

## **Episode 02: Getting the Song Out with Cecilia Livingston - Transcript**

Elizabeth McDonald:

Hello everyone and welcome to the GETTING THE SONG OUT podcast! We are WOMEN ON THE VERGE

I'm Elizabeth!

Emily Martin:

I'm Emily!

Kathryn Tremills:

I'm Kathryn!

During COVID-19 we realized that we needed to keep the art song world at the forefront of the conversation. We had been talking about this project for a long time and Quarantine was the perfect time to connect with new and old friends across the country - incredible Canadian female composers ...

Kathryn Tremills:

This week we are talking to Dr. Cecilia Livingston, and we've just heard an excerpt of "Penelope" performed by Elizabeth McDonald and myself. Elizabeth became acquainted with Cecilia while Cecilia was completing her Doctorate in Composition at the University of Toronto and was writing "Penelope" for her voice student, Alexandra Smither. Elizabeth became smitten with her writing and introduced her to the rest of us Women on the Verge. We're thrilled to talk with her now on this podcast series.

Emily Martin:

Welcome, Cecilia! We're so happy to be with you today, and can you tell us a little bit about how you got into composition and what you're doing right now? Like where you're living, what you're writing, all those kinds of good questions.

Cecilia Livingston:

Probably easier to start with the present, then work backwards. Right now I'm in London and I basically split my time between London and Toronto, though these days I'm more in London.

Elizabeth McDonald:

You mean London, UK?

Cecilia Livingston:

I mean London in the UK. Very good point. Thank you, Elizabeth. Nothing against London, Ontario, but yeah, I'm in London in the UK. I'm doing two things here. I'm composer in residence at Glyndebourne opera, and I'm doing a postdoctoral fellowship in music at King's College London. So those two things are sort of running side by side at the same time. How I, how I got to this point - I did not start composing at the age of five or anything. No prodigy story here, alas. I actually trained as a pianist through the Royal conservatory and went to music school because I knew I wanted to do something in music, but I didn't really know what that would be. I thought I might be a conductor for a while, but no that didn't work out. And then in my second year, I spent a bit of time in arts and science while I dithered. And then in my second year of music, I actually injured my shoulder. So I knew I wasn't going to be playing anymore really at all - not at a level that was going to be particularly satisfying. So I cast around to think about what I could do to make music. And I had really enjoyed the sort of composition exercises in my theory class, and I thought, well, I'll give this a try. We'll see what happens. And the faculty of music at the University of Toronto, which is where I was doing my undergrad, basically said, they'd give me a year to see if I could figure this out, at the end of which I did an audition for the composition program and was accepted as a major. So it's been fairly straight forward from there. I've had a couple of crossroads where I've been tempted by academic musicology. But I've kept choosing the creative life, or it's kept choosing me. I'm never quite sure who's driving that bus. So here I am today.

Emily Martin:

Great. So I just have a quick follow up. So with the idea of going into composition and having one year to prove yourself, which to me seems, I can't even imagine what that means. So did you just - I really would love to hear exactly how you started it. Did you just sit down and start just thinking and writing, or did you have lessons first and kind of like, how did that process happen?

Cecilia Livingston:

Once I got my probation set up, was given permission to take lessons. I think they were once a week, with Sasha Rapoport at the University of Toronto. And I would go and have my weekly lesson with him the first one of which I recall quite vividly, because I literally had no idea what a composition lesson would be or really how to compose music at all for being completely frank. And I think he was bemused by me and sent me away to, with a sort of exercise assignment for the following week, which I did, which is really appalling and like very stilted sort of - yeah - it was an attempt, there was an attempt and he very gently and very kindly said, you know, there are things that you could have done different way to make this more musically interesting for our listeners just sort of walked me through what I'd done and making really lovely and gentle suggestions about what I could've done differently.

And I don't, I don't remember a light bulb going on in that moment, but I do know that when I came back the following week with another exercise, I remember him saying like, "Oh, now you're actually writing some music," and I'm still - I don't recall some sort of moment of

elimination, but something obviously shifted or freed or I, you know, felt a bit less constrained and was able to start doing something that was somewhat expressive.

