

QERDDORION
VOCAL ENSEMBLE

James John
Artistic Director

PRESENTS

Rise Up, My Love

CHORAL SETTINGS OF THE SONG OF SONGS



Sunday, May 31, 2015, 3 pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
199 Carroll Street, Brooklyn

Tuesday, June 2, 2015, 8 pm
St. Ignatius of Antioch
87th Street & West End Avenue, Manhattan

THE PROGRAM

I Am the Rose of Sharon

William Billings (1746–1800)

Drunk with Love (World Premiere)

Craig Bakalian (b. 1961)



Rise Up, My Love

Healey Willan (1880–1968)

Quam Pulchra Es

John Dunstable (c. 1390–1453)

I Beheld Her, Beautiful As a Dove

Ensemble

*Ralph Bonheim, Jamie Carrillo, Susan Glass, Anna Harmon, Steven Iger, Linnea Johnson,
Michael Klitsch, Andre Kuney, Jonathan Miller, Myrna Nachman, Dean Rainey,
Tom Reingold, Christopher Ryan, Ellen Schorr*



Hvad est du dog skjønn

Edvard Grieg (1848–1907)

Trahe Me Post Te

Francisco Guerrero (1528–1599)

Andre Kuney, baritone

Quam Pulchra Es

Francisco José Carbonell (b. 1985)



Chants

*Jamie Carrillo, Anna Harmon, Frank Kamai, Michael Klitsch, Andre Kuney,
Cathy Markoff, Jonathan Miller, Dean Rainey, Tom Reingold, Jeannette Rodriguez,
Christopher Ryan, Ellen Schorr*

Du bist aller Dinge schön

Melchior Franck (1579–1639)

Er küsse mich



Iti Milevanon

Nira Chen (b. 1924)

arr. David Morse

Two Extracts from the Song of Solomon

Bengt Johansson (1914–1989)

Set Me As a Seal

William Walton (1902–1983)

Shir Hashirim

Yehezkel Braun (1922–2014)

Anna Harmon, soprano; Christopher Ryan, tenor

❖❖❖ *Intermission* ❖❖❖



CERDDORION

Sopranos	Altos	Tenors	Basses
Anna Harmon	Jamie Carrillo	Ralph Bonheim	Peter Cobb
Merrin Lazyan	Susan Glass	Frank Kamai	Steven Iger
Cathy Markoff	Linnea Johnson	Michael Klitsch	Andy Kettler
Jeanette Rodriguez	Myrna Nachman	Christopher Ryan	Andre Kuney
Ellen Schorr	Leonore Nelson	Avid Williams	Jonathan Miller
Rebecca Schwartz	Lauren Tenney		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.

Thanks to Vince Peterson and St. Paul's Episcopal Church for providing a performance space for this season.

Thanks to Cathy Markoff for her publicity efforts.

PROGRAM CREDITS:

James John wrote the program notes. He, Ellen Schorr, and Michael Klitsch edited and revised the program. Michael handled the printing.

THE ARTISTS

Now in its twentieth season, **CERDDORION** (Welsh for “musicians”) is one of New York’s most highly regarded volunteer choral ensembles. A chamber group of up to 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, Julie Dolphin, and Martha Sullivan.

Besides presenting its own varied programs, Cerddorion is frequently invited to perform with other acclaimed artists. Last season Cerddorion joined with the Shakespeare Society to present *The Food of Love*, a program of readings and choral settings. 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; they were invited back in 2014 to perform in Mr. Chapelet’s farewell concert. Past collaborations have included the North American premiere of Sir John Tavener’s all-night vigil, *The Veil of the Temple* (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 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 her *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 completing his fifth 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 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*, the Mozart and Verdi requiems, "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 most 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 Folk Songs 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. In Fall 2013, 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

Rise Up, My Love: Choral Settings of the Song of Songs

Notes by Artistic Director James John:

The *Song of Songs* is one of the shortest and most controversial books of the *Old Testament*. It is unique in that it makes no mention of God, fueling contentious debates about how the poetry should be interpreted. Did a single poet write it? Is there a discernable, dramatic through-line, or is it a haphazard compilation with little sense of continuity? Should it be interpreted allegorically, as an expression of God's love for the Israelites, or Christ's love for the Church—or literally, as an erotic declaration of love? Whatever the case, and perhaps precisely because of its ambiguity, it has long served as the source of inspiration for countless musicians.

