

CERDDORION

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For information about Cerddorion's 13th season as it becomes available,
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CERDDORION

VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Kristina Boerger
Artistic Director

PRESENTS

It Was Good



Sunday, May 13, 2007 - 4:00 p.m.
Oratory Church of St. Boniface
190 Duffield Street
Brooklyn, New York

Saturday, May 19, 2007 - 8:00 p.m.
Church of St. Luke in the Fields
487 Hudson Street
Manhattan, New York

CERDDORION

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

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

Cerddorion was selected to sing at the 2006 Eastern Divisional Convention of the American Choral Directors Association, where they presented the works they had commissioned of three New York composers for their tenth anniversary season.

Kristina Boerger

An accomplished singer, conductor, and choral arranger, Kristina Boerger received her formative musical training from pianist Annie Sherter and holds the D.M.A. in Choral Conducting and Literature from the University of Illinois. She currently lectures in music history at Barnard College and teaches choral conducting at the Manhattan School of Music. She is also Artistic Director of New York's AMUSE, a volunteer ensemble for sixteen women's voices.

Her work in the 1990s as founding director of AMASONG: Champaign-Urbana's Premier Lesbian/Feminist Chorus, is the subject of the documentary film *The Amasong Chorus: Singing Out*, which after touring festivals in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Australia has enjoyed repeated broadcast on PBS. Her work as a guest conductor and choral clinician has brought her most recently to the University of Illinois Chamber Singers, the Kalamazoo Bach Festival Society, and the Syracuse Schola Cantorum, and The Chicago Children's Choir.

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

This is Dr. Boerger's seventh season as Artistic Director of Cerddorion.

IN THE BEGINNING (*cont.*)

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

—*Genesis* 1:1–31, and 2:1–7

SWEET AND LOW

Alfred Tennyson

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.
And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.
And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.
And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.
And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.
And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.
And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.
And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
And the evening and the morning were the third day.
And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:
And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.
And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.
And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,
And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.
And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

(cont.)

Program

A Song for All Seas, All Ships Ron Jeffers (b. 1943)

Euroclydon William Billings (1746–1800)

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Thule, the Period of Cosmography Thomas Weelkes (1576?–1623)

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Lobster Quadrille Elliot Z. Levine (b. 1948)

Green, Green, and Green Again William McClelland (b. 1950)

**** * * * * *

Ecco mormorar l'onde Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

Soloists: Ellen Schorr, Elizabeth Geisewite, Tim Hutfilz, Eddie Rubiez, Leo Clark

**** * * * * *

Sweet and Low Matthew Harris (b. 1956)

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In the Beginning Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

Mezzo-soprano soloist: Silvie Jensen, Brooklyn; Michèle Eaton, Manhattan

Soloists

Soprano **Michèle Eaton** has earned praise for her pure voice and sensitive interpretations. Highly respected for her mastery of many styles, she is best known for her performances of Baroque and contemporary music. She recently sang the roles of Child Grendel and Shaper's Apprentice in the New York premiere of the opera *Grendel*, directed by Julie Taymor and composed by Elliot Goldenthal. On the Sacred Music in a Sacred Space series at St. Ignatius Loyola Church in New York City, she has performed Handel's *Solomon* and *Saul*, Bach's *Mass in B minor*, Taverner's *Lament of the Mother of God* and Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*. She frequently tours and records with the acclaimed Renaissance vocal group Pomerium, long recognized as one of the world's premiere ensembles for its beautiful phrasing and perfect intonation. With the Ensemble for Early Music, she has appeared in staged productions of Sponsus, a medieval morality play.

