

2020 - 2021

ANNUAL REPORT



SASKATCHEWAN CHORAL FEDERATION

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FUNDED BY



SASK LOTTERIES

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STAFF

VISION

Saskatchewan's choral community is vibrant, thriving and inclusive.

To foster participation in and development of choral music in Saskatchewan.

MISSION

VALUES

Inclusivity through adaptability and accessibility for all

- *Choirs at all stages of development from beginning to excellence*
- *Adaptive, able to include other traditions*
- *Make what we're doing accessible*
- *Make what's important and unique to the group part of our experience*

Responsible, proactive leadership

- *Demonstrate leadership in the music community*
- *Leverage what we have to move forward and capitalize on existing resources*

Accountability

- *Responsibility to our membership and funders*
- *Keep our commitments*
- *Provide honest answers to honest questions*

Relevance

- *Anticipating the future and leveraging the opportunities it presents to our advantage*
- *Capitalize (execute) opportunities*
- *Think outside the box*
- *Environmental awareness*

Embracing the evolution of choral music while preserving and celebrating its past

- *We have a heritage of people who did something before us and we have an obligation to leave a legacy behind us*

PRINCIPLES

- Singing is vital for our individual and collective well-being and must be available to all
- Singing together is an integral component and expression of every culture and must be created, shared, and passed on to the next generation
- Cultural activity brings many direct and indirect benefits to Saskatchewan
- All cultural art forms require a supportive infrastructure that systematically promotes continued development through stable, long-term funding

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Saskatchewan Choral Federation's service offerings meet the needs of diverse communities
- The public is engaged in choral music
- Saskatchewan Choral Federation's organizational capacity aligns with its vision and mission

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Once again it is necessary to gather virtually for our AGM. COVID-19 continues to create a difficult world within which the arts can flourish. Some choirs have started up again this fall but with many protocols having to take place. In a few weeks we will know how all of this has impacted our audiences. Who would have thought that rehearsals would be done with everyone wearing masks and separated by distance?

Sheryl Neher, our Executive Director, and Kayla Stadnick, our Program Manager, have once again ensured that the SCF is alive and functioning, although in a very different format. Although COVID-19 limited the number of activities, it did not seem to limit the amount of paperwork and organizational details that still had to be met. I, on behalf, of you, thank them for their commitment and hard work.

The programming for the year looked entirely different than it has in previous years although we were able to hold some events, just not in person. More detailed information on the programming can be found in the Program Highlights for the year.

Jennifer Lang, Vicki Meredith, Al Neufeld, Brendan Lord, Sara Brooks and Melissa Morgan presented a variety of workshops in the fall of 2020. Kudos to them and all those that turned out to participate.

February is the month in which ChorFest takes place. Because of COVID this past year's festival had to be a virtual one as choirs were not allowed to come together. Instead, a number of virtual clinics and sessions were organized that choirs could watch and take part in on line. The Clinicians included Hilary Apfelstadt, Geung Kroeker-Lee, Katy Luyk, Cynthia Peyson Wahl, Ryan Billington, Jon Day, Heidi Fellner Wood and Frank Lee. Recorded sessions were also presented with Elroy Friesen, Erica Phare-Bergh, and Free Play (Dylan Bell and Suba Sankaran). A pre-ChorFest workshop was presented by Jennifer Lang and Janet Brenneman at the end of January. Our thanks goes out to these clinicians who worked their magic and made choral music still a viable activity during these strange times.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

continued

For its seventh year the Saskatchewan Youth Choir worked on two different projects with choir alumni. Many thanks to director Marcia McLean, accompanist Joshua Hendricksen, audio editor Dana Rempel and visual editor Dalton Lam and the twenty-two singers who worked on and put together a lovely piece *Flight Song* for upload to the SCF YouTube account following the virtual Zoom premiere in January 2021. The second project included 14 alumni and was a collaborative commission with Canadian composer Laura Hawley. This culminated in a second virtual choir project featuring the new piece *Lantern*. Technical work for the project was done by Dana Rempel, audio editor and Khang Nguyen, visual editor. Again, many thanks to the organizers and to the choir members for persevering and coming together to sing.

Workshops that are normally held for school students were not able to occur this past year although there were sessions as part of the ChorFest offering that were available for teachers to share with their students. The music library, though still open, did not see much action as choirs were not rehearsing. Our Awards Program continued, but our plan to present the awards to the winners at concert events in or near where they live was not able to happen.

