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# Songs from the **Aviary**

for soprano & piano

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EKRH0009

*Commissioned and premiered January 2019 by  
Clarisse Tonigussi, soprano  
Toronto, ON, Canada*

words by

**A.E. WETHERALD**

music by

**E.K.R. HAMMELL**

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[ekrhammell.com](http://ekrhammell.com)

## about the piece

**DURATION:** ca. 10 mins total

**VOCAL  
RANGE:**



### **PROGRAM NOTES:**

*Songs from the Aviary* is a song set comprised of several brief, yet distinct musical images of Canadian birds depicted in the poetry of Canadian poet, A.E. Wetherald (1857-1940).

When my good friend Clarisse Tonigussi (soprano) approached me in late 2018 about writing some music for her to premiere at a series of animal-themed concerts, she was surprised to learn that I had already been hoping to create a set of songs for her from these (bird-themed) poems for over a year! It was meant to be.

Wetherald's poems seem to evoke miniature scenes in which intense fleeting moods suddenly arise from a brief shared moment she may have had with a particular bird. These intense, short bursts of character and personality are what I tried to highlight when creating these six songs.

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## about the composer

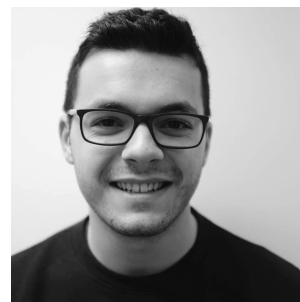
**E.K.R. Hammell** (Evan) is a Canadian composer, arranger, & music editor driven by the pursuit of unstoppable forward momentum. A recipient of the Lloyd Carr-Harris Composition prize, his original music and arrangements have been performed by the Canadian Men's Chorus; Denis Wick Canadian Wind Orchestra; provincial & state honour band ensembles in Saskatchewan, Minnesota, & Washington; PEI Symphony Orchestra; Exultate Chamber Singers; That Choir; Sirens; Charlottetown Festival Orchestra; Confederation Brass; Central Bucks West Choir; and the University of Toronto Wind Ensemble, to name just a few.

As a professional sheet music engraver & score editor he has prepared scores for countless performers, conductors, artists, and musicians, such as: the artistic director of the largest Bollywood festival in Canada; acclaimed Canadian classical-contemporary composers Larysa Kuzmenko and Imant Raminsh; and leading Canadian musical theatre MD Bob Foster, including a new edition of the conductor/vocal book for a Guinness World Record-breaking musical.

Evan is currently based in Toronto, having received a Bachelor of Music Composition from the University of Toronto in 2017. Aside from devising pretentiously abbreviated stage names, his other talents mainly involve playing bass trombone and being impressively bad at cooking.

Evan's music is currently available through Santa Barbara Music Publishing, J.W. Pepper, and his own website at [ekrhammell.com](http://ekrhammell.com).

**(b. 1993)**



**@ekrhammellmusic**  
**ekrhammell.com**

# i. the bird's hour

The world at noon belongs to the sun,  
At eve to the homecoming herds;  
But while the dew is pearly -- very, very early --  
The world belongs to the birds.  
As still as in a dream lie the meadow and the stream,  
'Neath the soaring and outpouring of the birds.

words by  
**A.E. WETHERALD**

music by  
**E.K.R. HAMMELL**

**Wondrous, freely** ♩ = ca. 60

*p* *f* *mf* *3*

VOCAL

The world at noon be- longs to the sun, At eve to the home-com-ing herds;

*mp* *f* *mp* *delicate, yet deliberate*

but while the dew is pear-ly, ve-ry, ve-ry ear-ly, The world be- longs to the birds.

*8va* *p con ped.* *3* *3* *3* *3*

Pno.

*(calmly & rhythmically imprecise)*

*pp* *(accel.)* *mf* *(rit.)* *pp*

## ii. the first bluebird

*First, first!*

That was thy song that burst  
Out of the spring of thy heart,  
Incarnate spring that thou art!  
Now must the winter depart,  
Since to his age-heavy ear  
Fluteth the youth of the year.

*Low, low;*

*Delicate, musical, slow;*  
Lighten, O heaven that lowers,  
Blossom, ye fields, into flowers,  
Thicken, ye branches, to bowers;  
And thou, O my heart, like a stone,  
Wilt thou keep winter alone?

words by  
**A.E. WETHERALD**

music by  
**E.K.R. HAMMELL**

**Rhythmically rigid,  
yet nimble & graceful** ♩ = 160

8<sup>va</sup>

Piano *mp con ped.*

6 (8)

*loco*

*p*

**A**

12

*mp*

First, first! That was thy

### iii.

## the hummingbird

Against my window-pane  
He plunges at a mass  
Of buds -- and strikes in vain  
The intervening glass.

O sprite of wings and fire  
Outstretching eagerly,  
My soul, with like desire  
To probe thy mystery

words by  
**A.E. WETHERALD**

Comes close as breast to bloom,  
As bud to hot heart-beat,  
And gains no inner room,  
And drains no hidden sweet.

music by  
**E.K.R. HAMMELL**

Urgently ♩ = ca. 160

VOCAL

Piano

*mf*

(2+2+3)

*f*

*ff*

A -

5 **A**

gainst\_ my\_ win-dow pane He\_ plun-ges at a mass of buds and strikes in

*mf*

Red.

