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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New choral work about the pandemic premieres online on June 19 across Canada

Five choirs across Canada will premiere a new work June 19 about the connections that hold us together during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The public is invited to join online at 7:30 p.m. Eastern for the first broadcast of *Take This Thread/ Le fil que je suis*, a new commissioned work for choir, piano and violin by Vancouver composer Katerina Gimon, with text by Montreal poet Lauren Peat.

More than 160 singers from across Canada recorded their parts individually at home. These were combined with the instrumental music by a sound engineer. The final recording will be accompanied by video images that show the emotional journey from isolation to connection.

This project brings together musicians from: Halifax (Symphony Nova Scotia Chorus and Halifax Camerata Singers); the Montreal area (Société chorale de Saint-Lambert); Waterloo Region (Grand Philharmonic Choir); and Edmonton (Richard Eaton Singers). Montreal-based violinist Bénédicte Lauzière, who is concertmaster for the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, and Waterloo-based pianist Ian VanderBurgh, also perform.

The event on June 19 will include a conversation with Gimon and Peat about the creative process.

To receive the link for the event, please click [here](#).

The six-minute song is "a gorgeous piece that captures the feeling of the day, while also leaving the listener with a sense of hope for what will be," said Mark Vuorinen, artistic director of the Grand Philharmonic Choir and the leader of this project.

"For choirs and those who sing in them, music is a way of coming together, to create something that is larger than oneself. Singing together is a hugely social experience, and we miss it deeply," he said.

All the choir directors agreed they wanted to work collaboratively on a new bilingual work that captures the Zeitgeist -- the spirit of the times -- of this unique moment in history.

"With this project, we wanted to create a new work that acknowledges the loss we all feel and so many are experiencing," Vuorinen said.

"We also wanted to tie together our vast country by involving creators from coast to coast. With five choirs, a poet and a composer, we have a project that spans from the Pacific to the Atlantic!"

Gimon, the composer, said she was delighted to be writing music "that reflects our world, that can help connect people."

She and Peat have collaborated before, and actually met 13 years ago when they both sang in the Hamilton Children's Choir.

Peat, the poet, said she was thinking about "this delicate effort to re-weave the links between us in this time" and she came upon the idea of a thread, which forms the central image for the poem.

Directors of the choirs across Canada are pleased to be involved.

The new work is "a most original and absorbing expression of choral singers' collective wish to unite their voices in the face of sometimes overwhelming odds," said Leonard Ratzlaff, director of the Edmonton-based Richard Eaton Singers.

"I believe the final result will prove to be most gratifying for the participants, not to mention truly inspirational to listeners."

Xavier Brossard-Ménard, director of the Société chorale de Saint-Lambert, said he and Vuorinen had earlier discussed a collaboration in person, which had been planned for May 2020. That had to be cancelled because of the pandemic, but the hope of an artistic connection was still there.

"This was the seed of this desire to stay together and to weave a thread that binds us together,. I am happy that this project allowed us to meet wonderful people across the country!"

Jeff Joudrey, who directs both Halifax-based choirs, said: "When Mark Vuorinen called and proposed the project, I knew this was a gift for the Halifax Camerata Singers and The Symphony Nova Scotia Chorus.

"The timeline was perfect for us, It enabled us to join together for virtual rehearsals and eventually with our colleagues across the country to create something beautiful in a time when we all were yearning to sing together again."

The project is supported by a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts, as well as other private donors and government supporters.



Note for journalists:

To arrange an interview with Mark Vuorinen, project leader, please email him directly at markvuorinen@grandphilchoir.com

To arrange an interview with poet Lauren Peat or composer Katerina Gimon, please email Luisa D'Amato, executive director of the Grand Philharmonic Choir, at executive@grandphilchoir.com

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