

**Wisdom and Pedagogy Symposium 2023**

**Female Esoterics in Song**

New compositions setting texts by and about female esoteric practitioners  
from world traditions, commissioned by Voices of the Pearl

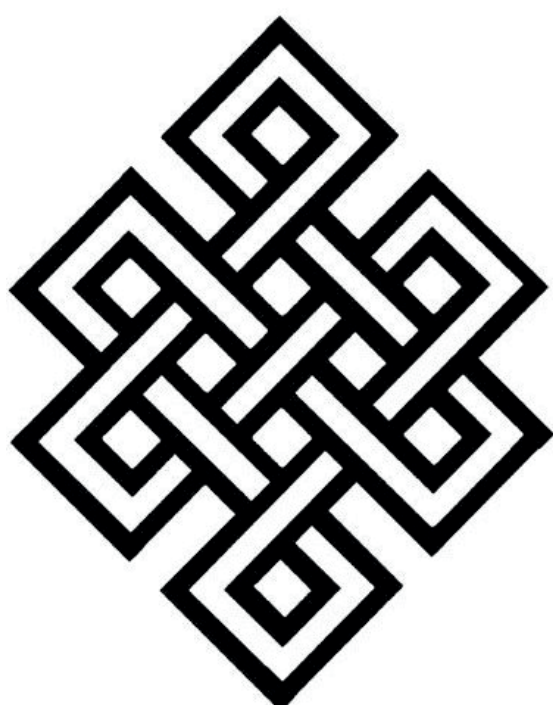
Anne Harley, *soprano*  
Barbara Pöschl-Edrich, *harp*  
Karola Obermüller, *live electronics*

**Thursday, July 27, 2023**

**7:30 p.m.**

**Reception Room**

**Domaine de Primard  
Guainville, France**









*Seven Prophetesses* (2016) (reduction for harp and voice)  
(European premiere)

Moshe Shulman  
(b. 1978)

1. Miriam

Anne Harley, *soprano*  
Barbara Pöschl-Edrich, *harp*

*You Moving Stars* (2018) (rescored for harp and voice)  
(French premiere)

Emilie Cecilia LeBel  
(b. 1979)

Anne Harley, *soprano*  
Barbara Pöschl-Edrich, *harp*

*Sounds Ineffable* (2015)  
(European premiere)

Bill Alves  
(b. 1960)

Anne Harley, *soprano*  
Karola Obermüller, *electronics*

*PERSEVERE* (2017)  
(French premiere)

Karola Obermüller  
(b. 1977)

Anne Harley, *soprano*  
Barbara Pöschl-Edrich, *harp*  
Karola Obermüller,  
*electronics*

*Seven Prophetesses* was commissioned with an award from Harvard's Fromm Music Foundation.  
*You moving stars* was commissioned an award from the Canada Council for the Arts.  
*PERSEVERE* was commissioned an award from the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts.

Tonight's commissions were all created in the last decade as part of the project Voices of the Pearl. Founded in 2011 by creative director and soprano Anne Dorothy Harley, Voices of the Pearl commissions, premieres and records new musical settings of texts by and about female esoteric practitioners, from various world traditions and eras. Despite rich traditions of mystical experience, the tradition of educating women in the processes for attaining for enlightenment in the female body has nearly been extinguished many times. Nevertheless, often as a form of dissenting knowledge, in every corner of the globe, remarkable women have pursued the mystical path over the centuries. Voices of the Pearl traces the tenuous lineage of women who dared to encounter the unmediated divine. Projects currently scheduled for premiere at Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religions include Douglas Knehan's musical setting of ancient Sumerian texts by Enheduanna (c. 23<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E., Ur), the first known named author in the world, and two settings of Coptic texts drawn from *Thunder Perfect Mind*, found in the Nag Hammadi Scrolls, by composers Jane E. Sheldon and Julian Bennett Holmes.  
For more information please visit: [www.voicesofthepearl.org](http://www.voicesofthepearl.org)

TEXTS, TRANSLATIONS, and PROGRAM NOTES

Seven Prophetesses

Tonight’s program presents only the first of the seven songs in this cycle, in a reduced scoring for harp and soprano. The original scoring is for soprano, harp and string quartet.

