The Aeolian Singers
Frances Farrell, *artistic director*
Ria Kim, *collaborative pianist*

guest artist
Matt Gallant, *percussionist*
Mairi Rankin, *fiddler*

GOODBYE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

a musical journey inspired by fairy tales

every path leads to a new adventure

Sunday
May 4 at 4 pm
Lilian Piercey Hall, Maritime Conservatory of Performing Arts
6199 Chebucto Road, Halifax

&

Saturday
May 10 at 4 pm
St. Luke's United Church
5374 St. Margaret's Bay Road
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The Aeolian Singers

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to the Aeolian Singers' production of *GoodbyeYellow Brick Road.* Step into a world of mystery, magic, and wonder as we take you on this musical journey that explores fairy tale heroines through music, blending classic stories with themes of personal journeys and self-discovery.

> "Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten." – G.K. Chesterton

What do fairy tales tell us about ourselves, about the world around us and why do they seemingly have such lasting power? Why are heroines in say, the Grimm fairy tales, often presented either as damsels in distress or wicked? These are a few of the questions I considered when developing the theme of this concert.

The first half of the programme, featuring allusions to the forest and to travelling, is prefaced by Gimon's *Boundless,* signaling not only the beginning of a journey, but a desire to move beyond narratives that bind us to certain archetypes. The pieces in this half range from contemplative sketches of nature as in McGlynn's *Wild Song* and Robbie Smith's *Lullaby to an Ancient River* to invitations and warnings to move and dance in both versions of *The Lobster Quadrille* and *Sigue,* to plain old rip-roaring fun in *Kiiriminna.*

The second half opens again in the mystical world of the forest, the backdrop to many familiar fairy tales (*Hide Me From Day's Garish Eye* and *Garden of Dreams*). The heroine has undergone transformation, gaining fresh insights into who she is and what she wants *(Bumble Bee, Children will Listen).* Her self-reliance grows stronger *(The Paper Bag Princess* and Melanie Doane's *Babe in the Woods).* Lastly, in Elton John's *Yellow Brick Road* our heroine moves beyond the yellow brick road – seeking her own wisdom and forging her own path.

> "Don't follow the path. Go where there is no path and begin the trail."
> – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Frances Farrell, Artistic Director

PROGRAM ORDER & TEXTS

Goodbye Yellow Brick Road
Frances Farrell, *artistic director*
Ria Kim, *collaborative pianist*

guest artists
Matt Gallant, *percussionist*
Mairi Rankin, *fiddler*

Boundless Music & Text: Katerina Gimon

Soloists: Agnes Szuecs, Shila LeBlanc

A fun and lively work, the spirit of *Boundless* is that of empowerment, exploration, and creativity. This music begins with sections of aleatory and textural exploration before resolving into a more structured and rhythmic celebratory conclusion. Because of the exploratory nature of this work, *Boundless* is almost entirely a vocalese – aside from its final moments, which summarize the essence of the piece: "There are no limits. This world is boundless. This life is boundless. I am boundless." (Composer's website)

Vocables
There are no limits...
This world is boundless...
This life is boundless...
I am boundless...

This bewitching setting tells the story of a young girl walking in an enchanted forest, mesmerized by dreamy, ancient songs sung by a chorus of birds. (OUP Website)

Deep in the forest a chickadee chorus or two sit on their branches,
Humming songs they had heard before and learned a long time ago
Back when the winds were young. Into their clearing a golden-haired girl passing through, mesmerized by their singing.
Tunes so familiar to our girl, but from where she can't say.
All she can hear is...
Feathers and melodies surrounding the golden-haired girl
Pull her and wrap her tightly into the wings of these curious things, so lovely.
And all she can say is:

What can this be, circling me?
I've heard it somewhere else, but I don't know where it is from, what it has done.

Slowly then, wrapped in the melody she feels the wind ruffling her skin so gently.
Filling her lungs with the chickadee song, she hums, caught in this feathered flurry.
Stretches an arm, but now a wing she has formed, and her feathers, golden, they shine so brightly.
Catching a breeze, she floats to a branch with the others, joining their singing.

What can this be, circling me?
I've heard it somewhere else, but I don't know where it is from.
What shall become of me here?
Here on these branches?

Feathers I have, yet I am glad.
Yet I am happy, with down and fluff to warble.
What can this be, circling me?

Deep in the forest a chickadee chorus or two sit on their branches, humming.
Into their clearing an auburn-haired girl passing through, mesmerized by their singing...

