

VSO

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Jean Coulthard Readings 2022

Wednesday, March 16, 2022 | 10am-1pm

Orpheum Theatre, Downtown Vancouver
Smithe Street Entrance

Presented by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra

Music Director, Otto Tausk

William Rowson, conductor

Edward Top, composer advisor

Antony Knight

The Protector of the Okanagan

Athena Loredo

RE: cycles

Peter Krejcar

*Commercial industrial procession guided in
fragments of genuinity*

Intermission

Nicholas Marriott

By Die

Francis Sadleir

Puddle

Leif Jack

Singularity

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We acknowledge that we live, work, and play on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.



Named in honour of one of BC's most beloved composers, the Jean Coulthard Readings give emerging BC composers an invaluable opportunity to have their work read by a professional orchestra

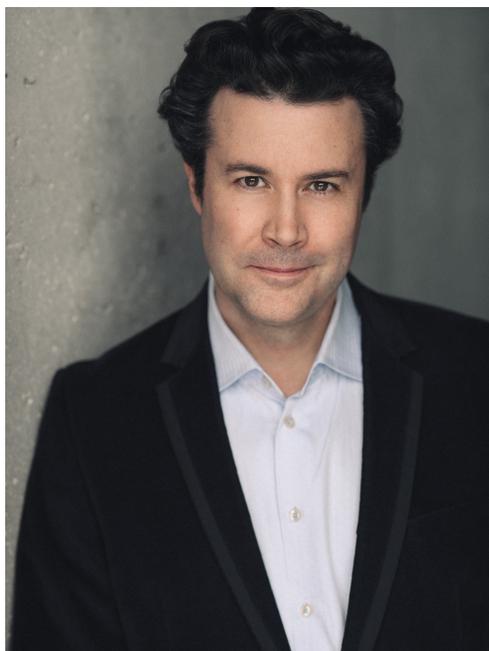


Jean Coulthard (1908-2000) was not only a driving force behind the dissemination of Canadian music, but also a pioneer who paved the way for women composers on the national music scene.

Coulthard was born and raised in Vancouver, where she received her early musical training from her mother, a prominent and influential music teacher. She pursued music studies at the Royal College of Music in London, where she was a pupil of Ralph Vaughan Williams. In the 1930s and early 1940s, she received critical assessments of her work by such composers as Béla Bartók, Aaron Copland, Darius Milhaud, and Arnold Schoenberg. In 1944-1945, she worked for an academic year at the Juilliard School with Bernard Wagenaar while her husband served in the Second World War. After the War, Coulthard and her family returned to Vancouver. She joined the newly-created Department of Music at UBC where she was a professor of theory and composition for 26 years. Throughout her career, Coulthard wrote more than 350 compositions encompassing many genres. Her influence is far reaching, both in terms of her compositional legacy and the number of her students who continue to shape the national musical landscape.

Coulthard was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1978 and was awarded the Order of British Columbia in 1994.

William Rowson, conductor



Conductor William Rowson is hailed as one of Canada’s most compelling and versatile young artists. He has worked with orchestras across Canada and currently serves as Music Director and Artistic Advisor of the Stratford Symphony Orchestra. From 2016-2018 Bill was the Assistant Conductor of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, becoming the Associate Conductor in 2018. He led the Grammy® and JUNO® award-winning ensemble in over 160 performances. To great acclaim, he conducted the VSO’s inaugural Sunset Beach outdoor concert to a crowd of over 14,000.

An active composer as well as conductor, Rowson’s music has been performed by orchestras and ensembles throughout Canada, the US and Europe, and has been broadcast in over 20 countries. His recent work *Short Variations on Waves* was featured on the 2021 JUNO® award-winning album *Mosaïque* by the Ensemble Made in Canada, and his *Fanfare for Canada’s 150th* was premiered by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Thomas Dausgaard.

This performance has been viewed 141,000 times on YouTube. Upcoming projects include the 2022 premiere of a new children’s opera *Frog Song*, as well as *The Carnival of OUR Animals*, written in collaboration with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra’s Indigenous Council.

In addition to performances with the Stratford Symphony, upcoming season highlights include appearances with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, Guelph Symphony Orchestra, as Music Director finalist, and the Regina Symphony, as well as return engagements with the Saskatoon Symphony and the VSO.