The song cycle *Seven Prophetesses* was completed in the summer of 2016 after receiving a 2015 Fromm Foundation Commission. The work is dedicated to Anne Harley, who, in 2013, commissioned my *Song of Songs* [*Shir Ha Shirim*] for voice and violin. That composition was eventually submitted to the Fromm, and ultimately led to this commission. Anne suggested that I set texts about female spiritual leaders from the *Tanakh* in my native language, Hebrew, for inclusion in her commissioning and recording project: Voices of the Pearl. This prompted me to ask Juli Varshavsky, an Israeli poet and army-mate, to write poems describing the eponymous seven prophetesses. These poems therefore do not exactly transmit the biblical references to the prophetesses, nor their historical writings, but, rather, the personal perspective of the poet.

— Moshe Shulman

1.Miriam

מִרְיָם

The sea opens  
its waves,  
Kneels and  
groans,  
And over the  
body drops of  
milk  
Drain in a  
wandering  
path.

הַיָּם פּוֹתַח אֶת  
גִּלְיוֹ,  
כּוֹרֵעַ וּפּוֹעָה,  
וְעַל הַגּוּף אֲגִלִּי  
חֶלֶב  
נִקְוִים בְּשֶׁבִיל  
תּוֹעָה.

Bleeds in the  
desert sand,  
Streams in a  
dance,  
Wraps with  
fetus blood  
In the blue  
outflow.

נִשְׁתַּת בַּחוֹל  
הַמִּדְבָּרִי,  
נוֹבֵעַ בַּמַּחֲוֹל,  
עוֹטֵף בְּדָם  
הַצָּבִי  
בְּשֶׁפֶךְ הַכַּחֲלוּ.

Felled from  
umbilical cord,  
Drawn out  
from the  
oblivion,  
The sea cuts  
the connection  
To the savior  
hand.

נִכְרַת מִחֶבֶל  
הַטֶּבּוֹר,  
נִשְׁלָה מִהַנְּשִׁיָּה,  
הַיָּם חוֹתֵךְ אֶת  
הַחִבּוּר  
לִיד הַמּוֹשִׁיעָה.

And the billow  
flows dropped  
In the shadow  
of milk and  
honey,  
The last one to  
die here,  
Will ruin the  
temple.

וְהַנֶּחֱשׂוֹל זֹרֵם  
נִשְׁמוֹט  
בְּצֵל חֶלֶב  
וַדְּבַשׁ,  
הָאַחֲרוֹן  
שֶׁבָּאן יָמוּת  
יַחְרִיב אֶת  
הַמִּקְדָּשׁ.

***You Moving Stars***

*Tonight's program presents this piece in an altered scoring for harp and soprano.  
The original scoring is for soprano and electric guitar.*

*Chinese texts:* excerpted from seventh scroll of the Sūtra on the Supreme King of Golden Light, more commonly known as the *Golden Light Sūtra*.  
*Pali texts:* excerpted from the early collection of texts by and about early Buddhist female disciples of the historical Buddha, the *Therīgāthā*, in the verses of *Mittātherīgāthā* & *Mittātherīgāthāvaṇṇanā*

四方星辰及日月，  
The stars and constellations of the four directions and the sun and moon

威神擁護得延年；  
With their august spiritual support and protection, longevity is obtained.

*sājja ekena bhattena, muṇḍā saṅghāṭipārutā*  
With shaven head, with one meal per day, wrapped in my (nun's) robe

*devakāyaṃ na patthehaṃ, vineyya hadaye daran"ti*  
(Now) I do not wish (to be reborn in) a group of gods; I have excised anxiety from my heart.