Ms. Eaton's other solo oratorio performances have included Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, *Judas Macabaeus*, and the *Messiah*, Mozart's *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*, Bach's *St. John* and *St. Matthew Passions* and *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*, Faure's *Requiem*, Haydn's *Missa Sancti Johanni*, Vivaldi's *Magnificat*, Carissimi's *Jephte*, Purcell's *Come Ye Sons of Art*, and Schubert's *Mass in G*. In addition, she tours annually with Peter Schickele and tenor David Düsing in both chamber and orchestral performances of the music of the legendary P.D.Q. Bach. She is equally at home in performances of contemporary music. She has sung John Adams's *Grand Pianola Music* with both the Jacksonville and Pasadena Symphonies, and she has toured internationally with the Philip Glass Ensemble in performances of *Einstein on the Beach*; she has also performed and recorded Glass's *Hydrogen Jukebox*. At the Aspen Music Festival, she was a Vocal Chamber Music Fellow and premiered Henry Brant's *Rain Forest Requiem*. She can be heard on the soundtrack for the film *Dead Man Walking* and has recorded on the Deutsche Grammophon, Angel, Dorian, Sony Classics, Nonesuch, Arabesque, Glissando, and Delos labels. She lives in New Rochelle, New York.

A native of San Francisco, mezzo-soprano **Silvie Jensen** has sung professionally since adolescence. She studied voice and piano at the San Francisco Conservatory before moving to New York, where she received a degree from Columbia University. Ms. Jensen is an extremely versatile singer and has performed widely, singing many genres of music, from Gregorian chant to opera to contemporary compositions. Ms. Jensen has appeared in operas with Ash Lawn Opera, Stonington Opera House, Riverside Opera, Bronx Opera, New Amsterdam Opera, Mannes Baroque Ensemble, and Friends and Enemies of New Music. When she sang in Hildegard von Bingen's chant opera *ORDO VIRTUTUM*, the *New York Times* said, "Of the many young singers, Silvie Jensen as Humility was perhaps the most impressive." When Ms. Jensen appeared in the premiere of *The Singing Bridge* at the Stonington Opera House in summer 2005, the *Bangor Daily News* wrote "Best of all were performances by Silvie Jensen as Alice True.... Jensen's voice was exquisite, floating and expressive, a joy to hear."

Ms. Jensen appeared as a soloist at the Barbican in London with Ornette Coleman, and at Carnegie's Zankel Hall singing the works of Meredith Monk. She will appear with Monk's Vocal Ensemble in 2007 in Ferrara, Italy. She has often appeared as soloist with the Christopher Caines Dance Company. She has sung the solos in Bach's Cantatas 134, 140, and 68, among others, and *St. Matthew Passion*; in Handel's *Messiah*; in Schubert's *Mass in G*; in Vaughan Williams's *Mass in G*; and in the Rutter *Requiem*, with the orchestras of Marble Collegiate Church and Church of the Good Shepherd. She has performed song recitals at Weill Hall, the Liederkrantz Club, the Roerich Museum, and Symphony Space. Ms. Jensen has appeared with such esteemed ensembles as the San Francisco Girls Chorus, Chorissima and Virtuouse, the San Francisco Opera, the San Francisco and Berkeley Symphonies, Pomerium and Early Music New York, the Russian Chamber Chorus of New York, and ensembles appearing at BAM, the Bard Festival, Carnegie Hall, Tanglewood, and Davies Symphony Hall.

GREEN, GREEN, AND GREEN AGAIN

Conrad Aiken

Green, green, and green again, and greener still,
Spring toward summer bends the immortal bow,
And northward breaks the wave of daffodil,
And northward breaks the wave of summer's snow:
Green, green, and green again, and greener yet,
Wide as this forest is, which counts its leaves,
Wide as this kingdom, in a green sea set,
Which round its shores perpetual blossom weaves—
Green, green, and green again, and green once more,
The season finds its term — then greenest, even,
When frost at twilight on the leaf lies hoar,
And one cold star shines bright in greenest heaven:
But love, like music keeps no season ever;
Like music, too, once known is known forever.