Our program assembles settings of the *Song of Songs* from more than five centuries. It is grouped more or less by text, in order to highlight the contrasting ways in which composers have set similar verses. For example, the words that conclude William Billings's exuberant anthem *I Am the Rose of Sharon* provide a serene and lyrical beginning for Healey Willan's motet *Rise Up, My Love*; the second of Bengt Johansson's *Two Extracts from the Song of Solomon* conveys a very different perspective on the conjugal love expressed in William Walton's *Set Me As A Seal*, even though it starts with the same line—and so on. I hope that such musical juxtapositions will make listening all the more interesting and enjoyable.

I am also delighted that our program features the world premiere of the winning compositions from Cerddorion's third annual Emerging Composers Competition: *Drunk With Love*, by Craig Bakalian, and *Quam Pulchra Es*, by Francisco José Carbonell. This year's competition drew seventeen entries from throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia, with the requirement that each submission consist of a new setting from the *Song of Songs*. Judging from the remarkable assortment of pieces we received, this extraordinary poetry will continue to be a source of musical inspiration for generations to come.

William Billings, *I Am the Rose of Sharon*

The life of William Billings (1746–1800) spanned one of the most tumultuous periods in American history. Born in Boston, he was apprenticed to a tanner at a young age and was largely self-taught as a musician. Billings was the first American composer to have an entire volume devoted to his compositions (*The New England Psalm-Singer*, Boston, 1770), and he is the only American from that time whose works have entered the standard choral repertory. Billings was quite famous during his day—he knew Samuel Adams and Paul Revere (Revere engraved the frontispiece of *The New England Psalm Singer*), and his anthem “Chester” became a wartime favorite (“Let tyrants shake their iron rod...we fear them not, we trust in God!”).

Of Billings's more than 340 works, *I Am the Rose of Sharon* is among the most popular and frequently performed today. It is through-composed, with a new melodic idea for each successive line of text. The tunefulness and singability of the vocal parts are trademarks of the composer's style, as well as his great adeptness at fashioning melodies that adhere to the metrical stresses of the poetry. Billings also never missed an opportunity for clever word painting, such as the rising lines on “that you stir not up” or the off-kilter rhythms used to portray “skipping.”

I Am the Rose of Sharon

I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley.
As the lily among the thorns,
so is my love among the daughters.
As the apple tree, among the trees of the wood,
So is my beloved among the sons.
I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
And his fruit was sweet to my taste.
He brought me to the banqueting house,
His banner over me was love.
Stay me with flagons,
Comfort me with apples,
For I am sick of love.

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
By the roes and by the hinds of the field,
That you stir not up nor awake,
Awake my love till he please.
The voice of my beloved,
Behold, he cometh,
Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.
My beloved spake and said unto me:
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away,
For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

—*Song of Songs* 2:1–11

Healy Willan, *Rise Up, My Love, My Fair One* and *I Beheld Her, Beautiful As a Dove*

Healy Willan (1880–1968) was born in London, where he attended St. Saviour’s Choir School and worked for a decade (1903–1913) as organist-choirmaster at St. John the Baptist Church. He emigrated to Canada in 1913, just before the outbreak of World War I, to accept an appointment as head of the theory department at Toronto Conservatory and organist at St. Paul’s Church. Willan wittily described his heritage as, “English by birth; Canadian by adoption; Irish by extraction; Scotch by absorption.” Today he is known as one of Canada’s most influential composers and teachers. Though he wrote more than 800 works (including symphonies, chamber music, and operas), his reputation rests primarily on his sacred choral and organ music.

The pair of pieces on our program, *Rise Up, My Love, My Fair One* and *I Beheld Her, Beautiful As a Dove*, come from a set of ten liturgical motets composed between 1928 and 1937. Their graceful melodies, clarity of counterpoint, and beautiful voice leading reflect the influence of plainchant and Renaissance polyphony, for which Willan had a deep affinity. It is interesting to note that the text of the second motet (*I Beheld Her*) is a well-known responsory associated with the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and does not actually come from the *Song of Songs*. It is rather an amalgamation of elements from that text, which has often been appropriated by the church for Marian worship.

