

## ***Incarnation***

Duo Concertante

Nancy Dahn, violin and electric violin

Timothy Steeves, piano

Andrew Staniland

1. *The River Is Within Us* 14:06

Denis Gougeon *Chants du Cœur*

2. *Chants du Cœur I* 4:37

3. *Chants du Cœur II* 4:55

Alice Ping Yee Ho

4. *Cœur à Cœur* 13:27

Jocelyn Morlock

5. *Petrichor* 9:54

Chan Ka Nin

6. *Incarnation* 16:23

Total playing time: 63:22

### **Program Notes for *Incarnation* (for electric violin and piano)**

*Incarnation* was commissioned as a companion piece when the Duo was performing the complete violin and piano works by Schubert.

The composer paid tribute to Schubert by echoing themes derived from works such as “Death and the Maiden,” Fantasy in C for violin and piano, and “Who Is Silvia.” This new work is titled *Incarnation* because in a way, it revives Schubert’s spirit. While Schubert’s melodies are famous, his accompaniments are equally memorable. For example, the opening piano figure in “Erlkönig” is an inspiring motive, and it appears in the final section of this work. In writing *Incarnation*, Chan Ka Nin tried to relive how Schubert composed, to rediscover his state of mind, and at the same time to rework his ideas in a contemporary context, as if Schubert’s spirit were travelling through modern times. The acoustic sound from the violin and piano represent Schubert’s world, and the modified electronic sounds act as the manifestation of his ideas in this century.

The work is a commission by the Canada Council for the Arts and Toronto Arts Council for Duo Concertante. The composer dedicates this piece to Nancy Dahn and Timothy Steeves.

**Biography: Chan Ka Nin**

Chan Ka Nin is a distinguished Canadian composer whose extensive repertoire draws on both East and West in its aesthetic outlook. A professor of theory and composition at the University of Toronto, he has written in most musical genres and received many national and international prizes, including two JUNO awards, the Jean A. Chalmers Award, the Béla Bartók International Composers' Competition in Hungary, and the Barlow Prize in the United States. In 2001 he won the Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding New Musical or Opera for his opera *Iron Road*. Characteristically luminous in texture and exotic in instrumental colours, Professor Chan's music has been described by critics as "sensuous," "haunting," and "intricate." The composer often draws his inspiration directly from personal experiences: the birth of one of his daughters, the death of his father, his spiritual quests, or his connection to nature and concern for the environment.

**Program Notes for *Petrichor*** *Petrichor* is the scent of rain on dry earth. The word is Greek in origin, and combines "petra" (Greek for stone) and "ichor" (according to Greek mythology, ichor, rather than blood, flows in the veins of gods). It is defined more precisely as "the distinctive scent which accompanies the first rain after a long warm dry spell."

*Petrichor* explores an emotional landscape of anticipation, joy, and release, such as a person might feel upon experiencing the first rain after a long drought. The music is built from small motivic fragments gleaned from the first movement of Bach's Sonata in G major for violin and keyboard (alongside which *Petrichor* was programmed for its premiere). The contrasting moods of the piece vary from somewhat whimsical and restrained to overtly ecstatic, becoming calm and serene again at the end.

**Biography: Jocelyn Morlock**

JUNO-nominated composer Jocelyn Morlock is one of Canada's most distinctive voices. She began her term as the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's composer-in-residence on 1 September 2014, having just completed a term as the inaugural composer-in-residence for Vancouver's Music on Main. "A lyrical wonder, exquisite writing" with "an acute feeling for sonority" and an approach that is "deftly idiomatic" (*Vancouver Sun*), Morlock's music has received numerous accolades, including being named in the top 10 at the International Rostrum of Composers (2002), winning the CMC Prairie Region Emerging Composer Competition (2003), winning the Vancouver Mayor's Arts Awards for Emerging Artist (2008) and for Music (2016), and being nominated for a JUNO Classical Composition of the Year (2011). Her first full-length CD, *Cobalt*, was nominated for three Western Canadian Music Awards and won Classical Composition of the Year in 2015.

### **Program Notes for *The River Is Within Us***

*The River Is Within Us* is the second of three related pieces, the others being *Solstice Songs* (commissioned by the Gryphon Trio) and *Still Turning*, a work for solo cello written for the Dutch cello virtuoso Frances-Marie Uitti. All three works share musical and poetic themes, and were composed in the spring, summer, and fall of 2011, respectively. *The River Is Within Us* is a highly lyrical work directly inspired by T. S. Eliot's famous *Four Quartets*, in which the seasons create a striking subtext. The idea of the river as a metaphor also figures heavily in this piece, specifically Michel Houellebecq's description of a river in his book *The Elementary Particles*.

*The River Is Within Us* was commissioned for Duo Concertante by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

### **Biography: Andrew Staniland**

Composer Andrew Staniland has firmly established himself as one of Canada's most important and innovative composers. Described by Alex Ross in the *New Yorker* as "alternately beautiful and terrifying," his music is regularly heard on CBC Radio and has been performed and broadcast internationally in over 35 countries. Andrew was the recipient of the 2009 National Grand Prize in Evolution, presented by CBC Radio 2/Espace Musique and the Banff Centre, top prizes in the SOCAN young composers competition, and the 2004 Karen Keiser Prize in Canadian Music. As a leading composer of his generation, he has been recognized by election to the Inaugural Cohort of the College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists of the Royal Society of Canada in 2014.

