

About kristina boerger

KRISTINA BOERGER comes to New York from Champaign-Urbana, where she has just completed her DMA in Choral Conducting and Literature at the University of Illinois. Boerger received her formative musical training from pianist Annie Sherter. She has served on the music faculties of Lake Forest College and Millikin University and as guest conductor, adjudicator, and ensemble clinician in several Midwestern cities, as well as in Tallahassee, Québec City, and Mar del Plata, Argentina. As Founding Director of AMASONG, an ensemble for 60 women's voices, Boerger has conducted and produced two award-winning compact disc recordings, appeared in several national venues, and toured the Czech Republic. Her work with AMASONG is the subject of a documentary soon to be aired on national public television.

Her choral arrangements and compositions are sung by ensembles throughout the country, and she has recently been awarded the 2000 GLAMA for Best Composition. As a singer in a variety of styles, Boerger has appeared with The King's Noyse, Rocky Maffit, and Urban Bush Women and sung oratorio and opera roles with Concerto Urbano and B.A.Ch. In 1994 she sang the soprano Evangelist role in the Canadian premier of Arvo Pärt's St. John Passion, a CBC radio simulcast from the 17th Festival International de Lanaudière.

Boerger was recently chosen as a soprano for the prestigious vocal ensemble The Western Wind, and is Professor of Music History at Barnard College. She is very excited to have joined the musical culture of New York City.

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CERDDORION

vocal ensemble

directed by
Kristina Boerger

presents

MADRIGALEAN EVOLUTIONS



Sunday November 12, 2000, 4:00 p.m.
Brooklyn Conservatory of Music
58 Seventh Avenue
Brooklyn

Saturday November 18, 2000, 8:00 p.m.
Church of St. Luke in the Fields
487 Hudson Street
Manhattan

CERDDORION

Sopranos

Prentice Clark
Panny King
Marilyn Lenat*
Eva Lund*
Wendy Reitmeier*
Jeanette Rodriguez*
Ellen Schorr*

Altos

Sally Elliott*
Susan Glass
Kate Kurz
Cathy Markoff
Leonore Max*
Myrna Nachman*

(* indicates performance in Gesualdo and Palestrina)

Instrumentalists in the Monteverdi

Ed Brewer, harpsichord
Arianne Lalemonde, violoncello
Andrea Larson and Karen Lee Larson, violin

Tenors

Jay Banks
David Deschamps
Philip Gallo*
Tim Hutfilz*
Togu Oppusunggu
Steve Parkey*
Franklin Roth*

Basses

Raphael Biran*
Peter Cobb
John Hetland*
Peter Kurz
Tod Mijanovich*
Dale Rejtmart

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Hor ch'el ciel e la terra (prima parte)

Hor ch'el ciel e la terra el vento tace

e le fere e gli augelli il sonno affrena
notte il carro stellato in giro mena

e nel suo letto il mar senz' onda giace:
Voglio, penso, ardo, piango,
e chi mi sface
sempre m'è innanzi per mia dolce pena.
Guerra è il mio stato d'ira e di duol piena,
e sol di lei pensando ho qualche pace.

Now, when the breeze passes silently over
heaven and earth,
and sleep arrests the beasts and the birds,
the starry chariot draws the night through her
orbit,
and the sea rests waveless in her bed:
I wake, I ponder, I burn, I weep.
And she who is my undoing is
always before me in my sweet suffering.
War is my condition, full of rage and pain,
And only in thinking of her do I have any
peace.

Così sol d'una chiara fonte viva (seconda parte)

Così sol d'una chiara fonte viva
move il dolce e l'amaro ond'io mi pasco

una man sola mi risana e punge
e perchè il mio martir non giunga a riva
mille volte il dì moro e mille nasco.

Tanto dalla salute mia son lunge.

Thus from a single bright and living spring
flow the sweetness and the bitterness on which I
feed.
One hand alone both heals and stings me.
And because my suffering never reaches the shore,
a thousand times a day I die and a thousand am
reborn.
So far-flung(*lunge*) am I from my own sanity.