Elizabeth McDonald:

That's so great. I love the idea that you went into this with kind of no idea how it actually worked and sort of built up a system, because I think that's what we're all looking to do is build a system, and so you've mentioned University of Toronto couple of times, and that's where I met you, and that was kind of our way in to the music of Cecilia Livingston, as a trio was my experience with you when you were doing your doctorate and you, I remember so vividly you were working on Penelope, your song, and you wrote it for Ally Smither, who was my student at the time. And I actually have some really vivid memories of like being in rehearsal with her and trying to figure out some of the things that honestly, I still can't figure out for my own voice sometimes, I'm like, "damn, that's hard!" And then I remember standing at the back of Walter Hall while she premiered that, and I was so nervous, as the teacher, like, I remember being so nervous, but I also remember just like falling in love with the music and the aesthetic. And then also your approach to just being a human, I guess, because you were - there's just something really wonderful about you and then, you know, you and I kind of had sort of spent some time together - I think it was the choral Institute that Dr. Apfelstadt had run, and you sat in on lessons and things like that.

And so when I think about Penelope as our sort of way into the music of Cecilia Livingston, we've now performed it like all over and have every time we do it, we always have people that come up and go, "can I get the music for that? How can I get the music for that?" That's so like - and there's always like at least one person that's like over the top, which I think is amazing. And it's always young women that are so excited about it, it feels like they understand the freedom that you give to a singer and a pianist in that. And so my question after that long winded preamble is, can you give us a little bit of insider information on your process with Penelope? I know it was a while ago, but it was kind of for us, what has led us to now commissioning you for the trio, but your inspirations, your influences- because it seems like that that song itself is indicative of a lot of your writing.

Cecilia Livingston:

Yeah...First of all, thank you. I mean, gosh, I feel like I'm 10 feet tall right now.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Oh, well you should. We love it! And it really is always received so beautifully, like really honestly,

Cecilia Livingston:

Well that is sort of the point, and I think when you - sorry, what I meant was in your description, I think you really said something that's really important to me, which was the thing that you said about freedom. I really hope to offer performers that sense of freedom. I really do. And you

know, when I was writing Penelope, I don't think I really could have articulated this to you clearly, but it's something I've thought about much more concerted since. And I really believe that, you know, my job - so called job as in writing a score is to set up an opportunity for the performers to do your thing in the way that is best for you. So for me, it's really - you know, we can collaborate and I can find out as best I can, what feels good in your body and what you want to do. But then I really feel like it's sort of - I should get out of the way I should give it away. And it becomes about - it's just as a scaffold, it's just a structure or an opportunity for you in performance to connect with listeners. And so if there's a rhythm that you think should be changed, or you need more time here, or, you know, these words will project better, if they're a third lower, like, I really hope my answer to those things is yes, as often as possible, because anything that facilitates the spontaneity and immediacy of your performance is what it should be. And I'll just learn from that.

Elizabeth McDonald:

That's so cool that you say that because there's that middle section that you write is free, and I know that Kate sometimes takes issue with me because sometimes I'm a little more free than I should be, but we always - that's the spot we always rehearse before we walk on stage every time, because it's like, "Oh, we gotta hit those points," you know, but at the same time, you're right. It does give us this freedom. It gives us this opportunity to recreate something different each time. And I think what I've found really interesting too, in my own process with it is listening to other singers, find that freedom because now lots of people have sung it. It's been recorded in a number of ways. Like there was that great recording that they played last week at the Cincinnati Song Institute. It was another voice, another tempo, just, it's just so amazing to hear how people do feel free to interpret that. And I just, I love that. I love that so much as a performer to be given that. So thank you because that's amazing.

