

SONUS VOICES PRESENTS

# HOME



SONUS VOICES

Greg Rainville, Artistic Director

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

"We gather this evening in Burlington on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, the Haudenosaunee, the Métis, and the Mississaugas of the Credit, who are the treaty holders of this territory. This land is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit and is held within the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes in peace and mutual respect.

As we sing about home, about memory, belonging, and the communities we build, we recognize that our ability to make music here is tied to histories of colonization, broken treaties, and ongoing injustices faced by Indigenous Peoples. We offer our gratitude to the First Peoples who have cared for this land since time immemorial, and we commit ourselves to learning, relationship, and concrete acts of reconciliation so that everyone may find a just and welcoming "home" here.

# Welcome Friends!

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Thank you for joining us this evening for Home!

As a growing ensemble, this concert feels especially meaningful to us. Over our first full season, Sonus has been finding its footing, building something new while carrying forward a rich legacy of low-voice singing in Canada.



Image by Matko Photography

As we settle into our new home and create this space for music making, I've found myself asking:

**What does it mean to feel at home?**

For each of us, the answer is a little different. Home can be a place, a person, a memory, or even a moment in time. It can be something we return to, something we long for, or something we are still in the process of creating. This evening's program invites you into that reflection – not just as a listener, but as a participant. The journey through this music is meant to be a personal one, shaped by your own experiences, memories, and sense of belonging.

I'm especially excited to share two premieres with you tonight: the premiere performance of *Requiem for the Returnee* by emerging composer Rasa Ghaedi, and the Canadian premiere of *I Will* by Hamilton native Katerina Gimon. Supporting and amplifying these composers, particularly those connected to our own communities, is an important part of who we are. These works remind us that "home" is not only something we inherit, but something we continue to create together.



Rasa Ghaedi



Katerina Gimon

This concert is, at its heart, about community. Sonus Voices exists because of the people who believe in it – our singers, our supporters, our leadership, and all of you who have chosen to be here. Your presence shapes this space and helps define this ensemble's continued growth.

I hope this music resonates with you and perhaps helps you connect more deeply with your own sense of Home.

Warmly,  
Greg Rainville

## Our Talent

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### Tenor 1

Matt Bean, Peter Oundjian, Paul Weiss

### Tenor 2

Lanny Fleming, Paul Hawkins, Andrew Inman

### Baritone

Chris Bee, Jordan Fang, David Fletcher, Martin Kuplens-Ewart

### Bass

John Baxter, Doug Long, Doug Parsons, Matt Oxley

### Guest Flutist

Caroleen Molenaar

### Collaborative Accompanist

Gary Forbes

### Artistic Director

Greg Rainville

# The Journey Begins

Prayer of St. Brendan the Voyager 

Thomas Bell

**Matt Bean**

Mornin' Train 

Larry Nickel, arr.

All Natures, Even Mine

Timothy Takach

"I'm Home"

(Spoken Reflection)

Jordan Fang

me(n)

Joshua Shank

Shenandoah 

James Erb, arr.

"Where is Home?"

(Spoken Reflection)

Chris Bee

 Canadian

 Premiere Performance

Click the song to learn more

# And it Continues

Light in the Hallway

Pentatonix

Matt Oxley

I Will  

Katerina Gimon

Michele DeSocio, poet

Peter Oundjian, Matt Bean,  
Martin Kuplens-Ewart, Matt Oxley  
Caroleen Molenaar, Flute

~ 15 Minute Intermission ~

Woodsmoke and Oranges 

Ian Tamblyn, Rebecca Campbell, arr.

J'entends le moulin

Michael Snelgrove, arr.

Requiem for the Returnee  

Rasa Ghaedi

Robert Louis Stevenson, poet

For the Beauty of the Earth

Paul John Rudoj

 Canadian

 Premiere Performance

Click the song to learn more

# And it Ends

Silver Deity of Secret Night

Catherine Dalton

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, poet

Peter Oundjian, Lanny Fleming

Martin Kuplens-Ewart, Andrew Inman, speakers

"When you have to go there..."

(Spoken Reflection)

John Baxter

Homeward Bound

Marta Keen, arr.

