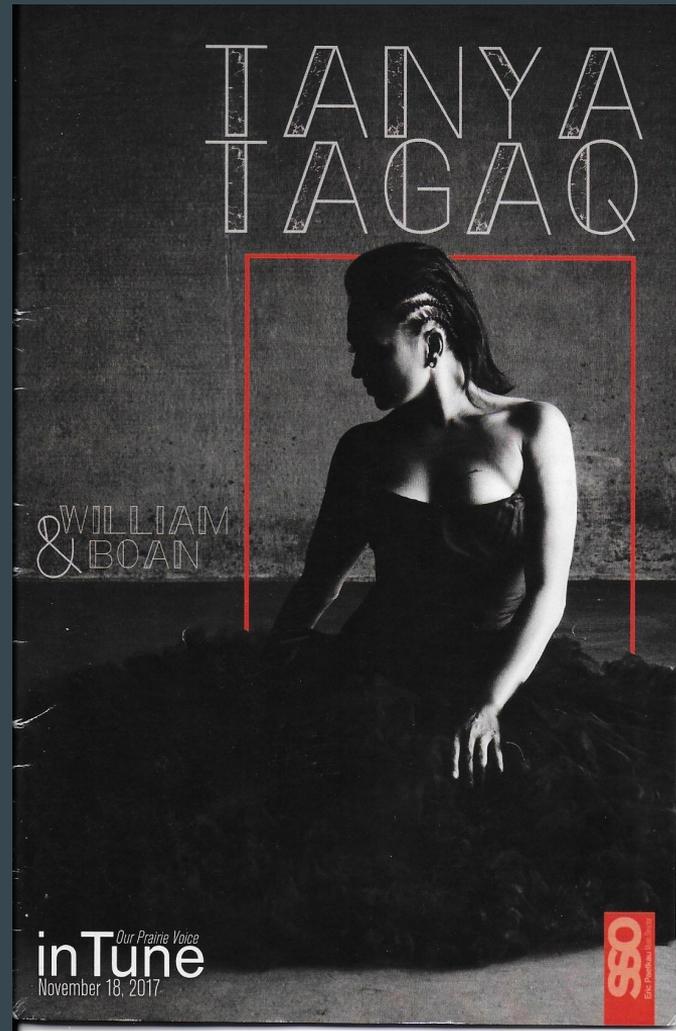
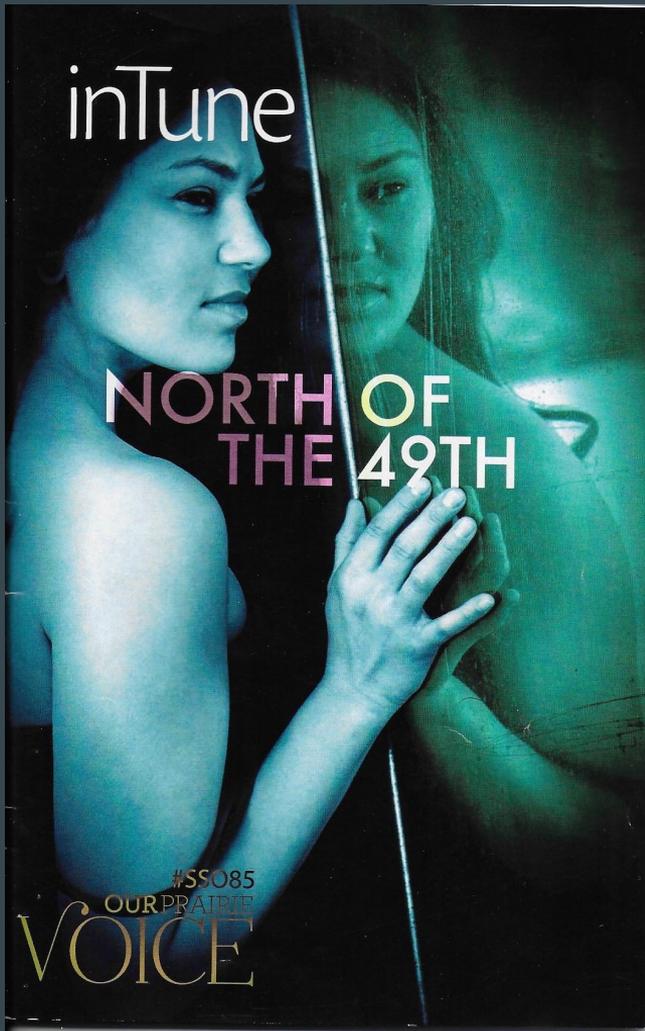


