

## ***THE MYSTERIES*** (working title) **Backgrounder**

### **The inspiration for *The Mysteries***

Ann Mortiffee’s songs, books, workshops and keynote talks draw upon spiritual traditions from around the world. She has lived in 5 different countries and travelled to 68 others.

Greece is one of Ann’s favourite places. While learning about Greek culture she was intrigued to find out that for two thousand years all Greek citizens were initiated into a special rite, the Eleusinian Mysteries. The rite was centered on the myth of the great mother goddess Demeter and her beloved daughter Persephone, who was abducted to the underworld.

The more Ann thought about the pivotal role that the myth played in ancient Greece, the more she became convinced that the myth reflected the time in history when the feminine spirit was disempowered. Taken underground, as Persephone was, the feminine spirit ceased to be honoured and valued. In the myth, Demeter’s grief over the loss of her daughter causes a cataclysm and the earth begins to die.

In what Oprah Winfrey would call an “ah-ha moment” Ann realized that the myth was essentially a foreshadowing of what is happening today. The feminine spirit around the world has been dominated by and subjected to the masculine spirit. And the environment is in crisis.

Ann was inspired to present the myth in musical form and to re-vision its message for contemporary audiences.



## The Creators of *The Mysteries*

As the concept for a musical based on the myth of Demeter and Persephone evolved, Ann called upon her trusted collaborator **David Feinstein**. David is the ground-breaking psychologist with whom Ann wrote her acclaimed [Serenade at the Doorway](#) album. He has a deep interest in mythology and, as an excellent listener, he became her sounding board for ideas and inspiration.



*Ann talks and David listens at a workshop they co-presented several years ago*

While Ann was working on the story and the lyrics she often spoke with him about the challenges and breakthroughs she was experiencing. David instinctively knew when to comment and when to sit quietly and allow her creative stream to flow.

Once the book and songs were written Ann had no question as to who would work with her on the musical scores. She and **Edward Henderson**, her long-time musical collaborator and dear friend, have lived and breathed music for the entirety of their award-winning careers. For *The Mysteries* they spent hundreds hours on voice and instrumentation scores and arrangements for 40 songs in a variety of genres.



*Ed and Ann on the day that they completed the piano and vocal score for *The Mysteries*.*

## How the Goddess Demeter became Involved

Mid-way through creating *The Mysteries* Ann spent a few days in Ashland, Oregon. While she was there she enjoyed several great discussions with the notable author and scholar **Jean Houston** at Jean's home. The two of them spoke at length about the goddess Demeter, who was worshipped at the temple in Eleusis.

One day Jean said to Ann, "I have a gift for you."

She reached over and handed Ann a small stone statue, unadorned, about 6 inches in height. "This is the goddess Demeter." said Jean. "She was excavated from the temple at Eleusis about 500 years ago."



A small statue of Demeter, unearthed from the ruins of the Temple of Demeter in Eleusis, sits to Ann's left on the piano.

To Ann it was a powerful affirmation that the time is right to re-vision the ancient myth for modern times.

For more information visit [annmortifee.com](http://annmortifee.com).

### Contact:

Barbara Constantine  
Communications Director, ESKOVA Enterprises  
604-876-0156 | [bconstantine@shaw.ca](mailto:bconstantine@shaw.ca)