Western Music
Don Wright Faculty of Music

FRIDAYS AT 12:30 SERIES
THE SOUNDS OF WOMEN'S WORK
Friday, September 18, 2026
12:30 p.m., von Kuster Hall and via livestream
Helen Faucher, *violin* (Western BMus)
Tasman Tantasawat, *viola* (Western DMA)
Abi Greenland, *cello* (Western MMus)
Theodore Chow, *piano* (Western DMA)
Amelia Yates, *piano* (DMA, 2021)
Martha Guth, *soprano*
Patricia Green, *mezzo-soprano*
Erika Switzer, *piano*

THE SOUNDS OF WOMEN'S WORK
A Musical Exploration of Traditional Women's Textile Work

Oli enne nel'l'ä neitta...(2015) — Omar Daniel
Movement II — b. 1960

Stitches in Time (1979) — Ann Southam
"Soundspinning I" — 1937-2010

Rivers: Set 3 (1981) — Ann Southam
No. 3 — 1937-2010

Salt Air (2014) — Cecilia Livingston
"Penelope"

slow disclosure (work in progress showing) — Cecilia Livingston
"parade gloss"
"patent"
"broidery"

This concert is part of the three-day festival-symposium
Music, Craft, and the Fibre Arts: Textures in Conversation taking place September 18-20, 2026.
For complete details, visit music.uwo.ca/research/textures-in-conversation

BIOGRAPHIES

Amelia Yates, D.M.A., is a pianist, adjudicator, and instructor from Hamilton, Ontario. A graduate of the Doctor of Musical Arts program at the University of Western Ontario, Dr. Yates's research focusses on the solo piano music of Canadian composer Ann Southam. In addition to performing as a soloist, Dr. Yates also enjoys collaborating with others and has extensive experience playing for choirs (including Western University Choirs and Myriad Ensemble). As an in-demand adjudicator, Dr. Yates has had the pleasure of adjudicating at music festivals across Ontario. Dr. Yates teaches piano lessons from her home studio, AGYPiano. Her goal is to help students perform, understand, and enjoy music thoughtfully, healthily, and artfully. She is also passionate about applying teaching approaches that nurture students' mental health and empower them to think critically and independently. Dr. Yates's students have received awards for both composition and performance at the local, provincial, and national levels, and frequently achieve First Class Honours and First Class Honours with Distinction standings on their conservatory examinations. Graduates of AGYPiano have gone onto study music at the University Level. Before receiving her doctorate, Dr. Yates also earned an ARCT diploma in piano performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music as well as a Bachelor of Music Honours Music Education and a Master of Music in Performance and Literature from the University of Western Ontario. She had the privilege of studying performance with Dr. Leslie Kinton, Dr. Brett Kingsbury, and John-Paul Bracey, and pedagogy with Dr. Diana Dumlavwalla and Dr. Christine Tithecott. Dr. Yates is a member of the Royal Conservatory of Music's College of Examiners and enjoys conducting exams across Canada. She has held positions on the board of the Hamilton/Halton Branch of the Ontario Registered Music Teachers' Association and the Hamilton Music Festival and continues to support these organizations as a volunteer. She is also honoured to support the Association of Canadian Women Composers as an Associate member. When she is not performing or teaching, Amelia enjoys spending time with her husband Daniel, a musician and lawyer, as well as practicing yoga, playing with her bichon frisé named Theodore Albert, and watching her favourite show: *Downton Abbey.* Amelia and Daniel welcomed their new baby son, Aaron Oliver, in early January 2026.

