

CERDDORION

VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Kristina Boerger

Artistic Director

PRESENTS

Ein Spiegel:

German-Romantic Part Songs and
their Contemporary Reflections



Sunday, February 22, 2009—3 P.M.
Church of the Good Shepherd
4967 Broadway
New York, New York

Saturday, February 28, 2009—8 P.M.
St. Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church
87th Street and West End Avenue
New York, New York

CERDDORION

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Heather Cooper
Bonny Hart
Amy Litt
Cathy Markoff
Ellen Schorr
Wendy See

ALTOS

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Linnea Johnson
Myrna Nachman
Nora Ryan
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Gretta Wren

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Michael Klitsch
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Chris Ryan
Marty Silverberg

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Dale Rejtmar
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For further information about Cerddorion,
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The Program

She Who Writes

from *Gartenlieder*

Im Herbst
Abendlich schon rauscht der Wald
Im Wald

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel
(1805–1847)



Rossetti Nursery Rhymes

I. I dreamt I caught a little owl
II. Dead in the cold
III. Love me, I love you

George Tsontakis
(b. 1951)

Conducted by Nathaniel LaNasa
Conducting Apprentice



Rossignol

Die Nachtigall

from Opus 59, No. 4

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809–1847)

Alba

Robert Dennis
(b. 1933)



The Four Seasons

Frühzeitiger Frühling

from Opus 59, No. 2

Felix Mendelssohn

Bredon Hill

Richard Peaslee
(b. 1930)

Herbsttag

Kristina Boerger
(b. 1965)

Herbstlied

Felix Mendelssohn

from Opus 48, No. 6



Vox Populi

from *Volkslieder*, Op. 34/35

Erlaube mir
Mit Lust tät ich ausreiten
Abschiedslied
Ach lieber Herre Jesu Christ
Schnitter Tod

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)



Five Kurpian Songs (Opus 75)

Henryk Górecki
(b. 1933)

*After tonight's performance, please come downstairs to meet and greet
your favorite Cerddorion members at our festive reception! All are invited.*

Join us for some music, dance, food, and fun!

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Join us for wine, hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, and special live music and group dance instruction (no experience necessary!) Proceeds will support our 2009–2010 concert season, as well as help fund the commission of a new work by New York composer Julie Dolphin.

Wednesday, March 25, 2009, 6:00–8:30 P.M.

At New York City Center
130 West 56th Street (between 6th and 7th Avenue), 4th floor

Tickets available at \$65, \$125, or \$250

For information: 212-260-1498, or visit www.cerddorion.net.

CERDDORION

NOW IN ITS FOURTEENTH SEASON, CERDDORION is one of New York's most highly regarded volunteer choral ensembles. A chamber group of twenty-eight mixed voices, it is known for its eclectic repertoire, encompassing music from the Renaissance to the contemporary. Audiences have come to appreciate the group's interpretive depth and technical excellence in many styles.

Besides presenting its own varied programs, Cerddorion is frequently invited to perform with other acclaimed artists. Past collaborations include: the North American premiere of Sir John Tavener's all-night vigil, *The Veil of the Temple*, performed at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall (with Dessoif Choral Consortium and choristers from London's Temple Church); several appearances with the Christopher Caines Dance Company; baroque opera performances with the early music instrumental ensemble Concert Royal; and serving as the resident teaching ensemble for the Dennis Keene Choral Festival in Kent, Connecticut.

In 2006, Cerddorion presented at the Eastern Divisional Convention of the American Choral Directors Association the works they had commissioned from three New York composers for their tenth anniversary season. A year ago marked the release on the Tzadik label of *A Handful of World*, the first commercial recording featuring Cerddorion. The CD is dedicated to vocal works by New York composer Lisa Bielawa and includes Cerddorion's performance of Bielawa's *Lamentations for a City*, which was commissioned and first performed by Cerddorion in 2004.

Kristina Boerger

An accomplished singer, conductor, and choral arranger, Kristina Boerger received her formative musical training from pianist Annie Sherter and holds the doctorate in Choral Conducting and Literature from the University of Illinois. She lectures in music history at Barnard College and teaches choral conducting at the Manhattan School of Music.

Selected as the 2008 Outstanding Choral Director of the Year by the New York State chapter of the American Choral Directors Association, Dr. Boerger is in her ninth season as Artistic Director of Manhattan's Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble, with which group she has commissioned works from several New York composers. Having served for two years as Music Director of New York's AMUSE, she was recently appointed Associate Conductor of the Collegiate Chorale.

Dr. Boerger has appeared as guest conductor of the Chicago Children's Choir, the Kalamazoo Bach Festival, the University of Illinois Chamber Singers, and the Schola Cantorum of Syracuse, among others. She has also served as guest conductor, adjudicator, and clinician in several U.S. cities, in Quebec City, and in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Her work in the 1990s as founding director of AMASONG: Champaign-Urbana's Premier Lesbian/Feminist Chorus, is the subject of the documentary film *The Amasong Chorus: Singing Out*, which after touring festivals in the United States and worldwide has enjoyed repeated broadcast on PBS.

As a singer in a variety of styles, she has appeared on stage and on disc with the King's Noyse, Rocky Maffit, the Tallis Scholars, Early Music New York, Vox Vocal Ensemble, Bobby McFerrin, Alarm Will Sound, and Urban Bush Women. She is a member of the acclaimed early music ensemble Pomerium and of the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble.

Program Notes

Welcome to an evening of musical mirrors. Our program is based in selected German Romantic part-songs, also presenting contemporary part-songs that bear reflections of the 19th-century works.