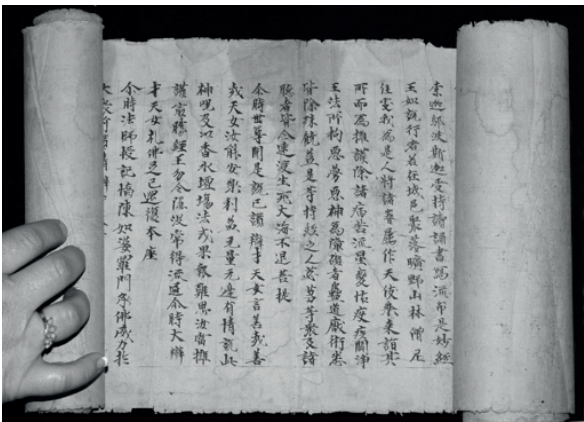
吉祥安隱福德增，  
Auspiciousness, stability, and blessings and virtue are increased

災變厄難皆除遣。  
Disasters and difficulties are completely averted and eradicated.

*sājja ekena bhattena, muṇḍā saṅghāṭipārutā*  
With shaven head, with one meal per day, wrapped in my (nun's) robe

*devakāyaṃ na patthehaṃ, vineyya hadaye daran"ti*  
(Now) I do not wish (to be reborn in) a group of gods; I have excised anxiety from my heart.

...日月...星辰...  
...sun, moon,... constellations



*Image of the seventh scroll of the Sūtra on the Supreme King of Golden Light  
Special Collections, Denison Library, Scripps College*

*You Moving Stars* sets female voices from the *Therīgāthā* in Pali and the *Golden Light Sūtra* in early Chinese from the Dunhuang scroll. The *Therīgāthā* is the earliest collection of women's literature known in the world, and it

collects spiritual poems by and about early female disciples of the historical Buddha (from approximately 5th century BCE). The Chinese text is from the seventh scroll of the Sūtra on the Supreme King of Golden Light, more commonly known as the *Golden Light Sūtra* (from the holdings of the Special Collections of Scripps College's Denison Library).

—Emilie Cecilia LeBel

### ***Sounds Ineffable***

voice and live electronics

*Text:* In Pali, from female disciple of the historical Buddha, Uppalavana from the *Therigatha*

Pubbenivāsaṃ jānāmi, dibbacakkhuṃ visodhitam;	I know that I have lived before, the divine eye has been purified;
Cetopariccañāṇaṇica, sotadhātu visodhitā.	There is knowledge of others' inward life, I hear the sounds ineffable.
Iddhīpi me sacchikatā, patto me āsavakkhaya;	I have realized senses beyond the Earth and annihilated the asavas*;
Chalabhiññā sacchikatā, kataṃ buddhassa sāsanam.	I have realized these knowledges; the Buddha's teaching has been done.

\*Asava: a sense or mental bias that binds one to the world.

This paraphrased translation has been adapted from K.R. Norman by James Anderson.

In *Sounds Ineffable*, the sounds of the singer are simultaneously stretched out by real time computer processing, creating different copies of the sound progressing at different rates. This process does not include any pre-recorded singing and results not in a delay exactly, but in what would have been called in the European Middle Ages a mensuration canon -- a piece being combined with itself at different speeds. These tempos are related to the original sound by the same integer proportions used in the tuning of the notes, creating resonances both in time, as the sung lines converge and diverge, and in pitch, forming just harmonies with each other. The words, though, dissolve in the paradox of sensory perceptions leading to the insensible.

—Bill Alves

### ***PERSEVERE***

The other day, my seven-year-old proclaimed out of the blue: “When I was a fish, I was a shark. You can see it because my teeth are so sharp.” This, for me, exemplifies the inherent wisdom of children. They just know of that deep connection between all things, and the boundaries of space and time that we believe in are nonsense to them.

Music, for me, is a medium for expressing and thinking about all this, which I paraphrase as “shadow / the hidden / magic / dream”. There is for me an eternal desire to search for the thing which is just out of reach—which will not be caught or tamed or owned. It is more than a game of Tantalus, though. It is actually an affirmation that there is more than what we already see and already know. It is, in fact, the very reason to create. For me, the magically hidden, the shadow dream, is the stuff by which life propels itself into the future.

