



VOICE OF THE WEAVER

Peter-Anthony Togni, *composer*

Mary Louise Martin, *poet*

Jeff Reilly, *bass clarinet*

Mark Vuorinen, *conductor*

The Elora Singers

July 17th, 2022

4:00 PM

**Sponsored by Randall Howard and
Judy McMullan, and the Centre
Wellington Community Foundation**

voice of the weaver

JULY 14TH 2022

voice of the weaver *

Peter-Anthony Togni
(b.1959)

- i. it is good to be reminded of the weaver
- ii. to look out beyond oneself
- iii. underneath the standing ones
- iv. they are dancing your spirit
- v. wela'lin niscum

Soloists:

Jeff Reilly, bass clarinet

Katy Clark, soprano

Jennifer Krabbe, soprano

Julia Barber, alto

Christina Stelmacovich, alto

Nicholas Nicolaidis, tenor

Paul Grambo, bass

** World Premiere Performance*

Heartfelt thanks to Wellington County
for the use of their beautiful space.

Program Notes

voice of the weaver is a five-movement concerto for the unusual combination of bass clarinet and choir, the fourth concerto I have written for my dear friend and musical partner Jeff Reilly, a truly brilliant player and improviser.

It's based on a poem by Mary Louise Martin, a Mi'kmaq artist, poet and writer and a member of the Millbrook Nova Scotia Band. Her poem, *it is good to be reminded of the weaver*, reminds us that life is built on a series of tiny events, preludes, minute to minute, day to day, seemingly tiny things that often hold great meaning and what one might call ordinary magic!

As great as the human spirit is, we stand underneath the tall overwhelming cedars, the great cedars are, in the words of Mary Louise Martin, "dancing our spirit!" Humanity is noble and graceful, but then, so are the tiniest of spiders, producing and weaving beautiful silken threads, we are no greater than these tiny ancient weavers, and are asked to look out beyond ourselves, to know that we are all related and connected. The simplest, most ordinary action is the constant, and keeps us grounded, keeps us human. It's really summed up in the last two words of the poem, *wela'lin niscum*, Mi'kmaq for *Thank you Creator*.

This insightful poem became a real companion for me, during the global pandemic, and through our collaboration, Mary Louise and I became very good friends. It's interesting to note that she never uses capital letters in her poetry, not wanting anything to scream out, or to be too forceful, though there are times when the music becomes wild and captivating!

Somehow in this process, through the words of Mary Louise Martin I am reminded of the words of Vincent van Gogh: "Seek only light and freedom and do not immerse yourself too deeply in the worldly mire." I have divided the poem into five movements: *it is good to be reminded of the weaver*; *to look out beyond oneself*; *underneath the standing ones*; *they are dancing your spirit*; and *wela'lin niscum*.

The musical influences are varied, from Eastern Orthodox hymnody, indigenous chant, Buddhist drones, jazz, the Beatles, Stockhausen and Pink Floyd! For the horn, there many free moments of improvisation and at times the choir sing random pitches, this creates tension, excitement and a sense of wonder, accentuating the fact that *voice of the weaver* is a study of extremes in the search of joy and beauty! Composing this work was a wonderful process, with conversations with Mary Louise, weekly sessions with Jeff Reilly, Mark Vuorinen came to Halifax, and we had a wonderful workshop in Dundas Ontario with The Elora Singers. Mary Louise and I are so excited about the birth of our creation with the fabulous Elora Singers, Jeff Reilly and Mark Vuorinen, embracing so fully, the concept of the voice of the ancient weaver coming to life!

Texts & Translations

Texts by Mary Louise Martin
from *it is good to be reminded of the weaver* (1996)

i. it is good to be reminded of the weaver

it is good to be reminded of the weaver
yes...from day to day
things...events are quite...
are quite ordinary

ii. to look out beyond oneself

to look out beyond oneself
that is what the weaver asks
to walk amongst the cool rains
the soft mist
the surreal of fog
to catch its moisture on our silken threads
of our human life's design
to stand as a two legged

iii. underneath the standing ones

underneath the standing ones
the tall...overwhelming cedars
or the ghost like essence of eastern birch
haunting the dream state with much beauty

wind all the while creating sound whispers... surround
one forgets the ordinary...
but strangely enough while in the midst of the standing ones

iv. they are dancing your spirit

they are dancing your spirit...we must not forget
we are all weavers of the web
we are much like the spiders
producing and weaving silken threads
patterns of great beauty in and through the standing ones
we all belong to our earth mother's design
and we are no greater then the tiny ancient weaver
and we are gifted indeed to know that we are related...

v. we'lalin niscum

we'lalin niscum

thank you creator

Upcoming Concerts

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| July 21 | The Music of Nina Simone
The Elora Singers at <i>Twilight</i> |
| July 22 | TorQ Percussion Quartet and The Elora Singers |
| July 23 | TorQ Percussion Quartet Workshop
<i>Brahms: A Saturday Serenade</i>
<i>Schubert: A Saturday Serenade</i>
The Elora Singers <i>Unplugged</i> |
| July 24 | <i>Sing-IN</i> at Gambrel Barn |

Free Music in the Community

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| Sundays | The Elora Singers at St. John's – Church Services |
| Thursdays | The Elora Singers – Evensong Church Services |
| Weekends | Music in the Village – Mill St and Metcalfe |

**For the full concert listing and artist information,
please consult the souvenir program book.**



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our first live festival in three years.*

*Thank you to our audiences, artists,
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