Cerddorion’s Next Performances

Please join us on November 4th in Brooklyn or November 10th in Manhattan (at St. Ignatius of Antioch) for the start of our 18th Season.

Watch our website (www.cerddorion.org) for more information, or join our mailing list to be kept up-to-date.

Support Cerddorion

Ticket sales cover only a small portion of our ongoing musical and administrative expenses. If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution, please send a check (payable to Cerddorion NYC, Inc.) to:

Cerddorion NYC, Inc.
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For further information about Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble, please visit our web site: www.cerddorion.org. Follow us on Twitter at @cerddorionnyc. Like us on Facebook.
The members of Cerddorion are grateful to Doug Keilitz and the Church of Saint Ignatius of Antioch for providing rehearsal and performance space for this season.

Gala Reception

Join us after the concert and support Cerddorion’s continued ability to commission new music. Refreshments and remarks by Mr. Moravec and Dr. John.

4:30-6:30pm
Gelabert Studios Gallery
255 West 86th Street.
Minimum contribution $50.

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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Malagueña
La muerte entra y sale de la taberna.

Pasan caballos negros y gente siniestra por los hondos caminos de la guitarra.

Y hay un olor a sal y a sangre de hembra, en los nardos febriles de la marina.

La muerte entra y sale y sale y entra la muerte de la taberna.

Malagueña
Death
 Goes in and out
 Of the tavern.

Black horses
And sinister people
Move along the deep paths
Of the guitar.

And there is a smell of salt
And women's blood
In the fresh spikenards
Of the seashore.

Death
 Goes in and out
 And out and in goes
 Death
 From the tavern.

The Program

Three Madrigals from Il Primo Libro de Madrigali
O primavera, SWV 1
O dolcezze amarissime, SWV 2
Tornate, o cari baci, SWV 16

Six Chansons
La Biche
Un Cygne
Puisque tout passe
Printemps
En Hiver
Verger

Claviante Brilioso

Sachi Ueshima, soprano

Intermission

Stava il Sole
Paul Moravec
(b. 1957)

Four Shakespeare Songs
Jaakko Mäntyjärvi
Come Away, Death
(b. 1963)
Lullaby
Double, Double Toil and Trouble
Full Fathom Five

Lorca Suite
Einojuhani Rautavaara
Canción de jinete
(b. 1928)
El Grito
La luna asoma
Malegueña

Katrina Montagna, soprano
Ethan Wagner, baritone
Michael Plant, bass
Cerddorion

Now in its seventeenth season, Cerddorion is one of New York’s most highly regarded volunteer choral ensembles. A chamber group of twenty-five mixed voices, it is known for its eclectic repertoire, encompassing music from the Renaissance to the contemporary. As befits its name (cerddorion is Welsh for “musicians”), the ensemble aspires to musicianship in the fullest sense, using the human voice to explore and fulfill the expressive potential of the art. 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 Lisa Bielawa, David Lang, Elliott Z. Levine, Robert Dennis, Julie Dolphin, and David Schober.

Besides presenting its own varied programs, Cerddorion is frequently invited to perform with other acclaimed artists. In 2011, the men of Cerddorion sang with esteemed French organist Francis Chapelet in the second inaugural recital of the Manton Memorial Organ at the Church of the Ascension in New York. Past collaborations have included the North American premiere of Sir John Tavener’s all-night vigil, The Veil of the Temple, performed at Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall (with Dessoff Choral Consortium and choristers from London’s Temple Church); several appearances with the Christopher Caines Dance Company; Baroque opera performances with the early music instrumental ensemble Concert Royal; and serving as the resident teaching ensemble for the Dennis Keene Choral Festival in Kent, Connecticut.

In 2006, Cerddorion performed at the Eastern Divisional Convention of the American Choral Directors Association the works they had commissioned from three New York composers for their tenth anniversary season. September 2007 marked the release on the Tzadik label of A Handful of World, Cerddorion’s first commercial recording. The CD is dedicated to vocal works by New York composer Lisa Bielawa and includes Cerddorion’s performance of Bielawa’s Lamentations for a City, which was commissioned and first performed by Cerddorion in 2004.

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

El Grito
El eclipse de un grito,
va de monte
a monte.

Desde los olivos,
será un arco iris negro
sobre la noche azul.

¡Ay!

Como un arco de viola,
el grito ha hecho vibrar
largas cuerdas del viento.

