composer and music educator, Sherryl Sewepéham will work directly with participating choirs on her works. "Sherryl is in demand across the country, and brings a wonderful indigenous influence to our 2024 festival. Working with her on music she has composed will be truly one of the highlights of 2024" says Greenwood.

Interested choirs are encouraged to get in touch with festival organizers early, as space is limited. "Each year, we look to have a minimum of 250 choristers on stage, and an absolute maximum of 350 due to the size of the stage in Southam Hall" says Greenwood. "In the past, we have had to move the festival to other locations when we reached 600+ choristers, but have decided in recent years to put an annual cap at 350, providing a much more manageable festival, and a better overall experience for choristers."



Festival Director is eager to connect with any interested participants, and can be booked for an easy Zoom call to talk more. "We still have room for 1-2 choirs for 2024, and are now looking ahead to 2025 as well" says Greenwood. "We are working on making the next few years a great comeback for this recently dormant festival, and will be announcing our 2025 Guest Conductor before the end of the year." Interested choirs can also be put on our email list by contacting [info@oxygenevents.ca](mailto:info@oxygenevents.ca) or visiting [www.unisong.ca](http://www.unisong.ca)



# FOR ALL OF YOUR CHORAL MUSIC NEEDS

Thousands of titles online, with many more available to special order



*Ask us about our  
choral music discounts*



**Long & McQuade**  
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS  
long-mcquade.com

Reach out to our choral music specialists

Sheilah scraven@long-mcquade.com  
Heather hhopkins@long-mcquade.com



JUNE 28 - JULY 2  
**2024**

**UNISONG**  
CHORAL FESTIVAL



Join This Annual Event  
**IN CANADA'S  
CAPITAL**

With Guest Conductor  
**KATHLEEN ALLAN**  
And Guest Composer  
**SHERRYL SEWEPAGAHAM**

For over 20 years, the Unisong Choral Festival has been uniting Canada through an amazing festival that places you at the heart of Canada Day Festivities in the Nation's Capital. Join choirs of all ages as part of a massed chorus of hundreds as we sing a shared repertoire of Canadian and international folk music.

More Information Visit [unisong.ca](http://unisong.ca)







*In 2024, it will be the 24th anniversary of the Uxbridge women's choir, Monday Morning Singers.*

## CHOIR *News*

Twenty four years ago, director and founder, Anne Mizen met with a group of women who loved to sing in the home of a friend. Together the singers gradually came together as a choir, exploring the rich repertory of music for women's voices. They had to find another rehearsal space to accommodate the growing number of singers, but the time of Monday morning seemed to suit everyone. The name seemed inevitable.

In 2000, plans were underway to celebrate the group's 20th anniversary. MMS had already performed *Snow Angel* by Canadian composer, Sarah Quartel. This dramatic piece is written for women's voices and includes several speaking parts. One of these performers was

the late Canadian actor, Kenneth Welsh, who was a great friend of MMS. Everyone, performers and audience, enjoyed this concert enormously. The choir decided to celebrate the 20th season by commissioning a composition from Sarah Quartel.

And then the pandemic came along.

The talks already in progress with Sarah sputtered to a stop.

But all things rise again and here we are back, gratefully and joyfully singing together again. Director, Anne and composer, Sarah kept in touch through the pandemic and in this past few months have worked out a plan.

There will be a new composition by Sarah Quartel written for the Monday Morning Singers in 2024. This special piece will be premiered at the Christmas concert of 2024 in our home town of Uxbridge, Ontario. We are so happy and excited to continue with this celebratory project. And we thank all the members of the choir, the volunteer executive committee, the many friends who contribute time and talent to support the choir and our faithful, enthusiastic audiences who fill our performance spaces.

For more information  
about MMS,  
have a look at our website,  
[mondaymorningsingers.com](http://mondaymorningsingers.com)

HARMONIOUS BARBERSHOP SINGING RESONATES ACROSS CANADA:

# FROM COAST TO COAST, BARBERSHOP ENTHUSIASTS CREATE MELODIC WAVES OF

# *Harmony*

By: Daniel Berlin

Canada has become a hotbed of melodious harmony as barbershop singing gains popularity from coast to coast. With its rich history and deep-rooted traditions, this unique form of a cappella singing (no instrumental accompaniment, voices only) is captivating audiences and bringing communities together with its enchanting melodies and soul-stirring harmonies.

Barbershop singing, a style of four-part harmony with close harmonies and a cappella vocals, has been thriving in Canada for decades. The country's diverse and multicultural communities have embraced this musical genre, resulting in the formation of numerous barbershop quartets, choruses, and organizations dedicated to preserving and promoting the art form.

One such organization, the Dukes of Harmony has been instrumental in fostering a vibrant barbershop community across the GTA. The Dukes provides a platform for singers to connect, learn, and perform, contributing to the growth and popularity of barbershop singing nationwide. You can, and should, check out their website at [www.dukesofharmony.com](http://www.dukesofharmony.com). The Dukes of Harmony are always seeking new singers as well as charitable and profitable venues for performing. You can contact them via the website and they always warmly welcome new, aspiring barbershoppers.

From bustling cities to small towns, barbershop enthusiasts are spreading the joy of harmony throughout Canada. Local barbershop choruses, often consisting of both men and women, regularly entertain audiences with their polished performances and heartwarming renditions of classic songs. These groups participate in regional competitions and international conventions, where they showcase their vocal talents and share their love for the art form.

In recent years, Canada has witnessed a surge in youth involvement in barbershop singing. Many schools and universities now have barbershop ensembles, providing young singers with a platform to develop their vocal skills and nurture their passion for harmony. The inclusion of young voices has injected a fresh energy into the barbershop community and has attracted a new generation of fans and performers.

Barbershop festivals and events have become an integral part of Canada's cultural landscape. Cities across the country host annual gatherings that celebrate the art of barbershop singing, drawing participants and spectators from near and far. These festivals feature captivating performances, workshops, and educational sessions, creating an atmosphere of camaraderie and musical discovery.

One notable event is the Canadian Barbershop Harmony Society Convention, which takes place every year in different locations across the country. The convention brings together barbershop singers, quartets, and choruses from all provinces, allowing them to share their talents, compete, and build lasting connections. This convention has grown in scale and popularity, highlighting the widespread enthusiasm for barbershop singing in Canada.

Barbershop singing's influence extends beyond the borders of Canada, as Canadian groups and individuals consistently make their mark on the international stage. Canadian quartets and choruses have achieved recognition and acclaim at international competitions, demonstrating the exceptional talent and dedication within the country's barbershop community.

With its ability to foster harmony, community, and musical excellence, barbershop singing has become a part of Canada's cultural fabric. From the energetic performances of quartets to the stirring harmonies of choruses, this timeless art form continues to captivate audiences and unite people through the power of music. As the popularity of barbershop singing continues to soar, Canada remains a proud bastion of melodious harmony, enriching the lives of both performers and listeners alike.