Broadly speaking, a part-song is a secular piece for unaccompanied voices set to vernacular text. The blossoming of the genre in 19th-century Germany and Austria, together with the proliferation of the Lied, was influenced by the era's great German-language poets: Goethe, Hölderlin, Heine, Möricke, Rückert, von Eichendorff, and others. But of course other influences were fertilizing the genre as well. While music at the princely courts was declining, musical culture was spreading rapidly among the urban middle classes. Increasing numbers of cities supported municipal orchestras and opera companies, offering a public concert life. Formalized courses of musical study, historically undertaken in monasteries and cathedral schools, were now offered to the general public in the proliferating conservatories established in several German cities. Advances in music publishing now made it fairly inexpensive to produce, in large amounts, a variety of scores for consumption by the public, increasing numbers of whom studied and performed music in the home or joined the new choral societies as avocations.

At the heart of cultural life in 19th-century Berlin stood the home of Abraham and Lea **Mendelssohn**, both inheritors of a rich intellectual and musical lineage: Abraham's father Moses Mendelssohn, recognized as the foremost philosopher of the Jewish Enlightenment, had also dedicated himself to music theory studies under Johann Kirnberger, a prominent student of J.S. Bach; the children's great aunt Sara Levy had presided over a thriving Berlin salon, where she—as a close friend of C.P.E. and W.F. Bach—regularly performed solos in music by J.S. and his sons. The salon where Abraham and Lea educated their children was a recognized crucible of artistic performance, literary study, and philosophical discussion.

Of the four Mendelssohn siblings, **Fanny** and **Felix** were especially close. They were still youngsters (15 and 10, respectively) when they joined the Berlin Sing-Akademie, a bourgeois choral society founded in the late 18th century. The children excelled in Latin and French, drawing, and music performance and composition. Their music study was augmented by piano lessons in Paris with Marie Bigot, a favored pupil of Haydn and Beethoven. By various accounts, Fanny's musical abilities were no less prodigious than her brother's, but it was only from his praise of her composing that she drew any confidence. Though he openly recognized her gift, he discouraged her from publishing, whether for social convention alone or also out of envy. And Abraham regularly warned her to focus her attentions on her future as a wife and mother. In fact, her first Lieder were published only because Felix arranged for them to be released under his own name.

After marrying the painter Wilhelm Hensel, Fanny became the central figure of a flourishing salon where she frequently played or conducted performances of her work, also promoting her brother's compositions and the work of countless—and nameless—women composers, writers, and painters. When in 1846 Felix married and the relationship between the siblings relaxed, Fanny felt the autonomy to pursue publication of her Lieder Opus I and of the *Gartenlieder* heard tonight. It was only one year later that she died of a stroke. The composer Charles Gounod, who credits her with inspiring his early career, eulogized her as a woman of “extraordinary energy” and an “exceptional” compositional gift. The effort to excavate the extent of her 466 works and bring them to a wider public was not seriously undertaken until 1987; thanks to that project of the Furore Verlag, it is now possible to recognize Fanny Hensel (1805–1847) as one of the Romantic era's most significant composers.

Ludwig Uhland, Joseph von Eichendorff, and Emanuel Geibel are the poets of tonight's *Gartenlieder*. All contemporaries of the Mendelssohns, they were Germany's leading figures in Romantic lyric poetry, which is characterized by first-person accounts of the intense feelings and thoughts of a specific moment; such moments in this tradition are typically experienced in the outdoors, where nature provides the setting and the metaphor for human emotion. Both the von Eichendorff and the Geibel poems were set repeatedly as choral works or solo lieder by German-Romantic composers. Aficionados familiar with the von Eichendorff will notice that Fanny changed his line *Wald und Welt versausen* (“Forest and world vanish”) to *Wie die Welt verbrause* (“How the world is becalmed”).

Our contemporary “mirror” for these three pieces by Fanny Hensel is a triad featuring the work of another woman published during her lifetime in the 19th century, Christina Rossetti (1830–1894). Like Hensel, Rossetti was educated at home, though by a mother of only modest means and learning. Her father was a poet and asylum seeker from Naples whose deteriorated physical and mental health brought the family to financial ruin when Christina was still a child. At age 14, Christina suffered her own nervous breakdown, and in her continued fragility she developed a religious devotion that inspired much of the poetry for which she would be known. Like Fanny, Christina too had a famous brother, the pre-Raphaelite painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti, whose eventual success brought the family out of poverty. Also like Fanny, Christina became engaged to a painter, though she broke the engagement over religious differences. A subsequent affair with a linguist came to an end over a similar conflict. And so Rossetti devoted her energies to ten years of voluntary service at the St. Mary Magdalene “house of charity” in Highgate, a refuge for prostitutes and other “fallen women.”

Rossetti was first published at the age of 31, though she had been writing since age seven. Her debut was the highly acclaimed and still-debated *Goblin Market*; ostensibly a kind of children's fairy tale, it is rife with apparent violent or sexual undertones. Two years after this publication debut, Elizabeth Barrett Browning died and Rossetti was hailed as the new “female laureate.” Though her romantic, devotional, and children's poems were widely recognized in her day, she was erased in the sweep of Modernism, going unnoticed and unread until Feminist scholarship began in the 1970s to recover her.

