



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 4, 2007**

## **A new International Song Festival to Premiere in Vancouver this June!**

Vancouver, BC - The **Vancouver International Song Institute Society (VISI)** presents **Song: The Audible Soul**, a groundbreaking new festival celebrating and exploring Art Song from June 17-27, 2007. Songs are jewels of concentrated emotion and thought that can penetrate the core of your being and connect you with the shared themes of humanity. At **VISI** the focus is on Art Song, the powerful realm of fused poetry and music - gateway to a rich world where history, sociology, psychology and philosophy meet in a musical experience of unforgettable intensity.

*Mothers sing lullabies to their babies; Alzheimer patients sing melodies from their prom night 60 years ago; groups spontaneously sing to celebrate a stranger's birthday. Song resounds among all human communities. From Asia to Australia, from Nunavut to Nigeria, every culture sings its stories. Why is this so?*

***Have you ever wanted...***

*to study song from the inside out?  
to fathom the poetry's philosophical core?*

***Have you ever wondered...***

*how to bring centuries of sung stories alive?  
how poems are translated into music by composers?  
what it is that makes humans sing?*

A dream team of Canadian and International artists and scholars, will pursue the core of these questions during **VISI's** 11-day event, **Song: the Audible Soul**, held at the **University of British Columbia School of Music, Vancouver, BC**. In its inaugural year, VISI will explore the rich and diverse repertoire of song in the English language.

**VISI** offers an intense **interdisciplinary course on Song for singers, pianists, pedagogues and serious listeners**. Within the four program study streams: **Professional Performance, Pedagogical Studies, Lifelong Learning Performance, and Listener Studies**, participants will enjoy a customized schedule of activities and performances involving the entire VISI community. The Study Program includes: fascinating lectures, ranging from poetry, history, philosophy, to physiology, biomusicology, and music therapy; workshops on acting, movement, and stagecraft; and master classes. Festival participants can attend the study program to deepen their understanding of Song, or they can choose to just enjoy the fantastic variety of festival concerts. A complete study program lecture schedule can be viewed on the website.

To complement each day's study program, two daily **Concerts** will be presented at the **UBC School of Music Recital Hall: the Noon-Hour "Inner Spa" Series** and the **"VISIONary Fusions: Ideas, Poetry, Song" Series**, a dynamic new evening concert series combining talks by world-class thinkers and song performances by world-class musicians. Festival participants can attend the study program to enrich their deep understanding of Song, or they can choose to just enjoy the fantastic variety of festival concerts.

Internationally distinguished faculty include UK pianist **Graham Johnson** and singer **Stephen Varcoe**; US pianists **Margo Garrett** and **Alison D'amato**; Canadian vocalists **Tracy Dahl, Benjamin Butterfield, Susan Platts, Nancy Hermiston, Lynne McMurtry, Tyler Duncan** and **Lambroula Pappas**; Canadian pianists **Rena Sharon, Terence Dawson, Laura Loewen** and **Erika Switzer**; scholars **Susan Youens, Deen Larsen, Ellen Dissanayake** and **Richard Kurth** and an array of **UBC thinkers**. (visit [www.visi.ca](http://www.visi.ca) for complete faculty bios). Guest artists from around BC will join the concert roster, as will some of the emerging artists attending the Professional Performance course.

The Festival begins on June 17<sup>th</sup> with a special afternoon forum, hosted by Bill Richardson, where a group of celebrated BC composers and poets will address topics about the meeting of words and music inspired by the life and times in our beautiful province. VISI's opening concert that evening celebrates Canadian Art Song, featuring Canadian compositions performed by Canadian artists. VISI's festival has two overlapping themes:

**Canadian/American Song** (June 17-22), including songs by Copland, Barber, Larsen, Musto, with poems by Walt Whitman and Emily Dickenson, and diverse Canadian poets and composers from Coultard to Chatman; **British Song** (June 22-26), includes a broad sampling from Purcell to Britten, Elizabethan poetry, works of Thomas Hardy and folks songs. The final concert on June 27th (National Multicultural Day) is a Song Salon entitled **Canada Sings!** This concert features a spectrum of song genres from cabaret to classical to jazz to international folk. The diversity of repertoire at this Salon will reflect Canada's multicultural fabric.

VISI also hosts a research component, where cognitive scientists will study Song as a phenomenon of human communication - the merging of two forms of language, speech and music - and its vast spectrum of expressive purposes from lullabies to laments to laudations. A concurrent symposium at the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies (June 21-23) will convene some of North America's top experts in the fields of linguistics, music neuroscience, and cultural anthropology as well as poets, philosophers and musicians for an interdisciplinary convergence of ideas. In conjunction with the symposium there will also be a special lecture, "Homo Musicus: Where Song Begins" on the morning of June 23, presented by Ellen Dissanayake, internationally renowned author of "Homo Aestheticus". Professor Dissanayake has lived travelled around the world studying the role of artistic expression in diverse cultures.

Research indicates that singing is therapeutic! In collaboration with **Artsway Healtharts Society**, a series of VISI concerts will be produced at some of Vancouver's extended care, senior, and hospital facilities.

**Concerts: UBC School of Music Recital Hall**

**Noon-Hour Concerts: Inner Spa** (12:15 pm) - June 18-22, 26 (June 23 – 1 pm) \$10 Adult, \$8 student/senior

\*Please Note, No Concert on Sunday, June 24

Tickets available at the door only (cash sales)

**Evenings Concerts: VISIONary Fusions** (8 pm) - June 17-27 (excluding June 23), \$26, includes ideas and song performances

www.TicketsTonight.ca, 604-231-7535, Tickets also available at the door (cash only), service charges may apply

**Listener Study Program:** Discover the intimate connections of poetry, music and the composers' inner realms. Hear lectures with the VISI scholars and audit professional master classes with VISI performers.

**Pedagogy Study Program:** For teachers of classical voice and collaborative piano. Interpretation Studies, Song History.

**Performance Study** stream information available on the website.

**Program Fees:**

**Festival Package - full 11 days** - \$980\* (includes lectures, master classes, noon and evening concerts)

**Flex Pass** - \$100\* per day (receive a 20% discount on day 6 through 11) Customize your own 'VISI Vacation' to suit your schedule from one-day drop-in or multi-day packages - (includes lectures, master classes and noon and evening performances)

**Half-Day Sessions:**

Morning - \$30\* (includes 1 lecture and noon concert), Afternoon - \$50\* (includes 2 lectures and master class)

Special Opening Day lectures package - \$35

Listener Study Student/Senior discount – 10% off listed fees. \*GST will apply.

Visit **www.visi.ca** for complete study program and concert schedules and registration details, **info@VISI.ca**, 604-643-9119

**Project Partners and Sponsors:** UBC School of Music, University of British Columbia, NATS – Vancouver Chapter, Vancouver Sun, CTV and CBC Radio Two

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**Media Inquiries: (up until May 18)**

Jodi Smith, JLS Entertainment

604-736-4939, [jlsmgmt@lightspeed.ca](mailto:jlsmgmt@lightspeed.ca)

**Media Inquiries: (after May 22)**

Gwen Kallio, Sisu Productions

604-215-2345, [sisuproductions@telus.net](mailto:sisuproductions@telus.net)