Cecilia Livingston:

That's kind of the magical space I think for a piece, for me is to start to hear it performed many different times by many different people sometimes by the same person over a number of years, which is - can be quite striking too. I remember sitting in the back of a performance of another piece, which I wrote many years ago and just realizing how long ago it was and what it is sort of - how it was still very, very personal and immediate for me, but also at this huge remove. It's a very strange feeling, it must be kind of like seeing your child graduate sort of far away and yet your own flesh in a strange way.

Kathryn Tremills:

That's wonderful Cecilia and that leads us to - well, how much we love Penelope and your other works that leads us to our next commission, and it's a 20 minute song cycle - as you well know - with, Toronto Laureate Anne Michaels, that will be premiered next spring. We understand you are busy sketching out the music and we're so excited to hear all about it. We'd love to hear about your process for composing this work, and we're wondering what you can share with us about how the piece is shaping up.

Cecilia Livingston:

Sure! I'm very excited about it, which is good because for a while I was really scared about it. So I didn't really enjoy that moment when suddenly it's not [gasp] anxiety thing, then suddenly there's a piece to work with. And since we - so how this began, I've admired Anne Michaels poetry for a very long time. She was sort of the first poet whose writing I really connected with. I saw a poem of hers on the subway and the poetry by the way campaign. When I think I was about 14, maybe 15, I really liked it, and then one evening on the way walking back from school, went into a Chapters - which is a bookstore in Toronto - and saw a book of her poetry for sale. And I don't know, bought it with my allowance, I guess. And I hadn't really put her writing down since then.

I think she really - her writing really taught me how to read and how to read as a composer, which is a different kind of reading, and a reading that I really love. I think it's part of the reason, almost everything I write has words in it. So when we started talking about what we could create, what we could commission, she was a writer that I was eager to work with. She knew my doctoral supervisor who was able to introduce us. And I think to all of our delight, she agreed to come on board. We had a number of conversations about the sort of work that we wanted to create, which I think is really, really valuable. It's the more, I feel like the more that I can hear from the people who are commissioning a piece about what they want to share with their audiences, the better, and I really try to find a way to be creative and sort of myself within what is going to connect with your listeners and the people that you perform for.

So we had talked sort of as a group, a number of times, about wanting to do something about women, about women's experiences, women who - you know, aren't going to die of tuberculosis after having illicit sex, even usual opera traditions, we wanted to, I think we're all in agreement that we wanted to do something far from those stereotypes. And Anne has a ton of expertise in writing about historical women in ways that really draw us into their imaginations and their personal lives. So she came back with the idea of sort of basically three monologues. I would almost call them, about three different female artists. And from that I'm building this cycle, that's more duet driven than I would have thought - which is quite interesting - out of these, what are basically monologues and I've sketched song number three and song number two, and I'm just in the middle of sketching, the first song right now, basically I took Anne's text and I read it and then I didn't do anything with that, and then I read it again. I wasn't doing anything with it. Worked on other projects, declutter and let everything sort of percolate. I think about it as the pot on the back element. And you just kind of don't think consciously about it, let that tech sort of grow into a part of my brain, and then there comes a day where I try to sit down and see what is there. And I was really lucky that I was able to do that with a piano - that's not always how I work, but I decided for this one that I really, really wanted to work with a piano in front of me, and was able to get access during the lockdown, which was not easy.

Just sit down, look at the first words, make some sounds, no one is recording me except me, so no one needs to hear those vocalizations and figure out what sound worlds work with those words and where they lead, and usually I get - you know, spend a couple of hours, get some musical ideas down and then ask myself, okay, what is interesting? What I want to hear more of, what I want to play around with, what is a melody that might unfold? You know, what needs to come back if this melodic idea sits well under this text? Why? Where does it come back? How does it have meaning? What harmonies sit around it? What timbres support it and kind of build out from there. My doctoral supervisor, Christos Hatzis, with whom I studied for many years, always told me that if you get stuck, it's because you're not listening hard enough to what you've already done.

Kathryn Tremills:

So it's quite an intuitive process then, that idea of just absorbing and letting it percolate, and as you said, and see what comes of it once you've sort of have that - the basic structure decided?