Rise Up, My Love, My Fair One

Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away.
For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear upon the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come.
Arise my love, my fair one,
And come away.

—*Song of Songs* 2:10–12

I Beheld Her, Beautiful as a Dove

I beheld her, beautiful as a dove,
Rising above the waterbrooks;
And her raiment was filled
With perfume beyond all price.
Even as the springtime was she girdled
With rosebuds and lilies of the valley.
Who is this that cometh up from the desert
Like a wreath of sweet smoke arising
From frankincense and myrrh?



Edvard Grieg, *Hvad est du dog skjøn*

Edvard Grieg’s (1843–1907) *Hvad est du dog skjøn* (“Oh, but you are beautiful”) may have been the composer’s last completed work. It belongs to a set entitled *Fire Salmer* (“Four Psalms”), Op. 74, published in September 1907 shortly after the composer’s death, and it is a paraphrase of *Song of Songs* 4:7–11. More than 30,000 people flooded the streets in Grieg’s hometown of Bergen, Norway, during his funeral—a tribute to his enduring legacy as one of Europe’s preeminent composers, as well as his iconic status within his own country.

In this relatively short and exceptionally powerful piece, Grieg draws on elements derived from Norwegian folk music (such as the modal melodies and drones found in Norway’s Hardanger Fiddle tunes) to create a contemplative mood of intense devotion. One can hear folk influences, especially in the open fifth that begins each verse, as well as the baritone solo that enters above it. Though the text makes reference to Christ as “God’s Son,” as a Unitarian and quintessential late nineteenth century artist, Grieg’s aesthetic sense also embraced a broader spiritual dimension. In 1906, while at work on these settings, he wrote, “To be able to see a great love behind the inexorable manifestations of this primal power—manifestations which often look for all the world like the work of an evil demon—that is of prime importance.”

Hvad est du dog skjøn

Hvad est du dog skjøn, ja skjøn,
 du allerlifligste Guds Søn!
 O du min Sulamit, ja mit,
 Alt hvad jeg har er også dit.
 Min Ven, du est min, ja min,
 Så lad mig altid være din!
 Ja, evig vist, evig vist, ja vist!
 Du min skal blive her og hist.
 Men tænk, jeg er her, ja her;
 iblandt såmange dragne Sværd!
 O så kom, Due! Ja kom!
 I Klippens Rif er Ro og Rum.

Oh, but you are beautiful, yes beautiful,
 You most living God’s Son!
 O you, my Shulamite, yes mine.
 All that I have is also yours.
 My friend, you are mine, yes mine;
 So let me always be yours!
 Yes, eternally, yes eternally, yes indeed!
 You shall be mine here and everywhere.
 But think, I am here, yes here,
 Among so many drawn swords!
 O so come dove! yes come!
 In the cleft of the rock is peace and safety.

(Text by H. A. Brorson; translation by Paul Erling)

—*Song of Songs* 4:7–11



Melchior Franck, *Du bist aller Dinge schön* and *Er küsse mich*

Melchior Franck (1579–1639) was one of the most prolific composers of his day (second only to Michael Praetorius), with a catalogue of nearly fifteen hundred compositions. Little is known about his early life or training, though he spent most of his career as Kapellmeister to Prince Johann Casimir in Coburg, Germany. He excelled at writing German-language motets with texts from the Lutheran Bible, a relatively new genre that was popular at the time. *Du bist aller Dinge schön* (“Thou art above all things fair”) and *Er küsse mich* (“Let him kiss me”) were published in 1608 as part of a collection of twenty-four motets intended for wedding celebrations, all with texts from the *Song of Songs*. Both pieces show the influence of the Venetian polychoral style in the way that different combinations of voices within the choir respond antiphonally to one another. Franck’s skill at word painting is especially audible in *Du bist aller Dinge schön*, where, for example, he uses descending lines and dotted rhythms to portray “ein triefender Honigseim” (“a dripping honeycomb”), as well as longer, more lugubrious note values to illustrate the words “Honig und Milch” (“honey and milk”).

