

Cerddorion's Upcoming Performances

Language of the Birds

Jannequin's "Chant des Oiseaux," music for choir and string quartet by Veronika Krausas, and the winner(s) of Cerddorion's Emerging Composers Competition. Presented in collaboration with the contemporary ensemble Face the Music.

Saturday, March 1 at 8pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
199 Carroll Street, Brooklyn

Saturday, March 8 at 8pm
St. Michael's Church
225 West 99th Street, Manhattan

The Food of Love

Choral settings of Shakespearean texts, including selected readings from the Bard's plays and poetry, in collaboration with New York's Shakespeare Society.

Sunday, June 1 at 3pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
199 Carroll Street, Brooklyn

Sunday, June 8 at 3pm
St. Ignatius of Antioch
87th Street & West End Avenue, Manhattan



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Cerddorion NYC, Inc.
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For further information about Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble, please visit our website:

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CERDDORION

VOCAL ENSEMBLE

James John

Artistic Director

PRESENTS

Pojďme zpívat!

Let Us Sing!

A CAPPELLA WORKS BY CZECH COMPOSERS



Friday, November 15 at 8pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
199 Carroll Street, Brooklyn

Sunday, November 17 at 3pm
St. Ignatius of Antioch
87th Street & West End Avenue, Manhattan

CERDDORION

SOPRANOS

Samantha Bassler
Anna Harmon
Cathy Markoff
Jennifer Oates
Jeanette Rodriguez
Ellen Schorr
Rebecca Schwartz

ALTOS

Jamie Carrillo
Jude Cobb
Clare Detko
Susan Glass
Linnea Johnson
Leonore Nelson
Gretta Wren

TENORS

Ralph Bonheim
Michael Klitsch
Chris Ryan
Grady Sullivan

BASSES

Jonathan Miller
Michael Plant
Dean Rainey
Tom Reingold
Larry Sutter



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The members of Cerddorion are grateful to James Kennerley and the Church of Saint Ignatius of Antioch for providing rehearsal and performance space for this season.

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Thanks to Cathy Markoff and Larry Sutter for their efforts in publicity and preparing this program.

Thanks to Grady Sullivan for his work on *Cerddorion.org*.

Thanks to Michael Plant for help with transcribing the Suk choral works, musical preparation, compiling translations and preparing this program.

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Our concerts would not be possible without a great deal of financial assistance. Cerddorion would like to thank the following, who have generously provided financial support for our activities over the past year.

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vzduch samá vůně, vzduch samý květ,

a mladý úsměv celý svět.

Hned každý strom zelený šat,
svátečně jme se oblíkat,
a každá haluz, každá snět
chce novou řečí rozprávět.

A jak by hodům zavolal,
přilítli hosté z blíž i dál,
a za den, za dva širý kraj,
a celý svět byl jara báj.

5. *Dnes do skoku a do písničky*

Dnes do skoku a do písničky!
Dnes pravá veselka je boží,
dnes celý svět a všecko v páрку
se vedou k svatebnímu loži.

Ve zvonku květném mušky tančí,
pod travou brouček křídla zvedá,
a vody šumí, lesy voní,

a kdo je nemá, srdce hledá.

Na nebi zapalují svíce,
na západě panenské rdění,
a slavík již to ohlašuje,
ten velkněž, u velebném znění.

Dnes velká kniha poesie
až dokořán je otevřena,
dnes každá struna všehomíru
na žert i pravdu natažena.

A nebe skví se, vzduch se chvěje,
dnes jedna píseň světem letí,
dnes zem a nebe jeden pohár,
a tvorstvo při něm ve objetí.

It is full of the sweet aroma, full of the smell of
blossoms,

and a young smile is on the world.

Each green-clad tree dons
at once its Sunday best,
each branch and bud speaking
in new tongues.

As if called for a feast,
guests came from near and far,
and after a day or two,
all the world becomes a spring paradise.

Let us dance and sing this day!
Today the just God rejoices.
Today the whole world is pairing up
to walk to the bridal bed.
The flies dance in the flower bell,
the beetle lifts his wings under the grass.
And the waters whisper, the forests smell
sweetly,
and creatures without wings are search the
heart.