¡Ay!

(Las gentes de las cuevas
asoman sus velones.)

¡Ay!

La luna asoma
Cuando sale la luna
se pierden las campanas
y aparecen las sendas
impenetrables.

Cuando sale la luna,
el mar cubre la tierra
y el corazón se siente
isla en el infinito.

Nadie come naranjas
bajo la luna llena.
Es preciso comer
fruta verde y helada.

Cuando sale la luna
de cien rostros iguales,
la moneda de plata
solloza en el bolsillo.

The Scream
The eclipse of a scream
Goes from hill
to hill.

From the olive trees
A black rainbow
Will rise above the blue night.

Ay!

Like a viol bow
The scream has thrilled
Long strings of the wind.

Ay!

(The cave people
Hold out their lamps.)

Ay!

The Moon Rises
When the moon rises
Bells fade away
And paths appear
Impassable.

When the moon rises,
The sea covers the earth
And the heart feels
An island in the infinite.

No one eats oranges
Under the full moon.
You must eat
Fruit that is green and ice cold.

When the moon rises,
With a hundred faces all alike,
Silver coins
Sob in the pocket.
Einojuhani Rautavaara, *Lorca Suite*

Einojuhani Rautavaara (b. 1928) is perhaps the dean of living Finnish composers. He began his studies in Helsinki at the Sibelius Academy, and later came to the United States where he spent time at Juilliard and Tanglewood, working with Vincent Persichetti, Roger Sessions and Aaron Copland. He completed his *Lorca Suite* in 1973, which consists of four tightly constructed, evocative settings of Federico García Lorca’s surrealist poems. The Suite centers on the note E-natural, and is based on the octatonic scale (an alternation of whole and half steps).

“Canción de jinete” (“Song of the Horseman”) describes, in galloping rhythms, a horseman riding towards his death. “El Grito” (“The Scream”) is characterized by dramatic portamenti and clusters of half steps, creating a quasi-aural equivalent to the famous painting of the same name by Norwegian artist Edvard Munch. In “La Luna Asoma” (“The Moon Rises”), rising scales grow out of a solitary E-natural, evoking the moon’s haunting ascent. The text refers to an Andalusian legend that eating oranges under a full moon is a portent of death. Finally, “Malagueñita” (which translates simply as “Dance from Malaga”) begins with vocal entries that outline the open strings on a guitar (E-A-D-G), and depicts a feverish dance of death. A general, yet fitting visual analogy might be Picasso’s famous *Three Musicians*, which hangs in the Museum of Modern Art.

**Suite de Lorca (Federico García Lorca)**

_Canción de jinete_

**Córdoba.**

Lejana y sola.

**Jaca negra, luna grande,**

y aceitunas en mi alforja.

Aunque sepa los caminos

y nunca llegaré a Córdoba.

Por el llano, por el viento,

y aceitunas en mi alforja.

La muerte me está mirando

desde las torres de Córdoba.

¡Ay que camino tan largo!

¡Ay mi jaca valerosa!

¡Ay que la muerte me espera,

antes de llegar a Córdoba!

**Song of the Horseman**

**Córdoba.**

So distant and lonely.

**Jaca negra, luna grande,**

and in my saddlebag olives.

Though the ways are familiar,

at Córdoba I will never arrive.

Across the plain, through the wind,

black little horse, and red moon.

Death keeps staring at me,

down from Córdoba’s towers.

Oh, how the way's dragging on!

Oh, so patient my brave little horse!

Oh, that death waits for me,

before Córdoba will ever be reached!

**Córdoba.**

So distant and lonely.

**James John, Artistic Director**

James John is Associate Professor and Director of Choral Activities at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College-CUNY, where he conducts the Queens College Choir, Vocal Ensemble and Choral Society, teaches choral conducting, and serves as advisor to the graduate program in vocal performance.

Under Dr. John’s leadership, the choral program at the Aaron Copland School of Music has become recognized as one of the finest collegiate choral programs in the region. Past performances with the School of Music’s choral ensembles include Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis*, an award-winning production of Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo*, Requiems by Mozart and Verdi, “A Night at the Opera” with Queens College alumna Erika Sunnegårdh of the Metropolitan Opera, Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem*, and world premieres of works by Sidney Boquiren, Leo Kraft, Meg Collins Stoop, and others. His choirs have performed in many of New York’s prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Weill Recital Hall, and St. Patrick’s Cathedral. The Vocal Ensemble recently released its first CD, featuring premiere recordings of part-songs by Scottish composer Hamish MacCunn, and the Queens College Choir was selected to perform at the 2012 Eastern Division Conference of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) in Providence, RI.