Du bist aller Dinge schön

Du bist aller Dinge schön, meine Freundin,
 und ist kein Flecken an dir.
 Komm, meine Braut von Libanon.
 Du hast mir das Herz genommen,
 meine Schwester, liebe Braut.
 Wie schön sind deine Brüste,
 meine Schwester, liebe Braut.
 Deine Brüste sind lieblicher denn Wein,
 und der Geruch deiner Salben übertrifft
 alle Würze.
 Deine Lippen sind wie ein triefender
 Honigseim.
 Honig und Milch ist unter deiner Zunge,
 Und der Geruch deiner Kleider
 ist wie der Geruch Libanon.

Thou art all fair, my love;
 there is no spot in thee.
 Come with me from Lebanon, my bride.
 You have captured my heart,
 my sister, my beloved spouse.
 How lovely are your breasts,
 my sister, my beloved spouse.
 Your breasts are more lovely than wine,
 and the smell of your ointments than all
 spices!
 Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the
 honeycomb:
 honey and milk are under thy tongue;
 and the smell of thy garments
 is like the smell of Lebanon.

—*Song of Songs* 4:7–11

Er küsse mich

Er küsse mich
mit dem Kusse seines Mundes;
denn deine Brüste
sind lieblicher denn Wein,
daß man deine gute Salbe rieche;
dein Nam' ist ein' ausgeschüttete Salbe,
darum lieben dich die Mägde.
Zeuch mich dir nach, so laufen wir.
Der König führet mich in seine
Kammer.
Wir freuen uns und sind fröhlich über dir;
wir gedenken an deine Brüste
mehr denn an den Wein.
Die Frommen lieben dich.

Let him kiss me
with the kisses of his mouth!
For your love
is better than wine;
Your anointing oils are fragrant;
your name is oil poured out;
therefore virgins love you.
Draw me after you; let us run.
The king has brought me into his
chambers.
We will be exult and rejoice in you;
we will extol your love
more than wine;
rightly do they love you.

—*Song of Songs* 1:2–4

Bengt Johansson, *Two Extracts from the Song of Solomon*

Born in Helsinki, Finland, Bengt Johansson (1914–1989) studied cello and composition at the Sibelius Academy and for much of his life worked at the Finnish Broadcasting Company (1952–1975). Johansson is considered a pioneer of Finnish electronic music, primarily due to his innovative *Three Electronic Etudes*, published in 1960. Despite this, he acknowledged Sibelius as one of his primary influences and did not consider himself a “modernist” composer. Finnish music scholar Kimmo Korhonen writes, “Although Johansson has gone down in the history of Finnish music as the creator of the first Finnish electronic piece and as a choral reformer, he distanced himself from Modernism proper and was critical of change for the sake of change.”

Most of Johansson’s choral music was composed after 1960, including his *Two Extracts from the Song of Solomon* (1967). In these short, effective pieces, Johansson frequently makes use of bitonality—splitting the choir into six parts, grouping women’s and men’s voices together and juxtaposing triads in different keys against one another. The resulting sonorities range from mild dissonances (such as the “ninth” chord at the beginning of *I Sat Down Under His Shadow*) to excruciating clashes—the most potent of which appears in *Set Me As a Seal* at the conclusion of the line “jealousy is cruel as the grave,” where D major and D minor chords fight painfully with each other in a striking moment of word painting.

I Sat Down under His Shadow

I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
He brought me to the banqueting house,
and his banner over me was love.
I sat down under his shadow with great delight.

—*Song of Songs* 2:3–4

Set Me as a Seal...

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm:
for love is strong as death;
jealousy is cruel as the grave.

—*Song of Songs* 8:6

William Walton, *Set Me As a Seal Upon Thine Heart*

The second of four children, William Walton (1902–1983) was born into a musical family. His father was a baritone and choirmaster, and his mother was a contralto. Thus, some of his earliest musical experiences were formed singing in his father’s church choir, and his affinity for choral music is evident in perhaps his most well-known work, the oratorio *Belshazzar’s Feast* (1930–1931), which did much to establish his reputation. He is considered one of the major composers of the twentieth century and wrote significant works in all genres, including film music (most notably the score for Lawrence Olivier’s adaptation of *Henry V*). According to Oxford Music Online, his style assimilates “an astonishing number of disparate and apparently contradictory influences, such as Anglican anthems, jazz, and the music of Stravinsky, Sibelius, Ravel and Elgar.” The anthem *Set Me As a Seal Upon Thine Heart* was written for a wedding ceremony that took place on St. Cecilia’s Day in 1938. (St. Cecilia is the patron saint of music.)