Via the songs of three generations of visionary Buddhist women,<sup>1</sup> *PERSEVERE* takes us on a journey along and through layers of lived lives that accrete on top of one another. The subtitles of the nine parts serve as guideposts:

mountain / water / I disappear // thirst / illusion / There remain. // oath / radiance / Forms emerge

*PERSEVERE* is a *femmage*<sup>2</sup> to these incredibly brave women who persevered.

— Karola Obermüller

<sup>1</sup> see Holly Gayley's program note after the texts and translations

<sup>2</sup> female form of *hommage*

### Three Generations of Visionary Buddhist Women

Within vicissitudes of life and ever-shifting historical conditions, how have Buddhist women persevered? Breaking free of personal attachments and social constraints is at the heart of the Buddhist path to liberation. With less autonomy than their male counterparts, Buddhist women throughout Asia have contended with traditional gender roles, family and domestic duties, and male-dominated social-institutions as formidable obstacles to their pursuit of spiritual awakening. Yet the voices amplified in *PERSEVERE* illustrate the determination of three generations of visionary women, spanning the time of the Buddha to the present.

In the first set of verses, the early Buddhist women of the *Therīgāthā* proclaim their triumph in breaking through social barriers to be free of “mortar and pestle,” as Mutta puts it, and able to pursue the Buddhist path. They took varied, at times circuitous, routes. Some were widows, others went mad after losing their children and later encountered the Buddha, and still others fled domestic duties or marital arrangements to ordain as nuns. By renouncing worldly life and engaging in intensive meditation, these early Buddhist women attained liberation, and the songs commemorating their achievements form an early layer of the Buddhist canon.

The second set of verses are attributed to the celebrated Tibetan female adept, Yeshe Tsogyal, disciple and consort of the eighth-century Indian tantric master Padmasambhava. Both played a central role in the lore surrounding the advent of Buddhism in Tibet. While Buddhist nuns disappeared from the historical record in India in the sixth to seventh centuries CE, the rise of tantra during the same period provided new religious opportunities for women, and these continued in Tibet. Yeshe Tsogyal provides the link in *PERSEVERE* between the voices of early Buddhist women and female tantric adepts in Tibet. According to hagiographic sources, Yeshe Tsogyal is connected to the time of the Buddha through her past life as Gaṅgādevī whose enlightenment he foretold and, in her own lifetime as a Tibetan princess, she resisted marital arrangements by her family and endured grueling austerities in solitary retreat in order to gain liberation.

In turn, Yeshe Tsogyal has become a crucial antecedent for later visionary Tibetan women who claimed to be her emanation. The third set of verses come from one such woman, Khandro Tāre Lhamo (1938–2004), a tantric heroine for her local community during the years leading up to and including the Cultural Revolution. Tāre Lhamo’s songs, drawn from her correspondence with her second husband, speak to the role of love and sexuality in tantric practice and Tibetan revelation, which nonetheless require setting aside worldly concerns and attachments. Her resilience and visionary capacity to access esoteric teachings—traced to Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyal—were instrumental in restoring Buddhist teaching, rituals, and institutions in the Tibetan region of Golok during the post-Mao era. Hence the garland of past lives joining these and other visionary Buddhist women is a significant aspect of their perseverance and enduring legacy.

— Holly Gayley, University of Colorado Boulder



## PERSEVERE

for soprano, harp, and electronics

### 1) pabbata (mountain)

*kiñ cāpi kho ‘mhi kisikā gilānā bāḷhadubbalā |  
daṇḍam olubbha gacchāmi pabbataṃ abhirūhiya || (Cittātherīgāthā, 27)*

Although I am feebly, sick and extremely weak  
Leaving on a stick I go, having climbed the mountain.

*saṃghāṭiṃ nikkhipitvāna pattakaṃ ca nikujjiya |  
sele khambhesiṃ attānaṃ tamokhandhaṃ padāliya || (Cittātherīgāthā, 28)*

Having put down my upper robe and turned over my bowl,  
I supported myself on a rock; the dark mass of confusion was pierced.

