



Cambridge Chamber Singers

Raymond E. Fahrner
Music Director

Sweet Sounds of Spring!

8:00 PM, Saturday, June 19, 2021
Old West Church, Boston

Cambridge Chamber Singers

Soprano 1

Julia Garrett
Rose Hegele
Erin McDermott

Soprano 2

Hinako Kawabe
Bailey Kerr
Suzy Liebert
Carolyn Roosevelt

Alto

Chelsea Kryspin
Bina Pliskin

Tenor

Tom Barber
Stephen Bart
Nathan Sobel

Bass

Paul Harter
Adam Jaffe
John MacDougall
Steven Mondloch
Chris Porter



William Byrd

Cambridge Chamber Singers

Celebrating its 40th season, the Cambridge Chamber Singers has distinguished itself with innovative and diverse programming, yearly commissions and premieres, and collaborations, including those with Richard Stoltzman, Renaissance, the Nature Conservancy and Amnesty International. Based in Cambridge, the ensemble has performed throughout the Boston area and on local radio and television broadcasts, as well as in Canada, Germany, Switzerland and Italy. In the summer of 2007 the group performed their *Centennial Tribute to the MacDowell Colony* on the Millennium Stage of the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. The Cambridge Chamber Singers has released three CDs: *Pour le temps de Noël*, featuring French Christmas music, *Madrigalia!* and Duruflé's *Requiem*, for chorus and orchestra. The ensemble was one of eight adult choruses - and the only classical one - to be featured on the second and third seasons of WGBH-TV's *Sing that Thing!*

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Old West Church
131 Cambridge Street
Boston, Massachusetts

Program

Hark! Did ye ever hear so sweet a singing? Thomas Hunt
(c. 1580 - 1658)

All creatures now John Bennet
(c. 1575 - c. 1614)

Though Amaryllis Dance William Byrd
(1543 - 1623)



O Primavera Claudio Monteverdi
(1567 - 1643)

Il bianco e dolce cigno Jacob Arcadelt
(c. 1505 - 1568)

Io dico e dissi Cipriano de Rore
(1516 - 1565)

Non piú guerra Claudio Monteverdi



Sleep, Fleshly Birth Robert Ramsey
(c. 1595 - 1644)

Intermission

In These Delightful Pleasant Groves

Henry Purcell
(1659 - 1695)

O Lord, in thy wrath rebuke me not

Orlando Gibbons
(1583 - 1625)



Never weatherbeaten sail

Charles H. H. Parry
(1848 - 1918)

There is an Old Belief

Charles H. H. Parry

Better music ne'er was known

Charles H. H. Parry



Peace I Leave with You

Amy Beach
(1867 - 1944)



The Cambridge Chamber Singers invites you to a post-concert reception.

Raymond E. Fahrner, Music Director

Conductor, composer, and arts administrator Raymond E. Fahrner celebrates his 33rd season directing the Cambridge Chamber Singers. During this time he has brought to light 39 world premieres and over 100 American premieres, including those of Gyorgy Ligeti. Fahrner has conducted musicians as disparate as clarinetist Richard Stoltzman and Joey McIntyre of *New Kids on the Block*. He has also conducted the Old Stoughton Musical Society, the Boston Chamber Ensemble, the Jamaica Plain Symphony, the Greater Marlborough Symphony Orchestra, the Cape Cod Community College Chorus, and the Colleges of the Fenway Chorus and Jazz Band, where he was Director of Performing Arts for fourteen years. An award-winning composer and fellow of the MacDowell Colony, his compositions include works for orchestra, chorus, jazz band, television and theater, including *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, for which he was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Composers Fellowship. In 2012 his *The Turning Point*, for orchestra, was released on Ravello Records. In November of 2015, he and poet Bill Yarrow released a CD, *Pointed Music*, and their progressive rock album, *Blasphemer*, was released in 2020. <https://billyarrow.hearnow.com>

Program Note

Welcome back! We are delighted to be singing for you tonight! We offer a reflection - both celebratory and grief-struck - of our time apart. Our hope is that these musical expressions and our gathering for this concert portend present and prospective joys!