The candles are lit in heaven,
the West a virginal red.
the nightingale, as high priest,
is presiding with a sublime sound.

Today the great book of poetry
is wide open.
Today each thread of peace
is stretched in truth and jest.

Heaven glows and earth vibrates,
as one song encircles the globe.
Today heaven and earth are one goblet
embracing all of creation.

THE PROGRAM

Cantico delle creature

Petr Eben (1929–2007)

Kačena divoká (The Wild Duck)

Leoš Janáček (1854–1928)

Two songs from *Tři zpěvy*, Op. 19

Josef Suk (1874–1935)

Zavedený ovčák

Mat Moja

Four Czech Folksongs

Zdeněk Lukáš (1928–2007)

V té naši maštalce

Už je sluníčko za horou

Potěšení

Poděbradská brána

❖❖❖ *Intermission* ❖❖❖

Four Sonnets, Op. 330

Lukáš

That Love

A Melancholy Song

The Song Within

Passions of Our Past

V Přírodě (Songs of Nature), Op. 63

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

Napadly písně v duši mou

Večerní les rozvázal zvonky

Žitné pole

Vyběhla bříza běličká

Dnes do skoku a do písničky



THE ARTISTS

Now in its nineteenth season, **CERDDORION** (the name, pronounced *kehr-DOHR-ee-on*, is Welsh for “Musicians”) 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. Cerddorion has also frequently commissioned new works by such composers as Paul Moravec, David Schober, Lisa Bielawa, David Lang, Elliot Z. Levine, Robert Dennis, and Julie Dolphin.

Besides presenting its own varied programs, Cerddorion is frequently invited to perform with other acclaimed artists. In 2011, the men of Cerddorion sang with esteemed French organist Francis Chapelet in the second inaugural recital of the Manton Memorial Organ at the Church of the Ascension in New York. Past collaborations have included 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 Dessoff 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 performed 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. September 2007 marked the release on the Tzadik label of *A Handful of World*, Cerddorion’s first commercial recording. 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.

Cerddorion is a proud member of the New York Choral Consortium.



JAMES JOHN is in his fourth season as Artistic Director of the Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble. He is also Associate Professor and Director of Choral Activities at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College–CUNY, where he conducts the Queens College Choir, Vocal Ensemble and Choral Society, teaches choral conducting, and serves as advisor to the graduate program in vocal performance. Recent professional highlights include guest conducting the Tokyo Oratorio Society in a performance of Brahms’s *Ein deutsches Requiem* in Tokyo’s Suntory Hall, and an invited performance by the Queens College Choir at the 2012 Eastern Division Conference of the American Choral Directors Association in Providence, Rhode Island.

Under Dr. John’s leadership the choral program at the Aaron Copland School of Music has

Teď všecko spí, i laňka dříma,
i zvonky visí do vybdělé,
noc kráčí jako všeho dozvuk,
tak příroda si k spánku stele.

3. *Žitné pole*

Žitné pole, žitné pole,
jak to zraje vesele!

Každý klásek muzikantem,
klasů jak když nastele.

Hedbávným to šatem šustí,
větřík v skočnou zadupe,
slunce objímá a líbá,
je nto v stéblu zalupe.

Za motýlkem včelka šeptem,
zda kdo v chrpě nevězí,
a ten cvrček posměváček
s křepelíčkou pod mezí.

Žitné pole, žitné pole,
jak to zraje vesele,
a má mysl jako v tanci,
jak když písni nastele.

4. *Vyběhla bříza běličká*

Vyběhla bříza běličká,
jak ze stáda ta kozička,
vyběhla z lesa na pokraj,
že prý už táhne jara báj.

Vyběhla jako panenka,
Tak hebká a tak do tenka,
že až to lesem projelo,
a vše se touhou zachvělo.

A táhne šumem jara báj,
vzduch jak na housle, na šalmaj,

Now all is asleep, even the doe naps,
even the bells hang exhausted.
The night walks as the reverberation of all,
and nature prepares for sleep.

Rye field, rye field,
how merrily it ripens!
Each blade a musician,
so many as if one had made a bed of them.

Rustling in a silk gown that the
wind readies for a dance,
the sun hugs and kisses
and folds the blades.