Cecilia Livingston:

Very much so, and I've spent a lot of time since - very pretentious - I've spent so much time trying to connect with my intuition, but I really have, and I've noticed that the pieces, like there was a real turning point in my portfolio when the pieces that I was writing started to get great feedback. People really wanted to perform them. And those were the pieces where I really got out of my own way, where I really tried to trust deeply in whatever was coming out intuitively. And that's not to say that I don't believe in craft because I really, really do. And solid technique is a good thing. I do believe firmly though, that, you know, that kind of annoying myth about musicians: music just pours from them! Well, no, it doesn't. All those years of training and technique, I feel are subsumed into your subconscious and they sit there and they wait for you and then when you want them, they're there.

Kathryn Tremills:

Yeah, such a combination of the two. I'm really curious. Can I ask you how you - when you said you've really spent time discovering your intuition, would you like to share how you have done that?

Cecilia Livingston:

Yeah, two things really helped. I think actually maybe three probably because I came to composition a bit later than some people. I was very self conscious about it for a long time. It felt super awkward about the idea of sort of doing things that were emotional, which is what my music often is. And, you know, that tells a story. These are things that really drive what I do, but it took me a lot of time to get comfortable with that. So the things that helped: I taught myself to improvise, which I didn't know the first darn thing about when I came to university. I taught a lot of piano and songs like popular song, jazz, to other people, which got me thinking about harmony in a very textbook way, and I found that sort of started seeping into what I was able to improvise with. And the third thing that I did was I started listening to a lot of music that wasn't

classical, which helped as well. So I think I opened my ears quite a lot. And then I grew up quite a bit and let myself trust my own sense of structure and that if something felt right, then it probably would be right for other people.

There was a moment. I really remember when I was writing my string quartet *To Dreams*, which I also wrote for Ally Smither - another person who keeps coming up here. I remember getting to a particular point where I knew there was one at a harmonic change and the bass drops and I thought, "Oh, sounds great. I love it. It's just really, really feels right." And then I thought, "Oh my God, this is so tacky." But then I thought, well, I really like it. No, but it's kind of tacky. So I took it into my lesson and I just, you know, played it or played the midi audio for it, and it was really interesting that we ended up spending most of my lesson talking about the fitness of that moment, harmonically, rhythmically, texturally. And at that time I was a baby composer. I don't think I could have told you why that moment felt right. But my ears that it did. So I really, really let myself trust my ears as I go. And I can think about why those things sound good afterwards and put my theory hat on when I want to.

Kathryn Tremills:

That's really interesting, because I think just breaking down the self criticism is such a huge thing for artists, and humans. Thanks Cecilia.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Can I circle back to something about when you were talking about your process of writing? You are - you know, we've commissioned - you've written for Ally, you've obviously written for specific voices and I'm really curious as to when you're writing for a specific voice or voices, how much you think of those voices when you're writing. I mean we've all spent a lot of time together, but, and I'm curious like as, as you're ruminating with the text, how do you hear the voices in your head? That sounds funny.

Cecilia Livingston:

Well, no, I think I know exactly what you mean. I think there are two things in play. The first is the singer's voice and that's not only - you know, true to singers too. It's instrumentalist as well. You know, they have a sound often that is quite characteristic of them. They're things that they do musically that, you know, you want to tap into or, you know avoid in some cases. But there's also, I think particularly for singers, who they are as an actor. So what's the dramatic personality as well and how does that play into the voice. I really spend a perturbing amount of time thinking about performer, and I sometimes chuckle because I've spent -

Elizabeth McDonald:

I am now terrified.

Cecilia Livingston:

I spent all day thinking about you, Elizabeth, have you been thinking about me?

Elizabeth McDonald:

Oh God.

Cecilia Livingston:

It's strange because that really will happen. I'll put 14 hours in, you know, on a piece, like be it sketching or, you know, grinding things down on, on a syllable level, on a chord level, on a 16th note level, I'll have spent all day thinking about you and our world and, you know, meantime you guys are off living your lives and it's quite a curious sensation to know people and the music that they make very, very intimately. Sometimes quite a long time before you really get into a rehearsal room and get to know them like on a friend level.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Okay, that is so much fun and I can't wait to hear what you think about my colleagues too.