Dr. John’s guest conducting appearances include Avery Fisher Hall’s annual *Messiah* Sing-In, a concert of American choral music with the Virginia Chorale (Virginia’s only professional choral ensemble), chorus master for the Queens Symphony, regional honor choirs throughout New York State, and a recording with jazz trumpeter Michael Mossman. In June 2012, he will lead the Tokyo Oratorio Society in a performance of Brahms’s *Requiem* in Tokyo’s Suntory Hall. He has given presentations at both divisional and national conventions of the ACDA and is in demand as a clinician and adjudicator throughout the United States.

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

Dr. John received his Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting from the Eastman School of Music. Prior to his current position at the Aaron Copland School of Music, he served as Director of Choral Activities at Tufts University in Boston, Director of Choral Activities at Nassau Community College in Garden City, NY, and as Dartmouth College’s first Conducting Fellow. He received his Master of Arts in Conducting from the Aaron Copland School of Music.
Passionate sighs ("sospiri") exchanged between voices in short, sensual, cascading roulades. The poet languishes desperately for the return of his lover. Initial setting of the word "primavera." In "Tornate, O Cari Baci" ("Come Back, O Dear Kisse"), Schütz immediately in the opening bars, where he felt it might make an interesting theme for a program. Our performance this afternoon features settings of Italian and French texts by German composers (selected madrigals by Schütz; Hindemith's Six Chanson); a Swedish composer who invented meaningless words to go along with music that he composed in advance (Jennefelt's Clarinante Briliano); an American writing in Italian (our newly commissioned work, Stava il Sole, by Paul Moravec); and two Finnish composers' renderings of English and Spanish poetry (Mäntyjärvi's Four Shakespeare Songs; Rautavaara's Lorca Suite). Though volumes could be said about text-music relationships in these works, as well as the particular challenges of writing in a language other than one's own, the primary element these pieces have in common is their power to reach past language barriers and communicate with immediacy to any audience—hence the title, "Joy Beyond Words."

Heinrich Schütz, Three Madrigals from Il Primo Libro de Madrigali (Venice, 1611)

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. They reflect the composer's remarkable assimilation of Italian style, his great gift for word painting, and his innate contrapuntal skill—elements he integrated seamlessly into his vast output of Protestant church music.

"O Primavera" ("O Spring") and "O Dolcezza Amarsiassime" ("O Bitter Sweets") are the first two madrigals in the collection, and belong together as a set. In them the poet contrasts the beauty of spring with the despair he feels at the loss of his beloved. Schütz captures this duality of moods immediately in the opening bars, where g-minor contrasts poignantly with G-major on his initial setting of the word "primavera." In "Tornate, O Cari Baci" ("Come Back, O Dear Kisses") the poet languishes desperately for the return of his lover—culminating in a series of breathless, passionate sighs ("sospiri") exchanged between voices in short, sensual, cascading roulades.

Lullaby (A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act II: Scene 2)
You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen.
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong:
Come not near our fairy queen.
Philomel, with melody:
Sing in our sweet lullaby:
Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby:

Double, Double Toil and Trouble (Macbeth, Act IV: Scene 1)
Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.
Thrice and once the hedge-pig whined.
Harrier cries: 'Tis time, 'tis time.
Round about the cauldron go,
In the poison'd entrails throw:
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping pot,
Boil thou first in the charmed pot.
Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.
Fillet of a fenny snake
In the cauldron boil and bake,
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing.
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

Full Fathom Five (The Tempest, Act I: Scene 2)
Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made.
Those are pearls that were his eyes —
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

Full notes:

Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Winches' mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digg'd I the dark.
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat, and slips of yew,
Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips.
Finger of birth-strangled babe,
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab.
Make the gruel thick and slab.
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
For the ingredients of our cauldron.
Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.
By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks, whoever knocks!

Joy Beyond Words

Program Notes by James John

With the exception of wordless pieces and compositions written on nonsense syllables, choral music is a text-based medium. Composers usually begin by searching for an inspiring text, which is not always easy to find. When one of Brahms’s close friends asked him in the mid-1870s why he hadn’t composed more music for choir, he remarked how difficult it was to find texts—and though Brahms ultimately wrote a great deal of choral music, the vast majority of it is in German.