After the butterfly the bee whispers
if someone touches the cornflower,
The mocking cricket
creaks under the ridge

Rye field, rye field,
how merrily it ripens,
and my head spins as though dancing
to the songs strewn all around

A little birch tree ran out,
like a small kid from the herd,
She ran out of the forest’s edge –
the legend of the spring is coming.
She ran out like a doll,
so soft and slim,
that when she ran through the forest,
everything shivered with desire.
And the spring legend comes noisily,
the air is like someone playing the violin, or the
shawm,

continued...

V Přírodě

1. *Napadly písně v duši mou*

Napadly písně v duši mou
nezavolány, znenadáni,
jako když rosy napadá
po stéblokadeřavé stráni.

Kol se to mihá perlami,
i cítím dech tak mladý, zdravý,
že nevím, zda jsou radost má,
či plác mé duše usedavý.

Však rosu luna zrodila,
a není písním v duši stáni:
tekou co slast a slza má,
a den se chystá ku svítání.

2. *Večerní les rozvázal zvonky*

Večerní les rozvázal zvonky,
a ptáci zvoní k tiché skrejši,
kukačka zvoní na ty většší,
a slavík na ty libeznější.

Les každou větev písni kropí
a každý lístek jeho dítě,
na nebes strop jim lampu věší
a stříbrné z ní táhne nitě.

A každá nit na konci spánek,
sny jako jiskry v stromech skáčí,
jen laňka se sebe je stršásá
a před lesem se v rose máčí.

Teď usnuli i zvoníkové,
les dýchá v prvním zadřímnutí,
a jestli slavík zaklokotá,
to ze spánku je prokouknutí.

In Nature

—Poems by Vítězslav Hálek (1835–1874)

Songs fell into my soul,
uncalled, at once,
as the dew falls
on the grassy hillside.

Pearls flicker about –
I feel so young, so healthy
That I know not if it is my joy
or the forlorn cry of my soul
But the moon begat the dew
and the songs abide not in my soul:
They flow as happiness and my tears,
and the day prepares for dawn.

The evening forest loosed the bells,
and the birds ring for a quiet shelter.

The cuckoo rings the big ones,
and the nightingale rings the loveliest.

The forest sprinkles each branch with
song, each leaf its child,
hanging a lamp from the ceiling of the
heavens, drawing silver threads from it,
each ending in sleep,
dreams leaping as sparkles in the trees –
only the doe brushes them off,
and bathes in the dew before the forest.

Now even the ringers have fallen asleep –
the forest breathes its first nap –
and if the nightingale chirps,
that will be an awakening.

become recognized as one of the finest collegiate choral programs in the region. Past performances with the School of Music's choral ensembles include Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, award winning productions of Argento's *Postcard from Morocco* and Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, Requiems by Mozart and Verdi, "A Night at the Opera" with Queens College alumna Erika Sunnegårdh of the Metropolitan Opera, Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, and world premieres of works by Sidney Boquiren, Leo Kraft, Meg Collins Stoop and others. His choirs have performed in many of New York's prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Weill Recital Hall, St. Patrick's Cathedral and Trinity Church Wall Street. Under his direction the Queens College Vocal Ensemble recently released its first CD, featuring premiere recordings of partsongs by Scottish composer Hamish MacCunn, and the Queens College Choir recorded Bright Sheng's *Two Folksongs from Qinghai*, soon to be released on the Naxos label.

Dr. John's guest conducting appearances include Avery Fisher Hall's annual Messiah Sing-In, a concert of American choral music with the Virginia Chorale (Virginia's only professional choral ensemble), chorus master for the Queens Symphony, regional honor choirs throughout New York State, and a recording with jazz trumpeter Michael Mossman. He has given presentations at both divisional and national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association, and is in demand as a clinician and adjudicator throughout the United States. This fall, Dr. John returned to Tokyo to conduct Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*.

As a teacher and scholar, Dr. John has served as Guest Lecturer in conducting at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany, and presented seminars on American choral music in Basel and Stockholm. His dissertation on Brahms's *Nänie*, Op. 82 won the Julius Herford Prize from the American Choral Directors Association and will be published soon in revised form as a book by The Edwin Mellen Press. His articles have appeared in *Choral Journal*, *American Choral Review*, and Chorus America's *Research Memorandum Series*. In July 2011 he was appointed Editor of *American Choral Review*, and also serves as a member of ACDA's National Research and Publications Committee.