Emily Martin:

So with that being said that you think about Elizabeth all day long, I know you've been in lockdown for a while, like all of us and I was in London at the same time that it went and locked down and it went really fast, right? And right in March it was like in two days, everything was locked down. So with that being said, I know all of us have had this sort of self isolation to think about things, but composition in itself is really self motivated and based on isolation and freelancing is so unstable and irregular and all of these great things. How do you balance that isolation and sustain your creative career through all of that?

Cecilia Livingston:

Yeah, that I think is a big challenge. I don't know if I'll ever have it sorted out or I'll sort it out at my funeral. The lockdown period has been interesting because I think for some composers that I've been talking with, certainly not for all of us, but for some of us - not a grotesque joke - I know I actually have found it very challenging to be working on our commission during this time. The poetry that Anne has written has very serious subject matter as does a lot of her poetry. So one of the poetry is about the death of children in the Holocaust. And it has been challenging to look at things like that and then to sort of come out into a world which is skidding sideways and continues to, I found that quite tricky. But I think the things that I try to do day to day to balance that out, haven't really changed that much and is still working so far. Trying to maintain routine, I think is the most important thing. And I - I really push back again, I hate the myth of the sort of spontaneous creativity because it's not true. You know, you don't get anything done. If you don't sit down at your desk, you don't get your bum in the seat - so booking time, making sure that, you know, I have time blocked off on my calendar every day, assigned for specific tasks, like: work out letter G of song three - it's going to occupy me from 10 to 12 tomorrow morning. But then also knowing how to balance the solitude. I try to exercise almost every day. I run a lot so often at the end of the day, I've had enough and I put that pot back on the back burner and go

out and get some exercise. And it's amazing how many things I sort of - "Oh, that's a great idea." You know.

I watch a disturbing amount of Bravo television, that has nothing to do with classical music.

Emily Martin:

That makes me so happy. I don't know why, I've known you for so long and I didn't know that and I'm very happy right now.

Cecilia Livingston:

Real Housewives is a great antidote to the dark opera circuit.

Emily Martin:

It's a great way to turn your brain off.

Cecilia Livingston:

It's a really, really wonderful way to - I think get a get distance from - a lot of the pieces that I write have, or are quite dark in their subject matter, and it can be a good way to step back - It's again, I think, you know, it lets things percolate when you're not focused on that. And you know, the great joy of our line of work is that eventually - less so right now - we get to collaborate, and that for me is highly social and looking forward to really, really balances out those, those hours and hours alone. What we know, I feel I'm commuting with Elizabeth and all my alone time. Anyhow...

Emily Martin:

I love how this has become the theme of this particular episode. Okay, so let's get back to serious stuff. So when we talk about the creative career, I know that it's hard to be a woman in a field that is predominantly men, which we're trying to change, especially with this podcast. So can you tell us a little bit more about female composers that are mentors or women that you've looked for inspiration for in this field while you've been going through?

Cecilia Livingston:

It's really interesting to me that the sort of the female composers who've become really important in my life have generally been colleagues in my own generation. Actually, I just think there are more of us and we're more visible by and large, and I know more of them and there's sort of a sense of solidarity there. Yeah, it's not particularly in the sort of the opera world that I'm getting more and more into - you know, that is certainly a man's world for composers still - it's changing, thank goodness, but it is still predominantly men. I also think it's not a coincidence that I've ended up working with singers a lot because I really ended up making friends and connecting with a lot of young female singers who were at school at the same time as me. And then they would say things like, "can you write me a piece?" And then suddenly this opportunity

opened up for me. So I think female colleagues have been wonderfully supportive along the way. And I think that's exactly what we have to do for each other. You know, we have to amplify each other, we have to help each other to build opportunities for one another. I think *Musique 3 Femmes* is a wonderful example of that. Similarly, the work that you guys are doing in art song, championing female composers.