Andrew Inman, Jordan Fang

 Canadian

 Premiere Performance

Click the song to learn more



## Let Us Know What You Think!

Take a quick 1-minute  
survey about tonight's  
concert

[Take our Survey](#)

# The Journey

## The Prayer of St. Brendan the Voyager, Mornin' Train

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We begin our musical journey this evening with one of history's great voyagers, St. Brendan the Voyager. Known for his travels in the 6th century, St. Brendan founded many monasteries that grew into vibrant communities for hundreds of people. His most famous voyage was a seven-year journey in search of the "Promised Land" or "Isle of the Blessed". *The Prayer of St. Brendan the Voyager* captures both the excitement and the uncertainty of setting out into the unknown in search of hope and peace – something I think many of us can relate to in our own ways.

The African American spiritual *Mornin' Train* also tells of a journey to a promised land. Like many spirituals of the time, it carries a dual meaning: the promise of Christian salvation, and coded guidance for those escaping via the Underground Railroad. Lyrics would shift depending on circumstance, but the dual intention still comes through clearly in lines like "I'm on my way to freedom land, won't you take me by the hand...".



[Now back to the concert](#)

# Longing and Belonging

All Natures, Even Mine, me(n), Shenandoah

*All Natures, Even Mine* sets deeply moving poetry from John Barford (writing under the pseudonym Philebus) from the early 1900s. The text is a plea for acceptance and belonging as a gay man, while pushing back against the prevailing Christian attitudes of the time: “If the Greatest Lover’s mind divine further can move – (who had in Himself all natures, even mine), love – and let love.” It is a text that still resonates today in its quiet but powerful call for understanding. The piece was written for and premiered by the New Mexico Gay Men’s Chorus in 2008.

Similarly, *me(n)* explores in a more modern setting how young men navigate the many pressures placed upon them: by peers, family, teachers, and society’s notions of race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, etc. Commissioned by a Texas high school men’s choir, the text was created collaboratively - each singer was asked to complete the phrase “I know that I am greater than...”. What emerges is a shared expression of growth, vulnerability, and confidence. I love this line in particular that speaks to both individuality and community:

“I know that I am  
greater when I try to  
understand  
That I’m on my own,  
But I’m not alone  
If I try to lend a hand.”



[Now back to the concert](#)

# ME(N)

*Adapted from anonymous responses by members of the commissioning ensemble.*



Image by Matko Photography

I know that I am greater...  
...than how others may see me  
...than the challenges I may to face  
...than all the ways that people can hate  
...than the person they say I should be  
...than the numbers that may define me  
...than the expectations of being a man

I know that I am greater...  
...than how others may see me  
...than the challenges I may to face  
...than all the ways that people can hate  
...than the person they say I should be  
...than the numbers that may define me  
...than the expectations of being a man

I know that I am greater...  
...than how people see the color of my skin  
...than what people think of who I love  
...than the stresses in my life  
...than the pressures coming from my parents  
...than what my teachers may think of me  
...than what I may think of myself  
...than the boy you think you know

Now back to the concert

I know that I am greater...  
...than my worst few moments  
...than the things in life I cannot change  
...than the limitations I place on myself

I know that I am greater when I try to  
understand  
That I'm on my own,  
But I'm not alone  
If I try to lend a hand.

I know that I am greater if I never, ever lie.  
To be upright  
And "Win the good fight,"  
Can always be my battle cry.

And I may not agree about you and me  
But it's never too late  
To be a little kinder,  
A living reminder that  
love will always conquer hate.

I know.



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*Shenandoah* is a song many of us know and love, but what is it really talking about? It likely began in the early 19th century as a sea shanty sung by French-Canadian fur traders, possibly those working with the Hudson's Bay Company as they traveled along major waterways into the early United States. The song is widely believed to reference Chief Skenandoa of the Iroquois Nation in central New York - or rather, his daughter - reflected in the early lyrics

“Oh Shenandoah, I love your daughter...”  
and “’Tis seven long years since last I’ve  
seen her...”.

By the mid 1800s, it was a popular song sung on the Oregon Trail. Travelers would have first encountered the Missouri River, an immense and daunting crossing that marked the beginning of their journey west, leading to

“Away, we’re bound away, across the wide  
Missouri”.