ECCO MORMORAR L'ONDE

Torquato Tasso

Ecco mormorar l'onde
e tremolar le fronde
a l'aura mattutina e gl' arborselli
e sovra i rami i vagh' augelli
cantar soavemente
e rider l' oriente
ecco già l' alb' appare
e si specchia nel mare
e rasserena il cielo
e imperla il dolce gielo
e gl' alti monti indora
o bella e vagh' aurora
l'aura e tua messagiera
e tu de l' aura
ch' ogn' arso co ristaura.

Hark! the waves are murmuring,
and the treetops gently rustle
as morning breezes stir among the branches.
On the verdant boughs
the birds sing sweetly,
and the eastern sky is laughing.
Now the dawn arises;
mirrored deeply in the ocean,
she brightens all the heavens,
turns the dewdrops to pearls,
and bedecks the mountains with gold.
Oh, lovely and gracious dawn,
breezes thy heralds
and thou their envoy:
you restore grieving hearts to life again.

—Anonymus

THULE, THE PERIOD OF COSMOGRAPHY

Thomas Weelkes

Thule, the period of cosmography,
Doth vaunt of Hecla, whose sulphureous fire
Doth melt the frozen clime and thaw the sky;
Trinacrian* Etna's flames ascend not higher:
These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I,
Whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry.

The Andalusian merchant, that returns
Laden with cochineal and china dishes,
Reports in Spain how strangely Fogo burns
Amidst an ocean full of flying fishes:
These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I,
Whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry.

*Sicilian

THE LOBSTER QUADRILLE

Lewis Carroll

“Will you walk a little faster?” said a whiting to a snail,
“There’s a porpoise close behind us, and he’s treading on my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all advance!
They are waiting on the shingle—will you come and join the dance?
Will you, won’t you, will you, won’t you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won’t you, will you, won’t you, won’t you join the dance?”

“You can really have no notion how delightful it will be
When they take us up and throw us, with the lobsters, out to sea!”
But the snail replied, “Too far, too far!” and gave a look askance—
Said he thanked the whiting kindly, but he would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the dance.

“What matters it how far we go?” his scaly friend replied.
“There is another shore, you know, upon the other side.
The further off from England the nearer is to France—
Then turn not pale, beloved snail, but come and join the dance.
Will you, won’t you, will you, won’t you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won’t you, will you, won’t you, won’t you join the dance?”

Program Notes

Tonight’s program was built in response to repeated requests by longtime members to sing Aaron Copland’s *In the Beginning*. I dragged my feet for years, shying away from the challenge of the piece’s numerous harmonic “left turns,” which have confounded many an ensemble—nearly derailing even the recording conducted by the composer himself. But this year I felt it was time to relent. So tonight, with the Copland, we present a series of pieces about the natural world. In the texts featured tonight, sailors pit themselves against the perils of the ocean, adventurers to extreme climates ponder their own hearts, marine creatures display comic anthropomorphoses, spring blossoms forth in waves of green, breezes refresh human hearts, winds return fathers to their babes, and God crowns six days of creation by breathing life into humankind.

The natural world provides endless inspiration to poets, tonight’s first being Walt Whitman. The poem **A Song for All Seas, All Ships**, which comes from *Sea Drift*, received its most prominent musical setting in Vaughan Williams’ *A Sea Symphony*. Here, scholar, music publisher, and composer **Ron Jeffers** takes from this poem its most musical word—*recitative*—and with it builds a background of treble ostinatos that represent the roiling of the sea. Against this relentless activity, the men’s voices invoke the intrepid strength uniting seafarers of all nations. Jeffers is known among choral researchers as the author of the extremely useful *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire, Volume I: Latin Texts and Translations*. Conductors turn to his publishing company, *earthsongs*, especially for new choral music by Latin American composers, new repertoire for treble chorus, choral concert music based on vernacular traditions from all over the world, and Jeffers’ own compositions.