As I was planning Cerddorion’s season and thinking about some of my favorite a cappella works, it occurred to me that several of them were written in languages other than the composer’s native tongue. This being the exception rather than the rule, I thought it might make an interesting theme for a program. Our performance this afternoon features settings of Italian and French texts by German composers (selected madrigals by Schütz; Hindemith’s Six Chantoni); a Swedish composer who invented meaningless words to go along with music that he composed in advance (Jennefelt’s Clarinante Briliano); an American writing in Italian (our newly commissioned work, Stava il Sole, by Paul Moravec); and two Finnish composers’ renderings of English and Spanish poetry (Mäntyjärvi’s Four Shakespeare Songs; Rautavaara’s Lorca Suite). Though volumes could be said about text-music relationships in these works, as well as the particular challenges of writing in a language other than one’s own, the primary element these pieces have in common is their power to reach past language barriers and communicate with immediacy to any audience—hence the title, "Joy Beyond Words."
Jaakko Mäntyjärvi, *Four Shakespeare Songs*

Of all the living composers on our program, Finnish musician Jaakko Mäntyjärvi (b. 1963) is the only one who holds a degree in linguistics, and is accredited as an authorized translator (for both Finnish to English and English to Finnish). His love of languages and fluency in English deeply inform his settings of Shakespeare's verses, which have become very popular with chamber choirs throughout the world. The composer has written his own program notes for these delightful works:

*Four Shakespeare Songs* is a blend of Renaissance poetry and contemporary music. The choral writing is varied and demanding, although the music never strays very far from traditional tonal harmony. The texts are songs from Shakespeare’s plays.

“Come Away, Death” (Twelfth Night) is a lament of unhappy love, typical for Renaissance lyrics: the narrator begs his friends to bury him, as he has been killed by the coldness of the ‘cruel maid’ that he loves. The falling figure on the repeated word ‘weep’ towards the end echoes the Renaissance practice of word-painting in music.

“Lullaby” (A Midsummer Night’s Dream) is sung by fairies to their Queen; it is a soft and tranquil mood piece in siciliano rhythm.

“Double, Double Toil and Trouble” (Macbeth), on the other hand, is sort of a Medieval cookery programme. The three witches, or weird sisters, chant the ingredients of a magic potion that they are brewing. This is the potion that the witches use later in the same scene to prophesy to Macbeth that he will become King of Scotland. The text is rather wild, and the music uses a wide range of devices up to and including speech choir.

“Full Fathom Five” (The Tempest) is a comforting yet ghoulish description of how the body of a drowned man is transformed into treasures of the sea and how mermaids ring funeral bells for him.

*Four Shakespeare Songs* was written for the Savolaisen Osakunnan Laulajat student choir of the University of Helsinki, which I was a member of from 1982 to 1987 and conducted from 1988 to 1993. The work was premiered at the 80th anniversary banquet of the Savo student nation of the University of Helsinki on February 23, 1985.

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**O Primavera, SWV 1 (Battista Guarini)**

(Prima parte)

O primavera, gioventù de l’anno,  
Bella madre di fiori,  
D’herbe novelle, di novelli amori,  
Tu torni ben, ma teco  
Non tornano i sereni  
E fortunati di delle mie gioie:

Tu torni ben, tu torni,  
Ma teco altro non torna  
Che del perduto mio caro tesoro  
La rimembranza misera e dolente.

Tu quella sè, tu quella  
Ch’ eri pur dianzi si vezzosa e bella;  
Ma non son io già quel ch’un tempo fui  
Si caro agli occhi altrui.

---

**O Dolcezze Amarissime, SWV 2 (Battista Guarini)**

(Seconda parte)

O dolcezze amarissime d’amore,  
Quanto è più duro perdervi, che mai  
Non v’haver ò provate ò possedute!  
Come sarìa l’amor felice stato,  
Se’l già goduto ben non si perdesse,  
O quando egli si perde,  
Ogni memoria ancora  
Del dileguato ben si dileguasse!

---

**Four Shakespeare Songs**

*Come Away, Death*  
(Prima parte)

Come away, come away, Death,  
And in sad cypress let me be laid;  
Fly away, fly away breath;  
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.  
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,  
O, prepare it!  
My part of death, no one so true  
Did share it.