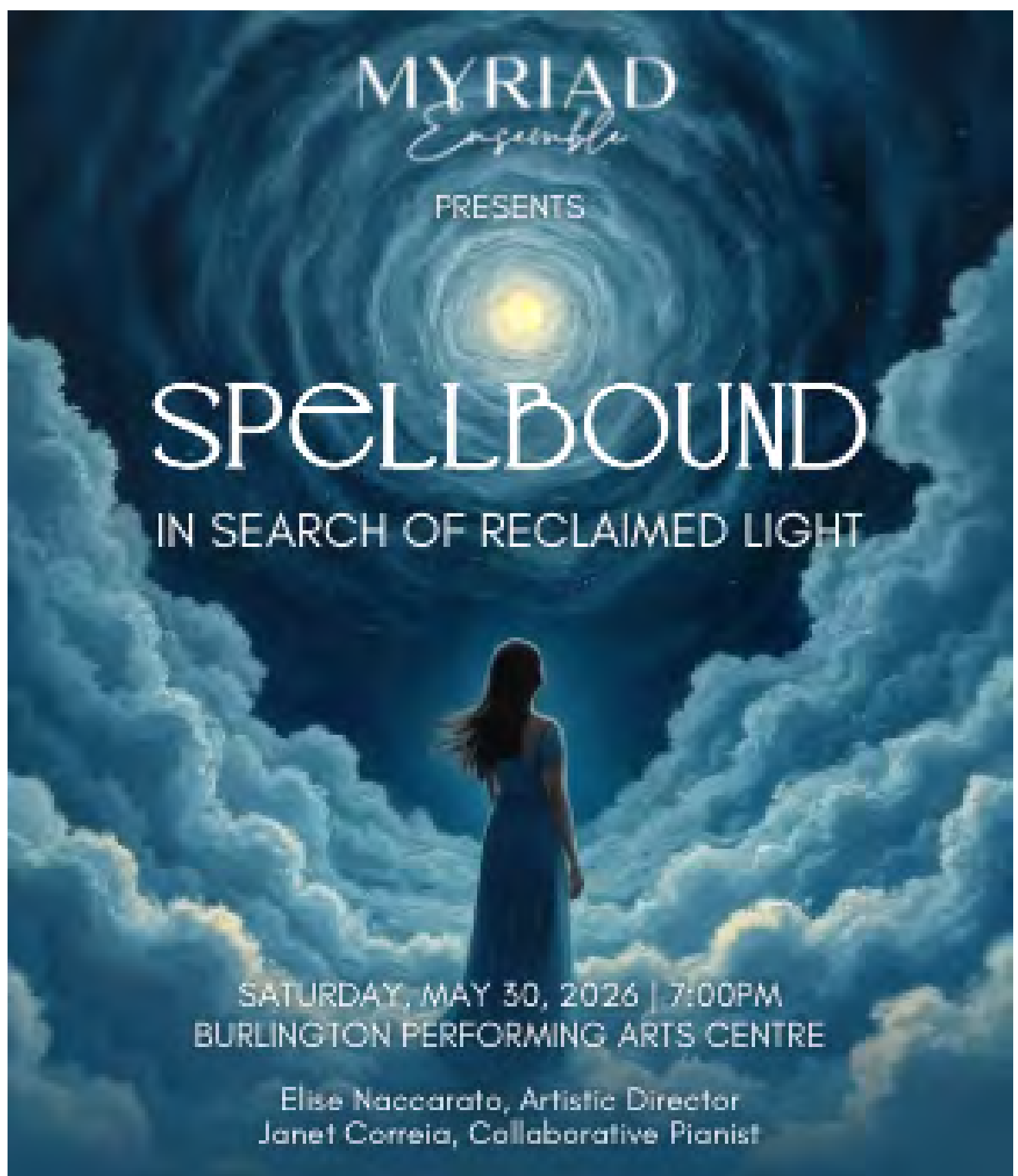
There are unconfirmed stories that Chief Skenandoa was an ally of George Washington against the British in the American Revolutionary War, and to commemorate this support, then President George Washington named the Shenandoah Valley and River after his friend and ally.

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# Being Home for Others

## Light in the Hallway, I Will

Some of you may know I'm a shameless Pentatonix fan, so I couldn't resist including *Light in the Hallway* in tonight's program. Written by group members Scott Hoying and Mitch Grassi along with singer-songwriter Audra Mae, the piece was inspired by the birth of Scott's nephew, Landon. Modeled after Billy Joel's "Goodnight, my Angel", it's a soothing lullaby that offers comfort in the face of fear, creating a sense of safety, warmth, and home.



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While “...Hallway” reflects care for the young, *I Will* is a poignant reflection on the experience of caring for a loved one with dementia, set to a powerful poem by dementia awareness advocate Michele DeSocio written as a personal promise to herself while she cared for her mother with early-onset Alzheimer’s. The piece takes us through a range of complex emotions felt when caring for a loved one experiencing memory loss, beautifully capturing both the fragility of memory and resilience of love. We are especially proud to share the Canadian premiere of this work by Hamilton native Katerina Gimon.