Dr. John received his Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting from the Eastman School of Music. Prior to his current position at the Aaron Copland School of Music he served as Director of Choral Activities at Tufts University in Boston, Director of Choral Activities at Nassau Community College in Garden City, NY, and as Dartmouth College's first Conducting Fellow. He received his Master of Arts in Conducting from the Aaron Copland School of Music.



PROGRAM NOTES AND TEXTS

(Translations were compiled by James John and Michael Plant)

Program Notes by James John

Our program provides only a glimpse into the vast range of Czech choral music. It was inspired by a performance I gave last spring at Bohemian National Hall here in New York City tracing Dvořák's influence on American music, which included his *Songs of Nature*, Op. 63 (Dvořák lived in America from 1892-1895, where he was head of the National Conservatory of Music in New York City). I found this set of pieces so enchanting and accessible that I was motivated to dig deeper with the hope of discovering more Czech treasures. The result is a selection of highlights from the *a cappella* repertory of the past 150 years.

Unaccompanied Czech choral music from the mid- to late nineteenth century was by and large written for male choral societies, which were the principal amateur singing organizations of the time. Works for mixed (SATB) choirs are rare, and therefore stand out amidst the oeuvre of the most well-known composers, such as Smetana, Dvořák and Janáček. Smetana, in fact, wrote nothing for unaccompanied mixed chorus, and from the handful of works by Dvořák and Janáček I have chosen gems of the repertory. Josef Suk (a student of Dvořák) also wrote very little in this genre, but his *Tři Zpěvy* ("Three Songs"), Op. 19 are extraordinarily expressive, and virtually unknown to contemporary audiences. Pieces by Petr Eben and Zdeněk Lukaš (both of whom died in 2007) round out our program, and we are especially pleased to be giving the American premiere of Lukaš's *Four Sonnets*, with texts by American poet John Gracen Brown—a work that unites Czech and American artists, serving as a reflection of the fruitful relationship that began more than a century ago with Dvořák's American sojourn.



Petr Eben: *Cantico delle creature*

Petr Eben (1929-2007) was one of the most prominent Czech composers of the latter half of the twentieth century. He was an accomplished organist with an exceptional ability to improvise, and is perhaps best known for his organ music. As a young man Eben's musical education was interrupted during World War II when he was interned in Buchenwald (he was raised as a Catholic, though his father was Jewish)—an event that had a profound impact on his life. "He...acknowledges a humanist mission for art, a conviction arising perhaps from the concentration camp experience which has instigated in his music recurrent meditations on mortality." (Oxford Music Online) After the war Eben refused to join the Czech Communist Party, which had a negative impact on his career, and gained international stature primarily after the fall of Communist rule in 1989.

Cantico delle Creature was commissioned in 1987 for the European Youth Music Festival in Neerpelt, Belgium. It is a setting of St. Francis of Assisi's famous "Canticle of the Sun" (circa 1224), considered one of the first works of literature in the Italian language. Eben made only minimal changes in the text, and left the

4. Passions of Our Past

Although passions of our past are far away,
Yet they yet lend a comfort to today;
And even though we now lie far apart,
Yet memories press down upon the heart;
And although I know my lonely single
Soul, reaches now with desire to mingle,
Yet I know that this reach is and will be
Incomplete,... and yet I know you will agree

That these frail passages are of the wind,...
And as you know the wind does not rescind
And even now blows on and on and on...
And however silent is never really gone.
The voice you hear is in the passing wind.
It sings within a song that has no end.



Antonín Dvořák: *V Přírodě (Songs of Nature)*, Op. 63

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) is perhaps the most famous and influential of all the Czech composers on our program, especially in America, where he was head of the National Conservatory of Music in New York City from 1892 to 1895. Dvořák came to this country at a time when one of the foremost questions in the mind of American musicians was how to create a national style. To accomplish this Dvořák believed that composers needed to draw upon their indigenous folk music. Several of his pupils, such as Will Marion Cook, William Arms Fisher and Rubin Goldmark, went on to teach countless students, among them Aaron Copland, Duke Ellington and George Gershwin—who we now associate with a quintessential 'American' sound.

