

Ephemera Ballads

Booking
for Spring
2025



Composer Emily Pinkerton partners with fivebyfive on a new chamber-folk piece that tells stories of bodily autonomy, gender identity and reproductive rights in folk poetry.

Ephemera Ballads is grounded in archival work on 18th and 19th century broadside ballads, a form of street literature (or “ephemera”) where women figured prominently in printed sheets of poetry crafted by male songsters. True to the title, the theme of the “ephemeral” is central to this song cycle: moving from incorporeal to corporeal, invisible to visible, impermanent to permanent.

Written for soprano, fiddle, banjo, flute, clarinet, piano, electric guitar and upright bass, Ephemera Ballads creates eerie, shimmering textures and draws from idiosyncrasies of phrasing in North American folksong. Performers create the “in the moment” heterophony of a banjo-fiddle duet with a score that combines fixed passages with emergent elements that respond to the story being sung.



Emily Pinkerton is a performer, composer and researcher who has spent over 25 years immersed in folk revival communities in North and South America. She has a professional trajectory in classical and folk circuits, creating original songs for her ensemble The Early Mays (#1, National Folk-DJ charts, featured on NPR’s Mountain Stage) and composing chamber-folk pieces for New Amsterdam Records (Rounder Songs) and Quantum Theatre (Looking for Violeta). www.EmilyPinkerton.com

Based in Rochester, NY, **fivebyfive** is an award-winning, artist-led ensemble garnering national attention with awards from Chamber Music America, New Music USA, and New York State Council on the Arts. The group is known for impeccable musicianship and an adventurous spirit that permeates innovative, cross-genre programming and community engagement. They have the prowess and flexibility to partner with Emily to create a chamber ensemble that functions like a folk/old-time band. www.fivebyfivemusic.com



Contact:

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Outreach activities include hands-on poetry workshops where Emily teaches the rhythms and rhymes of various broadside forms, and participants write their own modern ballads.