Emerging directly from the last chord of the Jeffers, we launch into **Euroclydon**, by early American composer **William Billings** (1746-1800). This “mariners’ hymn” takes its text from several verses of Psalm 107, whose theme is the Lord’s mercy in rescuing men from mortal danger. A *euroclydon* is a fierce north wind experienced in the eastern Mediterranean and is characterized by frequent gusts and squalls. After the example of the Renaissance madrigalists, Billings uses melodic, rhythmic, and textural devices to illustrate the rise and fall of massive waves, the terror and disorientation of the sailors, and the calm after the storm. When Billings has finished with the Psalm verses, he appends his own text, a colloquial celebration of welcome for the returning sailors: “And all huzza! Their Friends assembl’d on the Wharf to welcome them on the Shore. Welcome here again, welcome Home!” Billings’s hallmark style is recognized in a profusion of open fifths and octaves and in the placement of the melody in the tenor voice, two characteristics of the Shape-Note tradition to which he contributed several hymns. He explicitly declared his independence from the classical compositional practice that preceded him, as well as refusing any expectation that later composers should copy him.

Billings was a tanner by trade (and therefore infamously smelly), a musical autodidact, and a friend of Samuel Adams and Paul Revere. His most singular contribution to life in Revolutionary New England was his mission to improve the musicianship of the average churchgoer. In addition to publishing several collections of original hymnody, he traveled the colonies teaching at the local “singing schools,” where the public turned out to learn sight reading and harmonizing, as well as to socialize. Writings from Billings’s eager students testify that ensemble singing has always been a fine way to meet with friends and to find a paramour.

Our ship then sails to the extremes of the earth with the two-part madrigal, **Thule, the Period of Cosmography/The Andalusian Merchant**. *Thule* is the archaic name for Iceland, once thought to be the northernmost end of the world (“the period of cosmography”), whose volcano Hecla spews “sulphureous fire.” In the second half of the madrigal, we hear reports from Spanish merchants about oceans “full of flying fishes” and the strange burning at Fogo, a volcanic island at Cape Verde. The poet marvels at these natural phenomena but finds his own heart—which freezes with fear and fries with love—an even more wondrous mystery. The two parts of this madrigal share a refrain, in which the extreme climates of the planet and of the heart are arrestingly described through a sudden cessation of polyphonic activity on a chord of startling harmony.

This poem, by the composer himself, is paradigmatic of the verse that inspired the first madrigalists, Italian composers in the latter 16th century. Da Rore, Marenzio, and their contemporaries turned to poems with vividly contrasting natural images (towering mountaintops, deep ocean beds) or emotional states (desire, repugnance) as opportunities to stretch their descriptive and expressive capacities. Thus, the madrigal in Italy eclipsed the cyclical Mass as the most sophisticated and experimental genre of the Renaissance, sometimes demanding the virtuosity of the most trained singers. When the craze for part-song took root in England, its composers often selected lighter texts with less mercurial content, which resulted in more even and accessible music. But **Thomas Weelkes** (1576-1623) is among the few who took the example of the Italians in uniting poetic and compositional extremes. Like all working composers a church musician, Weelkes earned appointments as organist and choirmaster at Winchester College and Chichester Cathedral when he was still a young man. His sacred works benefit from his mastery of the madrigal, which genre he approached with the high degree of textual and motivic unification we hear among the six very active voices in this piece. Weelkes himself was no stranger to extremes of interior climate: His aspirations to a position with the Chapel Royal were continually dashed, and ultimately he died unemployed after a short life marred by the public scandal of his regular drunkenness.

