

# Music and Myth

Remembering R. Murray Schafer

## PROGRAM

Aubade for solo flute from *Wolf Music* (1996)

Lara Deutsch, flute

String Quartet #10, *Winter Birds* (2005)

Molinari Quartet

*Sun Father, Earth Mother* for solo voice (excerpts) (1984)

Sun Father

Earth Mother

Fish

Forests

Animals

Spirits of the world

Brooke Dufton, soprano

*The Crown of Ariadne* for solo harp and percussion (1978)

Michelle Gott, harp

Nocturne for solo flute from *Wolf Music* (1996)

Lara Deutsch, flute

String Quartet #12 (2012)

Molinari Quartet

Please join us for a reception and an audience talkback session with the performers in Woodside Hall following the concert.

Funding for this concert was generously provided by the School for Studies in Art and Culture, Carleton University; Music, Sound and Society in Canada research centre; and Ottawa ChamberFest. Thanks to Mitchell Frank, Paul Théberge, Paul Jasen, Alyssa Tremblay, Kimberley Seguin, Rebecca Cowal, Kessler Douglas, and the wonderful staff at the Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre.



# Music and Myth

Remembering R. Murray Schafer

## PROGRAM NOTES

By Ellen Waterman, Helmut Kallmann Chair for Music in Canada,  
Carleton University



R. Murray Schafer (1933-2021) was a true original — an internationally renowned composer, a prolific and polemical writer, and an artist whose scores are often elaborately illustrated. Schafer was the founder of the interdisciplinary field of acoustic ecology developed by the World Soundscape Project during the 1970s. Acoustic ecology has had significant impacts on acoustic design, noise

abatement policy and a made-in-Canada genre of electroacoustic music called soundscape composition ([www.wfae.net](http://www.wfae.net)). Schafer's innovative ideas about experiential music education have been highly influential in places as far flung as Japan and Brazil. Today's concert is part of a symposium *R. Murray Schafer's Ecologies of Music and Sound Re-examined* that includes an online study day on September 30. For information and registration see [www.carleton.ca/mssc/events](http://www.carleton.ca/mssc/events)

Our concert features work from two important strands of Schafer's compositions, and we are fortunate to feature several performers who worked directly with the composer. Dr. Michelle Gott and Dr. Brooke Dufton have both done extensive research on his harp and voice works respectively, and Quatuor Molinari have recorded all 13 of the string quartets on the Atma label.

The first strand our concert explores is Schafer's environmental music, designed to be performed as part of the monumental *Patria* series of 12 music dramas that follow a hero — Theseus/Wolf and a heroine — Ariadne/Princess of the Stars — across a vast canvas of times and places, drawing on myths and symbols from ancient Egypt, Greece, China, medieval Europe, and, somewhat problematically, Canada. Schafer composed *Patria* over 34 years beginning in the mid-1960s. The works are set in unusual locations: planting and harvesting a garden, a town carnival, a built labyrinth, around a lake at dawn, in the forest over 10 days. And they make unusual demands on performers. As the composer



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# Music and Myth

Remembering R. Murray Schafer

observed “To find performers in full control of a dozen musical or dramatic styles is today not difficult, but to find performers able to modulate their talents in order to perform around a lake at sunrise, or over a twelve- or twenty-four-hour period, or while hiking in a forest, is no easy task.”

Schafer tells us: “My idea was that two principal characters, a man and a woman, would engage in a search for one another through a labyrinth of different cultures and social twistings almost as if they represented the split halves of the same being... They might return with various guises and different names but the quest for unity and the homeland they were seeking would always be the same.” Although that homeland is an idea rather than a place, *Patria* is arguably also about Schafer’s deep and conflicted love for Canada, a country he often critiqued as lacking a strong sense of cultural identity, an identity he felt should be rooted in its geography, climate, and natural environment.