Over the past year the staff has attended numerous workshops online dealing with diversity, truth and reconciliation, and COVID topics related to choral singing. The Board met online for a Strategic Planning session led by Dawn Martin. Our old plan needed revision since much of what it contained had been sidelined by COVID. It is difficult to keep an organization alive and vital when board members and staff and choirs and individual members cannot meet in person. That statement was in my last year's report, but it is just as relevant again this year. Singing is an activity best done with other people present. I was optimistic last year that choirs would resume rehearsing and performing this fall and that audiences would be eager to hear them. Some of that has happened.

As always, the Federation is grateful for the support it receives from the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation. Without that help, the Federation would not be able to continue. Thank you for attending today's virtual AGM. As the Metropolitan Opera says, "the voice must be heard."

Respectfully submitted,
James Hawn, President

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

One of the roles of the Nominations Committee is to solicit nominations to the Board of Directors. Current Board members are encouraged to seek out potential board candidates in their broader circles to assist in bringing together a diverse group with a varied knowledge to assist in the ever changing needs of the organization. As well, they are the selection committee for the SCF Recognition Awards and Scholarships. The committee is typically composed of the Past-President acting as chair, two board members (not up for election) and a member from the community. With the Past-President position vacant, SCF President James Hawn chaired the Nominations Committee Executive Director, Sheryl Neher providing assistance as necessary. Board member representatives were Cynthia Peyson Wahl and Bob Nicholls. Dr. Jennifer Lang (previous Past-President) agreed to be the community member on the committee for this past year. Dr. Melissa Morgan, U of R Choral Director, was invited to provide input for the University Choral Leadership Awards as well.

The 2020 - 2021 Award Winners were:

Community Service Award - Corinne Groff (Regina)
Golden Note Award (Director) – Phoebe Voigts (Saskatoon)
Golden Note Award (Singer) - Judy Fawell (Regina)
Golden Note Award (Singer) - Monique Lovatt (Regina)
Golden Note Award (Singer) - Sandra Pfeifer (Regina)
Outstanding Administrator Award – Dr. Mark Anderson (Regina)
Pro Musica Award - not awarded in 2020
Congratulations again to these deserving recipients!

Once again we celebrate the contributions of choral leadership of two students at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina. The Dr. Dominic Gregorio University of Regina Choral Leadership Award and The University of Saskatchewan Choral Leadership Award were presented to Emily Kelln and Kate Nachilobe respectively. Each Choral Leadership award recognizes an undergraduate or graduate student who has made or has the potential to make a significant contribution to the choral community of the university.

We all share in these wonderful achievements, whether we have direct connections to these deserving recipients or not. Through the involvement of all those in the choral community whether it be past recipients, present directors and singers, advocates and enthusiasts we look forward to honouring the successes and achievement in future years!

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Nominations Committee,
Sheryl Neher, Executive Director

MEET THE 2020/2021 AWARDS & RECOGNITION RECIPIENTS

Golden Note



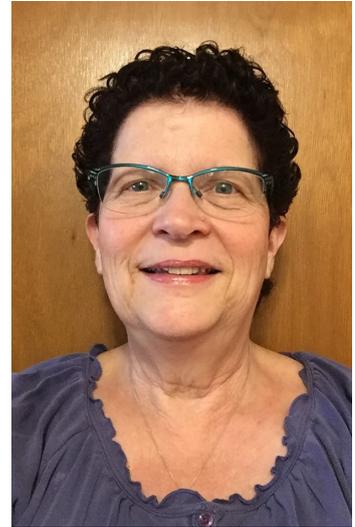
Phoebe Voigts

Golden Note



Judy Fawell

Golden Note



Monique Lovatt

Golden Note



Sandra Pfeifer

Community Service



Corinne Groff

Outstanding Administrator



Dr. Mark Anderson

University
of
Saskatchewan
Choral
Leadership
Award



Kate Nachilobe



Emily Kelln

Dr. Dominic
Gregorio
University
of Regina
Choral
Leadership
Award

Another year has passed and it is hard to comprehend how time can move that quickly. There are days that seem they will never end and yet here we are remarking on how quickly the time has gone. These are the **EXACT** words I said one year ago. The world has changed some from where we were last year but we are no where near what we were familiar with in February 2020. Choirs/choruses and ensembles are once again gathering, although in many cases in different locations, wearing masks, with new restrictions and guidelines in place and with a different make up of people. It is sad on one hand to know that there are many people not returning to participate in something they loved yet exciting to hear singing happening again with people together in a room. Will group singing as we know it ever return to the 'normal' that we may have so easily taken for granted. Only time will tell. Regardless, the spirit of choristers goes on!