Dvořák was born in the small town of Nelahozeves outside of Prague, a butcher's son and the oldest of eight children. After completing his studies at the Prague Organ School in 1857 he worked as principal violist in the Prague Theater Orchestra until 1871. Brahms took an early interest in his career, and was influential in helping Dvořák establish his reputation as a composer of international stature. Choral-orchestral works form an integral part of Dvořák's oeuvre: his *Mass in D*, *Requiem* and *Te Deum* (all from the 1890s) have entered the standard repertory and are among the composer's crowning achievements. He composed most of his smaller scale choral pieces between 1876 and 1882, perhaps due to his connections with several different choirs, including the Prague Hlahol Choral Society and Slavonic Choral Society of Vienna.

Dvořák's *V Přírodě*, Op. 63 ("Songs of Nature") were completed in 1882, ten years before the composer's stay in America. Other than his *Four Choruses*, Op. 29, they are the only a cappella compositions that Dvořák completed for mixed chorus. The cycle forms a variegated landscape, so to speak, expressing emotions evoked by an array of natural settings: joy and sadness at dawn; peace, as the forest goes to sleep at night; the playful exuberance of harvest time; the exhilarating arrival of spring; and a jubilant dance celebrating all creation. Vítězslav Hálek, a key member of the "May School" (a nineteenth century movement that sought to establish Czech as a modern literary language), wrote the texts, which reflect the beauty, solace and inspiration Dvořák found in nature, perhaps specifically in the surroundings of his summer home in Vysoka south of Prague.

Four Sonnets

1. That Love

When there is a measure of ease
And I feel the calm – and then the breeze
I turn to you again within
And feel again your touch within.
And yet I know it was long ago...
In the fragile autumn of the year,
When first you came and came so near...
And then I loved – and loved you so...

2. A Melancholy Song

Oh let me sing some melancholy tune –
Some tempting, tuneful, melancholy lay –
With hope once more to turn your heart this way;
Like this day that has now turned gray, I turn
To tunes that will not fade – nor stay away –
But now have come to last and last and last –
And cast their spell and hopes upon today.
Within the shapes and shadows of our past,

3. The Song Within

Oh sing your song – cold or warm – right or wrong,
And I will love you so against my will.
My love for you, you know, does not lie nil –
Nor does it rest or ever lie quite still –
But ever increases, and like this song
It rises and lifts with desire to fill,
It is my song upon the mandolin...
That lifts and drifts and gives a solemn thrill.

—Poems by John Gracen Brown (b. 1936)

O more... much more than you know,
It was the rich red, autumn rose
That blooms before the flare of fall
And the deeper cold of winter's call.
And when that gentle breeze yet blows
I know that love within yet grows.

Those tunes now come to swell and lift within
Oh don't you know that on a day turned gray,
The deep red rose – so tempting in the wind –
Deepens in the dusk – and reddens even more.
Oh won't you come to be again – as before
And let me touch your comely soul once more.

It is that song that lifts and lifts within.
It is the wind against the distant hill –
The song within that ever seems to win,
It is the silent warmth against the chill.
It is the solemn, blessed season's rain
That sings to you its silent, warm refrain.

original Umbrian dialect intact—one of the unique aspects of the work. The music responds dramatically to the individual lines of the poem: a dancelike melody and accompaniment for “Brother Sun;” polytonal harmonies with a serene melody in the inner voices for “Sister Moon;” an oscillating ostinato for “Brother Wind;” and mixed meter along with agitated dynamic contrasts for “Sister Bodily Death.”

Cantico delle creature

Altissimo, onnipotente bon Signore,
Tue so le laude, la gloria e l'honore et onne benedictione.

Laudato si, mi Signore cum tucte le Tue creature,
spetialmente messor lo frate Sole,
lo qual è iorno, et allumini noi per lui.

Et ellu è bellu e radiante cum grande splendore:

de Te, Altissimo, porta significatione.
Laudato si, mi Signore, per sora Luna e le stelle:

in celu l'ài formate clarite et pretiose et belle.

