

CERDDORION

Sopranos

Anna Harmon
Mavis MacNeil
Karen Mardini
Jennifer Oates
Jeanette Rodriguez
Ellen Schorr
Talya Westbrook

Altos

Jamie Carrillo
Susan Glass
Allegra Kuney
Cathy Markoff
Shana Metcalf
Myrna Nachman

Tenors

Ralph Bonheim
Gerard Gallagher
Mark Hewitt
Michael Klitsch
David Letzler
Dan Rubins
Ken Short

Basses

Peter Cobb
Rich Dikeman
Stephen Iger
Jonathan Miller
Dean Rainey
Tom Reingold
Larry Sutter
Oliver Van Oekelen

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Cerddorion NYC, Inc.
Post Office Box 946, Village Station
New York, NY 10014-0946

Visit our website for more information about Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble or to join our mailing list: www.cerddorion.org. You can also follow us on Twitter: [@cerddorionnyc](https://twitter.com/cerddorionnyc) and on Instagram [@cerddorionchoir](https://www.instagram.com/cerddorionchoir), or like us on Facebook: Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble.



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James John

Artistic Director

PRESENTS

Celebrating Our Audience: A Cornucopia of Fan Favorites



Friday, November 15, 2019, 8 pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
199 Carroll Street, Brooklyn

Sunday, November 17, 2019, 3 pm
St. Ignatius of Antioch
87th Street & West End Avenue, Manhattan

THE PROGRAM

Master of the Notes

Gaude Virgo Mater Christi

Josquin des Prez (c. 1450–1521)

Nymphes des Bois



Fostering New Music

Leve-toi, et viens

Karen Lemon (b. 1961)

again (after ecclesiastes)

David Lang (b. 1957)

Aguas Puros del Nilo

Elliot Z. Levine (b. 1948)

Jamie Carrillo, alto; Myrna Nachman, alto



Mourning and Evening

My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land

Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

Nachtwache I, Op. 104, No. 1

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Nachtwache II, Op. 104, No. 2

Selig sind die Toten

Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672)

❖❖❖ *Intermission* ❖❖❖

(Don't forget to vote for your favorite swan song! See the program insert.)

Mass Appeal

Kyrie and Agnus Dei (from *Mass for Four Voices*)

William Byrd (1543–1623)



DONORS

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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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to Richard Porterfield and the Church of Saint Ignatius of Antioch for providing rehearsal and performance space for this season. Thanks also to Alex Canovas and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Brooklyn for providing a performance space for this season, and to Drew Helstosky for his assistance in managing our Brooklyn concert.

Our performances would not be possible without extensive behind-the-scenes efforts by the group’s members. In addition to the ongoing work of our Board of Directors, this program relied on printing by Steve Iger and program editing and production by Michael Klitsch.

And special thanks go to Ellen Schorr, for her tireless work in synthesizing audience feedback and finalizing repertoire for this program.



SAVE THE DATES FOR A SEASON OF CELEBRATION!

As Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary, mark your calendars for the following can’t-miss programs:

- **March 1, 2020—Celebrating Collaboration:** We will present the New York premiere of *The Book of Rounds*, with world-renowned indie-pop group October Project and with two guest ensembles from the Kaufman Music Center’s Special Music School: Vox Nova Boys Choir and 5th Grade Choir (Emily John, Director).
- **March 27 & 28, 2020 (NOTE NEW DATES!)—Celebrating Our Singers, Past and Present:** Cerddorion alumni/ae will return for a fully staged production of Henry Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*, with period instruments and guest director/choreographer Christopher Caines.
- **May 29 & 31, 2020—Celebrating Our Commitment to New Music:** The final program of our anniversary season will feature the world premiere of a work by Sidney Boquiren celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Check www.cerddorion.org for more details.

Let Me Not Be Confounded
Versa est in Luctum
(from *Officium Defunctorum, sex vocibus*)

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)

Timor et tremor

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)



For Love and Lamentation
Dieu! qu’il la fait bon regarder
(from *Trois Chansons de Charles d’Orléans*)

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

O Teseo mio (from *Lamento d’Arianna*)

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)



Flora and Fauna
The Evening Primrose (from *Five Flower Songs*)

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

[Swan Song, chosen by popular vote]

Verger (from *Six Chansons*)

Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)



Farewell from the Bard
When That I Was and a Little Tiny Boy

Matthew Harris (b. 1956)



THE ARTISTS

Now beginning its twenty-fifth 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.

In addition to producing its own annual concert season, Cerddorion undertakes numerous collaborations and guest appearances. Most recently, the group performed in the “Mile-Long Opera: A Biography of 7 O’Clock.” For eight nights in October 2018, the High Line became the stage for a massive multimedia performance created by architect Liz Diller, composer David Lang, and librettists Anne Carson and Claudia Rankine.

Other guest appearances include an invited performance at the November 2016 New York State American Choral Directors Association Conference in Garden City, NY; a featured performance on the cable television series American Music in February 2016; and a collaborative concert with Sweden’s highly acclaimed professional choir Voces Nordicae in June 2015. 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. Other 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; and Baroque opera performances with the early music instrumental ensemble Concert Royal.

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 and Vocal Area Network, and an Artist in Residence at the Church of St. Ignatius of Antioch.