### 2) udaka (water)

*pāde pakkhālayitvāna, udakesu karomahaṃ |  
pādodakañca disvāna, thalato ninnamāgataṃ || (Paṭācārātherīgāthā, 114)*

After washing my feet I looked at the waters  
I saw the water from my feet going to the low-lying ground from the higher

*tato cittaṃ samādhemi assaṃ bhadraṃ va jāniyaṃ |  
tatodīpaṃ gahetvāna, vihāraṃ pāvisiṃ ahaṃ |  
seyyaṃ olokayitvāna mañcakamhi upāvisiṃ || (Paṭācārātherīgāthā, 115)*

Because of that I concentrated my mind, like a horse of good breed.  
Then, taking a lamp I entered my abode  
Examining the bed, I took a seat on the couch.

*tato sūciṃ gahetvāna vaṭṭiṃ okassayāmaṃ ahaṃ |  
padīpasseva nibbānaṃ vimokkho ahu cetaso || (Paṭācārātherīgāthā, 116)*

Then, taking a needle, I pulled out the wick,  
My mind was released like the quenching of a lamp.

### 3) esā antaradhāyāmi (I disappear)

*esā antaradhāyāmi, kucchiṃ vā pavisāmi te |  
bhamukantare tiṭṭhāmi tiṭṭhantiṃ maṃ na dakkhasi || (Uppalavaṇṇātherīgāthā, 232)*

I will disappear or enter into your belly;  
I stand in between your eyebrows and you do not see where I am standing.

4) gom (thirst)

བུ་མོ་ <i>Bu-mo</i>	ཁྱོད་ <i>kyod</i>	ཤངས་མེད་ <i>chang-med</i>	ལུས་སྒངས་ <i>lus-lang</i>	འཁོར་བ་རུ་ <i>kor-wa-ri</i>	འབྲམས་ནས། <i>chum-nei</i>				
སྦྱིས་ <i>Kyi</i>	ཤིའི་ <i>shii</i>	ཁ་ <i>ka</i>	འཁོར་ <i>kor</i>	ངན་སྒྲིང་གི་ <i>ngan-song-gi</i>	སྦྱག་བསྐྱུལ། <i>dud-nged</i>				
ཆ་ <i>Tsa</i>	ཤང་ <i>drang</i>	དང་ <i>dang</i>	བཀྲེས་ <i>gre</i>	སྒོམ་ <i>gom</i>	བཀོལ་སྦྱོད་ <i>gol-jod</i>	ཆོ་ <i>tsho</i>	བཟོད་བསྐྱར་དུ་ <i>zo-san-du</i>	འདུག་ <i>'du</i>	ན། <i>na</i>
སྦྱར་མ་ཕྱོགས་ <i>Nyur-ma-chog</i>			དཀའ་སྦྱད་ <i>ga-jie</i>		དེ་ཅི་ཕྱིར། <i>de-ji-shur</i>				
ཅི་ཏྱར་ <i>ji-dar</i>	ཡིན་ཁྱད་ <i>yin-jiang</i>		མི་ <i>mi</i>	བཟོད། <i>zod</i>					
བྱ་བ་ <i>Qia-wa</i>	གཞན་ <i>xian</i>	ཅི་ཕྱིར་ <i>ji-phyir</i>		ཡོད་དོ། <i>yod-do</i>					
འཆི་བ་ <i>Chi-wa</i>	ལས་ <i>las</i>	དེ་མིན་ <i>de-min</i>	ཅི་ <i>ji</i>	མཐའ། <i>tha</i>					
ད་དུང་ <i>Da-dung</i>	དཀའ་བ་ <i>ga-wa</i>		རང་སྦྱོད་ <i>rang-jio</i>	ཅིག་ <i>jig</i>	སྙིང་རུས་ <i>nyang-rus</i>		མ་མཆོ་རྒྱལ། <i>ma-tsho-gyal</i>		

In the circle of existence, Wandering through countless forms,  
Turning in the round of birth and death, Tortured by the sorrows and states of misery,  
Oh woman! if you bore that heat and cold, That hunger, thirst, and servitude!--  
Can you not sustain this hardship now,  
What else is there to do?  
The worst that can befall is death!  
Do not retreat from your austerity, O Tsogyal, courage, persevere!  
(Yeshe Tsogyal, *Lady of the Lotus-Born*)