## I WILL

*Michelle DeSocio*

When you forget, I will remember for us both.  
When you get lost, I will find you.  
When you are sad, I will be sad with you.  
When the fear comes, I will comfort you.  
When you cry, I will dry your tears.  
When you lash out at me, I will not be angry.  
When you repeat, I will have patience.  
When you forget my name, I will understand.  
When you can no longer eat, I will feed you.  
When your legs fail, I will carry you.  
When you long for home, I will be your safe place.  
When your journey is ending, I will be by your side.  
I will love you for eternity.  
I will...

[Now back to the concert](#)

# Canada

## Woodsmoke and Oranges, J'entends le moulin

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As a nod to our home here tonight, we present two Canadian folk classics. Canadian folk singer Ian Tamblyn, born and raised in Thunder Bay, Ontario, has spent much of his life exploring Canada's wilderness. His song *Woodsmoke and Oranges* evokes a deep sense of nostalgia and homecoming, with vivid imagery drawn from the Canadian landscape and ancient canoe routes.



The traditional French-Canadian folk song *J'entends le moulin* is described as a tongue twisting “game of rhymes” with quick, repetitive text imitating the sound of a mill wheel turning. In this arrangement, Michael Snelgrove really leans into the playful energy, creating a version that is as fun as it is challenging for the singers, and hopefully just as enjoyable to listen to!

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# J'ENTENDS LE MOULIN

*Michael Snelgrove, arr.*

J'entends le moulin (tique tique taque)  
Mon père a fait bâtir maison.  
La fait bâtir à trois pignons.  
Sont trois charpentiers qui la font.  
Le plus jeune c'est mon mignon.  
Qu'apporte-tu dans ton jupon?  
C'est un pâté de trois pigeons.  
Asseyons-nous et le mangeons.  
En s'asseyant il fit un bond,  
Qui fit trembler mer et poisson  
Et les cailloux qui sont au fond.

I hear the millwheel (tique tique taque)  
My father is having a house built.  
It's being built with three gables.  
There are three carpenters building it.  
The youngest is my darling.  
What do you have in your apron?  
It's a pie made of three pigeons.  
Let's sit down and eat it.  
While sitting down they all leapt up,  
Causing the sea and fish to tremble,  
and the stones on the bottom of the sea.

Now back to the concert

# Returning Home in Death

## Requiem for the Returnee

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Our featured work this evening is the premiere of *Requiem for the Returnee* by Rasa Ghaedi. The text comes from Robert Louis Stevenson's poem "Requiem" written near the end of his life reflecting a peaceful acceptance of death following years of travel around the world. Before his death, Stevenson and his family settled in Samoa, where a family member once wrote that "the word 'home' first began to have real meaning for these lifelong wanderers". The poem is now inscribed on his tomb atop Mount Vaea overlooking the sea – a fitting resting place for someone whose life was defined by movement. I'm deeply grateful to Matthew Emery for his mentorship and artistic partnership, along with Rasa Ghaedi for her immense talents and joyful collaboration in bringing this new work to life.

## REQUIEM FOR THE RETURNEE

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

Under the wide and starry sky,  
Dig the grave and let me lie.  
Glad did I live and gladly die,  
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:  
Here he lies where he longed to be;  
Home is the sailor, home from sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill.

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# Steadfastness and Infinite

## For the Beauty of the Earth, Silver Deity of Secret Night

We close our show this evening with two works that feel, in many ways, opposite yet deeply connected. *For the Beauty of the Earth*, the well-known English hymn, expresses gratitude inspired by the scenic beauty surrounding the poet's home in Bath, England. In this unique arrangement, the music flows continuously from the starting note to the final "amen", symbolizing the Earth as something constant and enduring despite what occurs across its lands.



Now back to the concert

*Silver Deity of Secret Night* transports us back to 1969, combining the thrill and awe of the Apollo 11 launch with Lady Mary Montagu's poem, "A Hymn to the Moon". Composer Catherine Dalton masterfully weaves together mathematics, poetry, and one of the most monumental moments in history into an incredible musical soundscape.

Earth and sky. Past and future. Present home... and future home? However we define it, I think we all recognize the feeling of "home" when it arrives: something steadfast, something vast... something infinite.