# Herstory 2.0



Week Five - Beautiful Blends



# Tanya Tagaq

- Inuit throat singer, experimental musician, painter and novelist
- Born in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut
- Her mother is Inuk, and was raised on Baffin Island
- Her father is British & Polish
- Attended residential school in Yellowknife, but completed high school through correspondence in Cambridge Bay



Source:

<https://trnto.com/torontos-most-inspirational-women-of-2019-tanya-tagaq/>

# Tanya Tagaq

- Grew up listening to Led Zeppelin, Bonnie M, the Beatles, Jimi Hendrix
- Music allows her to feel so much, and so deeply
- Graduated with a degree in fine arts from Nova Scotia College of Art & Design
- While living in Halifax, Tanya received a cassette from her mom of two women throat singing
- While showcasing some of her paintings at the 2000 Great Northern Arts Festival in Inuvik, NWT, she sang impromptu at a campfire
- Icelandic singer, Björk asked Tanya to join her on tour, and Tanya later recorded on her album “Medúlla”



Source:

<https://trnto.com/torontos-most-inspirational-women-of-2019-tanya-tagaq/>

# Tanya Tagaq

- Tanya performs solo, using her body and voice equally as instruments
- Traditional Inuit throat singing is an ancient vocal game, usually played by two women standing face-to-face
- The singing is continuous, and the goal is to see who will first lose their breath or burst out laughing
- In Canada, throat singing had been prohibited by Christian missionaries and was almost lost (boooooo)
- Elders rescued the ancestral custom, teaching it to younger generations
- The resurgence of the vocal games began in the 1980's



Source:

<https://trnto.com/torontos-most-inspirational-women-of-2019-tanya-tagaq/>

# Tanya Tagaq

“I’ve never heard a singer before who I felt had a string quartet in her throat the way that Tanya does. When I asked her to write for ‘50 for the Future,’ she said, ‘Well, I’m not really a composer,’ and I said, ‘Tanya, you are a composer. Just go into the studio and make a piece!’ So she did just that.” -

David Harrington, Artistic Director, Kronos Quartet



Source:

<https://www.musicworks.ca/featured-article/tanya-tagaq-grabs-world-throat>

# Tanya Tagaq

Sivunittinni (Inuktitut, trans. “future ones”)

- Tanya recorded herself singing in the studio
- Her singing was transcribed and arranged by Jacob Garchik
- The string playing sounds just like Tanya’s singing - even the bowing sounds like inhales and exhales



Source:

<https://www.musicworks.ca/featured-article/tanya-tagaq-grabs-world-throat>

# Tanya Tagaq

- While you could say Tanya's music is political, it is also about survival
- At the 2014 Polaris Awards, in Tanya's performance she included a scrolling list of 1200 names of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in Canada
- In 2002, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) started lobbying the federal government to address the systemic violence against Indigenous Women and girls.
- The Sisters in Spirit project created the first and only database in Canada of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls – listing 582 cases.
- In 2016, the NWAC's 11-year campaign for a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was finally launched.
- On June 3, 2019 a final report of the inquiry was released. The report found that Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be murdered or go missing than any other women in Canada, and 16 times more likely than Caucasian women.