## 5) krul-ba (illusion)

ད་ནི་	རེ་ཞིག་	གཉིས་ལྗོ་	མ་	ཞིག་	བར། །
Da-ni	re-shig	nyis-lo	ma	shig	bar
ང་	དང་	འབྲལ་འབྲལ་	འདྲ་བས་	བདེ་བར་	ཐྱོས། །
Nga	dang	dral-dral	dra-wei	de-war	chi
གཉིས་ལྗོ་	ཞིག་	ནས་	ང་	དང་	གཉིས་མེད་
Nyi-lo	shig	ni	nga	dang	nyi-med
					'gyur
བཟླ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས་	ནམ་མཁའི་	མཐའ་བྱབ་	ཤོག།		
Ta-shi-de-lek	nam-ki	ta-chab	shok		

For a time now, while your dualistic minds persist,

It will seem that I have left you, but take heart.

When your dualistic minds subside, you will see that we were never parted.

May health and happiness embrace the very limits of the sky!

(Yeshe Tsogyal, *Lady of the Lotus-Born*)

ཡུལ་	སྣང་བ་	ཡིན་	བས་	གྲུབ་པ་	མེད། །
Yul	nang-wa	yin	be	drub-ba	mai
ལམ་	འཁྲལ་བ་	ཡིན་	བས་	བདེན་པ་	མེད། །
lam	krul-ba	yin	be	dhan-ba	mai

The objects of our senses, mere perception, Have no being in themselves.

The path, too, is illusion; It is not the truth.

(Yeshe Tsogyal, *Lady of the Lotus-Born*)

## 6) ngang-der shok (There remain.)

ཆོས་	ཟད་	གདོད་མའི་	ལྗོང་དུ་	ཐེམ། །
Cho	sai	dod-mi	lun-du	tam
ང་	དང་	འབྲལ་	མེད་	འགྲོགས་
Nga	dang	drul	med	druk
				thab
				yin

All dissolves, exhausted, in the primal space,

And thus it is that you will never stray from me.

(Yeshe Tsogyal, *Lady of the Lotus-Born*)

ཕར་	བསྐྱེ་	ཚུར་	བསྐྱེམ་	གཉིས་མེད་	ལྗོང་། །
Par	se	tshur	dom	nyi-med	klong
ཉམས་ལྗོང་		སྐྱེས་ན་	ངང་དེར་	ཞོག།	
Nyam-myong		kyi-na	ngang-der	shok	

When you melt and mingle mutually together, Taste that vast expanse of nonduality.

There remain.

(Yeshe Tsogyal, *Lady of the Lotus-Born*)