Farewell from the Bard

Harris, When That I Was and a Little Tiny Boy

Composer Matthew Harris makes his home in New York City, where he teaches at Brooklyn College and the New York City College of Technology. He is the recipient of numerous awards and has had orchestral works performed by the Minnesota, Houston, Florida, Jacksonville, Chattanooga, Spokane, and Modesto Symphony Orchestras; chamber works by the Lark Quartet, New York New Music Ensemble, and League-ISCM; and vocal works by Sheryl Studer and Faith Esham. Harris's highly popular choral works have been commissioned or premiered by such leading choruses as the Dale Warland Singers, the Phoenix Bach Choir, the Los Angeles Chamber Singers, the Western Wind, and Cantori New York and have been sung by countless school and community choirs across America.

Among Harris’s most frequently performed works are his six books of Shakespeare songs (1990–2009), comprising some twenty-one choral settings of the Bard’s verses in a variety of styles. The finale of *Book V*, “When That I Was and a Little Tiny Boy,” uses folk-like melodies and open harmonies to set the clown Feste’s epilogue to *Twelfth Night*, and it climaxes in an extended coda that builds to sixteen parts as it repeats various bits of the poem.

When That I Was and a Little Tiny Boy

When that I was and a little tiny boy,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day.
But when I came to man’s estate,
With hey, ho, & c.
'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut
their gate,
For the rain, & c.

But when I came, alas! to wive,
With hey, ho, & c.
By swaggering could I never thrive,
For the rain, & c.
But when I came unto my beds,
With hey, ho, & c.
With toss-pots still had drunken heads,
For the rain, & c.
A great while ago the world begun,
With hey, ho, & c.
But that's all one, our play is done,
And we'll strive to please you every day.



Hindemith, Verger, from *Six Chansons*

Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) was born near Frankfurt am Main and received early training as a violinist. He later established a reputation as a violist, playing throughout Europe with the Amar Quartet (a group he founded in 1921). In 1927, he began teaching composition at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik, and during a time of great turmoil in Europe he emigrated to Switzerland (1938) and then the United States (1940), where he later obtained citizenship. He taught for over a decade at Yale University and established a reputation as an outstanding pedagogue (his book, *Elementary Training for Musicians*, is still used in conservatory ear training classes today). His many notable students included Lucas Foss, Norman Dello Joio, and Mel Powell.

Completed in 1939 during his time in Switzerland, *Six Chansons* (of which “Verger” is the final movement) was commissioned by a Swiss choir, Chanson Valaisanne, and has since become a cornerstone of the twentieth century *a cappella* repertory. Hindemith’s musical language is unique and accessible, and his settings of Rilke’s elegant poetry seem to capture the essence of the texts, which are highly nuanced and rich with symbolic meaning. Though a German poet, Rilke wrote more than four hundred poems in French, and toward the end of his life he made his home in Valais, the predominantly French-speaking canton of Switzerland from which the choir that commissioned these works took its name.

Verger (Orchard)

Jamais la terre n’est plus réelle
que dans tes branches, ô verger blond,
ni plus flottante que dans la dentelle
que font les ombres sur le gazon.

Là se rencontre ce qui nous reste,
ce que pèse et ce qui nourrit,
avec le passage manifeste
de la tendresse infinie.

Mais à ton centre, la calme fontaine,
presque dormant en son ancien rond,
de ce contraste parle à peine,
tant en elle il se confond.

Nowhere is the earth so real
as amid your branches, o orchard blond,
and nowhere so airy as amid the lace-work
of the shadows on the grass.

There we encounter that which remains,
that which sustains and nourishes,
with the manifest passage
of infinite tenderness.

But at your center, the calm fountain,
almost asleep in his ancient circle,
of this contrast few have spoken
while of them it is so truly a part.

JAMES JOHN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

JAMES JOHN is in his tenth season as Artistic Director of Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble. He is also Professor of Conducting and Director of Choral Activities at the Aaron Copland School of Music (ACSM), Queens College-CUNY, where he directs the Queens College Vocal Ensemble and Queens College Choral Society, and heads the graduate program in choral conducting.

Under Dr. John’s leadership, the choral program at ACSM has become recognized as one of the finest collegiate choral programs in the region, with performances by Queens College choral ensembles at state and divisional conferences of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). In New York City, his choirs have performed in such prestigious venues as Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Merkin Hall, St. Patrick’s Cathedral, and Trinity Church Wall Street. His ACSM choral ensembles have also been featured on two compact disc recordings: *The Partsongs of Hamish MacCunn*, released by the QC Vocal Ensemble, funded by a grant from the PSC-CUNY Research Foundation; and *Songs of Peace and Praise*, a compilation of choral music by Queens College composers, released on the NAXOS label.

Dr. John’s guest-conducting appearances include Brahms’s *Requiem* and Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* with the Tokyo Oratorio Society and Oratorio Sinfonica Japan, David Geffen Hall’s annual *Messiah* Sing-In, a concert of American choral music with the Virginia Chorale, and honor choirs throughout New York State. He has served as guest chorus master for the Queens Symphony and participated in a choral recording with jazz trumpeter Michael Mossman, head of ACSM’s Jazz Performance Program. Dr. John has also contracted choirs for Josh Groban, including appearances on *The Tonight Show* and the opening ceremonies of the U.S. Open, as well as for his Stages tour of New York City.

As a teacher and scholar, Dr. John has served as guest lecturer in conducting at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany, and in February 2020 he will be a featured clinician at the Korean Federation of Choral Music’s National Conference in Seoul. He has given presentations at both divisional and national ACDA conferences and is in demand as a clinician and adjudicator throughout the United States. Dr. John’s dissertation on Brahms won Julius Herford Prize from the ACDA, and from 2011 to 2016 he served as editor of *American Choral Review*, published biannually by Chorus America. He has also served 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. His prior appointments include Director of Choral Activities at both Tufts University (Boston, MA) and Nassau Community College (Garden City, NY), as well as Conducting Fellow at Dartmouth College. He received his Master of Arts in conducting from the ACSM.

