

## ***Program Notes***

**Dance and Turn** (*Moravia*) - Known for its agriculture in general, and its viticulture in particular, Moravia contains 94% of the Czech Republic's vineyards and is at the centre of the country's wine industry. This folk song reflects the coming together of the people who work the land to celebrate the harvest, with singing and dancing in circles. A perfect *welcome-to-our-concert* song!

**The British Grenadiers** (*Britain*) - This patriotic tune dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and is used as a traditional march by a number of units in the British army and some of the Commonwealth countries. In Britain the tune is still played at various official events such as "Trooping the Colour".

**O Waly, Waly** (*Britain*) - This is an example of a folk song that has evolved through the years and been revived in a number of folk genres. The original lyrics, dating back to the 1600's, describe the challenges of love, which as time progresses, *waxes cold and fades away as morning dew*. Modern lyrics, as in *The Water is Wide*, came out of southern England in early 1900. The tune is also known in contemporary hymnody as *The Gift of Love*.

**The Ash Grove** (*Wales*) - This beloved early 1800's Welsh tune is expressive, poignant and emotional, depicting the image of a mournful soul roaming through a graveyard and reflecting on lost loved ones. Lyrics have been written for this tune to be used as the hymns *Let All Things Now Living* and *Sent Forth by God's Blessing*.

**Loch Lomond** (*Scotland*) - First published in 1841, this folk song refers to the *high* and the *low* roads leading to Scotland. Many theories abound, but one interpretation of *low* road is that of an underground route taken by the 'fairies' or 'little people' who are reputed to transport the soul of a dead Scot who has died in a foreign land back to his or her homeland to rest in peace. This arrangement by Canadian Jonathan Quick develops into a rousing rhythmic chorus driving to the end of the piece with confident determination.

**Danny Boy** (*Ireland*) - *Londonderry Air* is known worldwide and is especially popular within the Irish Diaspora. There are various theories as to the true meaning of *Danny Boy*. Some have interpreted the song to be a message from a parent to a son going off to war or to an offspring leaving Ireland to live abroad.

**Pål På Haugen – Paul and His Chickens** (*Norway*) - Many Norwegian folk songs are about animals and in this rousing piece, little Paul, taking care of the family chickens, loses one to a fox. Amid the flurry of the chickens, one can hear a melodic line from *the Peer Gynt Suite*, by Norway's most famous composer Edvard Grieg. Listen for it.

**Weisst du wieviel Sternlein stehen?** (*Germany*) - J. Wilhelm Hey penned the lyrics to this children's' lullaby in 1837. "*Can you count the stars of evening that are shining in the sky? God the Lord, who dwells in heaven, Loving care to each has given.*" Elaine Penner has beautifully arranged this piece, which sung to her as a child, for voices, flute and piano.

**Three Russian Folk Songs** (*Russia*) - This is an exciting medley of Russian folk favourites: *The Birch Tree* (*symbol of Russian nature and beauty*); *Kalinka* (*the snowball tree*); and the well-known *Toom Balalaika*, often played on the three-stringed musical instrument with a characteristic triangular body.

**Three Hungarian Folk Songs** (*Hungary*) - *The Handsome Butcher* is possibly sung by a young lady whose affections have been supplanted by the glittering John Brown. *Apple, Apple* makes the suggestion that a kiss is as natural and inevitable as the fall of the apple from the tree. It is recommended that you not attempt to extract any subtle meanings from the text of *The Old Woman*.

**Ahrirang** (*Korea*) - This arrangement of the popular Korean folk song speaks of Ahrirang Hill outside of Seoul, believed to be a symbol of personal contentment and triumph. It captures the style of Korean music, which is highly personal and tender, with sentiments of love and peace. It also seeks to illustrate the contrast between Korean and Western music, with the middle section purposely arranged using common Western chords and harmonies.

**A South African Trilogy** (*South Africa*) - This medley of three African songs reflects a time of historical injustice in South Africa. Sung in English and the original Nguni language, the *a cappella* treatment makes for a uniquely rewarding cross-cultural quality. Featured are: *Siyahamba*; *Vula Botha* and *Bamthatha*.

**Sweet Betsy from Pike** (*America*) - This gold-rush ballad is about the trials of a pioneer named Betsy and her lover Ike who migrate from Pike County (Missouri) to California. The term "Betsy" was also a common frontier nickname for a rifle. It has been theorized that the song was originally a comic tribute to the rifle, portraying it as a pioneer's trusty but fiery companion. Amended versions have eventually turned it into a song about a real woman.

**Shenandoah** (*America*) - This is a traditional American folk song, dating back to the early 19th century, which is said to have originated with French voyageurs traveling down the Missouri River. The lyrics tell the story of a trader who fell in love with the daughter of the Oneida Iroquois pine tree chief, Shenandoah. Long flowing lines simulate the gliding of a canoe along the surface of a tranquil river.

**Alberta Homesteader** (*Canada*) – This is one of the Three Alberta Cowboy Songs by Trent Worthington - about the hardships of being a homesteader. "*It rained and hailed all summer and we never raised a thing!*" Trent has been an active musician in the Edmonton music scene for many years and is Associate Conductor of Pro Coro Canada.

**Four Strong Winds** (*Canada*) - A significant part of the early 1960s folk revival, the song is a melancholy reflection on a failing romantic relationship. It was recorded by Canadian folk duo Ian and Sylvia.

**Black Fly Song** (*Canada*) - This is a classic Canadian folk song written in 1949. In North Ontario, construction workers battle black flies without relief – *acrawlin' in yer whiskers, acrawlin' in yer hair!* Both the songwriter and the arranger are Canadian and must have experienced black flies first hand.

**Watching the Apples Grow** (*Canada*) - A popular tune by Stan Rogers with a very upbeat choral arrangement by Canadian Ron Smail. The rollicking hoedown-type tune and text compare the joy and freedom of growing apples in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia with life in the big city of Toronto.

**My Song of Joy** (*Canada*) - This piece was commissioned by the County Classic Chorale in 2013 commemorating its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Its moving words and poignant melody express the pleasure and satisfaction that singing brings each and every member of the chorale.