"In the quiet misty morning when the moon has gone to bed,

when the sparrows stop their singing, I'll be *Homeward Bound* again."

Now back to the concert

# About Sonus Voices

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Sonus has a passion for good music, great friends, and fulfilling experiences.

As a new ensemble, we're looking to make our mark in the area's vibrant choral scene by presenting inspiring choral music at a high level while creating unique collaborative opportunities for our performers, audiences, and community.

Sonus is the newest chapter of the previously named Canadian Men's Chorus, based in Toronto. The CMC was founded in 2010 with a mission to redefine tenor-bass choral music and secure its place within Canada's choral landscape. An amazing 12-year run culminated in a final performance at the Podium Choral Conference national festival in May 2022, presenting an all-Canadian program to a global audience.

Sonus will continue to build on this mission with a renewed focus on bringing to life the best low-voice repertoire available. Our mandate places additional priority on Canadian works, and as major supporters of emerging composers, Sonus will regularly commission and premiere new works. We've commissioned and premiered over 50 new Canadian works to date!

Ultimately, our goal is to create an environment which enables each person to learn, be challenged, and be fulfilled by meaningful musical memories surrounded by collaborative and supportive partners in song!

## Not Professionals. Professionals Who Sing.

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We're a welcoming, inclusive community looking for singers of all identities, backgrounds, and professions in the tenor-bass range.

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# Why Sonus?

The name Sonus reflects what makes our ensemble special: the rich, resonant sonority of low voices that creates a sound unlike any other — something that continues to inspire and drive our musical journey.

It also comes from the Latin word for sound, a simple word with infinite possibilities, just like the voices that make up our ensemble.

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With Sonus, we celebrate not just what is heard, but the feeling and connection that sound makes possible.

# About Greg

Artistic Director

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Greg Rainville is a dynamic Artistic Director, vocal coach, and music educator whose work is rooted in championing new Canadian music and building meaningful musical communities. With an extensive background spanning concert ensembles, church music programs,

live theatre, and private instruction, Greg is widely respected for his collaborative spirit and his commitment to fostering inclusive, accessible music-making. He is a sought-after guest Artistic Director and frequently leads workshops and masterclasses.

As Artistic Director of Sonus Voices (formerly the Canadian Men's Chorus), Greg champions the development and performance of new Canadian choral music.

Under his leadership, the ensemble continues the spirit of innovation established by the CMC, which commissioned and premiered more than 50 Canadian works and appeared at the Podium National Choral Conference, Stratford Summer Music Festival, CentreSpace for the Arts, and the Muskoka Concert Association. Greg's work with the CMC is featured on Aaron Jensen's album *From Sea to Sea*.

Known for his imaginative and forward-looking approach to concert programming, Greg is often recognized for crafting performances that weave together compelling artistic narratives, highlight Canadian creators, and deepen the sense of connection between performers, audiences, and the broader community.

Greg previously served as Assistant Artistic Director of the Orpheus Choir of Toronto (under Robert Cooper), making his Roy Thomson Hall debut during his tenure. Notable guest conducting engagements include leading the top 100 high-school voices at the 2015 Area All-State NYSSMA Conference and directing the Canadian Ambassador Choir during their 2016 Australia tour as part of the United Nations Choral Festival Rhythms of One World. He currently serves on the Choirs Ontario Board of Directors, supporting the growth of choral singing across the province and beyond.

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# About Gary

## Collaborative Accompanist

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Along with his duties as accompanist to Sonus, Gary Forbes is the Director of Music at St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church (Leaside), and serves as accompanist to the instrumental programs at Brock University (St. Catharines). Gary also runs a private piano studio based in Oakville, and is an active freelance collaborative pianist throughout Southern Ontario and the GTA.



Previously engaged as Accompanist to the Mississauga Children's Choir, Director of Music at Grantham United Church, and Director of Music for a variety of independent theatre companies throughout the Niagara Region, Gary has also worked closely with various choirs including the Niagara Men's Chorus, Chorus Niagara (Adult & Children's Choruses), Brock University Choruses, and Camerata Choralis.

# About Paul

## Executive Director

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With over three decades of nonprofit experience and a lifelong passion for music, Paul Hawkins brings visionary leadership and artistic dedication to Sonus Voices. His background includes formal vocal studies at the New England Conservatory of Music and performance with ensembles such as the Stuttgart German American Chorus, Heartland Sings, the Canadian Men's Chorus, Musikay, Christ's Church Cathedral, and others.