Known for "arresting and strangely alluring" music (Gramophone) that asks "slow burning, sometimes fiery questions" (The New York Times), Cecilia Livingston is Composer-in-Residence at the Canadian Opera Company, following three years as composer-in-residence at Glyndebourne. Her work has been performed at Glyndebourne, Teatro Colón, Teatro Carlo Felice, Bang on a Can's summer festival, Toronto's Nuit Blanche festival, in recital at Carnegie Hall, L'Auditori de Barcelona, the Barbican, the Kennedy Center, with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra, Tafelmusik, and Soundstreams, and is available on recording from Deutsche Grammophon. Cecilia's current projects include a new opera for the Canadian Opera Company, and her 2026 opera-oratorio 'Parélios' received wide acclaim: 'Opera Canada' magazine called it "otherworldly... unique and beautifully crafted." 'La Scena Musicale' described it as genre-defying, with a novel sound world spanning opera, staged music-theatre, secular oratorio, and chamber dance-piece. Theatre critic Paula Citron called the score "astonishing... rang[ing] from lyrical to dramatic, from meditative to explosive," and concluded that 'Parélios' "expanded the boundaries of what contemporary opera can be." Winner of the Louis Applebaum Composers Award "for excellence in composition for theatre, music theatre, dance or opera," Cecilia's creative work is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council, and SOCAN Foundation. She is Vice-President of the Canadian League of Composers.

Juno nominated soprano Martha Guth regularly presents concerts and recitals at major venues which include Wigmore Hall, Lincoln Center, The National Cathedral, Ravinia, and both Oxford Song and Leeds Lieder. Her interpretations have been called "Magical" (Opera Now); "Truly amazing" (Montreal Gazette) and "Thrilling" (Globe and Mail), and her concerts have been recorded and broadcast by the CBC Radio/Radio Canada, the BBC and the WDR in Germany. As a young artist Martha won first prize at both the Wigmore Hall International Song Competition and the Concours Musical International de Montréal, launching a performance career specializing in concert and song repertoire. Her deep interest in art song led her to co-found Sparks & Wiry Cries with pianist Erika Swtizer, a non-profit dedicated to art song spanning publication, live performance, and commission of new works. Her discography includes *Summer Night,* a Juno nominated disc of songs by Healy Willan on Centrediscs; *Das Ewig Weibliche* a solo disc of Schubert songs with Penelope Crawford on fortepiano; Roberto Sierra's *Beyond the Silence of Sorrow* with the Orquesta Sinfonica de Puerto Rico for Naxos (nominated for a 2016 Latin GRAMMY); John Fitz-Roger's *Magna Mysteria* for the Innova label; *Go by Contraries*, songs of Andrew Staniland with Baritone Tyler Duncan and Pianist Erika Switzer released on Centre Discs. Forthcoming is a disc for Naxos of Mendelssohn's Lobgesang with the Yakima Symphony. Martha is Associate Professor of Voice at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, has been Co-Artistic Director of SongFest and Director of its Composer/Mentorship program. She spent summers on faculty at the Vocal Academy for The Collaborative Piano Institute, and at Opera Seme in Arezzo, Italy and presented lectures, masterclasses and

recitals at dozens of major universities throughout North America specializing in song literature spanning the 19th Century to today.