This year, abridged as it has been, marks the 40th anniversary of the Cambridge Chamber Singers, which was founded as the Cambridge Madrigal Singers. (Mark your calendars for the anniversary party/concert in early December.) In light of this, we return to our roots: madrigals, English and Italian - accompanied by some sacred Renaissance music, for contrast and context. These are garnished with three Romantic part songs - with special significance - by Charles H. H. Parry.

Though we are a small chorus, we still make bold to perform madrigals, which were originally performed as “part songs,” with one on a part. Furthermore, these late Renaissance madrigals are characterized by their subject matter: secular, and usually about love in all of its guises, including manic, affectionate, and (most often) erotic.

As to the music of a madrigal, it is characterized by a playfulness called text painting. This is musical representation of the words. At its simplest, if the text is about birds, the music imitates birds. Or, as with Handel in his *Messiah*, if referring to heaven the music goes up, or if about crucifixion the music is dissonant. But composers also use text painting humorously, ironically, and philosophically, to great effect. Many Renaissance Christmas motets use obvious dissonance on the birth scene, and more dissonance on references to salvation, foreshadowing the pain of Christ’s death. These notes will point out some of the text painting in tonight’s concert, but the fun is in finding it yourself!

Hark! Did ye ever hear so sweet a singing?

In 1601, in the 45th year of Queen Elizabeth’s reign, a collection of madrigals was published by Thomas Morley, entitled *The Triumphs of Oriana*. Oriana was a nickname for the queen, and the last two lines of every madrigal in the book were, “Long live fair Oriana!” The obvious goal of the publication was to kiss bustle, so to speak (although bustles did not come into fashion until Queen Victoria...). Back to the music, no. 14 in the book was this piece by obscure composer Thomas Hunt.

The work begins with three measures of harking, imitating an excited crowd. It continues with pleasant, if undistinguished, text and music. This sets up a brief section that is unique and astounding. On the phrase “there was a note well taken,” Hunt composes amazing and ironic wrong-note music, filled with unusual harmonies and dissonances. A note well taken, indeed! Briefly harking back to the opening, the composer then lavishes - repeatedly - regal praise, concluding with the requisite Oriana couplet. Well dittied!

Hark! Did ye ever hear so sweet a singing?
They sing young love to waken,
The nymphs unto the woods, their queen are bringing.
There was a note well taken.
Hark! O good! O most divinely dittied:
A queen and song most excellently fitted.
I never saw a fairer, I never heard a rarer.
Then sang the nymphs and shepherds of Diana:
Long live fair Oriana!

All creatures now

Yet another obscure English madrigalist, John Bennet did have friends in high places. So he, also, was invited to compose a work for *The Triumphs of Oriana*. Bennet's offering is straightforward and merry (merry, merry, merry...).

Diana, well known as the goddess of the hunt, was also the goddess of the countryside, the underworld, the moon, fertility, and childbirth. (This is curious, as she was a "virgin," as was Queen Elizabeth.). As to the nymphs who followed her, these were wood (especially oak) nymphs, aka dryads. They were very shy, except around Diana. Apparently, they drove shepherds crazy. *All creatures now* has a bunch of them fa-la-la-ing, with echo effect! And Bennet cannot resist some brief text painting on the hovering birds.

As far as shepherds go, Pan was their god, and the god of rustic music and the wild. Having horns and hindquarters of a goat, he was associated with sex. (You knew we'd get there eventually.). He pandered to the nymphs.

All creatures now are merry minded,
The shepherd's daughters playing,
the nymphs are falalaing.
Yon bugle was well winded.
At Oriana's presence each thing smileth.
The flow'rs themselves discover,
Birds over her do hover,
Music the time beguileth,
See where she comes,
with flow'ry garlands crowned,
Queen of all queens renowned.

Then sang the shepherds and
nymphs of Diana,
Long live fair Oriana!

Though Amaryllis Dance

William Byrd (1532-1623) was the first great English composer, and he remains in the top three (with Purcell and Britten?). Besides being talented and prolific (about 470 compositions and seven children), he knew how to get along with powerful people. He wrote music for both Anglican and Catholic services, at a time when the wrong religion was generally a career breaker, if not a neck breaker. He found such favor with Queen Elizabeth that she granted Byrd and his teacher, Thomas Tallis — of *Spem in Alium* fame — a patent for the printing of all music in England for 21 years!