The Wild Song Music & Text: Michael McGlynn

Soloists: Jaime Woolstencroft, Shila LeBlanc

> This original text by Michael McGlynn describes the search for a wild place within everyone and was composed for the Finnish vocal ensemble Rajaton, grant aided by The Arts Council of Ireland. The evocative images are offset against a flowing and beautiful melodic line, with a simple but highly effective choral part – a truly contemporary piece – tonal, but modern at the same time. (Composer's website)

A pale bird flies over open sea
Singing sweet soul music to me
The ancient winds crying cold and flying free
Carry winter whispers through the trees

A soft voice murmurs a haunting melody
As it flows to the river from a stream
The gentle breeze carries youthful memory
Through the shaded valley of my dreams

I have come through the darkness
Touched the moon's new fallen dew
I have found there a place
Where the wild song echoes, echoes in my heart

There the dawn is wide with the scent of spring
With a red sun burning on the tide
In the hazel forest the blackbird sings
Of a secret place I keep inside

I have traveled far, I have made the road my home
But that music never will depart
I have walked the shoreline where seabirds cry alone
But a wild song echoes in my heart

I have come through the darkness
Touched the moon's new fallen dew
I have found there a place
Where the wild song echoes, echoes in my heart
Where the wild song echoes, echoes in my heart

Kiiriminna Traditional Finnish Song

Fiddle: Mairi Rankin arr. Marie-Claire Saindon

An SSA arrangement of the Finnish folk song "Kiiriminna", following the adventures of five lasses roaming the countryside with not a care in the world regarding boyfriends... (Composer's website)

Here we come, a group that is not weighed down by sorrows,
We've travelled around the land and always been joyful.
Hey kiiriminna kaarimminna kiirimiina kairaa,
Hey kiiriminna kaarimminna kiirimiina kairaa,

There are five of us handsome gals, pretty as the midsummer flowers,
We're looking for a new sweetheart 'cause the old one got lost.
Hey kiiriminna kaarimminna kiirimiina kairaa,
Hey kiiriminna kaarimminna kiirimiina kairaa,

I don't reckon I'll be any worse off with a new beau,
If I got a better beau and some more money!
Hey kiiriminna kaarimminna kiirimiina kairaa,
Hey kiiriminna kaarimminna kiirimiina kairaa,

You must not be sad, but joyful.
If you are not feeling good, then 'lift your spirits by bragging'!
Hey kiiriminna kaarimminna kiirimiina kairaa,
Hey kiiriminna kaarimminna kiirimiina kairaa

Here we come, a group that is not weighed down by sorrows,
We've travelled around the land and always been joyful.
Hey kiiriminna kaarimminna kiirimiina kairaa,
Hey kiiriminna kaarimminna kiirimiina kairaa

Lullaby to an Ancient River Text & Music: Robbie Smith, arr. F. Farrell

A contemplative setting of a journeyer stopping for the day along the river.

Hear me ancient river
Close your weary eyes
You have traveled far this day
By the golden marshes
Warmed by the sun along your way

The wind will stop and listen
To my simple song
With the coming of the night

And you will sleep 'til morning,
Bathed in the quiet harbour lights

Notes of love I could never write
Far far away
Scarcely heard in the quiet night
And lost, lost in the day

Now soon the tide will be changing
(changing)
With a gentle flow
The stars are melting with the sky

And when the storms are breaking
You will remember with a sigh
The night I sang – your lullaby

The Lobster Quadrille Music: David Eddleman

Text: Lewis Carroll

"Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is the story of a young girl, Alice, who finds a very strange world full of very strange characters. This passage is a song that is sung by the Mock Turtle as it dances with the Gryphon. They dance "The Lobster Quadrille," a dance where everyone dances with a lobster, and eventually the lobsters are thrown out to sea. The whiting, or a type of fish, can't find a lobster, so it asks the snail to be its partner instead of a lobster." (Source: Readingvine.com)

"Will you walk a little faster?"
Said a whiting to a snail
"There's a porpoise close behind us
Treading on my tail
See how eagerly the lobsters
And the turtles all advance!
They are waiting on the shingle
Will you come and join the dance?

Oh, will you, won't you, won't you
Will you, won't you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you
Won't you, won't you join the dance?"

"You can really have no notion
How delightful it will be
When they take us up and throw us
With the lobsters, out to sea!"
But the snail replied, "Too far, too far!"
And gave a look askance
Said he thanked the whiting kindly
But he would not join the dance

Oh, would not, could not, would not
Could not, would not join the dance
Would not, could not, would not
Could not, could not join the dance

"What matters it how far we go?"
His scaly friend replied
"There is another shore, you know
Upon the other side
The further off from England
The nearer is to France
Then turn not pale, beloved snail
But come and join the dance"

Will you, won't you, will you
Won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, won't you, will you
Won't you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you
Won't you, won't you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you
Won't you, won't you join the dance?