## 7) **tha-tshig (oath)**

ཁ་ལྷོ་རྒྱལ་མ་སྤོང་བ་མེན། །

*kha lto rgyab ma sos 'ong ba min*

གནས་འཁོར་མ་ཟེན་འབྱམས་པ་མེན། །

*gnas 'khor ma zin 'khyams pa min*

འབངས་ཡུལ་མིས་མ་གཅིས་ཕུད་པ་མེན། །

*'bangs yul mis ma gces phud pa min*

གཟའ་ཐབས་གྲོགས་མ་འགྲིགས་འཛོར་བ་མེན། །

*gza' thabs grogs ma 'grigs 'thor ba min*

ང་ཆོས་བརྒྱད་ལས་ལ་གཡེང་བ་མེན།

*nga chos brgyad las la g.yeng ba min*

ཕྱིར་དགྲ་འདུལ་གཉེན་སྦྱང་བསམ་པ་མེན། །

*phyir dgra 'dul gnyen skyong bsam pa min*

སྲིད་འཁོར་བའི་ལས་ལ་ཆགས་པ་མེན།

*srid 'khor ba'i las la chags pa min*

ནང་ཉོན་མོངས་འབྲུལ་བས་བསྐྱས་པ་མེན། །

*nang nyon mongs 'khrul bas bslus pa min*

དཔལ་པད་མའི་ཞལ་གཟིགས་ལུང་བཟླན་ཡིན། །

*dpal pad ma'i zhal gzig lung bstan yin*

མ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཐ་ཆོག་དུས་ལ་བབ། །

*ma mkha' 'gro'i tha tshig dus la bab*

Not leaving out of lack of food and clothes,

Not roaming because I failed as a householder,

Not cast aside for lack of affection from kin,

Not tossed away because a relationship didn't work out,

Not distracted by [everyday] concerns and deeds,\*

Not thinking of destroying enemies and protecting friends,

Not attached to worldly activities in cyclic existence,\*

Not deceived due to the confusion of inner emotions,

I am [bound by] the visionary prophecy of glorious Padma!

The time for the oath of the mother ḍākinīs has come!

(Khandro Tāre Lhamo, *Pad ma'i phreng ba* 103.3–6, translated by Holly Gayley)

## 8) **dwangs-ma (radiance)**

ཆོ་མཉམ་སྦྱེལ་བྱེད་པ་ལག་པའི་མཐེལ།

*tshe mnyam skyel byed pa lag pa'i mthil*

གྲོགས་བཅེ་གདུང་སྙིང་གི་དྲངས་མ་ལགས། །  
*grog s brtse gdung snying gi dwangs ma lags*

ཉིད་ལན་སྟོང་བྲན་པ་སློས་ཅི་དགོས། །  
*nyid lan stong dran pa smos ci dgos*

Of course, we will spend our lives together.  
Darling beloved, radiance of my heart,  
Recalling you a thousand times a day, what need I say.  
(Khandro Tāre Lhamo, *Pad ma'i phreng ba* 98.4, translated by Holly Gayley)

### 9) gzugs thon (forms emerge)

ནང་སེམས་ཉིད་རིག་པ་རང་གསལ་འགྲོ།  
*nang sems nyid rig pa rang gsal 'gro*  
གཞི་རྩལ་བྲལ་རིག་པའི་རང་ཞལ་མཇལ།  
*gzhi rtsol bral rig pa'i rang zhal mjal*  
མགོན་པད་མའི་སློན་ལམ་གཏད་རྒྱ་སད།  
*mgon pad ma'i smon lam gtad rgya sad*  
ལུས་རྩ་རྒྱུང་གཏུམ་མའི་བདེ་བློད་འབར།  
*lus rtsa rlung gtum mo'i bde drod 'bar*

གནས་འཁོར་ལོ་ལྔ་ཡི་རྩ་མདུད་གྲོལ།  
*gnas 'khor lo lnga yi rtsa mdud grol*  
བརྩ་ནམ་མཁའི་སྒོ་འབྱེད་དབྱེངས་ཡིད་བཏུ།  
*brda nam mkha'i sgo 'byed dbyings yid bkra*  
སྒོག་འཆི་མེད་དཔལ་སྟེར་བུམ་བུད་འཁེལ།  
*srog 'chi med dpal ster bum bcud 'khil*  
གཟུགས་ལུས་ཀྱི་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་མཁའ་ནས་ཐོན།  
*gzugs lus kyi phyag rgya mkha' nas thon*

Within, the mind itself becomes naturally radiant awareness.  
Meeting one's original face as awareness, the effortless ground,  
Awakening the protector Padma's aspiration and entrustment,\*  
The body's channels and winds blaze with blissful heat.\*

The knots in the channels at the five cakras release;\*  
The sky-gate of symbols opens; letters manifest in space;  
Nectar pools in the vase that grants glory of deathless life;  
Visible, gross symbolic forms emerge from the sky.  
(Khandro Tāre Lhamo, *Pad ma'i phreng ba* 145.1–3, translated by Holly Gayley)

\* Full passages are given here, though designated lines are omitted in the composition.