CELEBRATING OUR AUDIENCE: A CORNUCOPIA OF FAN FAVORITES

It is with great delight that we open our twenty-fifth anniversary season with a program of beloved selections, based on feedback from audiences through the years. To put a finishing touch on this interactive approach (and add to the fun!), we are asking you to participate in our first-ever **live poll**. Cerddorion has prepared three lovely “swan songs”—by Jacob Arcadelt, Orlando Gibbons, and Paul Hindemith—and we would like you to tell us which one we should perform. We will tally the votes at intermission and perform the winning piece as part of the “Flora and Fauna” set on the second half of the program. To help you decide, we included brief information about each piece, along with the full texts, in the program notes (following Britten’s *The Evening Primrose*).

Don’t worry if you are not familiar with these pieces: Feel free to take a look at the notes, register a spontaneous response, and have fun participating!

To vote using your smart phone, scan the QR code below, or visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/NXZKTW9. Or you can use the paper ballot inserted in this program.

Thank you for joining us to begin our season of celebration!!

—James John, Artistic Director



II. Subtle, suave, sagacious:

The Silver Swan by Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625)

Text by Sir Christopher Hatton (1581–1619), one of Gibbons’ patrons

The Silver Swan

The silver swan who, living, had no note,
When death approached, unlocked her silent throat.

Leaning her breast against the reedy shore,

Thus sang her first and last, and sang no more:

“Farewell all joys, O death come close mine eyes.

More geese than swans now live, more fools than wise.”—*Anonymous*

III. Esoteric, elegant, imaginative:

Un Cygne by Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)

Text by Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926)

Un cygne avance sur l’eau
tout entouré de lui-même,
comme un glissant tableau;
ainsi à certains instants
un être que l’on aime
est tout un espace mouvant.

A swan advances on the water
Surrounded entirely by itself,
Like a gliding display;
Thus, at times,
A being whom one loves
Is an entire moving space.

Il se rapproche, doublé,
comme ce cygne qui nage,
sur notre ame troublée...
qui à cet être ajoute
la tremblante image
de bonheur et de doute.

The being draws near, doubled,
Like this swimming swan,
To our troubled soul...
Which to that being adds
The trembling image
Of happiness and doubt.

Indeed, this is certainly true of Britten’s *Five Flower Songs*, written in 1950 to celebrate the twenty-fifth wedding anniversary of the composer’s friends Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst, who—fittingly—were avid amateur botanists. “The Evening Primrose” is the fourth of these settings. It portrays the delicate beauty of this bashful flower, which blooms only at night and fades quickly at the break of day. The shape of Britten’s gently interwoven melodic lines and their arrival on an open fifth at the song’s conclusion suggest the melancholy withering and disappearance of primrose blossoms at first light.

The Evening Primrose

When once the sun sinks in the west,
And dewdrops pearl the evening’s breast;
Almost as pale as moonbeams are,
Or its companionable star,
The evening primrose opes anew
Its delicate blossoms to the dew;
And, hermit-like, shunning the light,
Wastes its fair bloom upon the night,
Who, blindfold to its fond caresses,
Knows not the beauty it possesses;
Thus it blooms on while night is by;
When day looks out with open eye,
Bashed at the gaze it cannot shun,
It faints and withers and is gone.

—*John Clare (1793–1864)*

The Swan Songs

I. Passionate, powerful, rhapsodic:

***Il bianco e dolce cigno* by Jacob Arcadelt (1507–1568)**

Text by Alfonso d’Avalos (1502–1546)

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

The white and sweet swan sings as it dies
And weeping I reach the end of my life.
What a strange, different fate, that he
 should die in despair
And I die blessed.
If death, in dying
fills me with all joy and desire,
I feel no other sorrow in dying;
I would be content to die
 a thousand times a day.

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Master of the Notes

Josquin des Prez, Gaude Virgo Mater Christi

Josquin des Prez, Nymphes des bois

Every so often, a great artist emerges who is able to assimilate the style and musical language of his predecessors, while at the same time pushing the boundaries of possibility into new areas of self-expression. Beethoven was one such musician; Josquin des Prez (c. 1450–1521) was a similar “giant” of the Renaissance. Born near the border of Belgium and France, he is the most famous in a line of Franco-Flemish composers that includes luminaries such as Guillaume Dufay, Johannes Ockeghem, Jacob Obrecht, and Heinrich Isaac. Josquin’s gift for tightly knit musical construction is nearly unmatched; he created a new level of motivic and thematic unity within his compositions, while also displaying unprecedented sensitivity to the text. Martin Luther (1483–1546) revered him as “Master of the notes, which must do as he wills.”

Gaude Virgo Mater Christi is a Marian motet celebrating “five of the seven joys of Mary: the Annunciation, the Nativity, Christ’s Resurrection and Ascension, and the Assumption.” Though published in 1505, there is no certainty regarding its date of composition. Similarities have been pointed out between parts of *Gaude Virgo* and Josquin’s famous four-part setting of *Ave Maria*, which, if accurate, would mean it may have been written as early as 1480. Typical of Josquin’s style, the motet’s motivic connections are brilliantly wrought, as when the opening motive returns at the work’s climax (a powerful concluding “Alleluia”); and musical expression of the text is paramount—demonstrated, for example, by the rising lines at “Gaude Christo ascendente” (“Rejoice as Christ ascends”).