The Lobster Quadrille

Music: Ryan Brechmacher

Text: Lewis Carroll

Sigue Music: Ivette Herryman

Text: Nicolás Guillén

"In the poem, the poet asks a traveler not to mention him walking by the house of a certain woman, who is "bad". The poet requests of the traveler that he continue walking and that he not stop, even if she calls him. To recreate this image in the music, the piano part unfolds a bass line that presents a steady rhythm throughout the piece. This pattern is a walking bass that develops characteristic Cuban rhythms of the Cuban genre: Son. The "bad" woman is portrayed by a gesture composed out of triplets that tends to stop the regular movement of the bass. After the triplets - the woman's attempt to stop the traveler - the bass restarts the pace of its line, and the piece continues to move forward." (Composer's notes)

Walk traveler,
Continue walking;
Walk and do not stop,
Continue walking.

When you pass by her house
Do not tell her
That you saw me,
Walk traveler,
Continue walking.

Continue and do not stop,
Continue walking.

Do not look if she calls out for you,
Continue walking.

Remember that she is bad,
Continue walking.

INTERMISSION

Hide Me From Day's Garish Eye Music: G. F. Handel, arr. F. Farrell

from *Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* Text: John Milton

Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato is a pastoral ode composed by G. F. Handel in 1740. "The texts of Parts I and II are based on the two delightful companion poems *L'Allegro and Il Penseroso* written in the previous century by the 22-year-old John Milton. The first of these poems depicts the joys of the active or extroverted life, the second the joys of the contemplative or introverted life." (Source: Boston Baroque, Martin Pearlman)

Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honied thigh,
Which at her flow'ry work doth sting,
And the waters murmuring,

With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feather'd sleep.

And let some strange mysterious dreams
Wave at his wings in airy stream
Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eyelids laid.

Then as I wake, sweet music breathe,
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or th'unseen genius of the wood,
Or th'unseen genius of the wood.

Garden of Dreams Music: Sarah Quartel, Text: Sappho

Trans.: Arthur Sanders Way & A. S. Kline

A mesmerizing piece infused with lilting lullabies whose lyrics invite the listener to succumb to the mysteries and beauty of the forest.

I've a garden,
I've a garden of dreams,
Where the cool breeze whispering sways.

I've a garden,
I've a garden of dreams,
Softly the apple-sprays,

And from leaves that shimmer
and quiver,
from leaves that shimmer and quiver
Down on mine eyelids streams
A slumber river

I've a garden,
I've a garden of dreams,
Where the cool breeze whispering sways.

Oh, sing, nightingale,
herald of spring,
sing, nightingale, with a voice of longing.

And from leaves that shimmer
and quiver,
Oh, from leaves that shimmer
and quiver
Down on mine eyelids streams.

Oh, a slumber river,
Oh, a slumber river.

I spoke to you in a dream,
oh, flowers of spring
Breezes like honey: come to me here,
Come to me here.

But you had forgotten me,
Bittersweet, sly, uncontrollable creature:
Come to me here.

I've a garden, I've a garden..
Come to me here,
Here in my garden, here...

Bumble Bee Text & Music: Anders Edenroth

"The creative vision I had when writing Bumble Bee was to place the pure and simple poem in an effortless and every flowing musical world. The message is quite clear – we should try not to take the wonders of life for granted, whether evident or yet unknown." (Composer's notes)

From flower to flower
Hour after Hour
Be Humble, be humble Bumble Bee
Be Humble, be humble Bumble Bee

They all say you can't fly
Tiny wings to take you high
Be humble, be humble Bumble Bee
Be Humble, be humble Bumble Bee

And i've heard you can die
Heaven knows if that's a lie
Be Humble, be humble Bumble Bee
Be Humble, be humble Bumble Bee

From flower to flower
Hour after Hour
They all say you can't fly
And i've heard you can die
Oh, Be humble, be humble
Be humble, be humble Bumble Bee

From flower to flower,
Hour after hour, Ah.

Children Will Listen from Into the Woods Text & Music: Stephen Sondheim

Soloists: Candice Campbell, Andrea Jeffrey arr. Jacob Narverud

Into the Woods is a 1986 musical with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by James Lapine that "intertwines the plots of several Brothers Grimm fairy tales, exploring the consequences of the characters' wishes and quests. The main characters are taken from "Little Red Riding Hood", "Jack and the Beanstalk", "Rapunzel", "Cinderella", and several others. The musical is tied together by a story involving a childless baker and his wife and their quest to begin a family (the original beginning of the Grimm Brothers' "Rapunzel"), their interaction with a witch who has placed a curse on them, and encounters with other storybook characters during their journey." Children Will Listen is the finale to this musical, sung by the character Cinderella. (Souce: Wikipedia)

How do you say to your child in the night
Nothing's all black but then nothing's all white?
How do you say it will all be alright
When you know that it mightn't be true?
What do you do?