Before I go any further I would like to thank the SCF Board for their support over the past year as we had to 'make it up' as we went along in trying to provide programs and services for the organization. As we said more than once, we had a template of what worked, procedures in place of how to do it, what we could or would like to change and over and over again entire programs were re-worked to accommodate the ever changing restrictions and guidelines that were in place until July of this year. Not once were we able to host any in-person events which was extremely difficult as you are all aware.

They trusted us to get the job done in the best way that we could.

I would also be remiss if I did not acknowledge the exceptional work that SCF Program Manager, Kayla Stadnick did over the past year! The amount of time and research that she put into making any sort of programming happen was apparent as a number of wonderful things were still able to

OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMS REPORT

from the desk of the Executive Director

happen. You can only imagine how much brainstorming we did. Some days our brains truly hurt!!! Thank you Kayla for your knowledge and willingness to give it a try.

With COVID-19 not going away quietly I had the opportunity to connect with many others from not only across the province but also across Canada in a variety of meetings and info sessions. Everyone was searching and looking for options and solutions to make things better not only in the choral world but overall in the culture sector which really had been shut down since the start of the pandemic in March 2020. SCF participated in the promotion of a number of advocacy efforts throughout the year including the **Call to Action** - Sask Arts Alliance; **Music Matters** - Sask Music; **Singing in Canadian Schools COVID 19 Impact Survey** - collaboration headed by Choral Canada, The Coalition for Music Education, Canadian Music Educators Association and the Kodaly Society of Canada. As well, we were on the Business Response Advisory Committee, made up of a group of provincial cultural organizations, working to communicate to the Business Response Team that there were changes needed in the provincial pandemic restrictions/guidelines specific to the performing arts. The intent was to provide them with information from the current research, studies and the science with the aerosol studies that were available at the time. Unfortunately the meetings did not always go as we had hoped for and the results were not what we expected as guidelines would be amended and they were nothing that we had even recommended.

Staff resumed in-person work at the Music Centre in July of 2020 as both Kayla and I were seeing limited numbers of people and felt able to control the comings and goings at the office and the space allowing us to keep MORE than 2 metres distance from one another. Other protocols remain in place including masking, appointments required for access to library materials, extra cleaning, a sign-in tracking sheet, etc. to ensure the safety of the staff and those that do come by from time to time. It was determined that the air quality in the office is not ideal so three quality air purifiers were purchased for the main area. Unfortunately we discovered that we have no control over the ventilation system in the library as it is managed by a furnace connected to the renters next door. More investigation needs to be done in this area so because of this, in-person volunteer work has been non-existent as much of it is library related.

This year we were able to bring on a summer student, Hannah Magnusson, who started beginning of June and was with us for a couple of months. Hannah brought a new perspective to the work and planning going forward for the Summer Music Camps which was very beneficial for us. Her knowledge of COVID protocol when working with children was so helpful and we learned a lot from her as we work to bring music camps to more children in the future. As well she spent time assisting in research on the various groups and organizations throughout the province that we may be able to partner with in bringing singing back to their communities.

In the area of professional development, we have continued learning, researching and working to do better in the areas of inclusion and diversity. Staff have had the opportunity to participate in numerous workshops and online webinars, both live and archived. As well it was decided that staff and board members would take training specific to Diversity and Inclusion as well as Canadian Indigenous Culture Training - Truth and Reconciliation. This is such an important topic, which we were already aware of, but came even more to the forefront this spring. It is something we are strongly committed to as an organization for now and the future.

As was mentioned last year, COVID-19 has meant that many things we typically have done for programming had to be done drastically different and we worked hard to make that happen. With Kayla's knowledge of how group singing works and what needs to happen we were able to provide some excellent workshops for the membership over the course of the year. Her work with the Saskatchewan Youth Choir alumni culminated in two lovely virtual choir performances as well as a new piece which was commissioned for SYC through a collaborative project with Canadian composer Laura Hawley. Although these are not the typical offerings of SYC they were definitely well done and I am very proud of the work all the participants put in to making some music and many thanks again to Kayla for her perseverance into making things work!