Crustaceans, marine mammals, and other salty life forms are the ocean travelers in our next piece. The extremes of their peregrinations, more restricted than those in the Weelkes, extend only between England and France. This is Lewis Carroll’s **Lobster Quadrille**, in a new setting for treble voices by **Elliot Z. Levine**. Last year, Elliot learned that I was assembling a program of pieces based on dance forms, and in one of his frequent bursts of whimsy and generosity, he created this piece for me to conduct. As it happened, the work did not suit that particular program, but it finds its place here. About his piece, he says: “I wrote The Lobster Quadrille upon hearing that Dr. Boerger was looking for treble choral music with reference to dance. Having only one entry in that genre, I began as all of the famous composers did: I looked on the Internet for texts. This one came up, and I recognized it as one I’d been reading for years and admired. It was one of those times when a piece came quickly and without a lot of *tsimmi*. I had a lot of fun playing around with quirky rhythms, national styles, and the sheer beauty of the treble sound. This will be the first performance.”

Elliot Z. Levine, the baritone for the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble and Cantorial Soloist for Temple Emmanuel in Great Neck, has also appeared as a soloist with such groups as Musica Sacra, the Rome Opera, La Fenice, the Ensemble for Early Music, the Folger Consort, and the Kalamazoo Bach Festival. With his M.M. from the Manhattan School of Music, he has also studied conducting with Robert Hickok and composition with Robert Starer. He has been awarded five Meet-the-Composer Grants and has been composer-in-residence at the Church of

Texts

SONG FOR ALL SEAS, ALL SHIPS

Walt Whitman

1

TO-DAY a rude brief recitative,
Of ships sailing the Seas, each with its special flag or ship-signal;
Of unnamed heroes in the ships—Of waves spreading and spreading, far as the eye can reach;
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing;
And out of these a chant, for the sailors of all nations,
Fitful, like a surge.

Of Sea-Captains young or old, and the Mates—and of all intrepid Sailors;
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise, nor death dismay,
Pick’d sparingly, without noise, by thee, old Ocean—chosen by thee,
Thou Sea, that pickest and cullest the race, in Time, and unitest Nations!
Suckled by thee, old husky Nurse—embodying thee!
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

(Ever the heroes, on water or on land, by ones or twos appearing,
Ever the stock preserv’d, and never lost, though rare—enough for seed preserv’d.)

2

Flaunt out O Sea, your separate flags of nations!
Flaunt out, visible as ever, the various ship-signals!
But do you reserve especially for yourself, and for the soul of man, one flag above all the rest,
A spiritual woven Signal, for all nations, emblem of man elate above death,
Token of all brave captains, and all intrepid sailors and mates,
And all that went down doing their duty;
Reminiscent of them—twined from all intrepid captains, young or old;
A pennant universal, subtly waving, all time, o’er all brave sailors,
All seas, all ships.

EUROCLYDON

They that go down to the Sea in Ships, and occupy their Business in great Waters;
these Men see God's Wonders, His great and mighty Wonders in the Deep.
For He commanded the stormy Winds to blow, and He lifted up the Waves thereof.
They are mounted up as it were into Heav'n, and then down into the Deep;
and their Souls melt away with Trouble.
They reel and stagger to and fro like a drunken Man, and are at their Wit's End.
Then they cry unto God in their Trouble, and He bringeth them out of their Distresses.

He maketh the Storm a Calm, so that the Waves are still.
Then they are glad because they are quiet; and He bringeth the Vessel into Port.
And all huzza. Their Friends assembl'd on the Wharf to welcome them on the Shore.
And all huzza. Welcome here again, welcome Home.

—based on Psalm 107:23-24, from **The Book of Common Prayer** (1809) and Psalm 107:25-30, from **The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments** (1814)

The work opens in the unaccompanied voice of the mezzo-soprano soloist, who begins to tell the tale: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void.” The first choral entrances are thin in texture, thickening incrementally as creation progresses, from two-part canon to paired countermelodies, then to chords in three parts, and finally involving all sections where God names the darkness “night.”

Of the work’s 389 measures, the first 325 are devoted to the 31 verses of Genesis 1, in which God creates the world by stages in six days. This material coheres strongly through the reuse of several compositional devices. The first three notes of the opening solo constitute a motive that is present in the solo and the choral material in each of the six days. Recurring textual phrases in the scripture—especially the counting off of the days—receive identical or similar treatments. And although the choral material is constantly changing texture or pivoting from one tonal center to another, it is unified by the recurrent use of Lydian mode for the generation of melody and counterpoint.