Careful the things you say
Children will listen
Careful the things you do
Children will see
And learn

Children may not obey
But children will listen
Children will look to you
For which way to turn
To learn what to be

Careful before you say
"Listen to me"
Children will listen

The Paper Bag Princess Robert Munsch

Reader: Evelyn Harding

"The Paper Bag Princess was first told at the Bay Area Childcare Center in Coos Bay Oregon where I had a job in 1973 and 1974. I had been telling lots and lots of dragon stories. They were all fairly regular dragon stories where the prince saves the princess from the dragon.

One day my wife, who also worked at a daycare centre, came to me and said, "How come you always have the princess save the prince? Why can't the princess save the prince?" (Source: Author's website)

Babe in the Woods Text & Music: Melanie Doane, arr. F. Farrell

Though the phrase, "Babe in the woods" has come to mean, "a person who is innocent or lacks experience", we get the sense that the heroine in Doane's lyrics has had her eyes opened to the situation around her. She accepts that she lives in a "forest of fools" but is all the more wiser for it.

For all that I have learned
For all I have discovered
For all my knowing glances
The counsel I've imparted
I'm still a babe in the woods
Refusing to see this place is a forest of fools

For all my awareness
For all my knowability
For all my good intentions
And my advanced philosophy
I'm still a babe in the woods
Refusing to see this place is a forest of fools

Cinderella took a chance
Snow White used her influence
Red Riding Hood knew what to wear
And Goldilocks she dared to dare
But in the end
They're all just babes in the woods
Living happy ever after in this forest of fools

Thought honestly was noble
Thought truth was my friend
Thought I'd fend off the Big Bad Wolf
Never thought I'd be misled
Oh I'm just a babe in the woods
Refusing to see this forest of fools...

Where is my voice (swallowed by fear)
So much the better to hear you with my dear
Misrepresented and misunderstood
By wolves in sheeps' clothing

So what is the moral of these tales so tall
Does anybody really care
Who's the fairest of them all
I remain a babe in the woods
Stumbling through
This place, this forest of fools

Goodbye, Yellow Brick Road Music: Elton John, arr. Kerry Marsh

Soloists: Candice Campbell, Catherine McCormack Text: Bernie Taupin
Raquel Griffin, Hayley Giles, Maria Halavrezos

The title of this song refers to a series of yellow bricks leading to the Emerald City in L. Frank Baum's The Wonderful Wizard of Oz and its sequels. Its lyrics evoke leaving a life behind and being content with the decision made to finally move on (Smoothradio.com). Though the lyricist cites going back to his roots as the inspiration for this text, metaphorically speaking, Goodbye Yellow Brick Road invites us to consider our own journeys, just as our heroine has discovered a new path to fulfilment and self-discovery, one made entirely of her own doing.

When are you gonna come down?
When are you going to land?
I should have stayed on the farm
I should have listened to my old man
You know you can't hold me forever
I didn't sign up with you
I'm not a present for your friends
to open
This boy's too young to be singing
The blues, ah, ah
So goodbye yellow brick road
Where the dogs of society howl
You can't plant me in your penthouse
I'm going back to my plough
Back to the howling old owls
Hunting the horny back toad
Oh, I've finally decided my future lies
Beyond the yellow brick road
Ah, ah

What do you think you'll do then?
I bet they'll shoot down the plane
It'll take you a couple of vodka
and tonics
To set you on your feet again
Maybe you'll get a replacement
There's plenty like me to be found
Mongrels who ain't got a penny
Sniffing for tidbits like you
On the ground, ah, ah
So goodbye yellow brick road
Where the dogs of society howl
You can't plant me in your penthouse
I'm going back to my plough
Back to the howling old owls
Hunting the horny back toad
Oh, I've finally decided my future lies
Beyond the yellow brick road
Ah, ah

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The Aeolian Singers have established an enviable reputation for fine choral singing, dating right back to its founding by Claire Wall, 1976 in Dartmouth. As a treble voice community of singers in its long history, the choir has toured the UK, Europe and many parts of Canada, has won multiple music festivals, performed with Symphony Nova Scotia, and collaborated with many local musicians, singer/songwriters, dancers and storytellers. Carrying forward their great tradition of presenting meaningful repertoire under the direction of Frances Farrell, the Aeolian Singers are embarking on new and novel paths this season. Stay in touch with the choir and join our mailing list or find us on social media. New singers are always welcome to audition, and can find out more at aeoliansingers.ca.