Kathryn Tremills:

Thanks, Cecilia. That's awesome. So continuing on the topic of women; you've also chosen a lot of known literary female characters, Penelope, who we've spoken about from Homer's *Odyssey*, Lady Macbeth and Anne Frank - can you tell us what draws you to these characters?

Cecilia Livingston:

Well, generally I've read about them myself, and I've been thinking about them and I think they're interesting, and I've been wondering who they are, and who they might've been. You know that I don't know from the way that we talk about them, or the way that they are taught in school. I'm thinking particularly of Lady Macbeth, who - I first read *Macbeth* in school, was interested in her and we never really talked about her. I thought a stupid oversight. So I'm quite intrigued by the idea of characters who audiences might sort of think that they know. And then perhaps there's an opportunity to say, "well, how well do you really know?" And might there be a way to kind of challenge preconceptions that we have around female characters who often don't get a lot of time and the framework of, you know, longer novels or poems. I think Lady Macbeth is a great example of that, same with Penelope - people or characters, figures that are part of the popular imagination, but maybe in a sort of mythic way rather than in a complex way. And that was really what drove the Anne Frank project it's called *Singing Only Softly*, the director of that Alaina Viau came to me and said, "did you know that there were sections of Anne Frank's diary that were redacted because they didn't fit with the image of Anne that her editors wanted to portray at that time?" Then I was fascinated by that idea that there was sort of this much more complex young woman there that we were maybe only starting now to find out about. So what could we do with that? And music does that so well, right? It adds complexity. It sort of gives multidimensionality to text worlds. So it seems like a logical fit for me, although to be quite honest, it's not one I've ever actually consciously thought why, well I will now choose a literary figure. It just sort of happens.

Kathryn Tremills:

It's just who you're drawn to, and I think that's very insightful. And to bring that illumination to the characters that are there, and I mean, honestly, so when I think about having studied these literary characters and not noticing actually not, not actually noticing that these women were just kind of left by the wayside.

You've also set a lot of your husband's works, Duncan McFarlane, and I'm curious how that is working together, what you could speak to about that. And how - I don't know if the experience

is quite different, working together, working with new text as well and collaborating as opposed to setting text that's already there, and that's already been in existence for awhile.

Cecilia Livingston:

I really like working with living writers because I've noticed, I certainly do my best work when there's another creative brain, you know, in the process, right from the get go and someone whose ideas I'm sparking off. That can certainly happen with, you know, canonical writers who are dead or not involved. But there's a real delight in working with another creative imagination, right from the start. I have written my own texts, Penelope being case in point, and that was fine. But I much prefer working with somebody else, having somebody else to bounce ideas around with. And I think it also creates something that can also be a point of assistance. Let me explain what I mean by that. I think if anything is possible, that can be very creatively challenging, but when someone has already started something or put things in motion and you can pick up on them and manipulate them and change them - that can create, I think, a very, very rich creative result and can be, you know, a lot more energizing than just like here is the blank page. You do everything. I know other composers work very differently, but this is, I think, what works for me.

Duncan and I have worked together many times now, which has been hugely fun, challenging. And I think it's quite a unique, within my creative relationships. I think it's quite a unique one because he knows me in the, you know, really, really well. We've had like 1,001 conversations about the things that interest us creatively and artistically. So we kind of don't have to do a lot of that initial legwork. There's quite a rapport of understanding there. One would hope after this many years. I love his poetry. I love his writing because it has just endless layers. Sometimes I'll set things and only realize years later that I was picking up on things I didn't even consciously know were there. And the thing that I find really delightful about it is that he just really, really trusts the composing process.

And I've had one, only one thankfully, time working with a writer who really didn't trust what music could do or really believe, I guess that I could do it. And it was kind of awful for us both, because there was no give and take. Whereas I find with working with Duncan, he will just let me bring in my red pen or say, you know, can we put these lines here? Or, you know, he's just really, really trusting of my intuition and that's a rare privilege. So it's something that I treasure. I feel just totally free.