*Come Away, Death* (Twelfth Night, Act II: Scene 4)

Not a flower, not a flower sweet  
On my black coffin let there be strown.  
Not a friend, not a friend greet  
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown.  
A thousand thousand sighs to save,  
Lay me O where  
Sad true lover never find my grave,  
To weep there.

---

**O Primavera, SWV 1 (Battista Guarini)**

(Second Part)

O spring, youth of the new-born year,  
Mother of flowers,  
New verdure, and new loves!  
But not with thee return  
Those happy days thou hast been wont to bring,  
Whose every hour was joy:

Thou art return’d,  
But with three naught, alas! Returns,  
Save the sad recollection of my dear lost treasure,  
Remembrance full of woe:

Thou art the same, the very same  
Fair smiling season as thou were before,  
But I am now no more what once I was,  
So dear to those fair eyes, my only joy.

---

**O Dolcezze Amarissime, SWV 2 (Battista Guarini)**

(Second Part)

O bitter sweets of love,  
Far heavier grief it is to lose,  
Than never to have known or tasted love’s delights!  
How blest a thing were love,  
When gained, if it could ne’er be lost,  
Or being lost,  
All memory then  
Of the lost happiness should vanish too!
Tornate, o cari baci, SWV 16 (Giovan Battista Marino)

Tornate o cari baci a ritornarmi in vita,
Baci al mio cor digiuno esca gradita,
Voì di quel dolce amaro,
Per cui languir n'é caro,
Di quel vostro non meno nettare
Che veneno pascete i miei famelici desiri,
Baci in cui dolci provo anco i sospiri.

Paul Hindemith, 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 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 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 towards the end of his life made his home in Valais, the predominantly French-speaking canton of Switzerland from which the choir that commissioned these works took its name.

Paul Moravec, Stava il Sole

In 2004, New York composer Paul Moravec (b. 1957) received the Pulitzer Prize in Music for his Tempest Fantasy, a chamber work for clarinet, violin, cello and piano. He is a prolific composer of over one hundred compositions in all major genres including orchestral, operatic, vocal, film and chamber music, and currently serves as Professor of Music at Adelphi University. Past honors include the Prix de Rome, a Composer Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship, as well as the Charles Ives Prize and Goddard Lieberson Awards in American Composition. Cerddorion is delighted to be premiering his new composition, Stava il Sole, this afternoon. Of his own music, Mr. Moravec writes:

As a composer, I try always to make beautiful things, and I use whatever techniques and materials are useful for the particular composition at hand. Some of those materials are atonal or nontonal, but the overall harmonic context of my music derives from the tonal tradition, which after all is the lingua franca of Western music—essentially, Monteverdi to the Beatles and beyond.

The text of Stava il Sole is excerpted from Purgatorio, Canto XXVII, in which Virgil bids farewell to Dante. The account of Dante’s advancing through “the temporal and eternal fires” is a crucial moment in his long spiritual journey, as well as one of the most moving passages in the entire Commedia trilogy. This composition was commissioned by Cerddorion and is dedicated to the group with affection and admiration.

Stava il sole; onde ‘l giorno sognava,
Come l’angel di Dio lieto ci apparve.
Fuor de la fiamma stava in su la riva,
E cantava “Beati mondo corde!”
“Più non si va, se pria non morde,
Anime sante, il foco: intrate in esso,
E al cantar di là non siate sorde.”
“Il temporal foco e l’etterno
Veduto hai;…ch’io te sovra te corono e mitrio.”
La Biche
O la biche: quel bel intérieur
d'anciennes forêts
dans tes yeux abonde;
combien de confiance ronde
mêlée à combien de peur.
Tout cela, porté par la vive
gracilité de tes bonds.
Mais jamais rien n'arrive
À cette impassive
Ignorance de ton front.

A Swan
A swan is approaching through the water,
all in himself unfolded;
like a slow moving tableau;
thus, in certain moments,
the being of a loved one
seems to occupy such a migrating space.

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

Puisque tout passe
Puisque tout passe, faisons
la mélodie passagère;
celle qui nous désalère
aura de nous raison.
Chantons ce qui nous quitte
avec amour et art;
soyons plus vite
que le rapide départ.