Acclaimed for "singing with a poignancy and molten resonance" (Washington Post), mezzo-soprano Patricia Green's career includes international performances in opera, chamber music, and oratorio; as soloist with l'Orchestre de Radio-France, the Dutch Radio Philharmonic, the National Symphony (Washington), the Northern Israel Symphony, Theatre Chamber Players of the Kennedy Centre, Washington Bach Consort, Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, Esprit Orchestra, Aventa Ensemble, Opera Parallèle, Toronto's New Music Concerts, Bethlehem Bach Society, San Francisco BluePrint Project, Huddersfield Festival, Vancouver New Music, the U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum Series, Livewire Festival UMBC, Strasbourg Musica Festival, Soundstreams Canada, and others. Green has worked with conductors Pierre Boulez, Reinbert de Leeuw, Leonard Slatkin, Nicole Paiement, Peter Eotvos, Reillly J. Lewis and Pascal Rophé in halls such as the Concertgebouw, Zankel Hall, Glenn Gould Studio, Glazunov Hall and the John F. Kennedy Centre. Known for remarkable versatility and exceptional musicianship, she created over 32 world premieres working with composers Pierre Boulez, György Ligeti, R. Murray Schafer, Lori Laitman, Lasse Thoressen, Shulamit Ran, Pascal Dusapin, Emily Doolittle, George Walker, Hilary Tann, David Del Tredici, Kati Agocs, Alice Ho, and Laura Schwendinger. Look for her 12 recordings on the award-winning Blue Griffin label, Naxos, Albany Records and Newport Classics. Concerts have been recorded and broadcast on the CBC, Dutch National Radio&Television, and NPR. A passionate educator, Green has been a tenured Professor of Voice at UWO since 2007, following teaching at Michigan State University. In demand to teach masterclasses across China, in Italy, the U.S. and Canada, she most recently taught at the Glenn Gould School and Bologna International Opera Academy. A faculty member since 2016 at La Musica Lirica, Italy, she also created the International Institute for Voice and Piano in Xuzhou, China. Her students have sung roles on scholarship at La Musica Lirica, Berlin Opera Academy, Steans Music Institute at Ravinia, Franz Schubert Institute, Banff Centre for the Arts, Opera Nuova, St. Andrew's by the Sea, and Summer Opera Lyric Theatre. Awards won by students include 3 Rebanks Foundation awards, 2 Classical Voice Grants of the Hnatyshyn Foundation, 2 Jacqueline Desmarais Foundation Awards, several Western USRI and SSHRC Endowments, and 3 SSHRC Graduate Scholarship awards.

Erika Switzer is an accomplished collaborative pianist who performs regularly in major concert settings around the world, including at New York's Weill Hall (Carnegie), Geffen Hall, Frick Collection, and Bargemusic, at the Kennedy Center, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Spoleto Festival (Charleston, SC). Her performances have been called "precise and lucid" by the New York Times, and Renaud Machart of Le Monde described her as "one of the best collaborative pianists I have ever heard; her sound is deep, her interpretation intelligent, refined, and captivating." From 2000-2007, Switzer performed and studied in Germany, an experience that profoundly inspired and shaped her work. During that time, she appeared at Festspielhaus Baden-Baden and in the Munich Winners & Masters series and won numerous awards, including best pianist prizes at the Robert Schumann, Hugo Wolf, and Wigmore Hall International Song Competitions. Switzer has long been a leader in envisioning and promoting the future of art song performance. In 2009, in collaboration with soprano Martha Guth, she founded the organization Sparks & Wiry Cries, which commissions new works, presents sparksLIVE events in New York City, and publishes The Art Song Magazine. She is also devoted to new music, and has recently premiered new compositions at the 5 Boroughs Music Festival, Brooklyn Art Song Society; and Vancouver's Music on Main. Switzer collaborates with a range of top singers. A frequent collaborator is baritone Tyler Duncan, and as a duo, Switzer and Duncan have performed in major concert halls and music festivals around the world. She is also an active teacher, serving on the music faculty at Bard College and Conservatory of Music. Switzer holds a doctorate from The Juilliard School and lives in New York's Hudson Valley.

PROGRAM NOTES

On *Oli enne nel'l'ä neitta... (as written by the composer)*

The musical ideas in my piano quartet *Oli enne nel'l'ä neittä...*(once upon a time there were four maidens...) are rooted in ancient Estonian folk songs. These songs depict village life: cooking, weddings, funerals, games, parties, harvest and weaving. I composed this work for Ensemble Made In Canada, a group of four incredible musicians who happened to be women. The Estonian folk-song tradition is almost entirely performed and passed down through generations of women, so the match between ensemble and musical idea was natural.

The second movement uses fragments of an Estonian weaving song (*vöödukemiselaul*) along with freely composed 'wevaing-like' motives throughout. The 'weaving' nature of the relationship between the instrumental parts is analagous to the way that these songs were performed by groups of daughters, mothers and grandmothers during weaving gatherings.