Madrigalian Evolutions

EXORDIUM

Cipriano da Rore (ca.1515–1565)

Musica dolci sono

WEEPING, BURNING, LOVING, DYING

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)

Io piango

Luca Marenzio (1533–1599)

Cruda Amarilli (prima parte)

Ma grideran per me (seconda parte)

Morten Lauridsen

Amor, io sento l'alma

Carlo Gesualdo (ca. 1561–1613)

Ardo per te, mio bene

Morten Lauridsen

Luci serene e chiare

SPIRITUAL MADRIGALS

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525–1594)

Vergine bella, che di sol vestita

Heinrich Schütz (ca. 1585–1672)

Robert Ramsey (ca. 1612–1644)

Ach, Herr, du Schöpfer aller Ding

How Are the Mighty Fallen

GENIUS AT THE FORMAL LIMIT

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

Hor ch'el ciel e la terra (prima parte)

Così sol d'una chiara fonte viva (seconda parte)

Notes and Texts

THE FLOWERING OF THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ITALIAN MADRIGAL was as much a poetic movement as a musical one. Its precondition was a revival among the literati of interest in Petrarch, which inspired composers to set the verse of this fourteenth-century master, as well as turning to the work of contemporary imitators such as Guarini and Tasso. The classic madrigal text had lines of seven or fourteen syllables that depicted pastoral scenes or expounded on the joys and pains of love. The more vivid the imagery and the more wrenching the emotions communicated by the text, the better the text served composers' quest for ever-more illustrative and poignant techniques. As a secular genre, the madrigal freed composers from any strictures on their creativity encountered in their more conservative work writing Latin Mass parts and liturgical motets. Still, the polyphonic motet's imitative style is one of the chief influences on the madrigal. Another, contrasting, influence is that of the homophonic—or "familiar"—style of earlier Italian vernacular traditions such as the *frottola*. The madrigalists alternated freely between these textures according to the perceived demands of the poetic text. Poetic considerations also inspired sonic and visual text-painting, expanded use of chromaticism, sudden harmonic shifts, and a more liberal use of expressive dissonance, as well as an increasingly flexible use of rhythm aimed at approximating the natural prosody of spoken Italian.

Tonight's program features several Italian masters of the genre, examples of the genre's influence on sacred composition in Italy and abroad, and a living American composer's settings of some of the poems most favored by his Renaissance Italian predecessors. We are avoiding the more obvious programming choice of presenting everything in chronological order, instead placing the contemporary pieces in alternation with ancient ones. Of many features common to both the old and the new secular pieces is the exploitation of contrasting images and ideas: sorrow/joy, silence/weeping, death/life, pain/pleasure, and the like.

Our first selection, in fact, serves as a kind of opening argument for music's ability to respond to the extremes of human experience, a capacity that the Italian madrigalists exploited to the fullest. Cipriano da Rore was one of the last of the famed Franco-Flemish polyphonists to serve in Italy, and his volumes of madrigals exhibit the sophistication of his contrapuntal craft. Marenzio and Monteverdi, among others, credited him with laying the foundation upon which the mature madrigal stood. As its Latin text betrays, this piece is not properly a madrigal; according to convention, however, polyphonic settings of secular, Latin poems were included in madrigal publications, as was this one in 1565.

Luci sereni e chiari

Luci serene e chiare,
voi m'incendete, voi; ma prov' il core
nell' incendio diletto, non dolore.
Dolci parole e care,
voi me ferite, voi; ma prov' il petto
non dolor ne la piaga, ma diletto.
O miracol d'amore!
Alma ch'è tutta foco e tutta sangue,
Si strugge e non si duol, mor' e non langue.
—Ridolfo Arlotti

Eyes, serene and bright,
you set me aflame, but my heart finds
pleasure in the fire, not pain.
Words sweet and precious,
you wound me, but my breast finds
no pain in the wound, only pleasure.
O, miracle of love!
My soul, of fire and blood entire,
melts but pains me not; dies, but does not suffer.

Vergine bella, che di sol vestita

Vergine bella, che di sol vestita,
coronata de stelle al sommo sole
piacesti, sì, che'n te sua luce ascose;
Amor mi spinge a dir di te parole:
ma no so incominciar senza tu aita,
e di Colui ch'amando in te si pose.
Invoco lei che ben sempre rispose
chì la chiamò con fede.
Vergine, s'a mercede,
miseria estrema de l'umane cose
già mai ti volse, al mio prego t'inclina.
Soccorri alla mia guerra.
Ben ch'io sia terra, e tu del ciel regina.

Beautiful Virgin, who, adorned with the sun,
crowned with stars, so pleased the highest Sun
that he hid his light in you;
Love compels me to speak of you,
but I cannot commence without your aid
and that of Him who lovingly rested in you.
I invoke the One who has ever answered
any who called upon her in faith.
Virgin, if the extreme misery
of mortal affairs has ever
moved you to mercy, incline yourself to my prayer.
Grant me succour in my struggle.
For I am but clay, and you are the Queen of
Heaven.

Ach Herr

Ach Herr, du Schöpfer aller Ding,
Wie bist du worden so gering
Daß du da liegst auf dürem Gras
Davon ein Rind und Esel aß.