Six Chansons (Rainer Maria Rilke)

La Biche
O la biche: quel bel intérieur
d'anciennes forêts
dans tes yeux abonde;
combien de confiance ronde
mêlée à combien de peur.
Tout cela, porté par la vive
gracilité de tes bonds.
Mais jamais rien n'arrive
À cette impassive
Ignorance de ton front.

A Doe
O thou doe, what beautiful interiors
of ancient forests
appear in your abundant eyes;
what combination of serene confidence
mixed with fear.

And it is all carried on the lively
grace of your bounds.
Nor comes anything at all to astound the
impassive
unawareness of your brow.

A Swan
A swan is approaching through the water,
all in himself unfolded;
like a slow moving tableau;
thus, in certain moments,
the being of a loved one
seems to occupy such a migrating space.

It will draw near us, two-fold,
as a swan upon the river
of our troubled soul,
joined to this being through
the trembling image
of delight and suspicion.

Since all is passing
Since all is passing, retain
the melodies that wander by us;
that which assuages when nigh us
shall alone remain.

Let us sing what will leave us
with our love and art;
ere it can grieve us,
let us the sooner depart.
Printemps
O mélodie de la sève
qui dans les instruments
de tous ces arbres s’élève,
accompagne le chant
de notre voix trop brève.

C’est pendant quelques mesures
seulement que nous suivons
les multiples figures
ton long abandon,
ô abondante nature.

Quand il faudra nous taire,
d’autres continueront…
mais à présent comment faire
pour te rendre mon
grand cœur complémentaire?

En Hiver
En hiver, la mort meurtrière
Entre dans les maisons;
Elle cherche la soeur, le père,
Et leur joue du violon.

Mais quand la terre remue
Sous la bêche du printemps,
La mort court dans les rues
Et salue les passants.

Verger
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,
que père et ce qui nous 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.

Springtime
O melody that pours from the sap
and is soaring through all
these wooded instruments,
accompany the all too brief song
of our voices.

‘Tis but few measures’ duration
that we share the fantasy,
the endless variation
of thy long ecstasy,
o nature, fount of creation.

After our song is ended,
others will continue;
but meanwhile how can I give
to thee all my heart
in full surrender?

In Winter
With the winter, Death, grisly guest
through the doorway steals in;
he seeks both the young and the old,
and he plays them his violin.

But when the earth is stirred
beneath the spade of Spring,
death strolls through the streets,
lightly greeting passers-by.

Orchard
Nowhere is the earth so real
as amid your branches, o orchard blond,
ni anywhere 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.

Thomas Jennefelt, Claviante Brilioso

Thomas Jennefelt (b. 1954) is one of Sweden’s most prominent composers. He studied at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, where his teachers included Gunnar Bucht and Arne Mellnäs. His affinity for choral music was shaped by many years of singing in the Eric Ericson Chamber Choir, one of Europe’s most outstanding choirs, with a reputation for performing avant-garde music.

“Claviante Brilioso” comes from a suite of seven a cappella works entitled Villarosa Sequences, composed over a period of almost ten years and lasting close to seventy minutes when performed in its entirety. Of all the pieces on our program, this one perhaps best expresses the essence of the title, ’Joy Beyond Words’, in that Jennefelt is clearly experimenting with the power of vocal music to convey meaning regardless of text. The composer writes: “The roots to this music are to be found in American minimalism, Baroque music and Swedish choral tradition. The text was written after the music had been composed and can be seen as instrumentation and coloring.” As you listen to this work, I invite you to contemplate what you experience. The “words” sound like Latin, but have no meaning. How is it different from listening to a piece in a foreign language that you don’t understand? Do you naturally project meaning on to it? Does it have any meaning?

Claviante Brilioso (Thomas Jennefelt)
Flamia lava le criarol vona
strilias andara valoridi joo
quardededi anurrri fano brulirri stabacano
ri di
flamiatir
oria orijkxi oitari crisola
oria oitavi quarodeldi
quaro deldi caldospiri lovicanta alatari
vananana nananana nananana nananana
oritavi crinolli quardededi
oritavi caldospiri lovicanta alatari
vananana nananana nananana nananana.

Riva trivecata, stari broscalovi
a locato aleidi floristani andravoga
olotavi arindim viri
nisivi trivisa
anodi
farialdo alcdi vamistrato ridoani
villotari nemi anira finanono
claviante brilioso famia
svavo cranavalde rivaso
rimini cramini nelita
anori filianto brami
filianto bamicosta veno
costavo villotari bramosio clarovaldo non.