Laudato si, mi Signore, per frate Vento
et per aere et nubilo et sereno et onne tempo,

per lo quale, a le Tue creature dài sustentamento.

Laudato si, Signore, per sor'Acqua,
la quale è molto utile et humile et casta.

Laudato si, Signore, per frate Focu,
per lo quale ennallumini la nocte:
ed ello è bello et iucundo et robustoso et forte.

Canticle in praise of the creatures

—St. Francis of Assisi (c. 1181–1226)

Most high, all powerful, good Lord!
All praise is Yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing.

Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and You give light through him.

And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor!

Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.
Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars;

in the heavens You have made them bright,
precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Wind
and through air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather,
through which You give Your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water;
she is very useful, and humble, and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom You brighten the night.
He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.

continued...

Laudato si, mi Signore, per sora nostra matre Terra, la quale produce diversi fructi con coloriti fiori et herba.	Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.
Laudato si mi Signore, per sora nostra Morte corporale, da la quale null' homo vivente po skappare:	Be praised, my Lord, through our sister bodily Death, from whose embrace no living person can escape.
Laudate et benedicete mi Signore et rengratiate e serviteli cum grande humilitate.	Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve Him with great humility.



Leoš Janáček: *Kačena divoká*

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928) is the youngest of the famous Czech triumvirate (along with Bedřich Smetana and Antonín Dvořák) credited with forging a national style inspired by the country's indigenous folk music. His crowning achievements are his operas, in particular *Jenůfa* (1904), *Káta Kabanová* (1921), *The Cunning Little Vixen* (1924), *The Makropulos Affair* (1926) and *From the House of the Dead* (1930).

Of the composers on our program born in the nineteenth century, Janáček had the closest connection to choral music. He began singing at a young age, and throughout his early career he conducted several choirs, including the men's choral society Svatopluk (1872-1876), and the Beseda Choral Society (1876-1888). The latter group began as a men's choir, but Janáček later expanded it into a mixed choir. Though the vast majority of his *a cappella* works are for male voices, it is for the Beseda Choral Society that he wrote *Kačena Divoká* (*The Wild Duck*). The text comes from an anthology of Moravian folksongs, and without basing the piece on any particular melody Janáček was able to express its doleful beauty in a lush, strophic setting of folk-like simplicity. Prominence of the men in two of the strophes provides a glimpse of the composer's particular affinity for male-voiced writing. "What Janáček produced...was one of those occasional compositions which capture the brilliant inspiration of the moment, and from the very first this work was recognized as the masterpiece it is." (Jan Trojan, from the Bärenreiter edition of the score)

Kačena divoká

Kačena divoká
letěla z vysoka,

The Wild Duck

— Words from a Moravian folksong
The wild duck
flew so high,

k tobě bych se přivinula
jako bych tvá byla.
Ne tak, ne tak má holubičko,
to nemůže býti,
s kým bys ty jednou byla,
s tím by si zůstat musela
do smrti nejděší.

4. *Poděbradská brána*

Poděbradská brána,
pěkně malovaná
kdo tu bránu maloval,
ten barvy ne šanoval,
vy maloval na ní
štyry koně vraný
Styry koně vraný,
pěkne k šírovaný,
kdo koničky k šíroval,
ten panenky miloval,
ten už taky není,
ten je odvedený.

and cling to you
as if I was yours.
Not so, not so, my little dove,
that cannot be,
If you were with him,
you would stay with him,
until death.

The gate to Poděbrady
so beautifully painted
the artist who painted the gate
did not spare his colors!
On it he painted
four black horses.
The four black horses
are beautifully harnessed
by someone who really
loved the girls.
He is no longer here;
he's been drafted into the army.