Paul has also held leadership roles with organizations, including the Brott Music Festival and the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, where he built partnerships and supported organizational growth and now his own organization MomentumNetwork. At Sonus Voices, he is committed to advancing artistic excellence, strengthening community connections, and creating meaningful opportunities for singers, audiences, and supporters.



Image by Matko Photography



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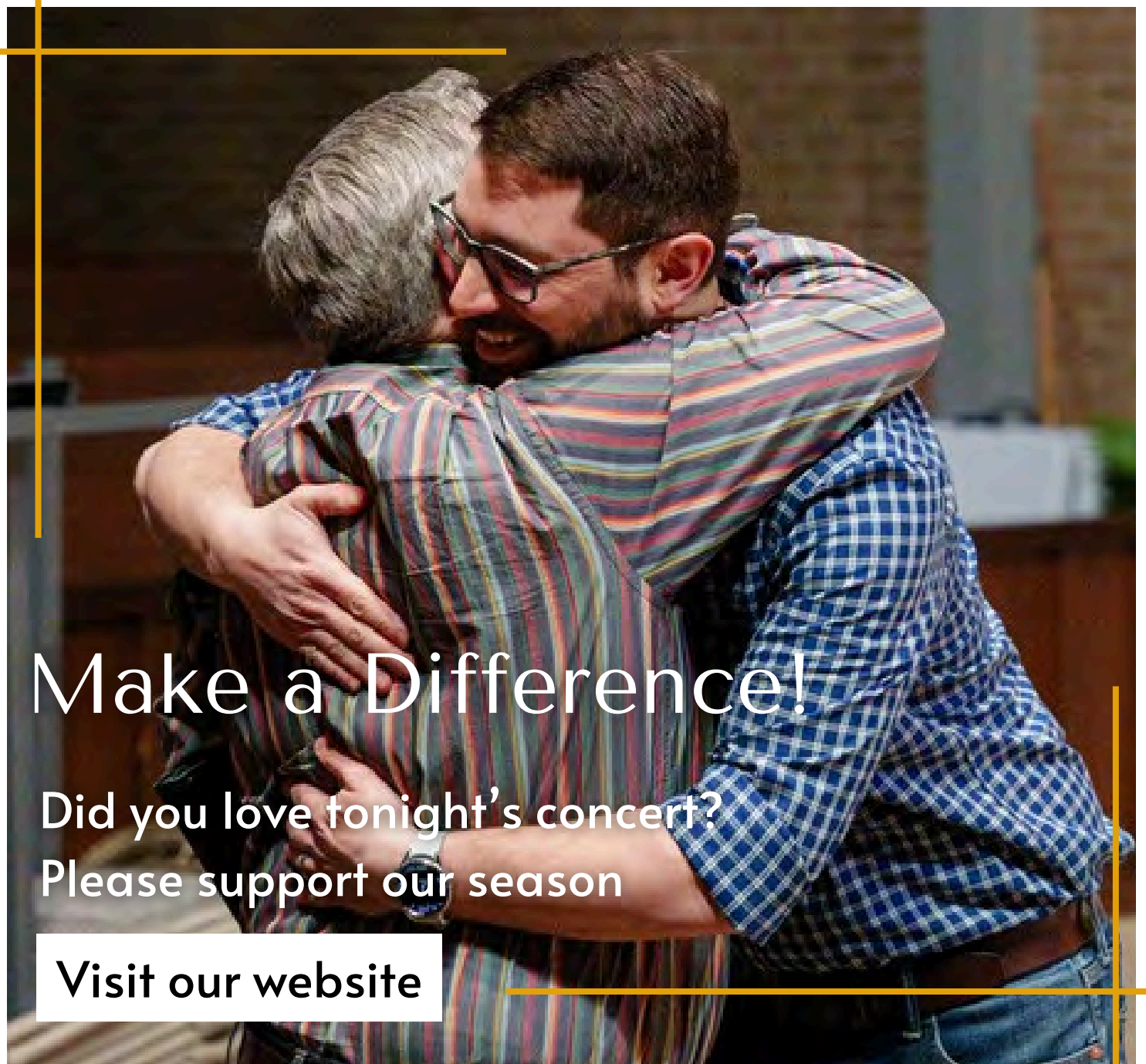
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Greg Rainville

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We're inviting community-minded individuals to help guide Sonus Voices and strengthen our impact.

Contact [info@sonusvoices.ca](mailto:info@sonusvoices.ca) to get started

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