

The Richard Léger Project



Kelly-Marie Murphy

Award winning Canadian composer, Kelly-Marie Murphy, has written a dramatic cantata for tenor soloist and symphony orchestra. The piece is in 4 movements and roughly 25-minutes long. It will receive its world première on November 17, 2014 at Southam Hall in Ottawa with renowned Canadian tenor and Officer of the Order of Canada, Richard Margison, the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, and Jean-Philippe Tremblay, conductor. The piece was commissioned by the Ottawa Symphony's music director, David Currie, to celebrate the orchestra's 50th anniversary season.

The Piece:

Entitled *Blue on Blue: Unthinkable Distance, Unspeakable Sorrow*, the tenor soloist creates the role of Richard Léger, father of fallen soldier, Sgt. Marc Léger. Marc was killed in April, 2002, the

night a U.S. pilot mistakenly bombed a Canadian live-fire training exercise at Tarnak Farm, Afghanistan. The piece, very simply, is about a father's love for his son. It is a timeline of sorts, going through Richard's joy at becoming a father for the first time; hearing the devastating news of his son's death; survivor's guilt mixed with pride and sorrow; and finally an open letter to his dead son revealing how much Marc is loved and missed. The text was created by the composer through interviews with Richard and Claire Léger who live in Stittsville, Ontario. Although the piece is written from one father's perspective, the topics are universal and felt by the survivors of any loved one killed in battle: love and loss; struggle; guilt; pride and sorrow.

I. Remembering.

I remember a beautiful baby boy! My boy.
So strong; so playful; so loving and so loved.
I know, I know, I know! Every father says that about his own child,
But in this case, it was true!
I loved you with every part of my soul.
How could anyone love someone else so much?
I loved you with every part of my soul.
You were happy and so was I; yes so was I.
I wish that I could have watched you grow old.

II. What are you saying?

What are you saying? What are you saying?
I don't think I heard you. Tell me again. Again!
It can't be true!
Tell me again, tell me again! I don't think I heard you.
How did it happen?

Are you sure? Is it true? Are you sure?
How do I find out if this is real? Who do I call? What should I do?
Tell me again! Tell me again!
Are you sure this is real, or just a nightmare.
Oh my God! Why my son?
My mind is racing, my head is spinning, my heart is stopping.
Not my son. Not my son.

III. Under the bridge. (Recitative)

You passed under the bridge.
Like water under the bridge.
Your flag-draped coffin, the first one under the bridge.
Your flag-draped coffin under the bridge.

IV. Dearest Marc.

Dearest Marc; my dearest Marc.
I miss you.
Life is precious, unpredictable, and fragile.
Not a day goes by when you are not in my heart, dearest Marc.
Every day I wish that I could have taken your place;
that terrible, terrible night; when the earth shook and the ground burned and the bomb fell.
But here I am struggling, questioning; dearest Marc.
Life is precious unpredictable, unfair!
Dearest Marc, I love you; I miss you.
My treasure, my son, I miss you.
Je t'aime, je t'aime mon fils. I think of you always; toujours.
I miss you.

The Soloist:

Hailed for his ringing top notes and spine-tingling power, Canadian tenor **Richard Margison** is one of the most critically acclaimed singers on the international stage today. He performs regularly in many of the world's leading opera houses including the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Canadian Opera Company, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, the San Francisco Opera, the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, the Sydney Opera and the Grand Teatro del Liceu in Barcelona. Richard was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2001, and received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012. This award was created to mark the 60th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne and to recognize an individual's significant contribution to Canada.

More Information:

The composer: www.kellymariemurphy.com
The soloist: www.richardmargison.com
The orchestra: <http://www.ottawasymphony.com/>
The project: <http://kck.st/1sS2EsF>