Source:

<https://artistsandclimatechange.com/2013/03/06/the-wonderful-world-of-tanya-tagaq/>

# Tanya Tagaq

Qiksaaktuq (Inuktitut, trans. Grief)

- A five movement orchestral work dedicated to the lives of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
  - Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance
- Collaboration at its core:
  - Composed by Tanya Tagaq, Christine Duncan, and Jean Martin
  - Orchestrated by Christopher Mayo
- “Generations of women move through her, as she becomes both wild tundra, and animal. Tagaq’s improvised throat singing honours the mothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers.” (Muskrat Magazine)



Source:

<https://artistsandclimatechange.com/2013/03/06/the-wonderful-world-of-tanya-tagaq/>

# Reena Esmail

- Indian-American composer bringing communities together through the creation of equitable musical spaces
- Her heritage is entirely Indian, but she comes from a diverse background - her father is Muslim, her mother is Goan Catholic
- Between Reena and her parents, they speak 10 languages!
- Being both Indian and American, growing up she found herself constantly navigating between these two cultures



Source: <https://www.reenaesmail.com/photos/>

# Reena Esmail

- From her first piano lesson, she knew she wanted to be a classical musician
- While she certainly wanted to be a pianist, she also really enjoyed being the person behind the scenes - the one who created the music
- Bachelor of Music from the Juilliard School of Music
- After finishing her undergraduate, she met a Hindustani singer, Mosami Shah
- In 2011 Reena received a Fulbright-Nehru grant to study Hindustani Music in India



Source: <https://www.reenaesmail.com/photos/>

# Reena Esmail

- In 2015, after months of pleading with embassies and government officials, Reena lost the battle for the Visa she needed to return to India simply because her grandfather had moved his family to Pakistan in the 1950's after partition
- “The pain of being from two places is that wherever you are, you always miss the other place.”  
(Reena Esmail)

“While I might not ever be able to live in a physical world that contained everything that I loved, and allowed me to be the fullest possible version of myself, I could at least try my best to create that world in the music that I wrote.”



Source: <https://www.reenaesmail.com/photos/>

# Reena Esmail

Hindustani and Western music can appear to be polar opposites:

- One is improvised, the other written
- One is primarily a solo art, the other supports a massive ensemble
- Hindustani music focuses deeply on melody and rhythm and has a degree of complexity that is not idiomatic to Western music
- Because of the notation system of Western music, harmony and counterpoint are possible in ways that are impossible in pure Hindustani music



Source: <https://www.reenaesmail.com/photos/>

# Reena Esmail

## This Love Between Us

- 7 movements juxtaposing the words of 7 major religious traditions of India - Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Islam
- It is simultaneously sung in English and the texts' original languages
- Scored for sitar and tabla, with choir and baroque orchestra
- Reena created audio guides to help the musicians
  - Pronunciation guide for the choir
  - “Oral Score” for the Hindustani musicians
- Also suggests having an intermediary



Source: <https://www.reenaesmail.com/photos/>

# Reena Esmail

“I see this as an immense opportunity and also an immense responsibility. If I am the first woman composer someone knows, if I am the first Indian composer they know, then I have the power to engage someone and perhaps provide that missing perspective. If there is very little context for people who look like me and do the work that I do, I hope that by providing that context, I can change minds and open hearts, one person at a time.”

- Reena Esmail



Source: <https://www.reenaesmail.com/photos/>

# Reena Esmail

Being represented is just the beginning. It is the very least we can do. I want to be clear: Women and minorities are fully aware that they are just as capable and creative as the people in the majority. But when they don't see themselves represented, it just conveys to them that our field is still too biased to accept them – and that perhaps they should take their talents elsewhere. We are simply losing talent by not demonstrating to our youngest creators that we are capable of fostering their voices at all levels.

Reena Esmail – from Q&A Luna Lab



Source: <https://www.reenaesmail.com/photos/>

# Reena Esmail

I also think we should be moving past the ideas of diversity and inclusion and into the idea of equity. Inclusion still implies a hierarchy. Diversity still feels like it can stop at cosmetic solutions. But I have been so fortunate to work with many organizations who truly partner with minority groups to put their voices front and center – to move beyond simply stuffing them into an already existing structure, but to restructure their practices, inspired by the people they are partnering with. This is how we move past minority groups feeling like they are being recruited for the purpose of metrics, and how truly sustainable relationships begin.

ibid



Source: <https://www.reenaesmail.com/photos/>

*Questions?*



# Trans & Non-Binary Composer & Artist Panel Discussion

moderated by Kendra Harder

**YOUTUBE LIVE JUNE 16TH @ 11 AM CST**

VISIT [SASKATOONSYPHONY.ORG](https://www.saskatoonsymphony.org) FOR DETAILS