Not all love is requited. Some shepherds are unfulfilled. *Though Amaryllis Dance* tells this sad tale. Since the piece uses the same music for five verses, it is difficult to text paint. So Byrd works with the concept of dance, and writes rhythmically spirited music which alternates between three-four and six-eight. The refrain settles into three-four, announcing "chill love no more." This is an obsolete dialect for "I will love no more."

Though Amaryllis dance in green,
like fairy queen,
and sing full clear,
Corinna can with smiling cheer:
yet since their eyes make heart so sore,
hey ho, chill love no more.

My sheep are lost for want of food,
and I so wood:
that all the day,
I sit and watch a herdmaid gay:
who laughs to see me sigh so sore,
hey ho, chill love no more.

Her loving looks, her beauty bright,
is such delight:
that all in vain,
I love to like, and lose my gain:
for her that thanks me not therefore,
hey ho, chill love no more.

Ah wanton eyes my friendly foes,
and cause of woes:
your sweet desire,
breeds flames of ice and freeze in fire:
ye scorn to see me weep so sore,
hey ho, chill love no more.

Love ye who list I force him not,
sit God it wot,
the more I wail,
the less my sighs and tears prevail,
what shall I do but say therefore,
hey ho, chill love no more.

O Primavera

The Italian madrigal was the precursor to the English madrigal, originating in the early 1500s. Compared to the English species, it is more contrapuntal, more dramatic, and more erotic. The eroticism is often thinly veiled with mythological allegories.

Claudio Monteverdi is the towering tree of the Italian musical garden. The first great opera composer and the master of new Baroque music ideas, he wrote nine books of madrigals, from 1587 through his death in 1643. *O primavera*, from *Book III*, evokes, as is common, the joy and energy of spring. But this time there's a dramatic twist. The first indication of something tragic is on the words "With you are not returning the bright and lucky days of my joys." The music becomes slower and darker, with only the three lowest voices. The joyous music pushes back, but a proportionally long section reestablishes the dark mood, and the cause is stated. "I am not that one that once I was, so valued in the eyes of others." We understand that this value is that of love, now "lost treasure's memory."

O primavera, gioventù dell'anno,
 Bella madre de' fiori,
 D'erbe novelle e di novelli amori!
 Tu torni ben, ma teco
 Non tornano i sereni
 e fortunati di delle mie gioie.
 Tu torni ben, tu torni,
 Ma teco altro non torna,
 Che del perduto mio caro tesoro
 La rimembranza misera e dolente.
 Tu quella sei, pur quella
 Ch'eri pur dianzi
 sì vezzosa e bella.
 Ma non son io quel,
 che già un tempo fui,
 Sì caro agli occhi altrui.

Oh springtime, youth of the year,
 beautiful mother of flowers,
 of new plants and of new loves,
 you return indeed, but with you
 are not returning the bright
 and lucky days of my joys.
 You return indeed, you return,
 but with you, otherwise, is returning
 only my dear lost treasure's
 memory, sad and sorrowful.
 You are that one, indeed that one
 that you were not long ago,
 so lovely and beautiful,
 But I am not that one
 that once I was,
 so valued in the eyes of others.

Il bianco e dolce cigno

An early madrigalist, Arcadelt hailed from Flanders, as did many an Italian composer of the time. As a transplant, he took root in Florence in the 1520's, where he grew into *the* most famous early madrigalist. Though this piece is contemplative in spirit, the death=orgasm madrigalian tradition should never be overlooked. "Death... fills me all full with joy and desire." Of special note is the wonderfully elegant imitative section on the words "*di mille morte....*"

Il bianco e dolce cigno cantando more,
 et io piangendo
 giungo al fin del viver mio.
 Strano e diversa sorte
 ch'ei more sconsolato,
 Et io moro beato.
 Morte, che nel morire
 Mi empie di gioia tutto e di desire.
 Se nel morir altro dolor non sento
 Di mille morte il di
 sarei contento.