*The Crown of Ariadne* (1978) is a tour de force for solo harp and percussion and has become an important part of the 20th century repertoire for harp. Schafer’s program note is indicative of the close working relationship he had with musicians:

The harpist Judy Loman had been asking me to write a harp work for some time. It was Toru Takemitsu who suggested that such a work might include bells, played by the harpist. Judy and I quickly set to work devising ways for the harpist to play a variety of bells and several other small percussion instruments together with the harp. At the time I was beginning to plan *Patria 5: The Crown of Ariadne*, which would tell the story of Theseus and Ariadne, the Minotaur and the Labyrinth. The work would be a dance drama and Ariadne’s instrument would be the harp. The various titles of the movements indicate Ariadne’s involvement in the story.

1. Ariadne Awakens
2. Ariadne’s Dance
3. Dance of the Bull
4. Dance of the Night Insects



# Music and Myth

Remembering R. Murray Schafer

5. Sun Dance
6. Labyrinth Dance

In 1995, at Judy's request, I added another movement (between 4 and 5) called "Ariadne's Dream."

Schafer describes *Wolf Music* as "a collection of pieces for voice and various instruments from *Patria: The Epilogue: And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon* (1983 ff). The various pieces in this collection are aubades and nocturnes, performed in the forest or across the water either early in the morning or late at night. They are not really intended for concert performance, although some of them have been performed this way." Written between 1991 and 1996, these works exemplify Schafer's idea of environmental music which makes unusual demands on the performer. I performed the Aubade and Nocturne for flute (1996) many times in the chilly pre-dawn mist and under the star-canopied night sky as a performer in *And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon*. (In today's concert they are performed by the wonderful flutist Lara Deutsch.) The score includes pauses for the performer to listen for the response of birds and insects, or the natural resonance of water and rock. Schafer observed: "Often I have heard what I could only call the "phantom sound" of the Nocturne continuing long after it is over, blended with the crickets, water and night birds of the forest."

*Sun Father, Earth Mother* (1984) is sung by the principal character in *Patria*, variously known as Ariadne and the Princess of the Stars. Soprano Brooke Dufton has performed this role in several *Patria* productions and is equally at home performing on dry land or in a canoe! The work is representative of Schafer's abiding love for the voice. He originally wrote the work for his partner, opera singer Eleanor James. As the score notes: "In *Sun Father, Earth Mother*, the singer invokes the whole of nature by singing to each of the elements in turn. In a suitable environment the phrase "I come to you, I sing to you" will fuse the solo voice with the echo so that it is impossible to identify the source of the sound - the human is blended totally with the environment."

The second strand of our concert represents Schafer's important body of 13 string quartets, many of which were written for the Molinari Quartet.



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# Music and Myth

Remembering R. Murray Schafer

They span his career and have won distinguished awards, including the Honneger and Jules-Leger prizes. A *Gramophone* review of the Molinari Quartet's recording of the first seven quartets describes the works as "electrifying" and noted for their "intensity of expression, rhythmic zest and direct communicability." Philip Ehernsaft describes the cycle of quartets as "one of the remarkable quartet cycles in the international post-war repertoire." Several of the thirteen quartets feature unusual additions — an electroacoustic part, a tai-chi master, a singer. The cycle also has musical links to *Patria*; for example, a musical theme representing Adriadne threads through many of the works. Especially poignant is String Quartet #13, composed for the Molinari in 2013 and one of Schafer's last compositions. The subtitle *Alzheimer's Masterpiece* reflects on the composer's final illness. Today we'll hear Quartets 10 and 12. Both are one-movement works.

Quartet #10 *Winter Birds* was commissioned by Radio France for the Molinari Quartet. As the composer tells us: "The quartet was written during January and February 2005 at my farm in central Ontario. This is the quietest time of the year, with snowy fields outside my window and temperatures that descend at night to 20 or 25 degrees below zero Celsius. There are few birds at the feeders: chickadees and sparrows, and a few blue jays and woodpeckers. As a result, the texture is thinner than in most of the previous quartets. Occasionally there is a suggestion of swirling snow or a flock of turtle doves. The wolf howl from the Fifth Quartet is taken over and echoed by all the instruments as if by a pack of distant wolves, and the strongest moment in the work is a depiction of sunrise on the glistening snow at dawn.