George Tsontakis (b. 1951) wrote his *Rosetti Nursery Rhymes* in 2000 for Harold Rosenbaum's New York Virtuoso Singers, supported by a grant from the Choral Artists Guild. Born in Astoria, Tsontakis received his doctorate from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Roger Sessions. His solo, orchestral, and chamber works have been widely performed throughout the United States and Western Europe and also in Greece and Israel. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy in 1995, the Berlin Prize in 2002, the University of Louisville's Grawemeyer Award in 2005, and the Charles Ives Living in 2006. He is also the winner of two Kennedy Center awards and a Grammy nomination for Best Contemporary Classical Composition. From 1998 until 2002, he served as the first composer-in-residence of the Oxford Philomusica. Currently the Distinguished Composer-in-Residence at Bard College, Tsontakis also teaches on the faculties of Sarah Lawrence College and the Aspen Music Festival.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)—whose 200th birthday fell on Cerddorion's February 3rd rehearsal—wrote three sets of part-songs for mixed voices and one for the men's Singverein in Leipzig. “**Die Nachtigall**” was written in 1843, the year in which, having directed the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra for eight years, he established the Leipzig Conservatory. The humble verse for this song was written by the great Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, whose style—like Mendelssohn's—is regarded as encompassing both the rational Classicism of the Enlightenment and the emotionalism of the new Romantic style. Goethe was, in fact, a friend of Felix and Fanny, who counted him among their artistic mentors.

Our reflection in contemporary part-song of Mendelssohn's “Nachtigall” comes from a new work, *Morning Group II*, written for us by **Robert Dennis**. We will present the work in full at our May concert, but tonight we excerpt the middle movement, a poem about the nightingale as imagined by Idaho-born Ezra Pound (1885–1972). The composer says:

I was first attracted to Ezra Pound's “**Alba**” by the nightingale imagery, and by the unusual rhymes. For me, the strongest moment in the poem is the almost violent change from the gentle, nocturnal mood to the coming of dawn.

Dennis was born in Saint Louis but has lived for years on New York's Upper West Side. His commissions and performances include pieces composed for the Denver Project, the New York City Opera, I Cantori, Cerddorion, the Jubal Trio, the American Brass Quintet, Calliope, the New Amsterdam Singers, the Baird Trio, and the Lincoln Center Institute. His music for orchestra has been performed by the Cleveland, Chicago, and Louisville orchestras. Mr. Dennis has also composed extensively for theater and film, including scores for productions at the Arena Stage, the Guthrie Theater, and Circle in the Square. Three of his eight scores composed for Pilobolus were performed on the Public Broadcasting System series *Dance in America*. Recordings include *Man in the Moon*, a CD of Mr. Dennis's works composed for the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble. “Il Ritorno,” a recent piece written for the American Brass Quintet, has been included by the group as part of its 50th-anniversary double CD. Vintage *Sesame Street* fans might enjoy going to YouTube, where a segment called “Milk” featuring a Dennis score has just been released, to the delight of so many who remember watching the clip as children.

What poet living in a northern climate can resist the metaphors of spring as optimism, summer as love, fall as ominous bellwether, and winter as death? We saw suggestions of this already in Fanny Hensel's "Im Herbst." Our next group, featuring all four seasons, opens with another Goethe setting from Felix Mendelssohn. "**Frühzeitiger Frühling**" tells of one spring's early arrival, precipitated by the sudden appearance of a sweetheart. This poem, too, exists in numerous settings, and here the composer has rearranged its lines to suit the harmonic design of his Classical ternary form.

For summer and winter, we turn to another poem made famous in art-song. "**Bredon Hill**" is from A. E. Housman's 63-poem cycle, *A Shropshire Lad*, a collection of nostalgic verse about rural life and the untimely deaths of young men. Here, young lovers in summer listen to churchbells ringing out before the Sunday service as they lie together on beds of thyme, promising that when it is at last their wedding, they will bother to go to church. But by winter, of course, the tolling bells are funeral chimes for the would-be groom, whose ghost watches his lover lead mourners into church without him.

"Bredon Hill" has been most famously set for solo singer and instrumental accompaniment by British composers George Butterworth, E.J. Moeran, and Ralph Vaughan Williams, who use clusters in an undampened piano, or violin-string harmonics, to simulate the complex sonorities of resonating bells. Our offering is by New York-born **Richard Cutts Peaslee** (b. 1930), who uses a full chorus of voices to ring the poem's chimes. Peaslee holds degrees from Yale and Juilliard, having also pursued private study with Nadia Boulanger. His eclecticism of style is manifest in jazz techniques, quasi-folk idioms, extended instrumental techniques, and electronic sound. He has written several pieces to exploit the virtuosity of particular performers, such as trombonist Joseph Alessi, saxophonist Gerry Mulligan, and tubist Harvey Phillips. In the 1960s, he began writing extensively for the stage, scoring an early hit with *Marat/Sade* in 1964. His dance commissions and collaborations include projects with Twyla Tharp, David Parsons, Elsa Monte, and the Joffrey and New York City ballet companies. He has also written several television and film scores. His 1984 score for the stage work *Garden of Earthly Delights* won an Obie Award and is currently delighting New York audiences in its revival at the Minetta Lane Theater.

I wrote "**Herbsttag**" as a companion piece to Mendelssohn's "Herbstlied," which closes our set. Rilke's poem had been gripping me for years. I found that I loved every word, not only in its original language, but also equally—as is seldom the case—in every translation into English that seemed possible. Divided over whether to set it in German or in English, I ultimately decided to present the poem in both languages. And so, the piece incorporates a mirror within itself.

