

VISIONARIES

VIVALDI and DAVINCI

February 8, 2025 7:30pm Jeanne Lamon Hall (Trinity–St. Paul's Centre)

Visionaries: Vivaldi & Da Vinci

Jean-Sébastien Vallée, conductor Toronto Mendelssohn Singers Instrumental Ensemble

The instrumentalists' appearance in this evening's concert is supported by a generous bequest from John Philip Penney.

Run Time: 110 minutes including one 20 minute intermission

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tmchoir.org/donate-now

Toronto Mendelssohn Choir acknowledges that the land on which we perform is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We are honoured to share our music across these lands.

PROGRAM

Gloria in D major, RV 589

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)

I. Gloria in excelsis

II. Et in terra pax

III. Laudamus te

Lindsay McIntyre, soprano

Rebecca Claborn, mezzo-soprano

IV. Gratias agimus tibi

V. Propter magnam gloriam tuam

VI. Domine Deus

Lindsay McIntyre, soprano

VII. Domine fili unigenite

VIII. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei

Simon Honeyman, counter-tenor

IX. Qui tollis

X. Qui sedes

Ryan McDonald, counter-tenor

XI. Quoniam tu solus sanctus

XII. Cum sancto spiritu

The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci

Jocelyn Hagen (b. 1980)

I. Painting and Drawing

II. Practice

III. Ripples

IV. The Greatest Good

V. The Vitruvian Man

VI. Invention

VII. Nature

Rebecca Claborn, mezzo-soprano

VIII. Perception

IX Look at the Stars

PROGRAM NOTES

At a glance and on the surface, there might seem to be little in common between Baroque composer Antonio Vivaldi, Renaissance artist and polymath Leonardo da Vinci, and contemporary composer Jocelyn Hagen. And yet, as tonight's concert of Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Hagen's *The Notebooks of Leonardo do Vinci* demonstrates, there are numerous connections between these three seemingly disparate figures. *Visionaries*, the title of tonight's concert, encapsulates many of these connections. All three creative artists push the boundaries of their chosen art forms; invite us to think deeply and reflectively on life, art, and creativity; and often use simple and direct musical or written language to communicate extraordinarily complex insights and ideas about music.

Exempting The Four Seasons, Vivaldi's Gloria is probably the composer's best-known work. A cantata-mass that sets the Latin "Gloria" text of Catholic liturgy, Vivaldi's setting of the text is often celebrated as one of the most joyous and uplifting pieces of sacred choral music in the repertoire. Its broader context and musical language also demonstrate Vivaldi as a visionary in the fields of music, education, and theology. Ordained as a priest in 1703, the composer also worked as a violin teacher at and composed for the ensembles of his native Venice's Ospedale della Pietà, an orphanage for girls that primarily housed the daughters of Venetian noblemen and their mistresses. The 'anonymous' donations of the girls' fathers ensured the children's proper upbringing and a particularly rich education in music and the arts. The Gloria was premiered by the Ospedale's students and performed across Europe. In addition to highlighting Vivaldi's work as a teacher (and notably, even as an internationally recognized and celebrated composer, Vivaldi continued work as an educator at the orphanage until a year before his death), the Gloria also highlights his musical ingenuity. The piece draws on and fuses techniques and practices associated with sacred music, opera, and the concertothe three genres in which Vivaldi made his primary musical contributions and greatest innovations.

The famed painter of *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*, the Italian Renaissance artist and polymath Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) is also well-known for his legendary journaling habit. He routinely kept notebooks that contain visionary insights across art, anatomy, astronomy, botany, cartography, painting, palaeontology, and philosophy. He detailed his thoughts and ideas in a daily writing and sketching practice, which he maintained from age 26 until his death, filling in the process approximately 50 notebooks that span over 20,000 pages, and which together form an extraordinary display of virtuosic intellect. Published after da Vinci's own lifetime, the notebooks can be explored online, and selections of them are routinely displayed as museum exhibits. American composer Jocelyn Hagen encountered the notebooks in 2016 at one such exhibit, and was inspired to work towards a 2019 musical piece to commemorate the 500th anniversary of da Vinci's death, resulting in *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*.

