

OCTATONIC DECADENCE was formed in January of 2010 and achieved first place standing in the Canadian Federation of Music Festivals NATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL 2010 in the Choral Ensemble category, winning the Richard W. Cooke prize. Formed by David Buley, the group’s membership fluctuates as required according to the voices needed for the wide array of music the group performs.

Singing in this concert:

Lexie Worthman, Soprano; Victoria Dubois, Soprano; Savanna Muscat, Soprano
Jan Buley, Alto; Hannah O’Connor, Alto; Ben Diamond, Tenor; Evan West, Tenor
Michael Coffin, Baritone; David Buley, Bass

For more information on OCTATONIC DECADENCE
our upcoming offerings,
or how you can help us in our mission for
presenting concerts of exquisite live choral music,
please visit our website at
www.octadec.ca

Special thanks to all for sharing the spaciousness and elegance of
the Whale Atrium in the Core Science Facility of Memorial University.

We respectfully ask that you do not make recordings
or take photographs during the concert. Thank you.

The Beauty of Chant

Octatonic Decadence Ensemble

Friday, November 21, 2025

we ask that any applause you may have awaits the end of the concert

<i>Ubi Caritas</i>	plainsong, Tone VI
<i>Ubi Caritas</i>	Michael John Trotta (1978 -)
<i>Miserere, Mei, Deus</i>	Gregorio Allegri (1582-1652)
<i>Ave Generosa</i>	Hildegard von Bingen (c.1098-1179)
<i>Ave Generosa</i>	Ola Gjeilo (1978 -)
<i>Heliseb Våljadel</i>	Urmas Sisask (1960-2022)
<i>Malolo</i>	Annea Lockwood (1939 -)
<i>Salve Regina</i>	plainsong, Tone 1
<i>Salve Regina</i>	Cristóbal Morales (c. 1500-1553)
<i>Te Lucis Ante Terminum</i>	Thomas Tallis (c. 1501-1585)
<i>Funeral Icos</i>	John Tavener (1944-2013)
<i>Ubi Caritas</i>	Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986)

~~~~~

VICTORIA DUBOIS is studying Music Education at Memorial University, having earned a Bachelor of Music (flute and voice) from Dalhousie University in Spring 2025. A notable flautist, she performed as a soloist with the Dalhousie Symphony Orchestra in *Concerto Night* (2023, 2024) and will make her professional solo debut with Symphony Nova Scotia at the Open Waters Music Festival this January. As a vocalist, she sang *Maguelonne* in Viardot's *Cendrillon* (2024) with Dal Opera and held various choral roles during her undergraduate studies. She is excited to share her passion for music with future students.

EVAN WEST is a first-year music-education student at Memorial University. He has been singing in choirs all his life and has a love for songwriting, composing and teaching.

MICHAEL COFFIN has pursued music at a young age. Michael has been in a variety of choirs since he was 5 years old and in band ensembles since he was 8. Michael has studied music at Memorial University and is currently a member of the Quintessential Vocal Ensemble.

LEXIE WORTHMAN is a classically trained soprano and percussionist born and raised in Paradise, NL. They love to share their passion for music by singing with their other groups, Quintessential Vocal Ensemble and Courtney Fowler Performance Academy. Between work and rehearsals, Lexie enjoys cuddling with their cat, playing Pokémon, and building Lego sets with their partner.

JAN BULEY is a reader, writer, traveller, gardener, dog-walker, kitten-lover and questioner. Jan completed her Ph.D. at NYU, gathering stories and examining the assumptions, beliefs and contradictions about family engagement in schools and has taught elementary school for some thirty-something years. Jan considers herself very privileged to be offering courses in elementary literacies and drama education to undergraduate and graduate teachers at Memorial University. Jan coordinates a *The Phoenix Garden Project* inside Her Majesty's Penitentiary. She has never made a pie or a powerpoint that anyone has ever raved about.

SAVANNA MUSCAT, originally from Windsor, ON, holds a B.Mus.Ed. (Windsor) and an M.A. in Instrumental Conducting (Memorial University). A versatile performer, Savanna sings as Freddie Mercury in The Champions Queen Tribute and second vocals in Black Cherry (pop/rock). Highlights include touring to Carnegie Hall, performing with the Windsor Symphony Orchestra (choral masterworks, solo euphonium), conducting the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra (2024-25), and playing lead trumpet in local Broadway pit bands. Savanna is also a music educator, teaching pop, rock, musical theatre, and jazz privately for over 8 years. Don't miss Savanna on stage!

From St. John's, BEN DIAMOND is a well-rounded musician who pursues a wide variety of projects which contribute to the evolution of the modern classical guitar, and has received accolades such as the "CBC 30 under 30 hot classical musicians" in 2021, the 2021 ArtsNL Emerging Artist of the year award, and a nomination for the 2025 East Coast Music Award for Electronic Release of the Year. Ben is also the founder of the guitar program at the STEP Suzuki school, and has a life long passion for choral music.