In contrast, there is no doubt that the motet *Nymphes des bois* was written in or around 1497. It is a lament on the death of the famous composer Johannes Ockeghem, who may have been Josquin’s teacher, and who died on February 6 of that year. The first section of the work imitates Ockeghem’s style, using the standard Latin Requiem text as a cantus firmus, building a setting of Jean Molinet’s (1435–1507) elegy on the death of Ockeghem around it. At the conclusion of the piece, Josquin’s own voice emerges: In a simple homophonic style, he mentions his own name and implores well-known composers of the time (Brumel, Pierson, Compère) “to weep great tears from your eyes, for gone is your great father.” This is perhaps one of the most deeply moving personal statements ever set to music.

Gaude Virgo Mater Christi

Gaude, virgo mater Christi,
Quae per aurem concepisti,
Gabriele nuntio.

Gaude, quia Deo plena
Peperisti sine poena,
Cum pudoris lilio.

Gaude, quia tui nati
Quem dolebas mortem pati,
Fulget resurrectio.

Gaude Christo ascendente,
Et in coelum te vidente,
Motu fertur proprio.

Gaude quae post ipsum scandis,
Et est honor tibi grandis,
In coeli palatio.

Ubi fructus ventris tui,
Nobis detur per te frui,
In perenni gaudio.
Alleluia.

Rejoice, virgin mother of Christ
You who conceived through your ear,
As announced by Gabriel.

Rejoice, because full of God
you gave birth without pain,
with the lily of purity.

Rejoice, for your son,
whose death you mourned,
shines in the resurrection.

Rejoice, as Christ ascends,
and, seeing you, ascends into Heaven
by his own movement.

Rejoice, you who rise after him,
and to whom great honor is accorded
in the palace of heaven,

Where the fruit of your womb
is given to us, through thee, to enjoy
in eternal joy.
Alleluia.

O Teseo mio

O Teseo, o Teseo mio,
sì che mio ti vo’ dir, chè mio pur sei
benché t’involi, Ah! crudo.
Ai gl’occhi miei volgiti, Teseo, o Dio
volgiti indietro a rimirar colei
che lasciato ha per te la patria e il regno
e’n questa arene ancora
cibo di fere dispietate e crude,
lascierà l’ossa ignude.

O Teseo mio, se tu sapessi, o Dio,
Ohimè, come s’affanna la povera Arianna,
forse, forse pentito,
rivolgeresti ancor la prora al lito,
ma con l’aure serene
tu te ne vai felice, et io qui piango,
a te prepara Attene
liete pompe superbe, et io rimango,
cibo di fere in solitarie arene.
Te l’un’e l’altro tuo vecchio parente
stringerai lieto,
ed io più non vedrovi o madre o padre mio!

O Theseus, my Theseus,
yes, I want to tell you that you still are mine
even though you flee, cruel one.
Ah, Theseus turn toward my eyes, oh God,
turn back to gaze at she who left her country
and kingdom for you,
and still on these sands is to be left
as food for merciless cruel wild beasts
that will leave only her bare bones.

Oh, my Theseus, if only you knew, oh God,
alas, the fate of this poor Ariadne,
Perhaps, perhaps repenting
you would turn your prow to this shore,
but you go happily
to the sea-maids and I stay here crying;
and for you, all Athens prepares
joyous celebrations, and I remain
food for wild beasts on this lonely shore.
You will embrace your elderly parents,
and I will never again see you, nor my
mother, nor my father.

Flora and Fauna

Britten, The Evening Primrose, from *Five Flower Songs*

Benjamin Britten’s (1913–1976) affinity for vocal music stands out among twentieth century composers. In particular, he had an extraordinary gift for writing choral music, and he created a body of work that is virtually unparalleled in quality and breadth. The scholar Peter Porter wrote the following regarding Britten’s ability to capture the intrinsic qualities of a text: “Not since the days when musician and poet were the same person has there been a great composer whose art is as profoundly bound up with words as Benjamin Britten’s. The whole corpus of Britten’s work is informed by a deeply poetical feeling.... What poets have prefigured in words, he has reworked in music. This recognition of the fact that even a superb piece of poetry leaves something more to be said is what makes his settings so masterful.”

Monteverdi, O Teseo mio, from *Lamento d'Arianna*

Shortly after the triumphant premiere of *L'Orfeo* in February 1607, Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643) was asked to write another opera for festivities celebrating the wedding of Francesco Gonzaga (the Duke of Mantua's son) to Margaret of Savoy, planned for the following year. The subject was the myth of Ariadne ("Arianna"), a heartrending tale of love and betrayal in which Ariadne (daughter of King Minos) is abandoned on the island of Naxos by her lover Theseus ("Teseo"), after helping him slay the deadly Minotaur and escape the labyrinth.

The period during which the opera *Arianna* was conceived and composed (1607–1608) was perhaps the most difficult of Monteverdi's life. The composer suffered the loss of his wife (leaving behind two young sons), as well as the death of the eighteen-year-old singer Caterina Martinelli, who had been cast in the title role of Arianna and was a former pupil of Monteverdi's. Such personal losses, combined with the demands of writing an enormous quantity of music in a limited time, almost drove Monteverdi to death. He later wrote of "the great suffering I underwent" and that "I almost killed myself when writing *Arianna*."