The white and sweet swan dies singing,
 And I, weeping,
 reach the end of my life.
 Strange and diverse fate,
 that he dies unconsoled,
 And I die blessed.
 Death, which in dying
 fills me full of joy and desire.
 If in dying no other pain I feel,
 With a thousand deaths a day
 I would be content.

Io dico e dissi

Io dico is another earlier madrigal, by another superb Flemish-Italian composer, Cipriano de Rore. It is in three voices, and almost sacred, in its reflection, summarized, "Better to have loved and lost..." Text painting has been distilled to individual phrases and gestures. The words "I say" are distinct whole notes. "I live" is set to active, ornamented notes. And "needs not lament" is set clearly and ironically.

Io dico, et dissi et diro sin ch'io viva
 che chi si trov' indegno leccio predo,
 se ben di se vede sua donna schiva,
 s'en tutt' avvers' al suo desir acceso,
 se ben Amor, se ben Amor,
 d'ogni merced il priva,
 pesca ch'el tempo la fatic'ha speso
 pur ch'altamente, habbia locat' il core,
 pianger non de se ben languisce more.

I say, I said, and, while I live, will say,
 He, who is fettered by a worthy chain,
 Though his desire his lady should gainsay,
 And, every way averse, his suit disdain;
 Though Love deprive him of all praised pay,
 After long time and trouble spent in vain,
 He, if his heart he placed well worthily,
 Needs not lament
 though he should waste and die.

Non piú guerra

With *Book IV*, published in 1603 when Monteverdi was 36, we sense changes in both quality and style. There seems a new-found, almost theatric quality to the madrigals. Note that Monteverdi's first, and *the* first extant, opera, *Orfeo*, was written in 1607. *Non piú guerra* starts with martial music: the battle (of the sexes) is ongoing, with military and gruesome poetic images. On the words "Do you want me to die?" the texture and color of the music change dramatically. All voices are extremely low. This moment is unparalleled in madrigalian history. Perhaps the darkness and low register implies Hades. Our lover comes fighting back, but with a resigned, parting shot of "it's your loss, too."

Non piú guerra, pietate,
pietate, occhi miei belli,
occhi miei trionfanti!
A che v'armate
contr'un cor ch'è già preso,
e vi si rende?
Ancidete i rubelli,
ancidete chi s'arma e
si difende,
non chi, vinto, v'adora.

Volete voi ch'io mora?
Morrò pur vostro, e del morir l'affanno
sentirò sí,
ma sarà vostr'il danno.

No more fighting--mercy,
mercy, lovely eyes of mine,
triumphant eyes!
Why do you take up arms
against a heart already
surrendered and taken?
Slaughter the rebels,
slaughter him who dons armor and
defends himself,
not him who, conquered, adores you.

You want me to die?
Then yours I shall die; and the torment of
dying I shall certainly feel,
but the loss will be yours.

Sleep, Fleshly Birth

Text painting is no less frequently found in serious music, as this lovely motet by Robert Ramsey illustrates throughout the piece. *Sleep* opens with no melody, just sustained notes. The basses go low to earth. "The music of the spheres" is set to more melodic, imitative singing. "Doleful," predictably, is more dissonant, as is "weeping." The rhythm changes to three, symbolizing the Trinity (= spiritual = heaven) on "we'll part [the earth] and meet [in heaven]." Descending lines imitate the bestrewing of flowers and the falling of tears..

The final section gives us more information: a young person, "sweet youth," has died. While the rhythm is restful, the harmonies are troubled. The tear motive is repeated, hoping for "soul and body to meet again."

Sleep, fleshly birth, in peaceful earth,
and let thine ears list to the music of the spheres,
while we around this fairy ground
thy doleful obit keeping,
make marble melt with weeping.
With num'rous feet we'll part and meet.
Then chorus-like in a ring thy praises sing,
while show'rs of flow'rs bestrew thee,
we'll thus with tears bedew thee.
Rest in soft peace, sweet youth, and there remain
'till soul and body meet to join again.

In These Delightful Pleasant Groves

We continue our madrigal history tour with Henry Purcell's joyous *In these delightful pleasant groves*, composed when he was 17. Originally written for stage, as part of Thomas Shadwell's *The Libertine* (1676), this late English madrigal captures the excitement of "happy loves." Note the setting of the word "laugh."