On the Ann Southam selections

Ann Southam was a Canadian composer known for her contributions to electroacoustic music, twelve-tone music, and minimalism. She was also a philanthropist, feminist, and deeply committed to musical community, becoming a founding member and first president of the Association of Canadian Woman Composers and donating a large part of her estate to the Canadian Women's Foundation. After a period of writing largely electronic music, she transitioned back into writing for acoustic instruments in the late 1970s. She became interested in both minimalism and feminism at this time, the effects of which show in both pieces presented this afternoon.

Southam developed an interest in the question of whether women owned an artistic style that differentiates their work from men – so much so that she would go on to organize the forum "Do Women Have the Potential for a Unique Aesthetic?" in 1982. She explored a potential answer in these pieces, taking inspiration from spinning, weaving, and similar forms of repetitive domestic "women's labour" to create works of process music that emulate these techniques. To her, composition, piano playing, and "women's labour" were all intrinsically connected through the tactile, something she wanted to make explicit in her composition. As she said in an interview for CBC:

> "For one thing, writing for piano is hand work... It seems that so much of women's work is hand work, maintenance work, mending work and it just seemed to me that minimalist processes and piano music were just in my mind a perfect metaphor for this."

Each building block of these pieces is intentionally crafted to be anti-patriarchal. Southam was keenly aware of the discrimination she faced as a female composer, and how much the very rules of classical composition came from a male-centered culture. Instead of existing outside the world, Southam wrote these pieces to reflect everyday life. Instead of achieving big climaxes, she wrote these pieces to mirror the patient, ordinary, tireless work that goes unnoticed and unappreciated. As she put it in *Canadian Women Making Music*, "Women just haven't had the time to make music but I'm sure they've been doing it anyway."

On *slow disclosure*

Art does not need to make an immediate impact to have value; it can be troubling and yet still bear repeated viewings. And you can find this slow disclosure in the work of Paula Rego, an artist who is psychically tense without being melodramatic... Her paintings contain narratives that don't always show themselves at once. The work is subtle, puzzling, discreet, and undermining. Things are not always explicit. Things are not always what they seem.

— Robert Hughes, '*The New Shock of the New'*

Sparks & Wiry Cries (New York) commissioned composer Cecilia Livingston's 'slow disclosure: songs for Paula Rego' through its songCircle initiative: "inspired by the sewing circle, an intimate and creative space occupied by women working towards a common goal, and 19th-century salon gatherings."

'slow disclosure' responds to a selection of works by Portuguese-British artist Paula Rego (1935-2022), whose unflinching paintings are rich in imagery of sewing, dressmaking, clothing, textiles, of women in uneasy domestic spaces—entangled in complex family lives steeped in unsettling personal and political histories. This new song cycle emerges from the intersection of music, visual art, and textile arts, exploring how these disciplines speak to one another when women's domestic lives, labour, and relationships are placed at the centre.

Central to this inquiry is the figure of women's work as both subject and method. This songCircle commission frames the project within a long tradition of feminist reclamation—one that refuses the hierarchy separating fine art from craft, composition from domestic making. Rego's own refusal of that hierarchy, visible in her insistence on women's everyday lives as worthy of monumental attention, makes her an ideal interlocutor for this interdisciplinary project.

Poet Duncan McFarlane's texts for this song cycle open beautiful, uncomfortable imaginary spaces in dialogue with Rego's work, with each text responding to particular images Livingston had selected. 'slow disclosure' is the latest in a series of projects in which Livingston and McFarlane respond to and adapt visual art into music—from the medieval Unicorn Tapestries to painting, sculpture, and installation by artists like Alberto Burri, Mark Rothko, Anselm Kiefer, Olafur Eliasson, and Teresita Fernández—in concert and stage works ranging from art song to opera.

Tracing the pathways between Rego's painted surfaces, the materiality of textile practice, and the embodied, collaborative work of art song, this concert presents excerpts from this commission-in-progress in advance of its 2027 premiere.

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