As we look to the future and the slow return of choirs/choruses/ensembles singing together we thank you for your support of SCF! In closing, let me use the exact same words I ended with last year. We will continue to work to and do the best we can for the membership and all those throughout the province that deserve a chance to experience and enjoy the art form we all love, choral singing!

Respectfully submitted,
Sheryl Neher,
Executive Director

Below are things of note from the 2020/2021 year:

- July 2020 - SCF Staff returns to the office to work
- July 2020 - SCF Summer Music Camp cancelled due to COVID restrictions to the disappointment of many in the Community
- September 2020 - Series of workshops - *'Fall 2020 - A Season of Change'* begins
- September 12, 2020 - Workshop *'A Voice for Life'*, with Dr. Victoria Meredith, Professor Emeritus of Choral Music at Western University, London, Ontario.
- September 24, 2020 - Workshop *'Zoom Basics for Online Choir Rehearsals'*, Al Neufeld, Director of Living Skies Chorus.
- September 30, 2020 - Workshop *'Intergenerational forces: A life of choral singing!'*, Dr. Jennifer Lang, U of S Assistant Professor of Music Education & Director of Choral Activities
- October 14, 2020 - Workshop *'Fall 2020 - A Season of Listening'*, Dr. Brendan Lord, Executive Director at Choir Alberta
- October 25, 2020 - Work begins on SYC Alumni Virtual Choir project for *'Flight Song'* by Kim Andre Arnesen
- October 25, 2020 - First creative session on SYC collaborative commission project with Canadian composer Laura Hawley
- October 28, 2020 - Workshop *'Self-Care for Choral Leaders and Music Educators'*, Dr. Sara Brooks, conductor, choral clinician, and more completing masters of counselling psychology
- November 6, 2020 - sponsored session for Sask Music Conference specific to diversity/choral music in relation to the Huron Carol with panel Dr. Jeanette Gallant, Dr. Kevin Lewis, Dr. Jennifer Lang
- November 14, 2020 - Workshop *'Discovering Prairie Composers'*, Dr. Melissa Morgan, Assistant Professor and Director of Choirs at U of R

OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMS REPORT Highlights for the Year 2020/2021

- November 20, 2020 - Second creative session for SYC collaborative commission project
- December 10, 2020 - Third creative session for SYC collaborative commission project
- December 13, 2020 - collaboration with Saskatchewan German Council for holiday sing along via Zoom
- January 17, 2021 - SYC rehearsal session & unveiling of new commission
- January 23, 2021 - Session *'Behind the Mask - Beyond the Screen'* with Dr. Janet Brenneman, Associate Professor of Music, Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg and Dr. Jennifer Lang, U of S Assistant Professor of Music Education & Director of Choral Activities
- February 1 - 13, 2021 - CHORFEST 2021 virtual festival with pre-recorded and live (via ZOOM) educational sessions for choral directors, singers and music students.

Presenters included:

- Erica Phare-Berg (Artistic Director of Voices in Motion, Victoria, BC) presented Choral Warm-ups/conductor-centered and Sight-singing for choirs/singer-centered
- Elroy Friesen (Director of Choral Studies, University of Manitoba) presented Who's on 5th? Tips and Tricks for Choral Tuning /conductor-centered and Keep Calm and Enunciate - English Diction for Choirs/ singer-centered
- Dylan Bell & Suba Sankaran - FreePlay Duo (Vocal jazz specialists, Toronto, ON) presented Vocal improvisation / conductor-centered and Vocal percussion /singer-centered

Highlights for the Year 2020/2021 continued...

