



DURME, DURME Four Ladino Folk Songs



Maureen Batt, soprano (she/her)

Maureen focuses on celebrating Canadian classical contemporary repertoire by collaborating with established and emerging composers to commission, premiere, and re-perform their works. Her discography includes *Lighthouse* with Grej (ECMA winner, Classical Recording of the Year 2022); *Breathing in the Shadows* (JUNO nomination 2022); *Aunt Helen* (ECMA and Music Nova Scotia nominations 2021-22); *Mirror, Mirror* and *Lady of the Lake* (ECMA and Music NS nominations 2017-18).

She is the co-artistic director, with Erin Bardua, of Essential Opera, an opera company founded in 2010. In 2015, Maureen founded Crossing Borders, a contemporary Western classical music recital series that, in addition to digital broadcasts, has toured programs of art song, opera arias, musical theatre, and electronics in the United States, Canada, and Colombia. She also has commissioned and premiered many works for Crossing Borders, including this song cycle.

Maureen has created a number of Canadian opera roles: Helen (*Aunt Helen*), Dorothy Parker (*Etiquette*), Bride (*Cake*), and Top Priority Air Customer Service representative and security guard (*December*) by composer Monica Pearce; Cindy (*Heather: Cindy + Mindy = BFFS 4EVER*) and Hannah (*Hannah & Paige and the Zombie Pirates*) by Christopher

Thornborrow; Lorelei Henderson (*Stockholm Syndrome*) by Fiona Ryan; Sister Mary Francis (*Time of Trouble*) by Elizabeth Raum, and Anna (*Regina*) and Keri Ferrell (*Hipster Grifter*) by Elisha Denburg.

She has a Master of Music from the University of Toronto, a Bachelor of Music from Dalhousie University, and a Bachelor of Arts from St. Thomas University. Maureen has regularly been on faculty at the Halifax Summer Opera Festival, is a frequent festival adjudicator, and offers masterclasses and workshops on voice and movement. For more information and to listen to Maureen's music, visit maureenbatt.com and [@maureenbattsoprano](https://www.instagram.com/maureenbattsoprano)



Tara Scott, piano (she/her)

Tara Scott is one of Atlantic Canada's most renowned collaborative pianists. Her love of teaching and performing has led her to pursue staff accompanist positions at Western, Dalhousie, Acadia, and Mount Allison universities. She has performed extensively with singers, instrumentalists, and choirs across Canada.

Tara has been music director and pianist for twenty full-length operas with Maritime Concert Opera. She co-founded, with Nina Scott-Stoddart, Halifax Summer Opera Festival, an opera training program with fully staged productions, now in its sixteenth season. She has worked as Music Director for Eastern Front Theatre/Neptune Theatre, Essential Opera, and Acadia's Singing Theatre, and has performed with Opera Nova Scotia, Opera New Brunswick, and Halifax Theatre for Young People.

Tara maintains a busy private piano studio in Dartmouth, NS, and is on faculty at the Maritime Conservatory of Performing Arts. She has adjudicated extensively for music festivals throughout the Maritimes and has worked as piano examiner for Mount Allison University and the Maritime Conservatory. She is also the accompanist for Dalhousie's Collegium Cantorum, directed by Gary Ewer.

Tara received a Bachelor of Music in piano performance from Mount Allison University under the tutelage of Dr. Janet Hammock. She studied with Dr. John Hess at Western University, receiving a Master of Music in Literature and Performance in collaborative piano. Originally from Grand Bay-Westfield NB, Tara now resides in Dartmouth with her husband and three children.

This EP is Tara's second commercial release. Her discography also includes *Breathing in the Shadows* with song cycles by Saman Shahi.



Elisha Denburg, composer (he/him)

Elisha Denburg's music focuses on vocal and chamber works, and is commissioned, premiered, recorded, and toured across Canada and in the United States. He collaborates with ensembles such as Access Contemporary Music, junctQín keyboard collective, TorQ Percussion Quartet, New Music Edmonton, Halifax Camerata Singers, Sneak Peek Orchestra, Thin Edge New Music Collective, Blythwood Winds, Ensemble Paramirabo, Esprit Orchestra, The Bicycle Opera Project, the Array Ensemble, and notably, Essential Opera, who commissioned his one-act opera about the first female rabbi, *Regina*. His music can be heard on CBC Radio 2's *The Signal* with Laurie Brown, *About Time* with Tom Allen, and *Tempo* with Julie Nesrallah. His three-movement work "Sonatina for Vibraphone & Harp" is featured on Angela Schwarzkopf's JUNO-winning album *detach*.

Elisha lives in Toronto, and was a founding member and co-Artistic Director of the Toy Piano Composers, a collective founded in 2008 by Monica Pearce and Chris Thornborrow, dedicated to the presentation of engaging new music with a playful approach.

www.elishadenburg.com

Composer Note

Durme, Durme: Four Ladino Folk Songs is a personal exploration of a unique aspect of my Jewish and musical heritage: Judeo-Spanish poetry and song. Although I am not a direct descendant of Jews who lived in—and were exiled from—the land called S’farad (Spain), these folk traditions have been shared in my family through the teachings and performances of my uncle, Moshe Denburg, and my grandmother, Miriam Ben-Ezra Denburg. In this song cycle, each one tells a different story, yet all are interwoven, lyrically or conceptually. I have used the poems’ traditional melodies as springboards to a newly rendered work, in the Jewish tradition of “renewing days as of old.”

Durme, durme (Sleep, sleep) is a simple lullaby designed to emulate the intimacy and vocal immediacy of a parent singing their child to sleep.