## Performer Biographies



**Anne Harley** is a prize-winning Canadian performer-scholar, director and educator based in Claremont, CA. She specializes in performing and recording music from challenging and groundbreaking contemporary composers, as well as researching and recording music from early oral and written traditions in Europe, North America and Russia. Her solo performances are available on Hänssler Profil, Naxos, Sony Classics, Canteloupe, Musica Omnia, einKlang and BMOP/sound, among others. In 2011, she founded the new music commissioning project Voices Of The Pearl ([www.voicesofthepearl.org](http://www.voicesofthepearl.org)). Voices of the Pearl presents, in new song cycles, texts by and about women esoteric practitioners from all traditions.

Harley is recognized internationally as a specialist in contemporary classical music and extended voice techniques. She has premiered, performed and recorded works by contemporary composers Evan Ziporyn, John Adams, Ralf Gawlick, Lee Hoiby, Louis Andriessen, Peter Eotvös and John Harbison, Jodi Goble, Bill Alves, Christine Southworth, Moshe Shulman, Yii Kah Hoe and Chaipruek Mekara, among others. She tours regularly in North America, Europe and Asia and has appeared as soloist with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Opera Boston, American Repertory Theatre, Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Camerata, at the Banff Centre for the Arts and at the Tanglewood Festival. Opera Online US awarded her 'Best Supporting Female Role' of the year for her portrayal of Madame Mao (Nixon in China). She serves as professor of music at Scripps College and will be Scholar-in-Residence at Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religions during the academic year 2023-24.



Harpist **Barbara Pöschl-Edrich** enjoys a multi-faceted career performing in solo, chamber and orchestral concerts, giving lecture recitals, as well as premiering new works. A scholar of the historical harp, she also plays an Italian Baroque triple harp, a Renaissance double-row harp, and a Gothic single-row harp. Ms. Pöschl-Edrich graduated from the Mozarteum Salzburg, the Trinity College of Music London, and earned a Doctor of Musical Arts from Boston University, where she has taught and performed until 2014. While living in Boston, she has performed with the Boston Symphony, Boston Pops, the Tanglewood Music Festival, Boston Baroque, Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Camerata, Lexington Symphony, Musica Viva, and Collage New

Music. Her solo concerts include works by Mozart, Saint-Saëns, Reinecke, Debussy, Ravel, as well as a live broadcast on WGBH of Handel's concerto performed on the Baroque triple harp. She now lives in Munich, Germany, where she recently formed the Ensemble mosaïque, a quintet; flute, harp and string trio. She also works as a substitute player with top orchestras in Munich. In 2018, she founded her own concert series, KammerKonzerte Erding, promoting contemporary music by local composers and rarely heard chamber music.



**Karola Obermueller's** composing, described by the New York Times as "hyperkinetic music", is constantly in search of the unknown, often with layers and layers of obscured material buried deep underneath a surface, which is at times sumptuous and other times bristling with rhythmic energy. Her unique voice began forming in collages of sound made with tape recorders as a child and evolved later with composition degrees from the Meistersinger-Konservatorium Nürnberg, the Hochschule für Musik Saar, and the University Mozarteum Salzburg. Her sense of rhythm and form was forever changed by studying Carnatic and Hindustani classical music in Chennai and Delhi, India.

A Ph.D. at Harvard University brought her to the US where she now teaches at the University of New Mexico, co-directing the composition area. She also lives and works part of the year in Europe and has been a visiting artist at ZKM, Deutsche Akademie Rom, Centro Tedesco di studi Veneziani, Akademie Schloss Solitude, Eisler House (International Hanns Eisler Scholarship), and IRCAM.

Her music, often political, always dramatic, includes operas for Staatstheater Nürnberg, Theater Bielefeld, Theater Bonn, Theater Heidelberg, and Stuttgart's Musik der Jahrhunderte. The emotional juxtapositions of story suspended in a tableau architecture that one finds in her operas can be heard in her concert works as well. These include commissions from the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Fromm Music Foundation, New Music USA, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Saarländischer Rundfunk, and numerous renowned soloists and ensembles.

Her music can be heard on CD (WERGO, New Focus Recordings, Brilliant Classics) and online at [karlaobermueller.net](http://karlaobermueller.net).







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