Despite these immense challenges, the opera was premiered on June 2, 1608, to extraordinary acclaim: "Signor Claudio Monteverdi composed the arias in so exquisite a manner that we can affirm in all truth that the power of ancient music has been restored because they visibly moved the whole audience to tears." The centerpiece of the drama is Arianna's lament (*Lamento d'Arianna*), sung after Theseus abandons her on the shores of Naxos. During Monteverdi's lifetime, *Lamento d'Arianna* became his most widely known and celebrated composition, and it is the only portion of the opera that survives. In the years following the premiere, demand for the lament prompted the composer to create a five-voice madrigal arrangement of the original solo version, which was later published in 1614 as part of his Sixth Book of Madrigals. "O Teseo" is the second section of this four-part lament, and it paints a volatile picture of the protagonist's raw emotional state, from stunned disbelief at being "left to die," to traces of tenderness that remain when she speaks her lover's name.

Nymphes des bois

Cantus firmus

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Requiescat in pace. Amen.

Nymphes des bois,
déesses des fontaines,
Chantres experts de toutes nations,
Changez voz voix tant clères et haultaines
En cris trenchans et lamentations.
Car Atropos, très terrible satrappe
A vostre Ockeghem atrappé en sa trappe.
Vrai trésorier de musique
et chief d'oeuvre,
Doct élégant de corps
et non point trappe,
Grant dommage est
que la terre le couvre.
Acoustrez vous d'habits de deuil
Josquin, Pierson, Brumel, Compère,
Et plourez grosses larmes d'œul:
Perdu avez vostre bon père.
Requiescat in pace. Amen.

Cantus firmus

Eternal rest give them, Lord,
And light perpetual shine on them.
May he rest in peace. Amen.

Nymphs of the woods,
goddesses of the fountains,
Expert singers from all nations,
Turn your voices, so clear and high,
To rending cries and lamentation.
For Atropos,¹ the terrible ruler,
Has seized your Ockeghem in her trap.
The true treasure of music
and its masterpiece
Learned, elegant in body
and in no way old-fashioned.
It is a terrible loss
that the earth covers him.
Put on your mourning clothes
Josquin, Pierson, Brumel, Compère,
And weep great tears from your eyes:
Gone is your great father.
May he rest in peace. Amen.

Fostering New Music

Lemon, Lève-toi, et viens

Australian composer Karen Lemon received first prize last year in Cerddorion's Seventh Annual Emerging Composers Competition for her setting of *Lève-toi, et viens* ("Arise, and come away") from the *Song of Songs* 2:10–13. Lemon holds a PhD in Musicology from the University of Sydney, Australia, and despite minor studies in composition during her undergraduate days, it has only been in recent years that she has returned to writing music. More information about her can be found at www.karen-lemon.com.

We are delighted to present her work again as part of our 25th anniversary season; it is one of our favorite competition winners from the past seven years. Lemon writes:

1. One of the three Fates, whose role it was to cut the thread of human life with her shears.

... *les fleurs paraissent sur la terre, le temps de chanter est arrivé* ...
(...the flowers appear on the earth, the time for singing has come...)

What more timeless muse exists? And what composer could resist giving their setting of this sublime text the performance indication “With a heart full of joy and the most beautiful sound possible”?

My compositional challenge was to avoid sounding a musical cornucopia at every line; the one-dimensional result of doing so would have done the text a great disservice. So, to put on the brakes, so to speak, I chose to use fragments of the top-and-tail line, “lève-toi, mon amie, ma belle, et viens,” as a refrain. This allowed a more measured unfolding of the textual journey from winter to spring; musically, it facilitated the concomitant unfolding, by extension and increasing density, of the melodic and harmonic materials and texture.

That the harmonic fabric is rich, there is no question. That the vocal cantilenas ebb and flow in the most sensuous fashion is but what the text, especially rendered in French, demanded of me. I hope that at the close of the piece you will be able to hold in heart and mind, even for a brief moment, a glimpse of all that is eternally good.

Lève-toi, et viens

Mon bien-aimé parle et me dit:
Lève-toi, mon amie, ma belle,
et viens!
Car voici, l’hiver est passé;
La pluie a cessé, elle s’en est allée.
Les fleurs paraissent sur la terre,
Le temps de chanter est arrivé,
Et la voix de la tourterelle se fait
entendre dans nos champs.
Sur le figuier, les premiers fruits mûrissent,
Et les vignes en fleur exhalent leur parfum.
Lève-toi, mon amie, ma belle, et viens!

My beloved spake, and said unto me:
Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.
For lo, the winter is past,
The rain has stopped, it has gone away;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time for singing is come.
And the voice of the turtledove
is heard in our fields.
On the fig tree the first fruits ripen,
And the vines in flower spread their scent.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

For Love and Lamentation

Debussy, Dieu! qu’il la fait bon regarder, from *Trois Chansons*

Claude Debussy (1862–1918) needs no introduction. One of the most influential composers of the last 150 years, Debussy wrote music spanning the transition from late Romantic style to twentieth-century modernism. “Dieu! qu’il la fait bon regarder” is the first of Debussy’s *Trois Chansons*, the composer’s only *a cappella* works for mixed chorus. It is unclear what inspired Debussy to choose the poetry of Charles D’Orléans (1394–1465) for these settings, instead of relying upon the contemporary symbolist poets who provided texts for so many of his vocal works. Perhaps the idea of writing for *a cappella* choir suggested Renaissance models. D’Orléans, a French nobleman captured by the English in 1415 during the battle of Agincourt and held prisoner for the next twenty-four years, wrote most of his nearly 500 poems while in captivity.