Set me as a seal upon thine heart

Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
as a seal upon thine arm.
Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can the floods drown it.
for love is strong as death.

—*Song of Songs* 8:6–7

Craig Bakalian, *Drunk With Love* (world premiere)

It is with great pleasure that we present the world premiere of Craig Bakalian's *Drunk With Love*, the winner of Cerddorion's third annual Emerging Composer's Competition. The composer writes:

I read multiple versions of the entire *Song of Songs*, and when I came across the phrase, "Eat, friends, and drink, until you are drunk with love," I immediately started hearing music that would develop into an entire piece. I identified with the praiseful, positive, and liberating feeling of the phrase, which is a call for everyone to run their cups over with love. Eating together, the preparation and sharing of food, is a powerful expression of love, similar to the preparation of concerts of music.

Subsequently, after hearing the initial phrase in my mind, I employed the technique of developing variation to project a longer, formalized concert piece, and to set the remaining words, which come from the *Song of Songs*, Chapter 5. I used Dorian, Aeolian, Lydian, major and Phrygian tonalities, and combined mixed meters (7/8 and 8/8) with duple meter (2/4) to create macro sections of organized smaller phrases. The movement to and from those tonalities and meters created musical variation and opportunities for musical invention.

The fifth chapter of the *Song of Songs* is a celebration of love, which I felt required a lively, rhythmic, musical setting; I hope I have created an artful expression for myself and others to enjoy.

Drunk with Love

Eat, friends, and drink, until you are drunk with love!

My sister, my bride, I have entered my garden;
I am gathering my myrrh and my spices;
I am eating my honeycomb along with my honey;
I am drinking my wine as well as my milk.

I am asleep, but my heart is awake.
Listen! I hear my darling knocking on my door!
Open for me, my sister, my love,
my dove, my flawless one!
For my head is wet with dew,
my hair with moisture of the night.

I've removed my coat; must I put it back on?
I've washed my feet; must I dirty them again?

The man I love put his hand through the hole by the door-latch,
and my heart began pounding at the thought of him.

I got up to open for the man I love.
My hands were dripping with myrrh
pure myrrh ran off my fingers onto the handle of the bolt.

I opened for my darling, but my darling had turned and gone.
My heart had failed me when he spoke
I sought him, but I could not find him;
I called him, but he did not answer me.

The watchmen roaming the city found me;
they beat me, they wounded me;
they took away my cloak,
those guards of the walls!

I charge you, daughters of Yerushalayim,
that if you find the man I love,
what are you to tell him?
That I am sick with love.

How does the man you love differ from any man,
you most beautiful of women?
How does the man you love differ from any man,
that you should give us this charge?

The man I love is radiant and ruddy;
he stands out among ten thousand.

His head is like the finest gold;
his locks are wavy and black as raven.

His eyes are like doves by running streams,
bathed in milk and set just right.

His cheeks are like beds of spices,
like banks of fragrant herbs
dripping with myrrh...

His words are sweetness itself;
he is altogether desirable.
This is my darling, and this is my friend,
daughters of Yerushalayim.

—*Song of Songs* 5

John Dunstable, *Quam Pulchra Es*

Francisco Guerrero, *Trahe Me Post Te*

Francisco José Carbonell, *Quam Pulchra Es* (world premiere)

Each piece in this trio of settings draws inspiration from the phrase “*Quam pulchra es*” (“How beautiful you are”).

In addition to being an astronomer, astrologer, and mathematician, John Dunstable (c. 1390–1453) was a composer of enormous influence. His penchant for using harmonies including thirds and sixths inspired the phrase “*la contenance angloise*” (“the English countenance”), which signified a style that spread throughout Europe and ushered in a new era of musical thought. His three-voice motet *Quam Pulchra Es*, composed almost six hundred years ago, is a gem of the choral repertoire. It is a shining example of the composer’s taste for triadic harmonies, creating a rich, sweet sound in almost every measure, breathing life into the extraordinary beauty described by the poem.