Zdeněk Lukáš: *Four Sonnets, Op. 330*

Lukáš's *Four Sonnets* were commissioned in 2002 by Robert L. Harris and *I Cantori* of Savannah, Georgia. Only Sonnet 4 ("Passions of Our Past") was premiered at the time, and thus our performance marks the American premiere of the full set. Lukáš displays considerable skill in depicting the plaintive, passionate expression underlying these love sonnets by American poet John Gracen Brown. Though certain word stresses occasionally seem unconventional, the text is declaimed clearly and often homophonically throughout, making the poetry easily understood. The composer employs a six-voice texture (SSATBB), which allows him to exploit the possibilities of dividing the choir into two equal groups (SSA and TBB). Dialogue between upper and lower voices, polytonality (with the women in one key and the men in another), as well as chromatically inflected turns of phrase, create a wide variety of colors that respond to subtle shifts in mood, giving the impression that Lukáš has captured the essence behind each poem.

unadorned settings allow the sadness and joy of the texts to speak directly to the listener, and conclude the first half of our program by highlighting the folk elements that contribute to Czech national style, as well as accentuating the sheer beauty of Czech folksong.

(The biographical information on Lukáš is indebted to Dr. Amy Dunker, Associate Professor of Music at Clarke College.)

1. *V té naší maštalce*

V té naší maštalce

stoji vraný kůn

ten je osedlaný,

na něm spakovaný

celý mundúr můj.

Na konička skočím,

šatečkem točím,

s Bohem buď má milá,

holka roztomilá,

s tebou se loučím.

Out in the stall

stands a chestnut horse,

he is saddled,

folded on the saddle

is my army uniform.

I will hop on my horse,

wave my handkerchief

saying farewell,

my dear,

my love, good-bye.

2. *Už je sluníčko za horou*

Už je sluníčko za horou,

lhotečti ženci s pole jdou.

Paňmámo neste večeri,

už vám jdou ženci do dveří.

Už je sluníčko za horou,

lhotečti ženci s pole jdou.

Náš hospodář je hodnejpán,

von nám daruje piva džbán.

The sun has already set behind the mountain,

The reapers are coming from the field.

Mother is bringing them supper,

they are entering the doorway

The sun has already set behind the mountain,

The reapers are coming from the field.

Our foreman is a kind man,

he brings us a pitcher of beer.

3. *Potěšení*

Potěšení kdepak ty chodíš,

potěšení kde pak jsi?

Za horama, za dolama,

za vysokejma vrchama,

za černejma lesy.

Kdyby ty jsi z vojny přišel,

a já vdaná byla,

od muže bych vandrovala,

My love, where are you walking,

my love, where are you?

Beyond the hills, beyond the valleys,

beyond the very high hills,

beyond the black forest.

If you came from the army

and I was married,

I would leave him,

šohaj dobrý střelec,

střelil ji do boka,

do boka levého

pod pravú nožičku.

Ona zaplakala,

sedňna na vodičku;

hořko zaplakala,

na Boha zvolala:

Ach Bože, rozbože,

už jsem dolétala.

Ubohá kačica,

už jsem dolétala,

už jsem svá káčátka,

už jsem dochovala.

Moje drobné děti

nedělajů škody;

sednú na Dunaju,

kalnú vodu pijú,

tvrdý písek jedá.

Vy drobná káčátka,

polette vy za mnoú.

Šak my poletíme

k velkému Dunaju!

the young fellow, a good shooter,

shot her in the side,

to the left side

of her right foot.

She cried out,

sat down on the water;

she wept with grief

and cried out to God:

Oh God, dear God,

I will no longer fly.

I, poor duck,

will not fly,

I will not raise

my little ducklings.

My little children,

they do nothing to anyone;

they sit on the Danube,

they drink turbid water,

they eat hard sand.

You little ducklings

flying behind me.

We want to fly together

to the great Danube!



Josef Suk: Two songs from *Tři zpěvy*, Op. 19

Josef Suk (1874-1935) received early musical training from his father, an accomplished violinist, and entered Prague Conservatory when he was only eleven years old. He graduated in 1891, the same year that Dvořák began teaching at the school. Suk stayed an extra year to study with the famous composer, and soon became Dvořák's favorite pupil, marrying Dvořák's daughter Otilie in 1898. In addition to his reputation as a composer, Suk was well known for more than thirty years as the second violinist of the so-called "Czech Quartet," which achieved international fame in 1893 after its Vienna debut. He later became an influential teacher on the composition faculty of Prague Conservatory.