Edward Top, composer advisor

"Horror composer **Edward Top** acted as a kind of snake, hypnotizing listeners as frightened little bunnies" is what Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant* wrote 25 years ago. As part of Vancouver’s kaleidoscopic music scene since 2010, Top’s music has been identified by *The Vancouver Sun* as “earthy neo-primitivism” and “a dreamlike expression of (...) the collective unconscious” by the *Georgia Straight*.

Top studied composition and violin at the Rotterdam Conservatory and, after working and traveling in the Far East for several years, continued studies at King’s College London.



Edward has been Head of Composition at the Vancouver Academy of Music since 2014, and served as Composer-in-Residence with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra working with conductors Bramwell Tovey and Otto Tausk.

Holland Symfonia, Schoenberg Ensemble, Tokyo Sinfonietta, among others, performed his compositions, and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra recently premiered the commissioned work *Eruption* on tour in Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto.

Composer Biographies and Programme Notes

Antony Knight, composer



Antony Knight (he/him) is a young composer, actor and singer based in Vancouver, British Columbia. He is currently finishing his undergraduate degree in composition and opera performance at UBC. Antony's compositional work ranges from chamber music, art song, film music, orchestral works and opera. Notably, he worked with Vancouver Opera to compose 2 short scenes for their New Works Program (2019), was awarded Best Score at the Persistence of Vision Film Festival for the film *The Knockers* (2019) and premiered his opera "Oh Alfred!" at the Vernon Proms Classical Music Festival (2021). Recently, he was commissioned by the Belkin Art Gallery to compose a piece for 6 voices as part of Nadia Lichtig's exhibit "Blank Spots".

The Protector of the Okanagan is inspired by a certain lake monster that lurks in the depths of the Okanagan Lake. The music follows the majestic creature as it glides on the surface, grazes the bottom and bursts out of the water to protect the valley and all its inhabitants.

This piece is for my home, the Okanagan Valley, and all the people there who've helped me on my journey.

Athena Loredo, composer

Athena Loredo (she/her) is a composer based in Vancouver, BC. Her compositional style is influenced by the manipulation of musical fragments. These snippets can be original material or quoted from pre-existing works. From quoting Bach and Bizet to composing non-linear works where musicians add or remove sections, Athena enjoys reworking music to create something new. In 2020, Athena's musical interpretation of Olivia Whetung's beaded score, *Strata*, was featured in the UBC Belkin Art Gallery event, *Soundings: Olivia Whetung and the Ladner Clock Tower Carillon*. Athena is currently pursuing doctoral studies in composition at the University of British Columbia after graduating in 2021 with an MMus in composition from UBC. She grew up in St. John's, NL, and obtained a B. Mus from Memorial University of Newfoundland.



The title of this work, *RE: cycles*, has a double meaning. Since the main musical motives come from three pre-existing works, the piece recycles musical material. The three pieces are *Romeo and Juliet*, op. 64, "Montagues and Capulets," by Sergei Prokofiev, the second movement of Antonín Dvořák's *Serenade for Strings in E*, op. 22, and *Contrapunctus I* from J. S. Bach's *Die Kunst der Fuge*, BWV 1080. The musical fragments are emphasized in a cyclic pattern, so this work is about cycles (RE[garding]: cycles).

The quoted pieces were chosen with the theme of cycles in mind. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the couple's death is what breaks the cycle of hatred between the Montagues and Capulets. The second movement of Dvořák's *Serenade* is waltz-like, with a cyclic three-beat pulse. In Baroque fugues, the subject is regularly repeated and altered, which aligns with the cyclic idea of my work. I chose Bach's *Art of the Fugue* specifically because it is one of my favourite pieces.

Peter Krejcar, composer



Peter (he/him) grew up in rural northern Alberta and spent his early years studying piano. He later moved to Vancouver to complete his undergraduate in music composition at the University of British Columbia.

This piece didn't start out as a programmatic one, my goal was to write something energetic, however, as the piece gradually coalesced into form and I began the difficult process of naming it, I found that one could apply to it a quasi programmatic narrative. The anvil strikes heard in the beginning as well as the later cluster chords hammered out on the glockenspiel reminded me of heavy machinery, at least that's how I heard it in my head, while the fragment of melody heard repeatedly through the first half instills a sense of longing or struggle for sincerity.