Francisco Guerrero (1528–1599) spent most of his life in Seville, Spain. Along with Tomás Luis de Victoria and Cristobal Morales, he was one of the most famous Spanish composers of the sixteenth century. The motet *Trahe Me Post Te* (“Draw me after you”) is constructed around an ingenious canon in the upper two voices prompted by the initial phrase of text: one voice is “drawn after” the other in canonic imitation. The first full verse, which comes from the *Song of Songs* 1:4, contains an interpolation to the Virgin Mary (“*Trahe me post te virgo Maria*”)—further demonstration, as mentioned earlier, that the *Song of Songs* was frequently used by the church in Marian worship. The remaining verses are taken from the *Song of Songs* 7:7–9, beginning with the words “*Quam pulchra es*,” thus overlapping with the first part of Dunstable’s setting.

Though Francisco José Carbonell’s *Quam Pulchra Es* starts with the same phrase as Dunstable’s motet, it comes from the *Song of Songs* 4:1–3, 16, which is an entirely different chapter. Such recurring motifs are one of the reasons that scholars perceive continuity throughout the *Song of Songs* and speculate regarding the possibility of single authorship. After studying sacred music in Rome and singing in the choir of St. Peter’s Basilica, Francisco Carbonell (who is originally from Valencia, Spain) considers Gregorian chant a vital source of inspiration. He writes:

Quam Pulchra Es is based on the fourth chapter of the *Song of Songs*. As a beautiful book of love, in this chapter the man sings of his love for his beloved in a sheer and poetic style. The piece is divided into four parts, each of them preceded by a chant-like introduction that also serves as a bridge between sections, framing each one as an isolated picture. The first three parts describe the beauty of different facial attributes: her eyes, her teeth, and her lips. In the final section, the woman is inviting her beloved to come to her, his “garden.”

Carbonell’s piece won second prize in our Emerging Composers Competition, and we are thrilled to present the world premiere as part of this program.

Quam pulchra est (Dunstable)

Quam pulchra es et quam decora,
carissima in deliciis
Statura tua assimilata est palmæ,
et ubera tua botris.
Caput tuum ut Carmelus
collum tuum sicut turris eburnea...
Veni dilecte mi; egrediamur in agrum
Et videamus si flores fructus parturiunt,
si floruerunt mala punica.
Ibi dabo tibi ubera mea. Alleluia.

How beautiful and fair you are,
my beloved, most sweet in your delights.
Your stature is like a palm-tree,
and your breasts are like clusters of fruit.
Your head is like Mount Carmel
and your neck is like a tower of ivory.
Come, my beloved, let us go into the fields
and see if the blossoms have borne fruit,
and if the pomegranates have flowered.
There will I give my breasts to you. Alleluia.

—*Song of Songs* 7:5–10, 12–13

Trahe me post te

Trahe me post te [virgo Maria]:
curremus in odorem unguentorum
tuorum...
Quam pulchra es et quam decora,
carissima in delitiis,
Statura tua assimilata est palmae
et ubera tua botris.
Dixi: ascendam in palmam
et apprehendam fructum eius:
et erunt ubera tua sicut botri
vineae,
et odor oris tui sicut odor malorum.

Draw me after you [Virgin Mary]:
we will run after thee to the odour of thy
ointments...
How beautiful art thou, and how comely,
my dearest, in delights!
Thy stature is like to a palm tree,
and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.
I said: I will go up into the palm tree,
and will take hold of the fruit thereof:
and thy breasts shall be as the clusters of
the vine:
and the odour of thy mouth like apples.

Quam pulchra est (Carbonell)

Quam pulchra es, amica mea!
Oculi tui columbarum per velamen tuum.
Capilli tui sicut grex caprarum
que descenderunt de monte Galaad.
Dentes tui sicut grex tonsarum

quæ ascenderunt de lavacro;
omnes gemellis fetibus,
et sterilis non est inter eas.
Sicut vitta coccinea, labia tua,
et eloquium tuum dulce.
Sicut fragmen mali punici,
ita genae tuae per velamen tuum.
Surge, aquilo, et veni, auster:
perfla hortum meum,
et fluant aromata illius. Amen.

