



Slow Rise Music
Presents

Hanging

By A

Thread

a night of world premieres
for multi-instrumental duo

À vol d'oiseau

Par Aude A. Saint-Laurent

Tu te seras retenue
Tant bien que mal
De tout ton cœur
De toute ton âme
Au fil des saisons
Au fil de l'eau
Aux fils des âges et de tes maux.

Jusque-là, notre Terre protégée
Sacrée vierge et immaculée
Se serait laissé bétonner
Aux quatre veines
Aux quatre vents
Forcée d'échanger
Monts et merveilles
Contre marées et vents.

Et c'est ainsi
Que face contre Terre
Entre deux moissons
Entre deux secousses
Tu auras attendu de pied ferme:
Les voleurs de temps
Les voleurs d'argent
Les fraudeurs d'eau douce.

À vol d'oiseau.

Et à vous
Pauvres petits pinsons
On aurait annoncé
Qu'il était déjà trop tard
Oui, trop tard
Pour retourner son sablier.

Et tour à tour
Les pires vautours
Se seraient emparés
De ce qu'il lui restait
De plus précieux:

Oui! de ta Mer
Oui! de ta terre
Oui! de tes frères
Et de leurs chants cérémoniaux
Et de ton Eau
Oui! de ton Eau.

Hélas! Ne restera-t-il de notre avenir
Que le merveilleux souvenir
D'un air d'autrefois?
Allez, tous ensemble
Suivons la cadence:
Alouette, gentille Alouette,
Alouette, je te plumerai.

Non, on ne la plumera pas
Car tel un Phénix
Qui renaît de ses cendres
La Terre, elle aussi
Réapprendra...
À tourner.

As the crow flies

By Aude A. Saint-Laurent (tr. Anika-France Forget)

You will have held back
As long as you could
With all of your heart
With all of your soul
Throughout the seasons
Over the water
Throughout the ages and over your ills.

Until then, our protected Earth
Sacred virgin and immaculate
Will have let herself concreted
In the four veins
To the four winds
Forced to exchange
Mountains and marvels
for tides and winds.

And it is so
That face to the ground
Between two harvests
Between two shakes
You will have waited
For time thieves
For money thieves
And for freshwater fraudsters.

As the crow flies.

And to you
Poor little finches
We will have announced
That it was already too late
Yes, too late
To turn back time.

And one at a time
The worst vultures
Will have laid hold of
Her most prized possessions:

Yes! Of your Sea
Yes! Of your land
Yes! Of your brothers
And of their ceremonial songs
And of your Water
Yes! Of your Water.

Alas! There won't be anything left but
The wonderful memory
Of an old melody.
Come on, all together
Let's keep up the rhythm:
Lark, good lark,
Lark, I will pluck you.

No, we won't pluck the lark
Because like the Phoenix
Which rises from its ashes
The Earth, too
Will learn...
To spin again.

Crimson bird
by Pamela Galloway

I

Beyond time
she wades in fear's glacial waters
caught in tangles,
taunts, his grip on her arms,
his force pushes her
wingless soul into icy darkness.
Dread lives in her
like the grasp of pondweed
around her legs and belly.
Remembering swallows her,
great gulps of her
gone

after the slap of words
after names
blamed and punished, smack
into her solar plexus,
her body and her spirit split
no way to lift a hand
against his strength
even the sky colludes.
Not one star.

Ripples caress rocks
her heartbeat's echo.
Of water, her arms float her calm
wind strokes her skin
she hears
the call of the loon, sky-searching.

II

Alone,
she waits, she listens for morning
to break from the darkness of dreams.
Today, no horizon glow.
Contrary dawn dropped a curtain
on day's stage,
trees, costumed green
have silenced their whispers
safe, safe.

Air empty of birdsong
no glint of sky
off a robin's wing
no rising trill
no waking chorus.

Her voice
captive with her breath,
silence folds over her heart
like wings.

Crimson bird, you enter her home
tremble angelic
flap against glass.
Sun and wind alive
in every feather's shimmer
as you seek light.

She throws open windows
frees you
breathes morning air,
leans into daylight's shifting silk
she sings an open sky.

Elsewhere There Was Daylight
by Tristan Zaba

Elsewhere there was daylight.
ELSEWHERE, there was daylight...

The water used to be blue.
(Dark doesn't come all of a sudden,
It comes gradually.)

Elsewhere there was daylight
But we were still in darkness.

The water USED to be blue,
But it started to get white
And then dark came.

A dense black cloud came up behind us,
As if a lamp was being put out in a room.

All white to the mountain,
Wherever ashes came down there was no drinkable water.
No running. Just like cement.

A dense black cloud came up behind us
Spreading over the earth like a flood.

All white to the mountain.
"Put away as much water as you can."
No beach, no bluff. Nothing...

The buildings were shaking with violent shocks,
Then the side of the mountain opened and boiled down on the people.

Many besought the aid of gods,
But more imagined there were no gods left
And that the universe was plunged into eternal darkness.

It started snowing fine pumice.
There were SOME who prayed for death in terror...

"Elsewhere there was daylight."

I was burned a good deal by the stones, but I got to the cave.
Let us leave the road while we still can see.