In contrast to Vivaldi's well-known cantata, Hagen's multimedia symphony is perhaps not as familiar to contemporary audiences, but is equally a visionary, innovative piece that deserves to have its own place in music history. Exploring selections from the notebooks through text, music, and film, the creative process of the piece involved four years of brainstorming, composition, collaboration across 23 commissioning companies. In addition to Hagen's libretto and music, the multimedia symphony features film by Isaac Gale, animation by Joseph Midthun, and MUSÉIK software from Ion Concert Media. In contrast to the popular custom of showing films with live orchestra (as, for instance, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra often does), which requires orchestral musicians to sync their performance perfectly to a film's soundtrack, MUSÉIK technology lets music guide the film. Through both the technology and the work of a video engineer, the accompanying film of The Notebooks syncs to the orchestra's and choir's performance, and is capable of following cues from the conductor. This ensures that specific images are connected to, and last for the full duration of, specific moments of music and text, so that-in Hagen's own words-"music serves as the foundation of the film instead of it functioning as purely a supporting musical soundtrack." Furthermore, through syncing the video to music rather than the other way around, we are able more readily to appreciate the creativity of the performing musicians: after all, one of the most exciting realities of live music is that no two performances of a piece are ever perfectly identical

Hagen deserves her own acknowledgment as an innovative musical visionary. Yet she has also spoken publicly about her hope that *The Notebooks* will inspire listeners to reflect on their own unique creativity, curiosity, and intellect, as well as on what we individually and collectively hope to create in this world. Vivaldi's piece further invites us into reflection, consideration, and a sense of wonder. Together, the two pieces function as a dialogue; they remind us to look and listen more closely at the world and all that is in it, and perhaps even to envision it anew.

-Rena Roussin, Musicologist-in-Residence



TORONTO MENDELSSOHN CHOIR & TMSINGERS

Toronto Mendelssohn Choir (TMChoir) is proud to be one of Canada's oldest, largest, and best-known choral organizations. The choir presented its first concert on January 15, 1895, as part of Massey Hall's inaugural season, and has been a leader in choral music in Canada ever since, commissioning works by Canadian composers, and presenting world and Canadian premieres. The choir also regularly performs and records with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. In May 2021, Jean-Sébastien Vallée was named as Artistic Director, only the eighth conductor in TMChoir's 130-year history.

Through its performances, educational programs, and community engagement, TMChoir aspires to introduce its audiences to choral masterworks from the past and present—and make both renowned and lesser-known pieces available, accessible, and inspirational to all.

TMChoir includes a core of professional singers and more than 160 auditioned and experienced volunteer choristers. The smaller professional ensemble, the **Toronto Mendelssohn Singers** (TMSingers), was created to deliver more intimate repertoire in a variety of non-traditional venues. This 130th anniversary season includes a commercial recording *Remember: 130 Years of Canadian Choral Music*, available now, by ATMA Classique, and a recording with Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra and Orchestre symphonique de Québec celebrating the late composer Jacques Hétu.





Jean-Sébastien Vallée, Artistic Director and conductor

Jean-Sébastien Vallée is a renowned Canadian-American conductor, scholar, and pedagogue known for his expertise in vocal, choral, and orchestral repertoires. With a career spanning over several decades, Vallée has conducted numerous ensembles across North America, Europe, and Asia, and has prepared choruses for some of the world's most prestigious orchestras including the Chicago and Toronto Symphony Orchestras, l'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, and the National Arts Center Orchestra in Ottawa.

Dr. Vallée is Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the renowned 160-voice Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and the professional Toronto Mendelssohn Singers. In addition, Jean-Sébastien is Full Professor of Music, Director of Choral Studies, and Coordinator of the Conducting & Ensembles Area at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University. He has previously served as the Director of Choral Studies at California State University, Los Angeles, and was on the choral faculty of the University of Redlands. Dr. Vallée holds degrees from Laval University, Sherbrooke University, the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a doctorate in conducting from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Vallée's recordings have been broadcast internationally and include Remember (ATMA, 2024), Distance (ATMA, 2021), Requiem (ATMA, 2018 – requiems by Fauré and Duruflé), and Lux (ATMA, 2017). His recent and upcoming engagements include concerts at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest, concerts with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and a performance at Carnegie Hall with Distinguished Concerts International New York.



Jocelyn Hagen, composer

Jocelyn Hagen composes music that has been described as "simply magical" (Fanfare Magazine) and "dramatic and deeply moving" (Star Tribune, Minneapolis/St. Paul). She is a pioneer in the field of composition, pushing the expectations of musicians and audiences with large-scale multimedia works, electro-acoustic music, dance, opera, and publishing. Her first forays into composition were via songwriting, still very evident in her work. The majority of her compositions are for the voice: solo, chamber and choral. Her melodic music is rhythmically driven and texturally complex, rich in color and deeply heartfelt. In 2019 and 2020, choirs and orchestras across the country are premiering her multimedia symphony *The Notebooks* of Leonardo da Vinci that includes video projections created by a team of visual artists, highlighting Da Vinci's spectacular drawings, inventions, and texts. Hagen describes her process of composing for choir, orchestra and film simultaneously in a Tedx Talk given at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, now available on YouTube. Hagen's commissions include Conspirare, the Minnesota Opera, the Minnesota Orchestra, Voces8, the International Federation of Choral Music, the American Choral Directors Association of Minnesota, Georgia. Connecticut and Texas, the North Dakota Music Teachers Association. Cantus, the Boston Brass, the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and the St. Olaf Band, among many others. Her work is independently published through JH Music, as well as through Graphite Publishing, G. Schirmer, EC Schirmer, Fred Bock Music Publishing, Santa Barbara Music Publishing, and Boosey and Hawkes.