Mendelssohn's "**Herbstlied**" ("Autumn Song") presents a poem by Nikolaus Lenau in a very slight but fully significant adaptation. The real title of Lenau's poem is "Herbstklage," which means "Autumn Lament." The lament was summarized in his last two lines:

Treulich bringt ein jedes Jahr welkes Laub und welkes Hoffen.	Unfailingly, each new year brings withered leaves and withered hopes.
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Mendelssohn forces a more optimistic ending to the poem, inviting us to look beyond autumn's decay to the ever-returning spring:

Treulich bringt ein jedes Jahr Neues Laub wie neues Hoffen.	Faithfully each new year brings New leaves, like new hope.
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In 1847, though, the spring was only tragic for Felix; it was in May that Fanny suffered her stroke, and on hearing the news, Felix screamed and fainted. His health was precarious thereafter, and it was later that year—in autumn—that he, too, died of stroke.

Our next 19th-century master is **Johannes Brahms** (1833–1897). Brahms was born in the port city of Hamburg (as were, in fact, Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn), where his father was a town musician and gave him his earliest training. At age 20, looking beyond Hamburg's educational and professional offerings, Johannes embarked on a concert tour as accompanist to Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi. It was later that year that he was introduced to Robert and Clara Schumann, becoming Robert's protégé and the couple's passionate friend, even serving as paterfamilias upon Robert's final hospitalization. After Robert's death, Brahms split his time between conducting a ladies' choir in Hamburg and serving the principality of Detmold as court music teacher and conductor. In 1863, he was appointed director of the Vienna Singakademie, eventually assuming the directorship of the concerts of the Wiener Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde ("Viennese Society of Music Friends") and living the rest of his life in that great city.

Brahms's work is testament to his concern for the highest standards of musical craft as developed by the Austro-German giants (Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven) before him. With Europe in the thrall of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* ideal (the "total" artwork, in which music is presented—as in opera—in a unified entity with literature, stage action, and elaborate sets), Brahms insisted that the worthiest music was sufficient unto itself. In his symphonies, concertos, sonatas, quartets, and numerous other absolute forms, he strove for a compositional structure that would require no literary or other external reference for its coherence and impact.

Nevertheless, Brahms was susceptible also to the attractions of vernacular musics, both local and exotic. For example, his *Hungarian Dances* for four-hand piano were inspired by the Magyar and Romany ("Gypsy") dance music played in the taverns by the Hungarian refugees passing through the Hamburg of his youth. In fact, he was an avid collector of folklore of many kinds—sayings, verses, and tales, as well as music. He kept a notebook of German folk maxims and compiled a collection of European folk songs. His personal library contained the tales of the Brothers Grimm, the *Edda* and *Nibelungenlied* epics, collections of English, Scottish, and Danish ballads, and popular literature from around the world in German translation. Brahms's compositions with explicit folkloric references number in the hundreds.

The sources for Brahms's 26 German folk-song settings for unaccompanied mixed chorus include two books found on his own shelves: Zuccalmaglio's *Deutsche Volkslieder* and Arnim and Brentano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. From these, we present a selection of five, each one chosen as an exemplar of a distinct—and, we hope, familiar—German tradition in song or verse.

For speakers of Hungarian, it is an apple that falls; in English, the cherry meets its demise. But in German (so also Goethe tells us in “Heidenröslein”), it is the rose that is plucked. We know the metaphor so well that we predict its appearance in “Erlaube mir.” The melody, too, is almost singable on first hearing. And so our set opens with a quintessential sample of German folk song.

“Mit Lust tät ich ausreiten” reflects the popularity in the 19th century of the large store of German folklore taking place in the forest. There, humans and animals exchange shapes, spirits whirl amid the trees, and witches fatten children for meals. The forest was the projected source of all experiences feared, desired, or misunderstood. Schubert’s “Der Erlkönig” and Weber’s *Der Freischütz* are early examples in the music literature of the forest’s traditional hold on the German imagination. Here, three birds turn out to be young women; it is the mysteriously nameless one whom the hunter leads to a cottage at the edge of the forest....

“Abschiedslied” involves a modest bit of polyphonic independence in the supporting voices. In its text, a man regrets the need to travel far from his sweetheart, pleads for her safety in his absence, promises his fidelity, and begs the same of her. No one familiar with the German polyphonic canon can fail to see this piece as the direct descendant of Heinrich Isaac’s “Innsbruck, ich muß dich lassen.”

“Ach lieber Herre Jesu Christ” owes everything to the Lutheran chorale. It is strikingly similar in melody and poetic structure to “Von Himmel hoch da komm ich her.” Brahms has harmonized it in the strict hymn texture that even common Lutherans learned to read in the early 17th century, both for musical worship in church and for singing their metrical psalters at home.

The opening line of “Schnitter Tod” may be familiar to readers of Alfred Döblin’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, where it is used as a chapter heading. In melody and scansion, it recalls Ludwig Senfl’s “Ach Elslein, liebes Elslein mein.” But I chose it especially because Brahms is so strongly represented by this particular *memento mori*: images of flowers sinking to the earth. One of the most powerful moments in all Brahms’s work is in the second movement of *Ein Deutsches Requiem*. Traditionally, this was the place for a *Dies Irae*, with its terrifying pictures of hellfire and agony. But Brahms, pondering the stupefying mystery of the oblivion to which we all come, expresses all his terror through this quiet verse from Scripture:

<i>Denn alles Fleisch ist ist wie Gras</i>	For all flesh is as the grass
<i>und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen</i>	and all the glory of humankind
<i>ist wie des Grasses Blumen.</i>	is as the flower of the grass.
<i>Das Gras ist verdorret</i>	The grass withereth
<i>und die Blume abgefallen.</i>	and the flower falleth away.