HANNAH O'CONNOR is a music teacher and clarinetist from Toronto, Ontario. They are a graduate of University of Toronto, where they earned a Bachelor of Music, and later moved to St. John's, where they completed their Bachelor of Music Education at Memorial University. Hannah also sings in the choir at St. Mary the Virgin and plays in the MUN Concert Winds. When not making music, Hannah can be found crocheting, or going on hikes in and around St. John's.

DAVID BULEY is an Associate Professor of music education in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, and the Director of Music at St. Mary's Church in St. John's, NL. He holds graduate degrees in choral conducting and sacred music from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ, and Drew University in Madison, NJ. David has taught classroom and choral music in Nova Scotia and New Jersey, and has led choirs in various situations, including children's choirs, community choirs, church choirs, university choirs, and professional vocal ensembles. A Co-Artistic Director of *HarbourVOICES! Festival*, David is also on the Board of Directors of *Kittinukee Ballet*. He is a certified practitioner of Dalcroze Eurhythmics and enjoys many community music-making and collective singing opportunities, particularly with the *Lullaby Project-NL*, and *HMP Sings*. David is owned by a border collie, Nellie, who is far better at running than he is.

Today we are sharing our explorations of music based on chant, sometimes referred to as *plainsong*, which is typically thought of as unison or monodic voice singing. This afternoon we are mainly presenting music based on so-called 'Gregorian chant,' although there are many other beautiful ways and forms of chanting. Gregorian chants have been composed in an array of pitch arrangements known as modes, sometimes delineated as numbered *Tones*. The melodies were developed, collected and codified generally between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Subsequently, composers of polyphonic music began to use these ancient melodies as bases for polyphonic part writing. Some composers create harmonic support for the melodies while others elaborate and embellish the chant melodies, adding pitches that support contrapuntal part writing. Thomas Tallis' *Te lucis ante terminum* and Maurice Duruflé's *Ubi Caritas* are examples of a simple harmonized accompaniment to the chant melody. Gregorio Allegri also derived sonorities to accompany the plainsong psalm chant in his setting of Psalm 51: *Miserere, mei, Deus*, however they are more elaborate than the Tallis style with polyphonic rather than homophonic writing. Allegri also provides a framework for a quartet of soloists who offer soaring and transcendent descants. The unadorned plainsong psalm verses are interspersed throughout the piece as well.

The Spanish composer Cristobál Morales has taken the c. 11<sup>th</sup> Century chant of *Salve Regina* and developed elaborate and evocative polyphony around aspects of the chant. Again, the original chant is interspersed between the polyphonic sections. In the polyphonic parts composers make musical commentary on the texts often 'painting' the texts in sound. In essence these pieces become theological treatises and meditations.

Writer. Composer. Mystic. Philosopher. Visionary. Theologian. Any of those attributes could be said the 12<sup>th</sup> Century polymath, Hildegard von Bingen. She joined the Benedictine tradition of community living very early in her life and eventually became an Abess, founding a religious community for women near Rupertsberg, Germany. She wrote theological, botanical and medicinal texts as well as numerous and beautiful chants. Composing in monody, she is one of few known Medieval composers who wrote both text and music. We share a piece by Hildegard today (*Ave Generosa*) as well as a contemporary setting of her text by the Norwegian composer, Ola Gjeilo.

Although not specifically based on Gregorian Chant, the music of the late Estonian composer Urmas Sisak evokes a natural sense of meditation through repetition. Sisak developed theoretical sound values for planets' rotations and trajectories, and created a scale which he believed represented the 'music of the spheres' and was the basis for much of his music.

A common feature of the English composer John Tavener's compositions is repetition that invites a continuum of meditation. He developed a strong affinity for the traditions of the Eastern Orthodox churches and composed a wide array of music that can evoke the sense of time stopped that occurs through interaction with and mediation on icons. Much of the music we share emanates from a liturgical and tradition of ceremony where the music carries prayer and meditation. This music was not intended as a concert offering, but rather as a means of mindfulness with and for a realm beyond self and time. Our sharing time today begins and ends with settings of the c. 8<sup>th</sup> Century hymn, *Ubi Caritas* – where love is, there is eternity is also.

The music we are sharing today ebbs and flows, soars and floats, and we hope these pieces will evoke images of beauty, peace and serenity. Thank you for joining us today.