

# Arts & Entertainment

## MOTET CHAMBER CHOIR

# Songs that last in the ever-changing world

**MICHAEL GURNEY**  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

A Vancouver-based chamber ensemble under the direction of its founder and Gibsons resident David Poon presented nearly 500 years of sacred choral music during a performance at St. Hilda's Anglican Church in Sechelt on Jan. 3.

The MOTET choir was founded in 2014 by Poon. The group has sung its "Twelve Days of Christmas" concert at venues in Vancouver and the Sunshine Coast annually, with the exception of a cancellation last year due to COVID-19.

After accompanying the singers' entry procession on the pipe organ, Poon joined the singers onstage. The eight-member chorale sang without its full complement due to the illness of several vocalists.

"Omicron plus the snow did a number on us this year," said Poon, "but we've learned the music and we wanted to sing it. Really, it's a joy to sing this music. I'm a little biased because I picked all of it."

The program featured a blend of unaccompanied Gregorian chant and familiar seasonal songs with ancient European roots.

Poon assembled the group of singers from among his friends and



MOTET in performance at St. Hilda's Anglican Church.

SARAH POON PHOTO

other choirs he accompanies or leads. MOTET differs from his day-to-day responsibilities as assistant director of music at St. John's Vancouver Anglican Church. The ensemble is, Poon explains, "project-based"—its members gather several times each year to prepare performances that are steeped

in the history and liturgy of the Catholic tradition.

Arrangement of the musical numbers reflected the custom of a 12-day festival beginning on Christmas Day. "Some of these are not strictly Christmas music but I think they should be," said Poon, who introduced each work

with a short historical sketch.

The dozen selections performed by the choir were inspired by figures and events from the history of the Christian church. A text sung to commemorate the birth of Jesus—"Corede natus ex parentis"—was written more than a century before the fall of

the Roman Empire by the poet Aurelius Prudentius, and set to a melody from the Middle Ages.

A contemporary arrangement of "The Huron Carol" by Canadian composer Sarah MacDonald was paired with a translation by David Poon himself of Jean de Brébeuf's original text. The conventional English version, Poon said, "is a little romantic, a little awkward, a mishmash" of different Indigenous cultures.

In MacDonald's arrangement, sopranos sing bird-like intervals over the solemn melody carried by male vocalists, echoing the soaring descants of Gregorian chant while adding naturalistic colour.

"Some things last," said Poon in an interview with the *Coast Reporter* as his choristers exchanged their modest black uniforms for winter jackets and scarves. "But the world changes. And so we have ancient texts set to new melodies, and they are equally wonderful. We are embracing the things that have held fast but also adapting things to the current day."

MOTET will return to the Sunshine Coast in early April for its performance of "The Rosary Project" at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Gibsons. The concert will feature music for peaceful meditation.

## ART BEAT

# 2022 Art Crawl applications open

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The Sunshine Coast Art Crawl 2021 featured 164 venues, of which 46 were first-time artists or studios that opened their doors to the public over three days in October. The Coast Cultural Alliance, which coordinates the event, has posted video highlights which are accessible via

its website: [suncoastarts.com/art-crawl/](http://suncoastarts.com/art-crawl/).

The application period for 2022 participants has begun. The 2022 Sunshine Coast Art Crawl will be held Oct. 21 to 23. Registration details are available at [suncoastarts.com](http://suncoastarts.com). All participating artists must be a member of the Coast Cultural Alliance at the time of application.

## New exhibit at Gibsons Public Art Gallery

Roberts Creek artist Mieke Jay opens an exhibit this week at the Gibsons Public Art Gallery. The Fabric of Our Lives is an interactive multimedia project that invites visitors to explore digital realities through immersive video projection.

Jay will be in attendance this Saturday, Jan. 15 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Viewers can move throughout the exhibit, becoming living canvas for light and colour.

The Gibsons Public Art Gallery is located at 431 Marine Drive, Gibsons.

The Fabric of Our Lives runs through to Feb. 6. Details are available at [gpag.ca](http://gpag.ca).

## Watercolour classes offered

Sunshine Coast watercolour painter Roberta Mauel launches a weekly class dedicated to painting in watercolour this Saturday, Jan. 15 at the Arts Building in Gibsons.

This is an introductory course for those unfamiliar with the medium.

Participants will learn watercolour techniques and brush strokes by creating a series of simple

paintings.

Roberta has lived on the Sunshine Coast for the past 25 years but also draws inspiration from time spent in Europe, Egypt, Syria, Zambia, Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau and Brazil.

A gallery of her works is available online at [robertamauel.ca](http://robertamauel.ca).

Workshop cost, registration information and other details are available online at [suncoastarts.com](http://suncoastarts.com).



# 2022 Sunshine Coast Wedding Magazine

Reserve your spot by Feb 1 for our Feb 25 publication.

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