The final verse of “Schnitter Tod” models bravery in the face of the Reaper and reminds us in one line what *Ein Deutsches Requiem* takes an evening to articulate: that some echo of us will bloom in the garden that awaits.

As a reflection of these five German folk songs, we close with the recently published *Five Kurpian Songs* of Henryk Górecki (b. 1933). Górecki was born in Czernica in southwest Poland. His parents were amateur musicians, and he began violin lessons at age 10. A misdiagnosed injury in his youth marked the beginning of a lifetime of poor health, throughout which the composer says he has “talked with death often.” As a young man, Górecki made a meager living teaching violin, clarinet, piano, and music theory, which wages scarcely afforded him the purchase of the manuscript paper he needed for his composing. In 1960, he graduated from the Academy of Music in Katowice, where the Szymanowski legacy had imbued him with an appreciation for Polish highland folklore. Also schooled in dodecaphony, he distinguished himself as Poland’s leading Modernist. As a teacher at the Academy, he was feared and respected for his rigor and his bluntness. He remained at the forefront of the Polish avant-garde until the early 1970s, when he began to reach for more traditional materials. This apparent stylistic “retreat” into a rich, consonant language damaged his reputation among the elite. He also brought himself into conflict with the authorities for criticizing the Polish Communist government’s interference with academic life. He resigned his post in 1979 and became a dedicated activist. Górecki’s most famous composition is his third symphony, *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*, which recording featuring soprano Dawn Upshaw brought him mainstream recognition in 1992. Though critics compare him to Messiaen and Ives, he cites Bach, Mozart, Haydn, and especially Schubert as his inspirations.

The Kurpians are an ethnic group from the Green Woods of Central Poland. Traditionally, they worked as beekeepers, hunters, and foresters. Today, Kurpians work in agriculture, especially in dairy farming. Craft arts from Kurpia include amber jewelry, silk-paper decorations, lace embroidery, and woodcarvings. The tradition of maintaining a choir in each village has eroded, but contemporary folk festivals include competitions in choral performance.

Among the traditional musical elements heard in Górecki’s settings are alternating patterns of dotted rhythms, a mixed meter apparently derived from a dance similar to the Hungarian Czárdás, and a scale with both a minor third and a major seventh. Górecki’s manipulation of time, however—which he arrests by sustaining and repeating simple figures—is a thoroughly current technique of composers who seem to be writing directly against the increasingly frenetic pace of contemporary life.

Thank you for affirming with us tonight our certitude that whatever shape our city life assumes in the coming years, the choral societies that flowered in the 19th century, and the beautiful repertoire written for them, will continue to be reflected in our 21st-century endeavors.

—Kristina Boerger

Texts

Im Herbste

Seid begrüßt mit Frühlingswonne,
blauer Himmel, goldne Sonne!
Drüben auch aus Gartenhallen
Hör' ich frohe Saiten schallen.

Ahnest du, o Seele wieder
sanfte, süße Frühlingslieder?
Sieh umher die falben Bäume!
Ach, es waren holde Träume!

—Johann Ludwig Uhland, 1805

Be greeted with Spring's delight,
Blue sky, golden sun!
Over there, from the gardens
I hear joyful strings resounding.

Do you expect again, O soul,
The soft, sweet songs of spring?
See the pale yellow trees all around!
Oh, they were lovely dreams!

Abschied

Abendlich schon rauscht der Wald
Aus den tiefsten Gründen,
Droben wird der Herr nun bald
An die Sterne zünden.
Wie so stille in den Schlünden,
Abendlich nur rauscht der Wald.

Alles geht zu seiner Ruh'.
Wie die Welt verbrause,
Schauernd hört der Wanderer zu,
Sehnt sich tief nach Hause.
Hier in Waldes grüner Klause,
Herz, geh endlich auch zur Ruh.

—Joseph von Eichendorff, 1810

Evening, and still the forest rustles
from its very depths;
Soon, now, the Lord will
ignite the stars above.
How still it is in the chasms!
Nothing but the forest's evening murmur.

Everything goes to its rest.
How the world is becalmed.
Trembling, the wanderer listens,
longs deeply for home.
Here in the forest's green cloister,
even you, o heart: take at last your rest.

Im Wald

Im Wald, im hellen Sonnenschein,
Wenn alle Knospen springen,
Da mag ich gerne mitten drein
Eins singen.

Wie mir zu Muth in Leid und Lust,
Im Wachen und im Träumen,
Das stimm' ich an aus voller Brust
Den Bäumen.

Und sie verstehen mich gar fein,
Die Blätter alle lauschen,
Und fall'n am rechten Orte ein
Mit Rauschen.

Und weiter wandelt Schall und Hall,
In Wipfeln, Fels und Büschen,
Hell schmettert auch Frau Nachtigall
Dazwischen.

Da fühlt die Brust am eignen Klang,
Sie darf sich was erkühnen—
O frische Lust! Gesang! Gesang
Im Grünen!

—Emanuel von Geibel, 1810

In the forest, in the bright sunshine,
when all the buds are bursting,
there in their midst, I am moved
to sing a song.

As suits my mood, in suffering or joy,
awake or dreaming,
I sing my heart out
to the trees.

And they understand me perfectly.
The leaves all hearken
and take up the beat
with their rustling.

And the ring and echo travel beyond me,
through treetops, rocks, and bushes.
Even Mrs. Nightingale trumpets away
in their midst.

Then my heart, emboldened by its tones,
might venture whatever it dares.
O lively pleasure! A song! A song
in the greenery.