FRANCES FARRELL *artistic director*

A native of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Frances Farrell pursued her music studies in Winnipeg, graduating with Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Education degrees from the University of Manitoba. She subsequently earned a Master's Degree and Artist's Diploma in Vocal Performance from McGill University.

Frances recently graduated with her Doctorate of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting from the University of Toronto. Her doctoral dissertation –Improvisation in Choral Settings – was subsequently awarded the Outstanding Dissertations Award by Choral Canada in 2018.

Currently, Fran works as a choral educator with the Halifax Regional Arts program. As a choral composer, Fran's works can be found on the Cypress Choral Music website including Winter Proverbs TTBB, which was awarded first prize in Chor Leoni's inaugural C4 competition. Other published works include several contributions to Volume Five of the Teaching Music through Performance in Choir series (2019), an article for the book The Choral Conductor's Companion (2020), and an article in Anacrusis (2024), Choral Canada's national publication, which reflects Fran's new path of inquiry as a certified Alexander Technique teacher.

As a choral clinician, Fran has been invited to work with choirs from across Canada, serving most recently as the guest conductor of the Saskatchewan Youth Choir in March 2024.

Fran is thrilled to be working with the Aeolian Singers, and looks forward to upholding the organization's high standards of choral artistry and innovative story-telling.

RIA KIM *piano*

Originally from South Korea, Ria is currently collaborating at Dalhousie University in Halifax, NS and with the Aeolian Singers. She received her education at the Maritime Conservatory of Performing arts with Oxana Zotova, and at Dalhousie with Lynn Stodola, Peter Allen in her BMusic, and at the Manhattan School of Music with Daniel Epstein where she earned her MMusic. Her main interest has expanded from classical performances towards pedagogy, performing cross-genre, Concerts in Care, and incorporating such freedoms in her teaching settings and collaborative environments. Her attendance

at Domaine Forget, Shandelee Music Festival, Bowdoin Music Festival gave her the opportunity to study with Yonghee Moon, Phillip Chiu, John Forconi, Chiharu Iinuma. Her passion for collaborative and solo piano performances both continues.

MATT GALLANT *percussion*

As an independent musician in the Nova Scotia Music scene for 20 years, Matthew has performed in Canada, the States and Europe, with many bands from the East Coast. As a recording artist, Matthew has won numerous Ecma, Music Nova Scotia awards, Music New Brunswick, and Canadian Folk Music awards. Matthew graduated from Dalhouse with a bachelor of Music degree, and studied Ethnomusicology in Ghana through the University of Alberta. Some notable artists Matt has worked with include Ben Caplan, Amelia Curran, Erin Costelo, Alan Syliboy, Dave Sampson, Mike Trask, Julie Aubé, Squid, Symphony NS, and Neptune Theatre. Matthew currently teaches drums and percussion at Long and McQuade.

MAIRI RANKIN *fiddle*

Born in Mabou, Mairi Rankin is a fiddler and step dancer who has been influenced by some of the best Cape Breton traditional musicians and instructors on the island. She has developed her own unique style by being immersed in this rich musical culture, pulling from her native Cape Breton and her strong Scottish roots from North Uist. Mairi has toured nationally and internationally as a performer and educator in both fiddle and step dance. She has performed as a solo artist, a side musician, in small combos and as a member of both the Cape Breton super group Beòlach and the highly acclaimed Scottish / Irish / Canadian band The Outside Track. Mairi has recorded one solo album, three with Beòlach, seven with The Outside Track, and one as a duo with cellist Eric Wright.

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Thank you to HRM Councillor Shawn Cleary (District 9), for being our Music Sponsor this season. His contribution allows us to continue enriching our community with uplifting choral music.

We are a proud member of the Nova Scotia Choral Federation, a voluntary not-for-profit organization which exists to serve the needs of the choral community, to raise public awareness and to foster an appreciation and enjoyment of choral music. NSCF promotes the art of choral music in Nova Scotia, encourages high standards of artistic achievement and provides technical expertise and training for both amateur and professional choral musicians. For more information visit nscf.ca.

Nova Scotia Choral Federation

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Sing with us

We are an inclusive and supportive community of singers with a passion for music, and love to welcome new members.

Our next round of auditions will be held in June. Visit our website for more information or to register: **aeoliansingers.ca/sing-with-us.php**

The Aeolian Singers

aeoliansingers.ca