Hanging By a Thread
by Slow Rise Music



À vol d’oiseau – Anika-France Forget (composer), Aude A. Saint-Laurent (poet)

Cardinal – Isaac Zee (composer), Pamela Galloway (poet)

Elsewhere There Was Daylight – Tristan Zaba (composer and poet)

McKenzie Warriner – Soprano Voice, Piano
Tristan Zaba – Bass Voice, Electric Guitar

This program is momentous in being Slow Rise Music’s first effort. It is our goal to contribute to Canadian musical culture through new music shows that are, in equal turns, accessible to post-pandemic general audiences artistically and presentation-wise, unified by coherent themes, representative of the diversity of our country, and living proof of vocal music transcending the silo-ing of established genres such as choral music, art song, and opera.

Hanging By a Thread was molded into its final form by the COVID19 pandemic. While future Slow Rise performances will feature additional performers, this production required limited contact between performers of different households in order to ensure the show went on despite changing health restrictions. This is the reason co-founders, partners, and housemates McKenzie Warriner (Soprano Voice, Piano) and Tristan Zaba (Bass Voice, Electric Guitar) became a multi-instrumental duo.

In addition to the new works of this show being guided by this unusual ensemble format, each artist was also asked to write on the general theme of “survival.” This theme was chosen in response to the pandemic as well, and in keeping with each individual’s going through their own personal journey over the past 20 months, each artist in turn developed something unique and profound in response. It is our absolute pleasure to present this music to you at this important time, and from the bottom of our hearts we thank the Canada Council for the Arts, the SOCAN Foundation, the Canadian Music Centre, Marilyn Cook, the First Nations of this land, and everyone watching for allowing this night to happen.

Biographies

Anika-France Forget (composer)

French-Canadian composer and mezzo-soprano Anika-France Forget has been equally noted for her heartrending music and exemplary stage presence. Compositional highlights include the commissioning, premiere, and repeat performance of her *Prayer for Return* in 2019 thanks to a mentoring partnership between Diaspora Dialogues and the Orpheus Choir of Toronto, and her three-time winning of the CFMTA National Student Composition Competition. She is currently attending the Guildhall School of Music in London, England earning a Master's degree in vocal performance.

Pamela Galloway (poet)

Originally from Manchester, England, B.C.-based poet and retired speech therapist Pam Galloway's highly personal work has been published in literary magazines and anthologies across Canada, the U.S., and the U.K. She has seen the publication of two books of her poetry, *Passing Stranger* (2016) and *Parallel Lines* (2006), and is also an avid collaborator, contributing to the book *Quintet: Themes and Variations* alongside four other female poets in 1996.

Ryan O'Grady (sound technician)

Ryan O'Grady is an Audio Engineer and Digital Media Producer with a Bachelor of Commerce from Carleton University and a Master of Music from the University of Toronto. He is the owner and operator of O'Grady Works, a service agency specializing in sound. O'Grady Works projects have surpassed 90 million streams on Spotify alone.

Aude A. Saint-Laurent (poet)

Aude A. Saint-Laurent is a French-Canadian poet who has often paired her work with Anika-France Forget's music. One of their notable collaborations was Forget's first French melodie, entitled *Mytosis, adieu. À vol d'oiseau* (the most direct path between two points in time) is a collection of excerpts from Saint-Laurent's story *À l'aube coucher de sommeil* (2016). Aude draws inspiration from dreams and the magnificent scenery of her native Gatineau Park.

Mariah Warriner (graphic designer)

Mariah Warriner is a freelance graphic designer and media manager currently pursuing her Undergraduate degree in Communications Studies at Concordia University. She is happy to have partnered with Slow Rise for this project.

McKenzie Warriner (performer, Slow Rise Music co-founder)

McKenzie Warriner is a Toronto-based soprano passionate about bringing music and text to life. Especially well-versed in the very old and very new, she has performed dramatic and musical roles in productions by early music presenters including the Eastman Collegium Musicum, while also working alongside organizations including Winnipeg's Camerata Nova showcasing new works. She was the 2020 winner of the Gordon C. Wallis Opera Competition, and holds a Master of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music and an Undergraduate degree from the University of Manitoba.

Tristan Zaba (composer, poet, performer, Slow Rise Music co-founder)

Inspired by communities across Canada as well as literature and film, Toronto-based composer, vocalist, poet, and multi-instrumentalist Tristan Zaba seeks to break musical boundaries through the radical exploration of artistic sincerity. His works have premiered at festivals including Source Song Festival and the Winnipeg New Music Fest, and collaborators have included the Quatuor Bozzini and Amadeus Choir. He holds a University of Toronto Master's degree in composition and a Bachelor's in the same subject with a vocal minor from the University of Manitoba.

Isaac Zee (composer)

Isaac Zee is a Vancouver-based composer, performer, and educator. He holds a Master's degree in composition from the University of British Columbia and an Undergraduate degree from the University of Manitoba. Isaac writes in a wide range of styles, most notably inspired by jazz, the spectralist movement, and interactive computer music. Isaac's compositional subjects are often loosely grounded in reality, commenting on contemporary events in his life. He was winner of the CMC's Prairie Region Emerging Composer Competition in 2020 and the 2019 Barbara Pentland award.

Land Acknowledgement

Slow Rise Music is based in Toronto, Ontario (also known by the Mohawk word Tkarónto), the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Wendat, Anishnaabeg, Métis, and Mississaugas of the Credit. This land is covered by the Dish with One Spoon treaty and Treaty 13. We are grateful to be able to practice our art in this place where so many Peoples have before us, and continue to do so, and also recognize our Culture's historical and ongoing oppression of Indigenous Nations, People, and Cultures. Slow Rise Music is dedicated to ensuring its activities are respectful of this land's First Peoples and of the land itself, and always in the spirit of peace.



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