Rossetti Nursery Rhymes

“I dreamt I caught a little owl
And the bird was blue”
“But you may hunt for ever
And not find such a one.”
“I dreamt I set a sunflower,
And red as blood it grew”
“But such a sunflower never
Bloomed beneath the sun.”

Dead in the cold, a song-singing thrush,
Dead at the foot of a snowberry bush,
Weave him a coffin of rush,
Dig him a grave where the soft mosses grow,
Raise him a tombstone of snow.

Excerpts from: *Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme Book*, by Christina Rossetti (1893)

Love me -- I love you,
Love me, my baby;
Sing it high, sing it low,
Sing it as may be.
Mother's arms under you,
Her eyes above you;
Sing it high, sing it low,
Love me -- I love you.

Die Nachtigall

Die Nachtigall, sie war entfernt,
der Frühling lockt sie wieder;
was neues hat sie nicht gelernt,
singt alte liebe Lieder.

The nightingale went to a faraway land.
Now the springtime calls her back.
She's learned nothing new;
she sings the beloved old songs.

Mächtiger rühret bald sich ein Hauch,
Doch er verlieret gleich sich im Strauch.

My breath stirs up, sudden and strong,
then quickly dissipates in the bushes.

Aber zum Busen kehrt er zurück,
Helfet, ihr Musen, tragen das Glück!

But to my bosom it returns.
Help me, o Muses, to bear such bliss!

Saget seit gestern wie mir geschah?
Liebliche Schwestern, Liebchen ist da?

How has this befallen me overnight?
Lovely sisters, my sweetheart is here!

Alba (Dawn)

When the nightingale to his mate
Sings day-long and night-late
My love and I keep state

In bower,
In flower,
"Till the watchman on the tower
Cry:
"Up! Thou rascal, Rise,
I see the white
Light
And the night
Flies."

From: *Langue d'Oc*, by Ezra Pound (1918)

Bredon Hill

In summertime on Bredon
The bells they sound so clear;
Round both the shires they ring them
In steeples far and near,
A happy noise to hear.

Here of a Sunday morning
My love and I would lie,
And see the coloured counties,
And hear the larks so high
About us in the sky.

The bells would ring to call her
In valleys miles away:
"Come all to church, good people;
Good people, come and pray."
But here my love would stay.

And I would turn and answer
Among the springing thyme,
"Oh, peal upon our wedding,
And we will hear the chime,
And come to church in time."

But when the snows at Christmas
On Bredon top were strown,
My love rose up so early
And stole out unbeknown
And went to church alone.

Frühzeitiger Frühling

Tage der Wonne, kommt ihr so bald?
Schenkt mir die Sonne, Hügel und Wald?

Rapturous days, have you come so soon,
bringing me the sunshine, hills, and forests?

Reichlicher fließen Bächlein zumal,
Sind es die Wiesen, ist es das Tal?

The brooks flow more generously now.
Is it the meadows? Is it the valley?

Blauliche Frische! Himmel und Höh!
Goldene Fische wimmeln im See.

Blue freshness! Heaven and heights!
Golden fishes teeming in the lake.

Buntes Gefieder rauschet im Hain;
Himmlische Lieder schallen darein!

Colorful plumage rustles in the grove,
heavenly songs resound within!

Unter des Grünen blühender Kraft
Naschen die Bienen summend am Saft.

Under the greenery's blooming display
the humming bees sip on nectar.

Leise Bewegung bebt in der Luft,
Reizende Regung, schläfernder Duft.

A gentle stirring flutters in the air,
the lovely quivering of a hypnotic fragrance.

They tolled the one bell only,
Groom there was none to see,
The mourners followed after,
And so to church went she,
And would not wait for me.

The bells they sound on Bredon
And still the steeples hum.
“Come all to church, good people,”
Oh, noisy bells, be dumb;
I hear you, I will come.

From: *A Shropshire Lad*, by A. E. Housman (1896)

Herbsttag

Herr: es ist Zeit. Der Sommer war sehr groß.
Leg deinen Schatten auf die Sonnenuhren,
und auf den Fluren laß die Winde los.

Befiehl den letzten Früchten voll zu sein;
gieb ihnen noch zwei südlichere Tage,
dränge sie zur Vollendung hin und jage
die letzte Süße in den schweren Wein.

Wer jetzt kein Haus hat, baut sich keines mehr.
Wer jetzt allein ist, wird es lange bleiben,
wird wachen, lesen, lange Briefe schreiben
und wird in den Alleen hin und her
unruhig wandern, wenn die Blätter treiben.

—Rainer Maria Rilke, 1902

Lord: it is time. The summer was so vast.
Lay your shadows upon the sundials,
and loose the winds across the pastures.

Bid the last fruits be full;
give them yet two more southern days,
urge them to consummation and press
their final sweetness into heavy wine.

He who has no house will not build any now.
He who is now alone long will so remain,
will keep vigil, read, compose long letters,
and wander the avenues restlessly
to and fro amid the driving leaves.

Translator: Kristina Boerger

Herbstlied

Holder Lenz, du bist dahin!
Nirgends, nirgends darfst du bleiben!
Wo ich sah dein frohes Blüh'n
braust des Herbstes banges Treiben.

Wie der Wind so traurig fuhr
durch den Strauch, als ob er weine;
Sterbeseufzer der Natur
schauern durch die welken Haine,

Wieder ist, wie bald, wie bald!
Mir dahin ein Jahr geschwunden.
Fragend rauscht es durch den Wald:
hat dein Herz sein Glück gefunden?