Certain characteristics of Debussy’s musical language—such as the use of modal scales and harmonies—seem perfectly suited to evoking the colors of these Old French texts. Debussy wrote the first and third of the Chansons in 1898 for an amateur choir founded by his friend, Lucien Fontaine, which he was then conducting. The second was added ten years later—and the premiere of all three was led by the composer in 1909. “Dieu! qu’il la fait bon regarder” is a courtly love poem describing the beauty of an idealized woman.

Dieu! qu’il la fait bon regarder

Dieu! qu’il la fait bon regarder
La gracieuse bonne et belle;
Pour les grans biens que sont en elle
Chascun est prest de la loüer.
Qui se pourroit d’elle lasser?
Tousjours sa beauté renouvelle.

God, how good it is to gaze upon her,
So graceful, good and fair!
For the great goodness in her
Everyone is ready to praise her.
Who could weary of her?
Her beauty is ever new.

Dieu! qu’il la fait bon regarder,
La gracieuse bonne et belle!
Par de ça, ne de là, la mer
Ne scay dame ne damoiselle
Qui soit en tous bien parfaits telle.
C’est ung songe que d’i penser:
Dieu! qu’il la fait bon regarder!

God, how good it is to gaze upon her,
So graceful, good and fair!
The ocean from shore to shore
Sees no lady or maiden
So perfect in all her goodness.
To think of her is a dream;
God, how good it is to gaze upon her!

Versa est in luctum

Versa est in luctum cithara mea, et organum meum in vocem flentium. Parce mihi Domine, nihil enim sunt dies mei.	My harp is tuned to lamentation, and my organ to the voice of wailing. Spare me, O Lord, for my days are as nothing.
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Poulenc, Timor et Tremor

When asked what led him to write “religious music,” Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)—one of the most gifted and perhaps idiosyncratic composers of the twentieth century—responded: “Heredity was deeply involved here... If one side of my art can be wholly explained by my mother’s ultra-Parisian descent... you mustn’t forget that my father... was deeply religious but in a very liberal way, without the slightest meanness.” Poulenc’s spirituality was much like his father’s, “profound, optimistic, realistic, joyous, and totally lacking in ostentation... he preferred quiet prayer or meditation... to the structured service of an urban church.” In 1935, the composer’s Roman Catholic faith was strongly rekindled when a close friend was suddenly killed in a car accident, and from this point on he began to compose a steady stream of sacred choral works.

Poulenc wrote “Timor et Tremor” (“Fear and Trembling”) in 1939, and it was published as the first of his *Quatre motets pour un temps de penitence* (“Four Lenten Motets”). The composer’s self-proclaimed “wild eclecticism” is particularly suited to the expression of this penitential text, which is a fervent prayer that concludes with the words “non confundar” (“let me never be confounded”). Striking musical contrasts and inexplicable harmonic twists are juxtaposed with little or no transition to convey the disquiet underlying this passionate plea for salvation.

Timor et tremor

Timor et tremor venerunt super me, et caligo cecidit super me. Miserere mei, Domine, miserere, quoniam in te confidit anima mea.	Fear and trembling have taken hold of me, and darkness has descended upon me. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, have mercy, for my soul has trusted in thee.
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Exaudi Deus deprecationem meam, quia refugium meum es tu adjutor fortis; Domine, invocavi te, non confundar.	Hear, O God, my supplication, for you are my refuge and strength; O Lord, I have called upon you, let me never be confounded.
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Lang, *again (after ecclesiastes)*

Of all the works Cerddorion has commissioned over the years, *again (after ecclesiastes)* by David Lang, has become the most well-known and widely performed; it was written for Cerddorion’s tenth anniversary in 2005. Lang, of course, hardly needs an introduction—he is one of the most accomplished contemporary composers of our time, whose *Mile-Long Opera* was premiered last October on New York City’s High Line to rave reviews. Cerddorion had the great privilege to be part of that wonderful production, along with myriad choirs from throughout the five boroughs. Lang writes the following about his piece:

again (after ecclesiastes) is a setting of a few lines from the beginning of the Book of Ecclesiastes, freely adapted by me. Ecclesiastes is a Hebrew prophet (in Hebrew his name is Kohelet) and his book is traditionally read during the harvest holiday of Sukkot. Kohelet moves powerfully from the cycling of the seasons to other endless natural and human cycles, creating a strange equilibrium of hope and futility.

In my setting, I wanted to make a piece that might convey the weariness of all of these endless cycles, concentrating on the weight of things repeating again. And again.

again (after Ecclesiastes)

people come and people go – the earth goes on and on
the sun rises, the sun sets – it rushes to where it rises again
the wind blows round, round and round – it stops, it blows again
all the rivers run to the sea, but the sea is never full – from where the rivers run they run again

these things make me so tired – I can’t speak, I can’t see, I can’t hear
what happened before will happen again
I forgot it all before. I will forget it all again.

Levine, Aguas puras del Nilo

A longtime friend of Cerddorion, Elliot Z. Levine is a prolific choral composer and accomplished singer who may be best known as cofounder of the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble. “Aguas puras del Nilo” (“Pure waters of the Nile”) comes from a four-movement work titled *Un prodigio les canto* (“I’ve a strange thing to sing you”), which sets texts by Sor Juana de la Cruz, a brilliant figure of seventeenth-century Mexico. *Un prodigio les canto* was commissioned in 2005 for Cerddorion’s tenth anniversary, and since then it has become one of the most popular works in our repertory. Levine writes:

The life of Juana Inés Ramiriz (better known as Sor Juana de la Cruz) follows a trajectory, from her humble birth outside Mexico City in 1648 to being a renowned published poet, dramatist, scholar, theologian, feminist, scientist, musician, and nun who died during the plague of 1694. I’ve known of her poetry and inspiring life for many years. In searching for texts, I found Alan Trueblood’s anthology of her works. I was attracted by the vivid imagery and directness of the villancico texts she wrote in 1691. These were set to music of their time, but it has not reappeared yet. The poems leapt off the page and demanded music out of me.