When Copland reaches the end of the first chapter of Genesis, he interrupts his music with a grand pause. This silence separates the two chapters, whose accounts of the order of creation directly conflict with each other and therefore suggest two different authors. Indeed, the music following the grand pause lacks the motivic unity of the rest of the piece, almost as if a different composer were responsible for it. This last section of the work is short; only seven lines are set. One wonders why Copland bothers with Chapter 2 at all.

I believe that the answer lies in his stopping place: Copland was not a religious man. The content he chose for this work is as nondogmatic and nonmoralistic as any that might still be dramatic enough to merit a musical setting. God himself is not the centerpiece anywhere in the work—it is, rather, each gorgeous result of God’s creation that is exalted by the music. The final verse that Copland chooses says: “And man became a living soul.” Its repeated, emphatic, quadruple-*forte*, and extremely high setting seems to proclaim: The human soul was the worthiest phenomenon that the humanist Copland knew.

The theme of tonight’s concert is uncharacteristically *au courant*. While Copland’s setting of the command in Genesis for humans to “have dominion over” every living thing is jubilant, some of the singers in Cerddorion have signaled their difficulty greeting the optimism of that text. These days, the news media remind us at every turn that our assumption of dominion over nature has been tragically false: We exist within the web of nature and not above it; nature will continue in some altered form even if we render it inhospitable to us. At least one composer on tonight’s program is actively involved in loving care of our embattled environment, working against a day when only the words of dead poets will be left to testify: *It Was Good*.

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St. Thomas More in New York City and at the schools of Delmar, N.Y. His latest large work, recently commissioned by The Glass Menagerie and premiered on May 11, 2007, is *Panim al Panim—the Death of Moses*. Other recent large works are *Requiem for the Living* for the Central City Chorus of New York and *Un prodigio les canto* for Cerddorion. Levine is published by Shadow Press, Harold Flammer, Inc., Transcontinental, E. Henry David, Plymouth, Colla Voce, and Willis Music Co.

Cerddorion’s tenors and basses answer “The Lobster Quadrille” with **Green, Green, and Green Again**, by **William McClelland**. I first heard McClelland’s music when a friend who had sung on a recording of his works presented me with a copy of the recording. For the past two years, I have used this piece as a study in mixed meter for my choral conducting students at the Manhattan School of Music. Its poetry fits it perfectly for inclusion in tonight’s program. Conrad Aiken describes the passing of spring into summer—the green of emerging daffodils, forest leaves, and the sea. His conclusion is that, while each of nature’s treasures waxes and wanes according to its proper time, the eternal treasures of love and music obey no season. “Green, Green, and Green Again” is from *Five Sonnets for Men’s Voices*, published by WMC Music.

Composer and pianist William McClelland, a Michigan native, has received grants and commissions from Meet the Composer, ASCAP, the Copland Fund, the Massachusetts Council on the Arts, and others. “The Revenge of Hamish,” a collection of his choral works, is carried by Albany Records, for which label he has also produced recordings of choral music by Billings and of 19th-century American spirituals and hymnody. As a pianist, he has premiered works by John Cage, Carl Ruggles, and David Patterson, as well as playing for prominent dance and theater productions in New York and concertizing with his wife, soprano Jean McClelland. Having served on the teaching faculties of the University of Massachusetts and the Elizabeth Seeger School and having directed various choral groups and theater productions in New York and Massachusetts, he is the longtime leader of the New York swing/jazz ensemble, The Feetwarmers. (Also an active environmentalist, McClelland is President of Bag Snaggers, Inc. (www.muzen.com), a multi-hundred dollar company that markets the Bag Snagger, a patented tool used for removing plastic bags and other debris caught in trees.