Waldesrauschen, wunderbar
hast du mir das Herz getroffen!
Treulich bringt ein jedes Jahr
neues Laub wie neues Hoffen.

By: Nikolaus Lenau (1802-1850), “Herbstklage,”
from *Gedichte* (1832)

Erlaube mir

Erlaube mir, feins Mädchen,
in den Garten zu gehn,
daß ich dort mag schauen,
wie die Rosen so schön.
Erlaube sie zu brechen,
es ist die höchste Zeit;
ihre Schönheit,
ihr Jugend hat mir mein Herz erfreut.

O Mädchen, o Mädchen,
du einsames Kind,
wer hat den Gedanken
ins Herz dir gezinnt,
daß ich soll den Garten,
die Rosen nicht sehn?
Du gefällst meinen Augen,
das muß ich gestehn.

Lovely spring, you are gone!
For never, never may you remain!
Where I saw your merry blossoms
now bluster autumn's anxious stirrings.

How mournfully the wind blows
through the bushes, as if it were weeping;
Nature's dying sighs
shudder through the decaying grove.

Once again, how soon, how soon!
The year has slipped away from me.
It rushes through the woods, asking
“Has your heart found its bliss?”

Murmuring woods, your miracle
has struck my heart!
Every year faithfully brings
new greenery like new hopes.

Permit me, fair maiden,
to walk in the garden,
there to gaze at
the roses so beautiful.
Allow me to pick one.
It's the perfect time.
Her beauty, her youth
is my heart's delight.

Oh maiden, oh maiden,
you innocent child,
who inspired
your heart to think
that I should see neither the garden,
nor the roses?
You're a pleasure to mine eyes,
that I must confess.

Mit Lust tät ich ausreiten

Mit Lust tät ich ausreiten
durch einen grünen Wald,
darin da hört ich singen,
drei Vögelein wohlgestalt.

So sein es nit drei Vögelein,
es sein drei Fräulein fein,
soll mir das ein nicht werden,
so gilt es das Leben mein.

Das erste heißet Ursulein,
das andre Bärbelein
das dritt hat keinen Namen,
das soll des Jägers sein.

Er nahm sie bei den Händen,
bei ihrer schneeweißen Hand,
Er führts des Walds ein Ende,
da er ein Hüttlein fand.

Abschiedslied

Ich fahr dahin, wenn es muß sein,
Ich scheid mich von der Liebsten mein,
Zuletzt laß ich ihrs Herze mein,
Dieweil ich leb, so soll es sein.
Ich fahr dahin, ich fahr dahin!

Das sag ich ihr und niemand mehr:
Mein'm Herzen g'schah noch nie so weh.
Sie liebet mich je länger je mehr;
Durch Meiden muß ich leiden Pein.
Ich fahr dahin, ich fahr dahin!

Ich bitt dich, liebste Fraue mein,
Wann ich dich mein und anders kein,
Wann ich dir gib mein Lieb allein,
Gedenk, daß ich dein eigen bin.
Ich fahr dahin, ich fahr dahin!

Nun halt die Treu als stet als ich!
So wie du willst, so findst du mich.
Halt dich in Hut, das bitt ich dich!
Gesegn dich Gott! Ich fahr dahin!
Ich fahr dahin, ich fahr dahin!

Lustily I rode out
through a green wood
wherein I heard a-singing
three shapely little birds.

But they weren't three little birds.
No, they were three fine young women.
Shouldn't one of them be mine?
Then my life would be worthwhile.

The first was named Ursulein,
the next Bärbelein.
The third has no name.
That one shall be the hunter's!

He took her by the hand,
by her snow-white hand.
He led her to the edge of the forest,
where he found a little cottage.

I'm going away, if that's how it must be.
I am parting from my love.
To the end, I will let her have my heart,
While I live, this will always be so.
I'm going away, I'm going away.

This I said to her and to no other:
"Never ever has my heart ached so much."
The longer she loved me, the more so.
Without her I must suffer agony.
I'm going away, I'm going away.

I beg you, my beloved lady,
If I think of you and no others,
If I give you alone my love,
Remember that I am your own.
I'm going away, I'm going away.

Now remain faithful, as constant as I!
As you wish it is how you will find me.
Keep yourself safe, I beg you!
God bless you! I'm going away!
I'm going away, I'm going away.

Ein' gute Nacht und guten Tag
Geb' dir, der alle Ding' vermag!
Hiermit sollst du gesegnet sein,
du herzeliebes Kindelein!
Ach Jesus, Herre mein,
Behüt' dies Kindelein!

Ach, lieber Herre Jesu Christ

Ach, lieber Herre Jesu Christ,
weil du ein Kind gewesen bist,
so gib auch diesem Kindelein
dein Gnad' und auch den Segen dein!
Ach, Jesus, Herre mein,
Behüt' dies Kindelein!

Dein'r Engel Schar, die wohn' ihm bei,
es schlaf, es wach' und wo es sei.
Dein Geist behüt's, o Gottessohn,
dass es verlang' der Heil'gen Kron'.
Ach Jesus, Herre mein,
Behüt' dies Kindelein!

Nun schlaf, nun schlaf, mein Kindelein!
Jesus soll freundlich bei dir sein.
Er wolle, dass dir träume wohl
und werdest aller Tugend voll!
Ach Jesus, Herre mein,
Behüt' dies Kindelein!

A good night and a good day
May he grant you who bequeaths all things!
By these words may you be blessed,
You beloved child!
Ah, Jesus...

Oh, dear Lord Jesus Christ,
as you have been a child,
so give even to this little one
your mercy and also your blessing!
Ah, Jesus, my Lord,
Protect this little child!