The 12th Quartet (2012) was commissioned by Phyllis Lambert for the Molinari Quartet. It has been described as "a work of great lyricism and beauty and, as always with Schafer's music, it also has a strong rhythmic vitality."

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# Music and Myth

Remembering R. Murray Schafer

## PERFORMERS



## Brooke Dufton

A passionate advocate for Contemporary music, and praised for her 'great skill' (*Globe and Mail*), 'strong presence' (*Peterborough Examiner*), and 'beautiful tone and control' (*The Chronicle-Herald*), soprano **Brooke Dufton** has sung for such organizations as Soundstreams, Arraymusic, Talisker Players, Toronto's New Music Concerts, and festivals including Luminato, the Scotia Festival of Music, Stratford Summer Music, Open Ears, and numerous Nuit Blanche events. A creative and collaborative artist, she has worked directly with many of the leading composers in Canada. She has premiered roles and pieces, many written for her, by numerous Canadian composers, including John Beckwith, Alexander Rapoport, and Norbert Palej. Brooke's affinity for the work of R. Murray Schafer in particular has resulted in leading roles in his *Patria* cycle, and frequent performances of his works in concert.



# Music and Myth

Remembering R. Murray Schafer

## PERFORMERS



## Lara Deutsch

Named one of 2020's "Rising Stars" by *BBC Music Magazine*, flutist **Lara Deutsch** is a versatile soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player known for her engaging warmth and ability to connect with audiences. Recipient of the \$125,000 Prix Goyer for 2019-2020, Lara is an avid chamber musician — recent performance highlights include recitals for the National Arts Centre (NAC) & Facebook's #CanadaPerforms initiative, Newport Classical (Rhode Island, USA), the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal's Virée Classique, Ottawa's Music & Beyond Festival, and the Allegra Chamber Music series. She has recorded two chamber music albums on the Leaf Music Label: *Origins* (2019, Duo Kalysta) and *Night Light* (2022, with Philip Chiu), both of which were named to Top 20 lists for their respective years by CBC Music. Lara performs on a 14k gold Haynes flute, generously loaned by Canimex Inc. of Drummondville, Québec. She is represented by Latitude 45 Arts.



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# Music and Myth

Remembering R. Murray Schafer

## PERFORMERS



## Michelle Gott

Harpist **Michelle Gott** enjoys a collaborative career in solo, chamber, orchestral, and interdisciplinary genres. She has subbed frequently with the major orchestras of New York, Boston, St. Louis, Houston, Phoenix, Toronto, Ottawa, and Vancouver. As a soloist, Ms. Gott has been featured at the National Arts Centre and the National Art Gallery in Ottawa, as well as with Symphony Nova Scotia and Ottawa ChamberFest. Ms. Gott received her BM, MM, and DMA degrees from the Juilliard School, where she was a recipient of Juilliard's Peter Mennin Prize for Outstanding Leadership and Achievement in the Arts and the Richard F. French grant for her doctoral research on the music of Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer.



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# Music and Myth

Remembering R. Murray Schafer

## PERFORMERS



## Molinari Quartet

Internationally acclaimed by the public and the critics since its foundation in 1997, the **Molinari Quartet** is the recipient of twenty-three Opus Prizes awarded by the Quebec Music Council to underline musical excellence on the Quebec concert stage. It has been described by the critics as an "essential" and "prodigious" ensemble, even "Canada's answer to the Kronos or Arditti Quartet". The Quartet has been invited to perform in numerous concert series and festivals throughout Canada, Europe and Asia and its recordings on the ATMA Classique label have received international critical acclaim. The Quartet features Olga Ranzenhofer (violin, artistic director), Antoine Bareil (violin), Frédéric Lambert (viola), and Pierre-Alain Bouvrette (cello).

<https://quatuormolinari.qc.ca/en/>



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