Concert Description:

**AIRE y TIERRA** is a musical tribute to the stories of our ancestors and the never-ending search for belonging. Living far from our ancestral homes has been a journey of self-discovery — a pilgrimage through the landscapes of foreign lands. In the process, we've forged a new version of ourselves, one that helps us stay connected to our roots. Through the diverse music of Canadian and Ibero-American composers, we share narratives through song in an innovative recital format merging classical music, audio effects, and storytelling. By featuring composers from Alice Ping Yee Ho to Ginastera, we hope to connect with audiences from all walks of life and experience the one fundamental element that binds us all: our shared humanity.

Program Notes:

We open the program with **AIRE**, a journey that explores the skies, air, night, and the essence of wonder as an homage to immigrants and refugees in human history.

**Soaring** represents the tapestry of experiences that have not only shaped Canada but also resonate with our collective human narrative. Circular Sky by Alice Ho and Birdsong by Ian Cusson depict two resilient birds. Ho’s piece is inspired by the Arctic Tern, which has the longest migration route. Birdsong illustrates displacement, portraying the struggle of being "flung from our nests… and ordered to fly" under conflictive circumstances.

**Night** delves into the mysteries of the twilight. Yolanda Tapia’s Nomada Nocturna is based on the many journeys we undertake in our dreams, and Clair de Lune Intellectuel by Maria Eduarda Martins guides us through the introspection and serenity of a moonlit night.

**Wonder** explores themes of exile and seasonal migration. Smallman’s Salario conveys the poignant poetry of Julia Esquivel, a poet and human rights activist who lived in exile during Guatemala’s Civil War. In contrast, Monarca draws inspiration from the monarch butterfly’s biannual migration between Canada and Mexico, driven by changes in weather and the need for suitable breeding and feeding grounds.

As we move into the second half of the program, **TIERRA** reflects on the past to help us better understand the future.

**Oppression** invites the listener into the joys and sorrows of a rapidly changing world. Led by excerpts from Xavier Montsalvatge’s Cinco Canciones Negras, this section of the program depicts the desire to find joy in the mundane amidst the harsh realities of a woman's life.

**Strength** calls for faith and spiritualism. Through a quiet and intimate prayer set to music by composer Ernani Braga, this piece honours the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé traditions.

In the face of adversity, **Hope** gives birth to new life through nursery rhymes by Blas Galindo, Alberto Ginastera, and Xavier Montsalvatge.

In the final section, **Freedom**, we close the program with songs from Cinco Canciones Populares Argentinas by Alberto Ginastera. These pieces foretell the endless possibilities that hope can bring in life.