Alta, alta es la luna (High, high is the moon) is told from the perspective of a young woman whose lover’s reckless behaviour has her questioning where she stands in the relationship.

Ir me kero, Madre, a Yerushalayim (I want to go, Mother, to Jerusalem) presents a complete shift in mood and instrumentation to a solo vocal, liturgical, cantorial chant. The traditional melody still exists in the refrain,

“En El me arimo yo,” (In Him I place my trust); however, the thrust of the piece is a freely-composed devotional plea that is inspired by *Hineni* (*Here I Am*), a synagogue prayer chanted on Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year). This prayer is sung only by the cantor, and is meant as a plea to God to accept not only their own prayers, but the prayers of the entire congregation on their behalf. In this sense, it is both personal and communal.

On the surface, *A la una yo nasi* (At one I was born) is a playful counting song. However, the lyrics zoom its conceptual lens outward to a very wide/macro focus with the intense refrain, “Alma i vida i korason” (Soul, life, and heart). Many of the themes touched on in the previous three songs are rendered here anew, and the singer’s urgency of communication concludes the set as an expression of joy in life lived, and as a mourner’s prayer for those who were lost in exile from their homeland.

Thank you to Maureen Batt and Tara Scott for their wonderful rendition of these songs, and to the Ontario Arts Council for supporting the commission of this work.

– Elisha Denburg

Text and Translations

DURME, DURME

Four Ladino Folk Songs by Elisha Denburg

Texts and translations edited by Daisy Sadaka Braverman

Durme, durme

Durme, durme ijiko de Madre,
Durme, durme sin ansya i dolor.
Siente djoya palavrikas de tu Madre
Las palavras de *Shema Israel*
Durme, durme ijiko de Madre
Kon ermozura de *Shema Israel*.

Sleep, sleep

Sleep, sleep, mother's little one
Sleep, sleep, free from worry and grief
Listen, my jewel, to your mother's words,
The words of *Hear O Israel*.
Sleep, sleep, mother's little one.
With the beauty of *Hear O Israel*.

Text and Translations

Alta, alta es la luna

Alta, alta es la luna
Kuando empesa'esklareser
Ija ermoza y sin ventura
Nunka yege a naser.

Mis ojos me se incheron
De tanto mirar la mar.
Vaporikos van i vienen.
Letra para mi no ay.

Mi kerido es ermozo,
Dos tarras tiene kon el:
La una ke arondja dados,
La otra ke echa shesh besh.

Mi kerido es alto i vano,
I una vara de espander
Mi Madre izo kolada,
Lo metió a detener.

La, la, la, da, da, da...

High, high is the moon

High, high is the moon
When dawn is breaking.
May a beautiful but hapless girl
Never be born.

My eyes are swollen
From gazing so much at the sea.
Steamboats come and go.
There is no letter for me.

My beloved is handsome,
He has two weaknesses:
One is that he shoots craps,
The other is that he plays backgammon.

My beloved is tall and vain,
Just like a clothesline pole.
My mother did her laundry,
And had him hold the line.

La, la, la, da, da, da...

Text and Translations

Ir me kero, Madre, a Yerushalayim

Ir me kero, Madre, a Yerushalayim
Komer de sus frutos
Bever de sus aguas

En el me arimo yo
I en el m'afalago yo
En el Sinyor de todo el mundo

I el Bet Hamigdash lo veo d'enfrente
I me parese la luna kresiente

En el me arimo yo
I en el m'afalago yo
En el Sinyor de todo el mundo

I lo estan fraguando
Kon piedras presiozas
I lo estan lavrando
Kon piedras presiozas.

En el me arimo yo,
I en el m'afalago yo
En el Sinyor de todo el mundo

I want to go, Mother, to Jerusalem

I want to go, Mother, to Jerusalem
To eat its fruits
To drink its waters

I lean onto Him
And in Him I trust
The Lord of all the world

And I see the Holy Temple in front of me
It looks to me like the crescent moon

I lean onto Him
And in Him I trust
The Lord of all the world

And they're building it
With precious stones
And they're embroidering it
With precious stones

I lean onto Him
And in Him I trust
The Lord of all the world

Text and Translations

A la una yo nasi

A la una yo nasi,
A las dos m'engrandesi,
A las tres tomi amante,
A las kuatro me kazi.
Alma i vida i korason.

Dime, ninya, de donde vienes,
Ke te kero konoser.
I si no tienes amante,
Yo te are defender.
Alma i vida i korason.

Yendome para la guerra,
Dos bezos al aire di.
El uno es para mi Madre,
I el otro para ti.
Alma i vida i korason.

At one I was born

At one I was born,
At two I grew up,
At three I took a lover,
At four I married.
Soul, life, and heart.

Tell me, little girl, where do you come from?
I want to get acquainted.
If you have no lover,
I will defend you.
Soul, life, and heart.

Going off to war,
I threw two kisses into the air.
One is for my mother,
And the other is for you.
Soul, life, and heart.

Credits

Maureen Batt

Soprano

Tara Scott

Piano

Elisha Denburg

Composer

Jeremy VanSlyke

Producer

Ben Barton Creelman

Recording Engineer, Mixing
and Mastering

Nathan Cann

Additional Mastering

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MAUREEN BATT, SOPRANO • TARA SCOTT, PIANO • ELISHA DENBURG, COMPOSER

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- ii. Alta, alta es la luna
- iii. Ir me kero, Madre, a Yerushalayim
- iv. A la una yo nasi