# iv. the screech owl

Hearing the strange night-piercing sound  
Of woe that strove to sing,  
I followed where it hid, and found  
A small soft-throated thing,  
A feathered handful of gray grief,  
Perched by the year's last leaf.

And heeding not that in the sky  
The lamps of peace were lit,  
It sent abroad that sobbing cry,  
And sad hearts echoed it.  
Oh hush, poor grief, so gray, so wild,  
God still is with His child!

words by  
**A.E. WETHERALD**

music by  
**E.K.R. HAMMELL**

**Melancholic, with rubato** ♩ = ca. 66

**VOCAL**

**Piano**

**A**

Hear - ing \_\_\_\_\_ that strange

night pier - cing sound of woe \_\_\_\_\_ that strove to sing, \_\_\_\_\_ I fol - lowed

**B**

\_\_\_\_\_ where it hid \_\_\_\_\_ and found \_\_\_\_\_ a small soft \_\_\_\_\_ throat - ed thing a fea - thered hand - ful \_\_\_\_\_ of gray

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins with a tempo and mood instruction: 'Melancholic, with rubato' and a tempo marking of a quarter note equal to approximately 66 beats per minute. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-6) features a vocal line starting with a fermata and a piano accompaniment in 5/4 time. A section marker 'A' is placed above the vocal line. The second system (measures 7-12) continues the vocal line with lyrics 'night pier-cing sound of woe that strove to sing, I fol-lowed' and piano accompaniment with dynamic markings 'pp' and 'mp'. The third system (measures 13-18) continues the vocal line with lyrics 'where it hid and found a small soft throat-ed thing a fea-thered hand-ful of gray' and piano accompaniment with dynamic marking 'mf'. A section marker 'B' is placed above the vocal line. Performance markings include 'mp con ped.', 'freely', and 'p'. Time signatures change from 5/4 to 4/4, then to 3/4 and 6/4, and finally back to 4/4.

# V. the chickadee

Stout-hearted bird,  
When thy blithe note I heard  
From out the wind-warped tree --  
Chick-a-dee-dee! --  
There came to me  
A sense of triumph, an exultant breath  
Blown in the face of death.  
For what are harsh and bitter circumstances  
When the heart dances,  
And pipes to rattling branch and icy lea,  
Chick-a-dee-dee!

Sing loud, sing loud  
Against that leaden cloud,  
That draggeth drearily,  
Chick-a-dee-dee!  
Pour out thy free  
Defiance to the sharpest winds that blow  
And still increasing snow.  
By courage, faith and joy art thou attended,  
And most befriended  
By thine own heart that bubbleth cheerily,  
Chick-a-dee-dee!

words by  
**A.E. WETHERALD**

music by  
**E.K.R. HAMMELL**

**Playfully & proud,  
yet dainty** ♩ = 168

**A** *mf*

VOCAL

Piano *mf* *legato, no pedal (until indicated)*

Stout heart-ed bird, when thy blithe note I heard from\_

5 out the wind warped tree\_ chick-a - dee-dee dee!\_ chick-a -

8 dee-dee-dee dee!\_ There came to me\_ a sense of triumph, an ex -

*f* *mf*

*f*

Ped. \_\_\_\_\_

# vi. the bird's hour (part 2)

Long, long before there is life at any door,  
Or smoke at any roof, or laughing words  
Of children fresh from sleeping, the outer world is steeping  
In the heaven-given rapture of the birds.  
Not a thought of grief or care can enforce admission there  
Through the winging and singing of the birds.

words by  
**A.E. WETHERALD**

music by  
**E.K.R. HAMMELL**

**Wondrous,**  
**freely** ♩ = ca. 60  
*8va-*

Piano *mp* *con ped.* 3 3 3 *rit.*

Detailed description: This block contains the piano introduction. It features a treble clef staff with a melody of eighth notes, some grouped in triplets. The bass clef staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords. The tempo is marked 'freely' with a quarter note equal to approximately 60 beats per minute. Dynamics include mezzo-piano (mp) and a ritardando (rit.) at the end.

2 *mp* \*all accidentals apply until the nearest barline

Long — be - fore there is life — at an-y door, Or smoke — at an-y roof,

*mf* *a tempo* \*all accidentals apply until the nearest barline *mp*

Detailed description: This block shows the first line of the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a treble clef with lyrics underneath. The piano accompaniment is in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked 'a tempo' and the dynamics are mezzo-forte (mf) for the piano and mezzo-piano (mp) for the voice. A note with an asterisk indicates that all accidentals apply until the next barline.

3 Or laugh-ing words\_ of\_ chil-dren fresh from sleep-ing\_ the out-er world is steep-ing\_

*p*

Detailed description: This block shows the second line of the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The vocal line continues with lyrics. The piano accompaniment continues in the grand staff. The dynamics are piano (p) for the voice. A triplet of eighth notes is marked in the vocal line.