Suk wrote only a handful of choral works (an early mass, as well as a few sets of pieces for men's and

women's voices), and unlike many of his contemporaries he “derived almost no stimulus from folk music and very little from literary sources.” (Oxford Music Online)

His *Tři Zpěvy* (*Three Songs*), Op. 19, are clearly an anomaly then, since they are not only folk-inspired, but also his only music for unaccompanied mixed chorus. Written in 1900 when Suk was still fairly young, the precise motivation for their composition is unclear. Nos. 1 and 2, on our program tonight, take their texts taken from Czech and Slovak folksongs, respectively. In *Zavedený ovčák* (*The Abducted Shepherd*), which tells the story of a young man tempted away from his flock by two Siren-like women, folk-elements are particularly prominent. Open fifths drone in the bass throughout most of the first and last sections of the piece, and the general character seems to evoke the sousedská, a type of traditional slow waltz. *Mať Moja* (*Mother of Mine*), in contrast, is a heartrending lament suggestive of the mournful keening that is a component of many folk traditions.

1. *Zavedený ovčák*

Pase ovčák, pase ovce,
v pěkném zeleném klobouce,
pase na kopečku
v březovém háječku.

Pod dubem tu znenadání
dvě panenky stály.
Ovčák jim dal dobrý večer,
ony se mu smály.

Jedna byla celá bílá
jako holubička,
druhá k němu švitořila
jako vlaštovička.

Pojď ovčáčku, pojď ty s náma,
vyspi se u nás do rána,
a ty tvoje ovce,
at je pase kdo chce.

Vzaly jsou ho za ručičku,
do hor s nima zašel,
Svých oveček a chaloupky
nikdy víc nenašel.

The Abducted Shepherd

—Words from a Czech folksong

The shepherd grazed his sheep
in a pretty green hat,
They grazed on the hillside
in a birch grove.

Suddenly, under an oak
appeared two young maidens.
The shepherd wished them good evening,
but they laughed at him.

One was as white
as a dove,
the second chirped at him,
like a swallow:

“Come shepherd, come thou with us!
Sleep with us until morning,
and your sheep,
who cares who will shepherd them!”

They took him by the hand,
to the mountains with them he went
And his flock, and his cottage,
he never found again.

2: *Mať Moja*

Mať moja, mať moja,
za dvoma horama,
už ma boli hlava
čo plačem za vama.

Hlavička ma boli,
len tak pobolieva:
že ste ma, mamička,
malú odumrela.

Čierna zem, čierna zem,
daj moju mamku ven
nech sa mojej mamke
horko poža lujem.

Keď sa ja vam, mati,
budem žalovati,
bude zem sa triasti,
kde ja budem stati.

Čierna zem, čierna zem
daj moju mamku ven!

Mother of Mine

—Words from a Slovak folksong

Oh my mother, my mother,
beyond the two hills
my memory still
cries out for you.

In my head
I still feel the pain
as if you, mommy
had only just died.

Black earth, black earth
give my mother back to me!
Let my mother bring me
the loving warmth I need.

When I return, mother,
I will entreat the earth
I will shake the very ground
whereon I stand pleading:

Black earth, black earth
give my mother back to me!



Zdeněk Lukáš: *V té naší mašťalce* – Four Czech folksongs

In addition to being a close contemporary of Petr Eben, Zdeněk Lukáš (1928-2007) is also one of the most distinguished contemporary Czech composers, with over three hundred compositions to his credit—more than a third of which are choral works. Lukáš began composing as a high school student, and after graduating from the Theater Institute in Prague, taught elementary school for five years. For a decade (1954-1964) he served as an editor and literary manager for Czechoslovak Radio, and around the same time founded the famous Czech choir, Česká Píseň. After 1964 he briefly held two posts, the first a temporary teaching position at the Music Conservatory in Prague, and the second a four-year appointment as director of a women's choir for the Czechoslovak State Ensemble of Songs and Dances—otherwise, he devoted himself exclusively to composition.

Lukáš's *Four Czech Folksongs* are poignant, charming and deceptively artful in their simplicity. The composer preserves the character of the original tunes in part by employing triadic harmonies, arriving at cadences in unison or on open fifths, and by frequently alternating between men and women's voices. These