Two are Christmas texts and two are for St. Catherine of Alexandria [including “Aguas puras del Nilo”]. I think she identified with St. Catherine, who converted many Romans (including the Emperor’s wife) and dazzled a court of scholars convened to discredit her. As St. Catherine was about to be tortured on the wheel, it flew apart. After this, she was beheaded. Sor Juana, while a young lady-in-waiting at the court in Mexico City, was tested by a group of scholars on her prodigious knowledge of Latin, Greek, philosophy, and theology. In these pieces, I tried to capture some of the flavor of Spanish and Latin American seventh-century music, while using a conservative contemporary harmonic language.

Aguas puras del Nilo

(Estribillo)

Aguas puras del Nilo,
parad, parad,
y no le llevéis
el tributo al Mar,
pues él vuestras dichas
puede envidiar.

¡No, no, no corráis,
pues ya no podéis
aspirar a más!
¡Parad, parad!

(Refrain)

Pure waters of the Nile,
subside, subside,
do not carry
the tribute out to sea,
for the sea may envy you
your blessings.

No, cease your coursing,
for you could not
hope for a greater joy than this!
Subside, subside!

exquisite pieces in Byrd’s oeuvre. The Kyrie’s lyrical lines are masterfully interwoven in a way that evokes expressive qualities of a much later era; the Agnus Dei is similarly passionate, concluding with a remarkable chain of suspensions at the words “Dona nobis pacem” (“Grant us peace”) unparalleled in all of music.

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison;
Christe eleison;
Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy.

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.

Let Me Not Be Confounded

Victoria, Versa est in Luctum, from *Officium Defunctorum, sex vocibus*

Tomás Luis de Victoria is the preeminent Spanish composer of the late Renaissance. He was born in Avila, one of 11 children, and served as a choirboy at Avila Cathedral. Ordained a priest in his late twenties, Victoria went as a young man to Rome, where he knew Palestrina and may have studied with him. He remained there for almost twenty years before returning to Madrid in 1587 to become chaplain, choirmaster, and later convent organist for the Dowager Empress Maria, daughter of Charles V, one of Victoria’s most dedicated and generous patrons. When she died in 1603, Victoria wrote his last published work, the *Officium Defunctorum, sex vocibus* (often referred to as Victoria’s *Requiem Mass à 6*)—a gorgeous and deeply personal statement, inspired by his noble benefactor. “Versa est in luctum” appears in the latter portion of this work, following Communion. The text comes from outside the liturgy (Job 30:31 and 7:16), and through subtle chromatic shifts the composer conveys the sorrowful image of a “harp tuned to mourning,” setting the tone for the whole motet.

Schütz, Selig sind die Toten

Born one hundred years before J.S. Bach, Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672) was one of the most influential figures of the early German Baroque. He traveled to Venice twice during his long career: from 1609 to 1612, to study with Giovanni Gabrieli, and in 1629, to meet Claudio Monteverdi. The fruits of his first sojourn included a book of nineteen Italian madrigals (required of him by his teacher), which became Schütz’s first published works.

In 1615, shortly after returning from Italy, Schütz was appointed court composer in Dresden, where he remained for the rest of his life. “Selig sind die Toten” comes from a collection of twenty-nine motets entitled *Geistliche Chormusik* (“Sacred Choral Music”), completed in 1648. In the collection’s preface, Schütz explains that he attempted to create a series of works demonstrating the rigors of strict counterpoint, without the need for basso continuo (the addition of a bass instrument together with organ or harpsichord to fill in the harmonies), which by that time had become standard practice. The pieces contained in *Geistliche Chormusik* are therefore written in an “old style” (referred to as “stile antico”), in which Schütz was immersed as a student of Gabrieli. They reflect the composer’s remarkable assimilation of Italian style into Protestant church music, and as “Selig sind die Toten” demonstrates, Schütz’s great gift for word painting and innate contrapuntal skill permeate every line.

Selig sind die Toten

Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben, von nun an. Ja der Geist spricht: Sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.	Blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord from now on. Yea, the Spirit speaks: they rest from their labors and their works follow them.
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Mass Appeal
Byrd, Kyrie and Agnus Dei from Mass for Four Voices

William Byrd (c. 1543–1623) is perhaps the most well-known and influential English composer of the late Renaissance. A Catholic in Protestant England, Byrd was forced to navigate between public persona and private conviction throughout his long career. He wrote a substantial amount of Anglican service music while working in the Chapel Royal under Elizabeth I, and at the same time he privately composed works for the persecuted Catholic minority. The most famous of these are his three unusually expressive Mass settings—clearly the product of deep personal faith—written between 1592 and 1595. The “Kyrie” and “Agnus Dei” from the *Mass for Four Voices* are among the most

(Coplas)
Soseiga, Nilo undoso,
tu líquida corriente;
tente, tente,
párate a ver gozoso
la que fecundas, bella,
de la tierra, del Cielo, Rosa, Estrella.

Tu corriente oportuna,
que piadoso moviste,
viste, viste,
que de Moisés fue cuna,
siendo arrullo a su oído
la onda, la espuma, el tumbo y el sonido...

No en frágil hermosura,
que apreciaba el loco abuso,
puso, puso
esperanza segura,
bien que excedió su cara
la de Ruth, Bethsabe, Tamar, y Sara.