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Viola

Emily Eng

Cello

Drew Comstock

Bass

Daniel Lalonde

Harpsichord/Organ/Piano

Christopher Bagan

Oboe/Baroque oboe

Marco Cera

Bassoon/Baroque bassoon

Dominic Teresi

Trumpet/Natural Trumpet

Norman Engel

Flute

Laura Chambers

Clarinet

Max Christie

Horn

Christine Passmore

Harp

Julia Seager Scott

Percussion

Tim Francom Kris Maddigan

Video Operator

Kai Leung

TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

Gloria in D major, RV 589 - Antonio Vivaldi

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Laudamus te, benedicimus te, Adoramus te, glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.

Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.

Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe,

Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest.

And on earth peace to men of good will.

We praise you, we bless you, We adore you, we glorify you. We give you thanks for your great glory.

Lord God, King of Heaven, God the Father Almighty.

Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father

You who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

You who take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

You who sit at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are holy, you alone are Lord, You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,

With the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci - Jocelyn Hagen

1. Painting and Drawing

O Painter!

A painter is not admirable unless he is universal.

A painting is a poem seen but not heard, a poem is a painting heard but not seen. Hence these two poems, or two paintings, have exchanged the senses by which they pierce the intellect.

2. Practice

Those who are in love with practice without knowledge are like the sailor who gets into a ship without rudder or compass and who never can be certain whither he is going. Practice must always be founded on sound theory, and to this, perspective is the guide and the gateway; and without this nothing can be done well in the matter of drawing.

3. Ripples

Just as a stone flung into the water becomes the center and cause of many circles, and as sound diffuses itself in circles in the air; so any object, placed in the luminous atmosphere, diffuses itself in circles, and fills the surrounding air with infinite images of itself. And is repeated, the whole everywhere, and the whole in every smallest part.

4. The Greatest Good

The greatest good of all is knowledge.

Obstacle cannot crush me. Every obstacle yields to stern resolve.

The acquisition of any knowledge is always useful to the intellect, because it will be able to banish the useless things and retain those that are good. For nothing can be either loved or hated unless it is first known.

5. The Vitruvian Man

Vitruvius, the architect, says in his work on architecture that the measurements of the human body are distributed by Nature as follows:

four fingers make one palm, four palms make one foot, six palms make one cubit; four cubits make a man's height. These measures he used in his building.

If you open your legs so much as to decrease your height one-fourteenth and spread and raise your arms till your middle fingers touch the level of the top of your head you must know that the centre of the outspread limbs will be in the navel and the space between the legs will be an equilateral triangle.

From the roots of the hair to the bottom of the chin is the tenth of a man's height; from the bottom of the chin to the top of his head is one eighth of his height; from the top of the breast to the top of his head will be one sixth of a man.

From the top of the breast to the roots of the hair will be the seventh part of the whole man. From the nipples to the top of the head will be the fourth part of a man.

The greatest width of the shoulders From the elbow The whole hand below the knee The length of a man's outspread arms is equal to his height.

The face forms a square in itself. The distance from the attachment of one ear to the other is equal to that from the meeting of the eyebrows to the chin, and in a fine face the width of the mouth is equal to the length from the parting of the lips to the bottom of the chin.

The ear is exactly as long as the nose. The ear should be as high as from the bottom of the nose to the top of the eyelid. The space between the eyes is equal to the width of an eye.

6. Invention (Orchestra Only)

7. Nature

Though human ingenuity may make various inventions, it will never devise any inventions more beautiful, nor more simple, nor more to the purpose than Nature does; because in her inventions nothing is wanting, and nothing is superfluous.

Necessity is the teacher and tutor of Nature.

8. Perception

All our knowledge has its origin in our perceptions.

9. Look at the Stars

Oh Time! Consumer of all things; O envious age! Thou dost destroy all things and devour all things with the relentless teeth of years, little by little in a slow death.

If you look at the stars, cutting off the rays, you will see those stars so minute that it would seem as though

nothing could be smaller; it is in fact their great distance that is the reason of their diminution, for many of them are very many times larger than the star which is the earth with water. Now reflect what this, our star, must look like at such a distance, and then consider how many stars might be added – both in longitude and latitude – between those stars that are scattered over the darkened sky.

Wisdom is the daughter of experience.

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