Ah, Lord, thou Creator of all things,
How lowly hast thou made thyself,
That thou wouldst lie on the harsh grass
wherefrom the ox and the donkey ate.

How Are the Mighty Fallen

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle.
O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thy high places, woe is me for thee, my brother Jonathan
Very kind hast thou been to me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war destroyed

Ma grideran per me (seconda parte)

Ma grideran per me le piagge e i monti
e questa selva, a cui
sì spesso il tuo bel nome
di risonare insegno.
Per me piangendo i fonti,
e mormorando i venti,
diranno i miei lamenti;
Parlerà nel mio volto
la pietate e 'l dolore;
E, se fia muta ogn' altra cosa, al fine
parlerà il mio morire,
e ti dirà la morte il mio martire.
—Battista Guarini, *I Pastor Fido*

But the shores and the mountains will shout for me,
and this forest, which
so often I set to resounding
with your name.
For me, the springs, weeping,
and the breezes, murmuring,
will tell of my torments.
Pity and sorrow will be
declared in my face.
And if at the end all else falls mute,
my death will speak.
My death will tell you of my suffering.

Amor, io sento l'alma

Amor, io sento l'alma
tornar nel foco ov'io
fui lieto et più che mai d'arder desio.
Io ardo e 'n chiara fiamma
nutrisco il miser core;
Et quanto più s'infiamma,
tanto più cresce amore,
perch'ogni mio dolore
nasce dal fuoco ov'io
fui lieto et più che mai d'arder desio.
—Jhan Gero (parody of a ballata by Machiavelli)

Ah, Love, I feel my soul
returning to the fire where I
rejoiced and more than ever desire to burn.
I am burning, and in bright flames
I nourish my miserable heart.
And the more it takes fire,
the more my love increases,
for all my pain
is born of that fire where I
rejoiced and more than ever desire to burn.

Ardo per te, mio bene

Ardo per te, mio bene,
ma l'ardore spira dolce aura al core.

Moro per te, mia vita,
ma il morire gioia divien,
dolcissimo il languire.
Felice sorte, ancor che ardo e moia:
L'ardor divien dolce aura,
el morir gioia.

I am burning for you, my beloved,
but the burning breathes sweet breezes upon the
heart.
I am dying for you, my life,
but the dying becomes joy,
so sweet is the languishing.
Joyful fate, that I should burn and die again:
My burning becomes a sweet breeze,
and my dying, joy.

The three selections by Morten Lauridsen are from *Madrigali: Six "Fire Songs" on Renaissance Italian Poems* (1984). Each text makes some analogy between love and the experience of burning, and in all six madrigals Lauridsen uses a particular sonority he calls the “Fire chord.” The composer cites Palestrina, Monteverdi, and Gesualdo as the sources of inspiration for this cycle. Lauridsen is composer-in-residence with the Los Angeles Master Chorale and Chair of the Composition Department at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music.

Luca Marenzio flourished in Rome, where he wrote liturgical music as well as the many volumes of madrigals that most distinguish him as an innovative composer. His madrigals show a heavy reliance on musical symbolism. Most notably, he typically gave each line of poetry a unique musical texture, shape, and sonority; if the madrigal was an analogue of the poem, no two distinct lines of text should sound the same in their musical manifestations. This paired set, “Cruda Amarilla/Ma grideran per me,” was first published in 1595.

Carlo Gesualdo, the Prince of Venosa, is said to have suffered from melomania and other forms of melancholia (and is infamous for ordering the execution and dismemberment of his wife and her lover). For someone not a composer by vocation, he left behind a surprisingly large *oeuvre*, consisting of numerous books of madrigals and even some little-known sacred music. Gesualdo concluded that the theoretical rules governing the generation of counterpoint in the Renaissance must be thrown out entirely to allow for any expressive devices as demanded by the text. His madrigals are instantly recognizable for their abrupt shifts in texture and for a chromatic palette not seen again until the modern crisis of progressive tonality.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's writing epitomizes the balanced and rational beauty of High Renaissance polyphonic practice that Gesualdo, above all, found so constraining. This master of the Counter-Reformation secured his employment from reactionary Church patriarchs in Rome, under whose influence he actually apologized at one point for the earlier indiscretion of having written secular madrigals. Still, he could not escape the genre's influence altogether, and he is one of many composers to classify certain of his works by the appellation *spiritual madrigal*. The Latin text of “Vergine bella” (1581), as well as its conservative construction, camouflages it nearly entirely as a madrigal of any kind; in fact, the verse—which contrasts the mortal and divine realms and is constructed of lines of seven and fourteen syllables—is by none other than Petrarch.