A ésta, Nilo sagrado,
tu corriente sonante
cante, cante,
y en concierto acordado
tus ondas sean veloces
sílabas, lenguas, números, y voces.

(Verses)
Billowy Nile,
slow your current down;
hold still, hold still,
stop yourself to gaze with pride
on the one whom you nourish, beautiful one
of the earth, of Sky, Rose, Star.

Awed, you moved your
timely current,
you see, you see,
that was Moses’s cradle,
lulling his ear
with wave and foam, ripple and hum.

Not in fragile beauty,
so wrongly prized,
did she place
sure hope,
yet of face she was fairer
than Ruth, Bathsheba, Tamar, and Sarah.

To her, sacred Nile,
may your sounding current
sing, sing,
and in tuned accord
may your waves be swift
syllables, tongues, measures, and voices.

Trans: Alan Trueblood
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Mourning and Evening
Elgar, My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land

Sir Edward Elgar, perhaps the most renowned English composer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, struggled to achieve success until his early forties. He was born in the countryside near Worcester, where his father (a piano tuner, violinist, and organist) owned a music shop. Elgar was primarily self-taught and often felt like an outsider in established musical as well as social circles. His fame began to take hold around 1900 with the premiere of the *Enigma Variations*, Op. 36, as well as the large-scale oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius*, Op. 38, both of which have now entered the standard repertory.

My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land was Elgar’s first published partsong, and when it appeared in 1890 one critic wrote, “[It is] crude, ill-written for the voice, laid out without knowledge of the capabilities of the human voice etc., etc.!” This critique now seems both puzzling and humorous because of the degree to which it quite simply misses the mark. Superbly lyrical, Elgar’s setting skillfully captures the melancholy of Andrew Lang’s poem, centered on themes of young love and premature loss. *My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land* was the opening piece on Cerddorion’s very first concert program in March 1996, led by the group’s founder, Susanne Peck.

My Love Dwelt in a Foreign Land

My love dwelt in a Northern land.
A dim tower in a forest green
Was his and far away the sand
And gray wash of the waves were seen
The woven forest boughs between:
And oft that month we watched the moon
Wax great and white o’er wood and lawn
And wane, with waning of the June,
Till, like a brand for battle drawn,
She fell, and flamed in a wild dawn.

And through the Northern summer night
The sunset slowly died away,
And herds of strange deer, silverwhite,
Came gleaming through the forest gray,
And fled like ghosts before the day.
I know not if the forest green
Still girdles round that castle gray.
I know not if, the boughs between,
The white deer vanish ere the day:
The grass above my love is green,
His heart is colder than the clay.
—*Andrew Lang (1844–1912)*

Brahms, Nachtwache I, Op. 104, No. 1
Brahms, Nachtwache II, Op, 104, No. 2

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) was one of the nineteenth century’s most skilled and beloved composers of choral music. His gift for choral writing grew out of his passion for early music (particularly for German composers such as Schütz and Bach), from his love of counterpoint, and also from practical experience as a choral conductor. “Nachtwache I” and “Nachtwache II” (“Night Watch I and II”) are the first two pieces from Brahms’s *Fünf Gesänge* (“Five Songs”), Op. 104. Published in 1890, this set is Brahms’s last group of secular choral compositions. The texts for Nachtwache I and II are excerpted from a five-stanza poem by Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866) and thus make a logical pair. Both employ a six-part texture (SAATBB) in which the altos and basses are split, emphasizing the lower voices and creating a dark, rich palette of vocal color.

“Nachtwache I” is essentially a love song: If “soft sounds awakened by the breath of love” are unable to open “a loving heart,” the poet asks that they be returned to him, “sighing,” on the “night wind.” Upper and lower voices often interact in dialogue throughout this short piece, culminating in a series of extraordinarily beautiful musical “sighs” that propel the work toward its poignant conclusion, and which paint the text with exceptional clarity.

“Nachtwache II” begins with a question, “Ruh’n Sie?” (“Do they rest?”), set to a simple descending fourth (E♭-B♭), in imitation of a night watchman’s horn call. The answer, “Sie ruh’n” (“They rest”), is an inversion of this same interval (B♭-E♭), bringing comfort and peace as the poet contemplates thoughts of death. One of Brahms’s closest friends, Elizabeth von Herzogenberg, described “Nachtwache II” as “a pearl among the partsongs”—and indeed, it is one of Brahms’s best.

Nachtwache I

Leise Töne der Brust, geweckt
vom Odem der Liebe,
Hauchet zitternd hinaus, ob sich
euch öffnen ein Ohr,
Öffn’ ein liebendes Herz, und wenn
sich keines euch öffnet,
Trag’ ein Nachtwind euch seufzend
in meines zurück.
—*Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866)*

Soft music of the heart, awakened
by the breath of love,
Whisper tremulously if
an ear opens to you,
or a loving heart; and if
none should open,
let a night wind bear you, sighing,
back into mine.

Nachtwache II

Ruh’n Sie? ruft das Horn
des Wächters drüben aus Westen,
Und aus Osten das Horn ruft entgegen:
Sie ruh’n!
Hörst du, zagendes Herz,
die flüsternden Stimmen der Engel?
Lösche die Lampe getrost,
hülle in Frieden dich ein!
—*Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866)*

“Do they rest?” calls the horn
of the watchman from the west,
And from the east the horn answers back:
“They rest!”
Do you hear, timorous heart,
the whispering voices of the angels?
Extinguish your lamp in consolation
and wrap yourself in peace!