Next we present a beloved madrigal from the opus of **Claudio Monteverdi** (1567-1643), performed as the composer expected to hear it: by five solo voices. The text to **Ecco mormorar Ponde** is by Monteverdi’s older contemporary Torquato Tasso, one of the Petrarchan Revivalists writing in the verse forms and style of the great Trecento poet. This text can be identified as a *madrigal* poem (rather than as a *sestina*, an *ottava rima*, a *sonnetto*, or any other verse form) by its use of lines of either seven or eleven syllables. Its central image, *l’aura* (“the breeze”), is a play on the name of Laura Peperara, a woman in Mantua whom Tasso loved. Monteverdi published this madrigal setting in 1590, the year he moved from his hometown of Cremona to serve the court of Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga I in Mantua.

The madrigal was the focus of Monteverdi’s compositional efforts until he was 40 years old. This example comes from the second of his nine books of madrigals, which, regarded together demonstrate his evolution from mastery of Renaissance *a cappella* polyphony to experimentation with the accompanied, florid solo singing that ushered in the first dramatic forms of the Baroque. In 1607, at the age of 40, he composed his first opera (and the second-oldest extant one), *L’Orfeo*, for courtly entertainment during the celebration of *Carnevale* in Mantua. Monteverdi was not happy in the employ of the Gonzagas, and with the death of Vincenzo, he was dismissed at last,

making a successful bid in 1613 for the position of *maestro di capella* at Saint Mark's Cathedral in Venice. His sacred output includes collections of *a cappella* motets, a four-voice *a cappella* Mass,

and the lavish *Vespro della beata Maria vergine* of 1610, scored for various combinations of voices and instruments. By 1637, the first public opera houses opened in Venice, providing him with new venues for his dramatic works. He completed his last (and third extant) opera, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, at the very end of his life.

From the breezes of the Italian dawn, we go to Alfred Lord Tennyson's "wind of the western sea," which will bring the sailor back home to his family in safety. I was introduced to the music of **Matthew Harris** years ago in my capacity as a soprano in the Western Wind sextet, and last year I brought to Cerddorion several of his *Shakespeare Songs*. Harris recently wrote **Sweet and Low** for Western Wind, who will be performing it with other new American works next month. Knowing that the piece would sound wonderful also in a choral treatment, and finding its subject perfect for this concert, I was grateful to receive the assent of both the composer and Western Wind to "scoop" its world premiere. About the piece, Harris writes: "When the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble asked me to write a piece, I looked around for lesser-known poems that mentioned a western wind (that is, something besides the famous anonymous poem the group named itself after). When I found Tennyson's 'Sweet and Low,' I knew I had my text. I set it as a barcarole and lullaby in one. Throughout most of the piece, two notes (*e* and *d*) gently undulate back and forth like the rolling waters in the poem, passing from one voice to another. The placid, homophonic texture briefly dips into a six-part quasi-fugue at the words 'sleep and rest,' as if the child is nodding off into a dream."

Matthew Harris's choral works have been commissioned, recorded, or premiered by leading choruses, such as the Dale Warland Singers, Phoenix Bach Choir, Los Angeles Chamber Singers, Western Wind, and Cantori New York, and have been sung by numerous avocational choirs across America. In May, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts will present two evenings devoted to Harris's complete cycle of *Shakespeare Songs*. His *Child's Christmas in Wales*, a cantata for chorus and orchestra, has been performed around the United States and the United Kingdom. The New York City Opera has presented scenes from his opera *Tess*, and his orchestral works have been played by the Minnesota, Houston, and Florida Symphony Orchestras. The Lark Quartet, New York New Music Ensemble, and League-ISCM are some of the chamber groups that have performed his music. G. Schirmer and C. F. Peters publish his music, and Chandos, Albany, Cedille, and CRI Records represent him on disc.