Kathryn Tremills:

Hmm. As one married to a bass-baritone myself, I can attest to the challenges, but also the magic of knowing each other so well and having that full trust - in our case when we get out on stage.

Cecilia Livingston:

It's kind of a, it's a special, special thing.

Elizabeth McDonald:

So Cecilia, what you don't know about our new podcast series is that we like to change up the tempo to finish things off. And so we've created what we're calling a speed round of questions. Yes. And it's been, I will say it's been amusing for the introverts and the extroverts in the house. Mostly they panic - don't panic. Although I'm not sure you're an introvert, but anyway, we don't have to go there. So I have six questions and basically it's, what's the first things that pops to mind that you're willing to say out loud.

Cecilia Livingston:

Well I will and then regret.

Elizabeth McDonald:

So our first question is what's your favorite place in Canada?

Cecilia Livingston:

Manitoulin Island.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Ooh, that's pretty good. Georgian Bay is so gorgeous. Most cherished music score?

Cecilia Livingston:

Oh gosh, you know, it's probably Gavin Bryar's Incipit Vita Nova for countertenor and string quartet.

Elizabeth McDonald:

All right, I'll have to look that one up. It's worth it.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Okay. Favorite summer drink, because I know it's hot in London right now.

Cecilia Livingston:

I am very partial to a glass of white wine, but I have developed quite a crush on the Aperol spritz.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Ooh...

Cecilia Livingston:

European experience.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Nice, nice. Morning, noon or night for composing?

Cecilia Livingston:

Morning.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Oh, you're our girl. Emily and I's girl. Kate likes the nighttime. Musician you would like to be stranded on a desert Island with?

Cecilia Livingston:

Probably Thom Yorke from Radiohead.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Oh my husband loves you right now.

Emily Martin:

These are some good answers.

Cecilia Livingston:

Huge fan.

Emily Martin:

And I thought I knew you Cecilia, but no I didn't. And that's great.

Elizabeth McDonald:

You know, you've managed to bring up Tom York in almost every interview I've heard you do.

Cecilia Livingston:

Well...

Elizabeth McDonald:

Maybe we'll have to sort something out there. All right. Last question. What professional singer would you like to write for?

Cecilia Livingston:

Oh, I have, I have an answer and I'm just drawing a blank. Drawing a complete blank.

Elizabeth McDonald:

That's hilarious. Describe their face.

Cecilia Livingston:

It's not that - I just can't remember. I'm just drawing to complete this - sidebar. This is what happens because I've really thought about you guys so hard in the last few weeks that nobody else exists.

Emily Martin:

It's all Elizabeth.

Cecilia Livingston:

Actually seriously true. Any chance you can ask me another one?

Elizabeth McDonald:

I think that's hilarious. That's the best answer ever. So in order to wrap things up, why don't you tell our audience where they can find your music, where they can find you online, how they can get in touch with you? What your socials are?

Cecilia Livingston:

Probably the best thing is to go to my website, which is just [CeciliaLivingston.com](http://CeciliaLivingston.com) should be fairly easy to remember. And you can find me on Twitter and Instagram through there. If you want scores, drop me an email. Some are available through the Canadian Music Center, but it's probably quickest during lockdown to ask me, I'm always happy to hear from people who want something to look at. And a lot of my music is on Soundcloud too, if you want to have a listen.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Awesome. Thank you Cecilia for joining us today. We are so grateful to be able to interview our good, our good friends, our good musical friends. So thank you.

Cecilia Livingston:

Thank you.

Kathryn Tremills:

Thank you, Cecilia.

Kathryn Tremills

Thanks for joining us for this interview with Cecilia Livingston. We will wrap up with an excerpt from "Give Me Your Hand", inspired by the sleepwalking scene of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The text is by Cecilia's husband Duncan McFarlane, performed by mezzo soprano Blythe Gaissert and pianist Kelly Horsted.