### **Program Notes for *Chants du Cœur***

*Chants du Cœur* consists of two movements. *Chant du Cœur I* is very slow, giving the melodic material entirely to the violin, with the piano supplying the accompaniment in a dark and serious mood. *Chant du Cœur II* uses the first notes of "Flow my tears," by John Dowland. Here the mood is livelier and the range of emotion and dynamic more highly contrasted.

"This work, written in memory of my parents, was commissioned by Duo Concertante and premiered on 10 August 2012 at the Tuckamore Chamber Music Festival in St. John's, Newfoundland. It is dedicated to Nancy and Tim with all my gratitude." – Denis Gougeon

### **Biography: Denis Gougeon**

Quebec composer Denis Gougeon has written more than 100 works, ranging from solos to orchestral pieces, from concertante music to chamber opera, and from musical tales to symphonic ballets. He has written for, among others, the symphony orchestras of Quebec City (OSQ), Montreal (OSM and OM), and Shanghai; the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France; the Esprit Orchestra of Toronto; the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec; the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne; the Molinari and

Erato string quartets; sopranos Marie-Danielle Parent and Marianne Fiset; the Percussions de Strasbourg; the Bayerisches Staatsballett of Munich; and the Norwegian National Ballet. In January 1989, Charles Dutoit selected him as the MSO's first composer-in-residence. Denis Gougeon won first prize in the 2010 International Composition Competition in Shanghai. He won the 2000 Opus Prize for Composer of the Year, and the 2011 Opus Prize for Composition of the Year for his work *Mutation*. His work *Clere Vénus* was awarded a JUNO in 2007. After honouring Claude Vivier, Gilles Tremblay, and Ana Sokolovic in previous years, the SMCQ chose Denis Gougeon as the focus of the fourth (2013-2014) iteration of their Hommage series. Denis Gougeon has been teaching composition in the music faculty of the Université de Montréal since 2001.

### **Program Notes for *Cœur à Cœur***

As the title suggests, this piece is conceived as an imaginary conversation between two voices exchanging inner thoughts and confessing their feelings to each other. There is an emotional aspect of the music that suggests a deep affection and mutual understanding between two individuals, like the support and receptiveness between players in a duet. The music moves from expressive lyricism to high animation, and concludes in transcending high notes uttered by both instruments, signifying everlasting tenderness or consolation.

“My work is created especially for Duo Concertante, violinist Nancy Dahn and pianist Timothy Steeves, two outstanding performers and supporters of Canadian music. Together they are an incredible couple who demonstrate remarkable strength and beauty in their lives and music making.” – Alice Ping Yee Ho

### **Biography: Alice Ping Yee Ho 何冰頤**

Considered “among the most important composers writing in this country” (D. Ariaratnam, the *Record*), Alice Ping Yee Ho is a Hong Kong-born Canadian composer acclaimed for her “distinctly individual” style and “organic flow of imagination.” She has written in many musical genres and received numerous national and international awards, including the 2016 Louis Applebaum Composers Award, 2014 Prince Edward Island Symphony Composers Competition, 2014 Kitchener Waterloo Symphony Friendship Orchestral Composition Competition, 2013 Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding New Musical or Opera for her opera *Lesson of Da Ji*, 2013 Boston Metro Opera International Composition Competition, K. M. Hunter Artist Award, du Maurier Arts Ltd. Canadian Composers Competition, MACRO International Composition Competition, Luxembourg Sinfonietta International Composition Prize, and International League of Women Composers Competition. Her work *Glistening Pianos* for two pianos (Centrediscs label) was nominated for the 2015 JUNO Award Classical Composition of the Year. A recording of her opera *Lesson of Da Ji* was released by Centrediscs in November 2015.

## **Duo Concertante**

The members of Canada's premiere violin and piano ensemble, Duo Concertante, are partners in music and in life. Known for their brilliant, passionate performances, this husband and wife join forces in a team whose extraordinarily unified voice has become one of the most striking features of their work. Critics have praised Nancy Dahn and Timothy Steeves' "artistry, poetry, and impeccable technique" (*La Scena Musicale*) and "deeply integrated performances that flow naturally as if the music were being created on the spot" (*Gramophone*). The Duo's busy touring schedule across North America, Europe, and China has led to performances at Wigmore Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Roy Thomson Hall, the National Arts Centre, and the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing.

Their eight acclaimed CDs include *Beethoven: Complete Sonatas for Violin and Piano* and *J. S. Bach: Six Sonatas for Violin and Keyboard* which received rare reviews from the international press, and their recording of Schafer's *Duo for Violin and Piano* won a 2011 JUNO Award for Classical Composition of the Year. Professors at Memorial University's School of Music, Nancy and Tim are also the Artistic Directors of the Tuckamore Festival. They were recently elected as Fellows to the Royal Society of Canada.

[www.duoconcertante.com](http://www.duoconcertante.com)

## Credits

This recording was made possible with the assistance of Memorial University.

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