Heinrich Schütz, who inaugurated the German Baroque style, began his career by studying in Italy with Giovanni Gabrieli and then writing a book of proper Italian madrigals. Virtually all of his subsequent output was sacred, and most of it in German, though it exemplifies his mastery of the secular Italian techniques of dramatic and pictorial writing. The text to the spiritual madrigal “Ach, Herr, du Schöpfer aller Ding,” which is the ninth verse of Martin Luther’s “Von Himmel hoch da komm ich her,” contemplates the juxtaposition of the Creator’s grandeur against His human manifestation as a baby lying on the floor of a barn. Schütz does not quote Luther’s melody, though his setting of the last line of text, “davon ein Rind und Esel Aß,” has virtually the same, descending shape.

The secular Italian madrigal took root in England only in the last years of the sixteenth century. Its emulators there included Tompkins, Morley, Weelkes, and Bennet. As in other lands, its influence penetrated the walls of the church. Robert Ramsey, an organist at Trinity College during the emergence of the English Baroque, wrote several *madrigal anthems*. “How Are the Mighty Fallen” sets one of the most poignant texts found in the Old Testament, David’s lament for his beloved Jonathan from the Second Book of Samuel.

We close our program with a masterpiece by Claudio Monteverdi, whose theatrical experimentations in nine books of madrigals eventually pushed the genre beyond its formal limit and into the emergent forms of opera, cantata, and oratorio. It was in Book Five that Monteverdi first joined continuo instruments to what had been an *a cappella* genre; here, in Book Eight (pub. 1638), we see even obbligato writing for the violins. Book Eight is subtitled *Madrigali guerrieri ed amorosi* (“Madrigals of War and Love”), wherein Monteverdi set out to illustrate in music what he regarded as the three basic emotional states: calm, supplication, and aggression. “Hor ch’el ciel e la terra” features all three, most notably the use of rapidly repeated and heavily dotted notes to symbolize aggression, which Monteverdi called the *stile concitato* and claimed to have properly discovered after consulting ancient Greek texts on rhythms used in war dances. All the “tricks” of the madrigalists can be heard in this paired set: text painting, prosodic rhythm, wrenching dissonance, and the musical illustration—by various means—of contrasting images and emotions. The genius with which Monteverdi combined the polyphonic choral art with the emerging practice of solo dramatic singing supported by instruments effectively closed the Renaissance style period and inaugurated the Italian Baroque.

—Kristina Boerger

Musica dulci sono

Musica dulci sono
coelestia numina cantu mulcere
et divos flectere diva potest.
Haec homines sparsos,
vinclo sociavit amoris
primaque contiguas iussit habere domos.
Solatur moestos eadem,
et accurrens tempore utroque iuvat.
Iure igitur divam facimus
coeloque locamus:
Ipsa sibi meritis struxit ad astra viam.

The Goddess Music with Her sweet sound
Can soothe heavenly divinities with song
And bend the deities to Her will.
She has united scattered people in the bond of love,
And it was She who first compelled people
To place their houses together.
She is also the One Who consoles the sad
and augments the joys of the happy.
At every turn She hastens to lend Her help.
Therefore, we are right to make Her divine
and to locate Her in heaven:
She is the very One who has set out, for those
deserving of Her, the way to the stars.
—*Trans. Jerise Fogel*

Io piango

Io piango, ch’èl dolore
pianger’ mi fa, perch’io
non trov’altro rimedio a l’ardor’ mio.
Così m’ha concio’ Amore
ch’ognor’ viv’in tormento
ma quanto piango più, men doglia sento.
Sorte fiera e inaudita
che’l tacer mi d’a morte e’l pianger vita.
—Ruffo

I am crying, ’tis sorrow
that makes me weep, since I
find no other cure for my burning.
So has love ensnared me
that I live ever in torment.
But the more I weep, the less pain I feel.
What a vicious and appalling fate,
that silence gives me death and weeping life.

Cruda Amarilli (prima parte)

Cruda Amarilli, che col nome ancora,
d’amar, ahì lassol, amaramente insegni;
Amarilli, del candido ligustro
più candida e più bella,
ma de l’aspidò sordo
e più sorda e più fèra e più fugace;
Poi che col dir t’offendo,
i’ mi morrò tacendo;
—Battista Guarini, *Il Pastor Fido*

Cruel Amaryllis, who with your name, alas,
do still bitterly impel loving -
Amaryllis, than the fair privet
fairer and more beautiful,
But than the deaf snake,
more deaf, more savage, and more elusive:
Since by speaking I offend you,
I shall die silenced.

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