Yet this sincerity isn't genuine. Perhaps I feel this way because it only briefly blooms near the end of the piece or because it is constantly being interrupted.

In any case, although it wasn't my original intention, this piece could be described as a commentary on the mass production of beautiful things

Nicholas Marriott, composer

Nick Grainwing (he/him) is a composer, guitarist, performer, and improviser of eclectic music. Like many young modernists, he is reluctant to wander the time worn trail. Though firmly rooted in traditional musical basics, Nick is keenly aware that the past is past. He explores maximalist synth techniques with a penchant for noise punk aesthetics. Recently Nick has had a piece read by the Hard Rubber Orchestra and the West Coast Symphony Orchestra. Currently he is working on recording a solo album featuring his abilities as a producer.



By Die oscillates between two states, brass and then something else. These monolithic swipes of brass sometimes puncture delicate woodwind sections while other times swelling and bursting to reveal spiny strings. The piece has a sense of interruption without the interruptions only being present during transitions. Sometimes a change turns out to be only an interruption of the previous material. But after the infighting of the brass verses the rest of the orchestra, everyone is forced to play together. Unceremoniously and unhappily they continue until the rising cacophony prompts a truce between the sections and reach a compromise.



Leif Jack, composer

Hailing from Kelowna BC, Leif (he/him) has been composing since he was 15. In high school, he was fortunate to have three of his orchestral works performed by fellow young musicians in the Okanagan Symphony Youth Orchestra (OSYO), and as he graduated high school, he received a scholarship from the British Columbia Arts Council, and a bursary from the OSYO to help pursue studies in composition. Currently, he is in the third year of his Bachelor of Music in Composition at the University of British Columbia (UBC), studying under Jocelyn Morlock. Since starting at UBC in 2019, Leif has composed over 20 new works and has enjoyed collaborating with fellow UBC music students to perform these works, gaining valuable insight into composing for various instruments and ensembles. Some recent projects include a text-based solo work for the percussionist Katie Rife, and a work for the Piano and Erhu Project (PEP) ensemble.

This work reflects on the lives of stars, the scintillating jewels of the universe. A star's life begins with only bits of matter. Gradually this matter coalesces, birthing a star. Throughout its life, a star gives off flares of fluctuating intensity and form. Like all, a star eventually approaches death, but approaching death, it does not suffer the same fate as anything Earthly: slow decay from full development. Approaching death, a star dies nobly, becoming larger, more radiant, and forceful than ever, as if receiving second birth, or renewed spirit in its ultimate battle. Yet, this radiance is unsustainable against the forces of reality, so the star collapses under its own weight, crashing down into a hyper-dense singularity, either a neutron star or black hole. At that point we've returned to the beginning, the star as it was no longer exists, either becoming the cosmos' finest diamond, or a matter annihilator. These two possible fates leave questions about our own legacies. In our times of greatest change and (will)force, what shall be remembered and left for those remaining? A shining example with humble means, beautiful and familiar? Or an all-consuming, insatiable, inescapable pit, with the ensnared stretched to their limits?

Francis Sadleir, composer

Francis Sadleir (he/him) is a 17-year-old clarinetist/composer from Vancouver, B.C. He has been studying composition with Edward Top for four years and the clarinet with AK Coope for nine years. Music has been a huge part of his life for as long as he can remember and finds composing to be the most exciting way to express himself. Francis loves chamber music and witnessing how musicians can communicate with each other and audiences through music. His pieces explore texture, rhythm, and how different instruments can interact with each other. Francis is enrolled in the Young Artists Collegiate Program (YACP) at the Vancouver Academy of Music (VAM) where he spends his Saturdays studying music history, theory, and composition, and playing clarinet in the VAM Symphony Orchestra. When he's not playing or composing music, he's most likely listening to it or talking about it.



My piece ***Puddle***, which I submitted to the 2022 Jean Coulthard Readings is my first ever orchestral piece. What begins with a very clear and calm texture slowly evolves into a much denser texture. The title of my piece comes from the effect that occurs when one steps in a puddle. You see the mud disperse and form these underwater clouds before settling back down at the bottom of the puddle. I portray this effect through my use of dissonances that grow out of and resolve back to very stable chords. I was also inspired by the idea of how we destroy our own reflection by stepping in puddles.