- 'Safe(r) Spaces for Singers' with Katy Luyk (Executive Director, Kokopelli Choir Association, conductor of Oran & Vacilando, Edmonton, AB)
 - 'Looking at Leadership Through Multiple Lenses' with Dr. Hilary Apfelstadt (Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto)
 - 'Stepping Stones to Successful School Choral and Vocal Jazz Programs: a panel discussion' with Frank Lee (Choral director, Carson Graham Secondary School, North Vancouver, BC), Heidi Wood (Choral director, Joane Cardinal-Schubert High School, Calgary), Ryan Billington (Choral conductor and vocal jazz professor, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS) and Jon Day (Collaborative pianist, Calgary, AB)
 - 'Culture and Community Design' with Geung Kroeker-Lee (Middle/school/senior school music teacher, St. John's Ravenscourt School, Winnipeg, MB)
 - 'Decolonizing Your Music Room' with Cynthia Peyson Wahl (Choral and vocal jazz director, Campbell Collegiate, Regina, SK)
 - March 27, 2021 - final SYC planning session for collaborative commission working on visual aspect of project
 - April 2021 - preliminary discussions with Regina North East Community Association on possible summer music camp
 - May 2021 - initial communications sent out to potential summer music camp participants (would they attend, what camp might look like with COVID restrictions in place)
 - May 3, 2021 - SYC virtual rehearsal for final preparation for new commission *Lantern* which premiered July 2021
 - May 15, 2021 - Board and staff strategic planning session (review of current plan and how it may or may not still work)
 - June 2021 - Summer student begins and starts work on summer music camp revamp
- In addition -**
- over the year on-going monthly meetings with SaskCulture and other eligible cultural organizations which provided information and updates
 - regular check-in meetings with Choral Canada and other provincial choral organizations
 - sessions on mental wellness for staff provided by SaskCulture entitled Wellness Wednesdays with sessions on taking care of yourself, coping with the world around us in the current climate and how do we transition back to what should be normal following the removal of restrictions
 - Lunch and Learn training sessions/series on racism awareness hosted by Multicultural Organization of Saskatchewan (MCOS)
 - began work with Communications Consultant specific to social media and understanding the changing dynamics around communications
 - participation in Non-Profit Lifecycle Lab with SCF Staff and select Board members from August 2020 to January 2021
 - purchase of new and diverse music for SCF Music Library
 - review and culling of music library titles for both choral/band including minstrel songs and others deemed not appropriate

A GLIMPSE OF THE YEAR

Workshops

'A Voice for Life'

presented by Dr. Victoria Meredith,
Professor Emeritus of choral music at
Western University, London, Ontario

In Dr. Meredith's workshop participants will have the opportunity to experiment with a variety of relevant exercises as they gain insight into vocal changes that tend to take place over a lifetime. Physical, mental and societal benefits of adult choral singing will also be explored.



Intergenerational forces: A life of choral singing

Wednesday, September 30, 7pm

presented by Dr. Jennifer Lang
Assistant Professor, Music Education, University of Sask;
Director of the Greystone Singers & University Chorus

Building on the work presented by Dr. Victoria Meredith on the importance of singing through life this workshop will explore the benefits of collaborative singing in choirs through various ages and stages of one's life. Highlights of this session will also include a discussion of the mutual benefits of intergenerational singing programs and the rehearsal strategies and considerations of joining multiple ages together in song.

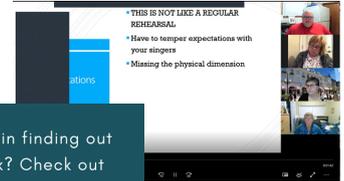


Conductors are you interested in finding out how online rehearsals can work? Check out

ZOOM BASICS FOR ONLINE CHOIR REHEARSALS

Thursday, September 24th, 7pm

Presented by Al Neufeld
Director of Living Skies Chorus



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14TH, 7:00 PM

FALL 2020 - A SEASON OF LISTENING

presented by Dr. Brendan Lord

At the heart of the session will be ten pieces from Dr Lord's personal listening list for choirs. Using this list, you will explore how to structure listening sessions, how to support technical development, how to teach key musical concepts, and how to keep your singers engaged. Bring your headphones, and join using a strong and reliable internet connection if you can.

Listening is the root of good ensemble singing.

- 5 main ingredients in ensemble singing – eyes, ears, mind, heart, voice
- Interestingly, although it represents only 20% of the recipe, the voice typically occupies 85% of rehearsal time.
- To sing well together, our ears are at least as important as our voice.
- In choir, our ears are our connection to the rest of the choral instrument and guide most of our decisions as choral artists.
- This is true both in terms of making music and in developing an understanding of our concertgoers.
- Ultimately, excellent listening is requisite for authentic corporate artistry.

ARE YOU A CHORAL LEADER OR MUSIC EDUCATOR WHO IS MISSING CONNECTING WITH YOUR SINGERS WHEREVER THAT MIGHT BE? AS WE CONTINUE TO ADAPT TO OUR NEW WORLD WE MAY STILL BE EXPERIENCING PERIODS OF FEAR AND ANXIETY.

Join us for an interactive discussion with Dr. Sara Brooks to explore coping skills for self-care in a safe, non-threatening setting on Wednesday, October 28th, 7:00 pm via ZOOM.