Your angel host abide with him
as he sleeps and wakes and wherever he goes.
Your Spirit protect him, o Son of God,
That he may long for the holy crown.
Ah, Jesus...

Now sleep, now sleep, my little child!
Jesus will befriend you.
He bids you sleep well
and be filled with all virtue!
Ah, Jesus...

Schnitter Tod

Es ist ein Schnitter, heißt der Tod,
hat G'walt vom höchsten Gott;
heut wetzt er das Messer,
es schneid't schon viel besser,
bald wird er drein schneiden,
wir müssens er eiden.
Hüt dich, schönes Blümelein!

Was heut noch grün und frisch da steht,
wird morgen hinweg gemäht,
die edlen Narzissen,
die Zierden der Wiesen,
die schön'n Hyazinthen,
die türkischen Binden.
Hüt dich, schönes Blümelein!

Das himmelfarbne Ehrenpreis,
die Tulpanen weiß,
die silbernen Glocken,
die goldenen Flocken,
sinkt alles zur Erden,
was wird daraus werden?
Hüt dich, schönes Blümelein!

Trotz Tod! komm her, ich fürcht dich nit,
Trotz, eil daher in ein'm Schritt;
werd ich auch verletzt,
so werd ich versetzt
in den himmlischen Garten,
auf den alle wir warten.
Freu dich, schönes Blümelein.

There is a reaper called Death
who has power from the highest god;
today he whets his knife
so that it will cut much better.
Soon he will begin to cut,
and we must suffer it.
Beware, fair little flower!

What today is still green and fresh
will be cut down tomorrow:
the noble narcissus,
ornament of the field,
the fair hyacinths,
the Turkish posies.
Beware, fair little flower!

The sky-blue veronica,
the tulips all white,
the silver campanula,
and golden centaury,
all will sink to the earth,
what will become of them?
Beware, fair little flower!

I defy you, Death! Come forth, I fear you not.
Come what will, hasten here in one step.
Howsoever you wound me,
I shall be transported
to the celestial garden
that we all await.
Rejoice, fair little flower.

Five Kurpian Songs

1. Hej, z góry, z góry!
Hej, z góry, z góry!
Kóniku bury,
przebziroj nózeckani!
Do mej dziwcyny, do mej jedynej,
z modryni oceckani.

Dziwcyno mlóda, ślicno, urodna
Na kogóze sie oglundos?
Na ciebie, Jasiu, mój Jasiuleńku,
Co wrónygo kónia mos.
Hej, z góry! Hej!

2. Ciamna nocka, ciamna
Ciamna nocka, ciamna,
ja jade do ciebie.
Choćbyś ty usnena,
Obudze ja ciebie.

Choćbyś ty usnena,
tym modrym oceckiem
To jo cie obudze
łagodnym słóweckiem.

3. Wcoraj, dziwcyno, nie dzisiaj
Wcoraj, dziwcyno, nie dzisiaj,
Wcoraj, nie dzisiaj;
Zapłać ze ni za te nocke,
Com sie kolysał.

Juz jo, Jasiulu, nie mała.
Juz jo nie mała,
Niałam ci jo ojca, matke
Do kolysania.

Juz jo, Jasiulu, nie dziecko
Juz jo nie dziecko.
Nie chce ci jo kolibańki,
Wole lózecko.

1. Hey, down, downhill!
Hey, down, downhill!
My grey-brown little pony,
move those little legs of yours!
To my girl, to my only one,
to my girl with the sky-blue eyes.

My young, beautiful, charming girl,
Who are you staring at?
At you, Jasio, at you, my handsome,
you with the dark horse.
Hey, down, downhill.

2. Dark is the night, dark
Dark is the night, dark,
I'm riding to see you.
If you've fallen asleep,
I'll awaken you.

Even if in your sleep
you close your azure eyes,
I'll awaken you
with one whispered word.

3. It was yesterday, my lass, not today
It was yesterday, my lass, not today,
yesterday, not today;
Pay me for the night
I rocked you to sleep.

I'm not a little girl, Jasio,
I'm not a child anymore!
I had a father and a mother
to rock me to sleep.

I'm not a child, Jasio,
I'm not a child anymore!
I don't need a cradle,
I prefer my bed.

4. Z Torunia ja parobecek

Z Torunia ja parobecek,
z Torunia jade.
Pošciel ze ni to lózaňko,
to sie uklade.

Pošciel ze ni to lózaňko na stary rogi,
Bo ja jade parobecek z daleki drogi.

Nie banzies ty, mój Jasiulu,
Na mym lozu społ,
Krótkie różki u poduski,
bandzies sie zmykol.

5. Wysła burzycka, bandzie desc

Wysła burzycka, bandzie desc.
Gdzie sie, ptasecku, podziejesz?

Oj, polece ja do boru
Pod galunzaňke jeworu.

Tam me ten jewur okryje,
Tam me burzeňka ominine.

Tam me descek nie pryšnie
na me psiorecka zlociste.

4. From Torun I come to see you

From Torun I come to see you,
I, your swain.
Prepare the bed
so I can lay me down on it.

Smooth out the bed sheets for me,
for I've come a long, long way.

Not in my bed, my Jasio,
will you be sleeping,
the sheets and pillows are too small,
You'll slip right off.

5. A storm is coming, there will be rain

A storm is coming, there will be rain.
Where will you find shelter, little bird?

I will fly into the thick forest
under a sycamore bough.

There the sycamore will shelter me,
there the storm will pass me by.

There the rain will not drizzle
on my golden feathers.

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