Behold, thou art fair, my love;
thou hast doves’ eyes within thy locks:
thy hair is as a flock of goats,
that descend from Mount Gilead.
Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are
even shorn,
which came up from the washing;
whereof every one bear twins,
and none is barren among them.
Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
and thy speech is comely:
thy temples are like a piece
of a pomegranate within thy locks.
Awake, O north wind; and come, O south;
blow upon my garden,
that the spices thereof may flow out. Amen.

—*Song of Songs* 4:1–3, 16

Nira Chen, *Iti Milevanon* (arr. David Morse) Yehezkel Braun, Verse 11 from *Shir Hashirim*

Our program concludes with two settings of the *Song of Songs* in the original Hebrew.

Nira Chen (b. 1924) was born in Israel at the Kibbutz Ein-Harod, where she still lives and works. She was trained at the Jerusalem Conservatory, majoring in piano and music education, followed by graduate studies in composition and orchestration. The tune *Iti Milevanon* (“Come with me from Lebanon”) was created in collaboration with the well-known dancer/choreographer Rivka Shturman, who is a member of the same Kibbutz. It is one of many melodies (including Chen’s popular *Dodi Li*) designed to correspond with Shturman’s folk-inspired dance steps, which have gone on to become quite famous throughout the world as Israeli folk dances.

David Morse’s choral arrangement of *Iti Milevanon* emphasizes the beauty and simplicity of the melody, which consists of only two short phrases. The tune is introduced without words, as if to highlight its origin in movement, and with each successive verse it is passed back and forth between voices in differing combinations. Dissonant harmonies, together with the tune’s Aeolian (natural minor) mode, create an atmosphere of intensity that suggests great longing and passion.

Shir Hashirim is Hebrew for “Song of Songs,” and Yehezkel Braun’s six-movement work is a setting of the book’s entire third chapter. Braun (1922–2014), who was born in Breslau and moved to Israel with his parents when he was 2 years old, spent most of his career as a Professor of Music at Tel Aviv University. He had dual interests in Hebrew and Gregorian chant, as well as Jewish folk music, and he studied for a year at the Benedictine Monastery in Solesmes, France, renowned for the authoritative method of singing plainchant practiced there. Braun’s compositions reflect these disparate influences, blending them into a style uniquely his own. When presented in its entirety, Braun’s setting of *Shir Hashirim*, Chapter 3, lasts close to fifteen minutes. We are performing only the final section (verse 11), in which the daughters of Zion are called upon to witness the wedding procession of King Solomon, crowned in magnificent splendor. The music is festive and joyful; folk influences (more than plainchant) are at work here, and can be heard particularly in sections of dancelike counterpoint that alternate with powerful homophonic exhortations proclaiming the arrival of the King.

Iti Milevanon

Iti milevanon iti kala tavoi	Come with me from Lebanon, my bride;
Mimonot arayot merosh	From the lion’s dens; from the peak of the Snir
snir v’chermon	and Hermon mountains
Hinach yafa rayati einayich yonim	Thou art fair, my love, thou has dove’s eyes.
ze dodi	This is my beloved, and this is my friend.
Ze re’i bnot yerushalayim	O daughters of Jerusalem, this is my friend.

—*Song of Songs* 4:8, 4:1; 5:16

Shir Hashirim

Ts’ena ur’ena b’not tsiyon bamelech	O maidens of Zion, go forth and gaze upon
Sh’lomo	King Solomon
Baatarah sheitrah lo imo	Wearing the crown that his mother gave him
B’yom chatunato	On his wedding day,
Uv’yom simchat libo.	On the day his heart rejoiced.

Translation by H. L. Ginsberg

—*Song of Songs* 3:11

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Cerddorion Welcomes Voces Nordicae!

On Monday, June 15, Cerddorion will host **Voces Nordicae**, one of Sweden's outstanding professional choirs, Lone Larsen, Artistic Director, in their only New York appearance. In preparation for a residency at the Yale International Choral Festival, Voces Nordicae will present the U.S. premiere of a striking new work, "Open Plan Living," and will be joined by members of Cerddorion in singing Swedish and American folksongs. The concert will take place at 8:00 pm at St. Ignatius of Antioch Church on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Visit www.cerddorion.org for ticket information and concert details. Anyone who attends our May 31 or June 2 performances may receive \$10 tickets for this special concert, by typing in the discount code VOCES on our Eventbrite ticketing page or by bringing a copy of this program to the door on the evening of the performance.



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