There is no charge to attend the session if you are part of the choral community in Saskatchewan!

THE DISCUSSION WILL NOT BE RECORDED!

FOR MORE INFO ON OUR RECORDS PLEASE SEE OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.SASKCHORAL.CA

To register go to <https://tinyurl.com/SCFSelfcare>

No longer forward nor behind! Look in hope and fear. But grateful, leave the good behind. The ages of now and here.

Wendy Selfcare
You got this!

**Not
recorded**

Discovering Prairie Composers

Saturday, November 14th, 10:30 am
with Dr. Melissa Morgan

Join Dr. Morgan for 'An Introduction to choral art music and choral composers from the Canadian Prairies'. In her presentation she will identify significant Prairie composers, and highlight repertoire of a variety of levels for both mixed and equal voices and will feature original, lesser known a cappella and accompanied choral compositions accessible to community, school and church choirs.

What do you mean by Prairie?	
Prairie	• Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan
Composer	• Spent a minimum of half their career on the Prairie or adopted the region as home
Compositions	• SATB and Original

Behind the Mask - Beyond the Screen

How do you keep singers engaged? How can singers keep up their skills? How do you keep that sense of community? A peek behind the mask... beyond the screen: connection and community in choral rehearsals with Dr. Jennifer Lang (University of Saskatchewan) and Dr. Janet Brenneman (Canadian Mennonite University).

Saturday, January 23rd at 10:00 am (CST) via ZOOM

Registration required and paid prior to receiving Zoom link.

Registration Cost

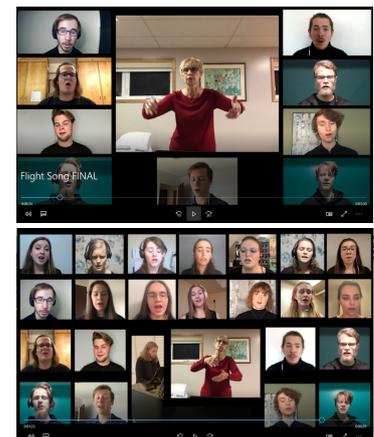
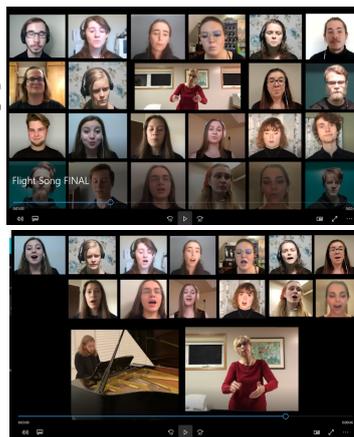
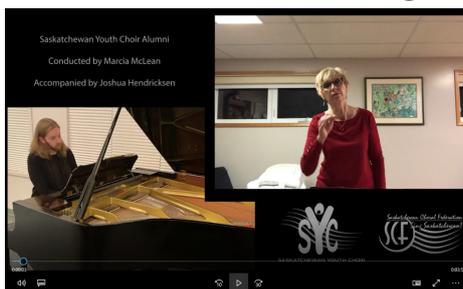
SCF Members - \$15
(Includes Individual / or Director/Chorister of a member choir)

Students - \$10

Non-members - \$25

Register at
<https://saskchoral.wufoo.com/forms/zoom2021226/>

SYC Alumni Virtual Choir Project



ChorFest

A GLIMPSE OF THE YEAR



Erica Phare-Bergh



Dr. Elroy Friesen



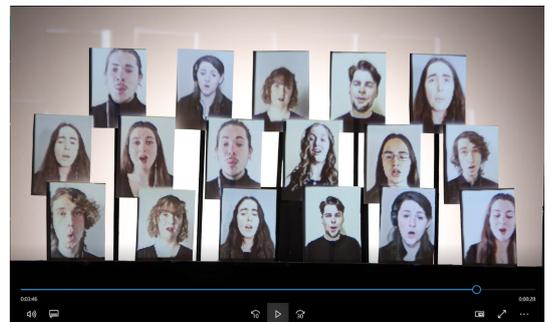
Suba Sankaran & Dylan Bell



SYC collaborative commission project and virtual choir



Canadian composer
Laura Hawley





Saskatchewan Choral Federation gratefully acknowledges the significant funding we receive from the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation.

Saskatchewan Choral Federation is

A proud member of

