

## Panel Discussion: Music and Climate Activism

### Moderator:

Kirsten Hedegaard: Director, The EcoVoice Project; Faculty, Loyola University Chicago  
kirsten@ecovoiceproject.org

### Panelists:

Bill Bargemann: Member, Left Coast Labor Chorus, blbargeman@gmail.com  
Barb Coward: Member, Left Coast Labor Chorus and Resisters, cawardbarb@hotmail.com  
Jason Davis: Director, Climate Stories Project, jason@climatestoriesproject.org  
Anne Harley: Faculty, Scripps College, Aharley@scrippscollege.edu  
Luke Wallace: Singer-songwriter, lukewallacemusic@gmail.com

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In recent years, there has been a growing trend to address contemporary social concerns through music. This proliferation of music-making in pursuit of social justice is permeating many genres and addressing a wide range of important issues, most critically, climate change. This panel will explore several ways in which musicians are creatively pursuing climate activism through musical means.

Following a brief introduction to the growing movement of music and climate activism, each panelist will share examples of their work, which collectively showcase the diverse ways in which musicians are engaging with this promising avenue of climate activism. With varied backgrounds and musical interests, the panelists will share work that spans labor chorus initiatives, classical music performance, activist folk music, and imaginative composition exploring people's personal climate narratives. Members of the panel will also address three primary questions:

- 1) Why is music especially well-suited to engaging with the topic of climate change?
- 2) What are examples of the impact this work has had/ is having?
- 3) What is challenging about creating music that engages audiences with climate change?

This session will benefit scholars, artists, students, and a general audience interested in using music and the arts to facilitate communication around the climate crisis. A secondary goal of this panel is to inspire attendees to consider how personal talents and skills can intersect with the climate crisis, yielding creative and distinctive paths for climate activism. Participatory musicking will permeate the discussion, with an invitation for all to engage with this repertoire.

### About the Panelists



**Bill Bargemann** has been a member of the Left Coast Labour Chorus since its inception in 2014. He is a retired high school teacher and Past President of the Vancouver Secondary Teachers Association local of the BC Teachers' Federation.

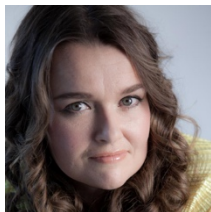


**Barb Coward** taught EASL for 30 years at Douglas College, and on retirement took on urban farming and singing for social change. Her passion for animals and plants has been lifelong. Singing in the streets with Left Coast Labour Chorus and her feminist quartet, the Re:Sisters, is her joy. She believes songs reach the heart of our humanity in a way that plain speech cannot. For that reason, she thinks artistic expression needs to be centered in the struggle for all aspects of climate, social and political justice.

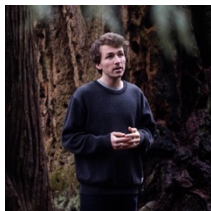
The Left Coast Labour Chorus is a group of 30 plus singers who merge their voices and activism in their music. The original members came from a labour background and their repertoire came from a rich tradition of labour and social justice songs. In recent years the chorus has widened its focus to songs and inspirations for dealing with the climate crisis. In addition to being seen at picket lines they now appear at climate rallies and protests. The conductor is Peggy Hua, a musician and conductor who leads a number of different choirs in Vancouver.



**Jason Davis** is the Director of the Climate Stories Project. Jason is a musician, environmental educator, and leader of the environmental sound and improvisation ensemble Earthsound. He teaches music and environmental studies at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. In fall 2022 he served as the Basler Chair at East Tennessee State University. He holds a Doctorate in music from McGill University in Montreal and has Master's degrees in Music and Ecology. Jason was inspired to create the Climate Stories Project from listening to *Different Trains* by composer Steve Reich, a piece which uses recorded interviews to explore the very different experiences of people traveling by train in the US and in Europe during World War II.



Canadian-American **Anne Harley** is a director, performer, educator and scholar, serving on faculty at Scripps College, where she has led the voice area and has taught music history and interdisciplinary humanities since 2009. As part of her research, teaching, and service, she regularly leads projects uniting faculty, students, community groups, and visiting scholars from various disciplines in the creation of new music about pressing civic issues such as climate change and social justice. Harley's solo performances appear on Hänssler Profil, Naxos, Sony Classics, Canteloupe, Musica Omnia, einKlang, Bridge Records, and BMOP/sound, among others.



**Luke Wallace** is a songwriter, speaker, choral arranger and environmental champion from the Coast Salish Territory known as Vancouver, Canada. For 10 years Luke has been touring, recording, fundraising and organizing for people and the planet. In 2023, Luke was a feature performer at the United Nations Water Conference, the first of its kind in a generation. Luke has performed hundreds of concerts all over North America and spends much of his time speaking in schools about hope in the face of climate change. Luke's performance history includes the Vancouver Folk Festival, Salmon Arm Roots and Blues, Vancouver Island Music Festival and multiple independent US tours.

### About the Moderator



**Kirsten Hedegaard** has enjoyed a varied career as a singer, conductor, and scholar. Currently Director of Choral and Vocal Activities at Loyola University, Hedegaard is interested in bringing together musicians and artists to explore how the arts can support environmental education and action. She is Artistic Director and Co-founder of the EcoVoice Project, which uses music and interdisciplinary collaboration to inform, connect, and inspire people to act for environmentally just causes. As an arts organization designed to bring awareness to climate change and environmental issues through musical performance, the EcoVoice Project connects musicians, interdisciplinary artists, scientists, and community members through a series of concerts, guest speakers, outreach, and civic engagement.