In these delightful pleasant Groves,
Let us Celebrate our happy Love.
Let's Pipe and Dance,
and Laugh and Sing,
Thus ev'ry living thing,
Revel in the cheerful Spring.

O Lord, in thy wrath rebuke me not

Orlando Gibbons, the leading English composer in 1625, died relatively young, at the age of 41. His output, therefore, is smaller than that of his contemporaries, but of notable and lasting quality. Tonight's program features one sacred piece and one madrigal.

The opening of this glorious six-voice motet uses the words of an angry, suffering Psalmist. Dissonance abounds, with fourteen suspensions in the first section alone. The musical line descends in humility when asking for mercy. Then the texture changes abruptly, from six parts to three, on the words "for I am weak." Anger and dissonance return, as does the "have mercy" motive on "O, save me."

O Lord, in thy wrath rebuke me not:
neither chasten me in thy displeasure.
Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak:
O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.
My soul is also sore troubled:
but, Lord, how long wilt thou punish me?
O save me, for thy mercy's sake.

Never weatherbeaten sail

In 1916, at the age of 68, Charles H. H. Parry began a set of six part songs entitled *Songs of Farewell*. The title was prescient, as Parry was to die shortly after completing the set in 1918, of the Spanish Flu. Tonight we perform numbers three and four. These songs are performed in memory of the many who died from the current pandemic.

Never weatherbeaten sail uses words by Thomas Campion, a contemporary of the English composers on the program earlier tonight. Not to be outdone by his forebears, Parry does not miss an opportunity to text paint.

Weatherbeaten - The rhythms do not coincide between the parts.
Affected slumber - The music calms.
Sprite [spirit] now longs to fly - Melodies soar upward.
Come quickly - Second sopranos repeat the words five times, pleading.
Rest - Chord is a long, soft, C major.

But this is not simply a parlor trick. Parry's music is dramatic and expressive because he balances the words with the lyric grace of the melodies and well chosen harmonies.

Never weather-beaten sail more willing bent to shore.
Never tired pilgrim's limbs affected slumber more,
Than my wearied sprite now longs to fly out of my troubled breast:
O come quickly, sweetest Lord, and take my soul to rest.

Ever blooming are the joys of Heaven's high Paradise.
Cold age deafs not there our ears nor vapour dims our eyes:
Glory there the sun outshines whose beams the blessed only see:
O come quickly, glorious Lord, and raise my sprite to thee!

There is an Old Belief

No. 4 of *Songs of Farewell* is a moving statement of belief, and a stunning balance of word and music. On the words “beyond the sphere of Time and Sin and Fate’s control,” Parry writes music looking to the future, with extended harmonies and fresh chord changes. The dramatic conclusion closes with a plagal cadence (the “amen cadence”), a gesture of faith and humility.

There is an old belief,
That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief
Dear friends shall meet once more.

Beyond the sphere of Time
And Sin and Fate's control,
Serene in changeless prime
Of body and of soul.

That creed I fain would keep
That hope I'll ne'er forgo,
Eternal be the sleep,
If not to waken so.

Better music ne'er was known

This piece, from earlier in Parry’s life, implores us to relax; enjoy life, love, and song; and keep laughing! The text painting is used for humor. The music for “smooth and plain” jumps around, for instance, and it moves up sequentially on “he shall rise.” As far as heigh ho, Merriam-Webster states, “used typically to express boredom, weariness, or sadness or sometimes as a cry of encouragement.” “Before the hour of dying,” one wonders which!

Better music ne'er was known,
Than a pair of hearts in one.
Let each other that hath been
Troubled with the gall or spleen,
Learn of us to keep his brow
Smooth and plain as ours are now.
Sing, though before the hour of dying
He shall rise, and then be crying,
Heigh ho! 'Tis naught but mirth
That keeps the body from the earth.

Peace I Leave with You

We conclude tonight's program with a most relevant prayer for peace by Boston composer Amy Beach.

Peace I leave with you,
my peace I give unto you.
Not as the world giveth give I unto you.
Let not your heart be troubled.



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Our audience!



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