Commissions, grants, fellowships, and awards have come from the Fromm Foundation/Aspen Music Festival, Verdehr Trio, Modesto Symphony Orchestra, Haydn-Mozart Orchestra, American Composers Forum, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Aaron Copland Fund, the New York Foundation for the Arts, Tanglewood, Meet the Composer, the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, the Chautauqua Chamber Singers, Georges Enesco Foundation, Society for New Music, National Association of Composers, Musicians Accord, Taubman Institute, ASCAP, and BMI. A graduate of The Juilliard School, New England Conservatory, and Harvard University, Harris has taught at Fordham University and Kingsborough College (CUNY), and in 1988 founded Harris Musicology. He lives and works in New York City.

Notre fin est le commencement: We finish our concert with **In the Beginning**, Aaron Copland's motet about the six days of creation according to the book of Genesis. Aaron Copland was born in the year 1900 to a family of Lithuanian Jews, who Anglicized their surname *Kaplan* before immigrating to New York via London. Growing up in Brooklyn in the apartment above his

parents' shop, Aaron had no direct encouragement for a life in music, but by age 15 he had declared his aspiration to compose. After seeking expert tutelage stateside, he traveled to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger. Returning to the United States in 1924, he faced an historical moment with critical implications for his search for a compositional style to call his own.

In Europe of the previous century, with the establishment of new governments and the redrawing of the geopolitical map, many composers explicitly inscribed their ethnic or national identities in their works; as examples, consider Chopin's mazurkas, Liszt's Hungarian rhapsodies, and Dvóřak's Slavonic Dances. In fact, it was Dvóřak, teaching in the United States in the 1890s, who encouraged American composers to stop imitating European styles and turn instead to their wealth of indigenous material—specifically, the music of African Americans. By example, Dvóřak built the slow movement of his *New World* symphony on a melody that simulates plantation song (as his ears understood it).

Copland did, in fact, feel an imperative to develop a distinctly national style, and so into his works in the European concert-music tradition he incorporated elements of jazz—particularly rhythm. His works in this initial period were harmonically too esoteric to attract the kind of widespread popularity that accrued to the classical/jazz fusion of *Rhapsody in Blue*, written by his fellow New Yorker Jacob Gershowitz (George Gershwin). During the Great Depression, however, Copland found himself in sympathy with Left-leaning composers who had cast their lot with the masses, forsaking the elitist traditions of the conservatory and the concert hall for a language more firmly based in styles popular among the working classes. At a time when the academies were teaching atonality, Copland turned for material to early American hymnody and cowboy songs. From his "vernacular period" come his most widely loved works, including the ballet scores *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring*, his "Fanfare for the Common Man" (and his *Third Symphony*, which uses the "Fanfare"), and his *Lincoln Portrait* for orchestra and narrator. The open and stable harmonies of these works is said to be the aural representation of the vast spaces of the American heartland. It was not until the 1950s that Copland returned to esoteric harmonies, creating several significant works employing serialism.

However patriotic was his material, during the country's most difficult decades of the century, Copland was investigated by the FBI and blacklisted in the 1950s for having defended the Communist Party during the 1936 presidential elections. He was called before Congress in 1953, and though he was never shown to have joined the U.S. Communist Party, the investigation of him remained open until 1975. Meanwhile, his concert music and his scores for ballet, theater, and film had earned him the undisputed title of "Dean of American Composers." Five years later, he toured the country in a series of concerts in celebration of his 80th birthday. He lived another ten years, dying in Tarrytown, New York, on December 2, 1990.

In the Beginning—one of the longest continuous *a cappella* works known—represented a bold undertaking for a composer whose choral opus was relatively small. In 1947, the Harvard Symposium on Music Criticism commissioned Copland to write a choral work and suggested that he use a Hebrew text. Copland, however, did not feel competent to work convincingly in Hebrew. Ultimately, he selected the King James version of Genesis 1 and the first seven verses of Genesis 2 as his text.