

CERDDORION

VOCAL ENSEMBLE

James John

Artistic Director

PRESENTS

With Harp and Voice

featuring guest artist Emily John, harpist



Sunday, June 5, 2011—4 P.M.
Oratory Church of St. Boniface
190 Duffield Street
Brooklyn, New York

Saturday, June 11, 2011—8 P.M.
St. Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church
87th Street and West End Avenue
New York, New York



**Lower
Manhattan
Cultural
Council**



This program was made possible in part with public funds from the Fund for Creative Communities, supported by the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Manhattan Community Arts Fund, supported by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, which are both administered by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

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CERDDORION

NOW CONCLUDING ITS SIXTEENTH 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. 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, Elliot Z. Levine, Robert Dennis, and Julie Dolphin.

Besides presenting its own varied programs, Cerddorion is frequently invited to perform with other acclaimed artists. 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 Dessooff 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 Words*, 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.

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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 have included Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, an award-winning production of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, Requiems by Mozart, Verdi, and Brahms, "A Night at the Opera" with Queens College alumna Erika Sunnegardh 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 partsongs by Scottish composer Hamish MacCunn, and the Queens College Choir was selected to perform at the 2010 New York State School of Music Association convention in Rochester, NY.

Dr. John's guest conducting appearances include Avery Fisher Hall's annual Messiah Sing-In, a concert of American choral music with the Virginia Chorale (Virginia's only professional choral ensemble), chorus master for the Queens Symphony, regional honor choirs throughout New York State, and a recording with jazz trumpeter Michael Mossman. He has given presentations at both divisional and national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association, and is in demand as a clinician and adjudicator throughout the United States.

Dr. John has also served as Guest Lecturer in conducting at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany, and presented seminars on American choral music in Basel and Stockholm. His dissertation on Brahms's *Nänie*, Op. 82, won the Julius Herford Prize from the American Choral Directors Association and will be published soon in revised form as a book by The Edwin Mellen Press. His articles have appeared in *Choral Journal*, *The American Choral Review*, and the American Choral Foundation's *Research Memorandum Series*. He currently serves as Project Chair for Research and Scholarship for ACDA's Eastern Division, is a member of ACDA's National Research and Publications Committee, and was recently appointed to the Editorial Board of the *American Choral Review*. 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.

Guest Performers/Composers

Emily John, Harp

Emily John resides in the New York City area, where she is a freelance harpist and maintains a private studio of harp, piano, and voice students. She performs regularly with regional orchestras, with choirs, and for private events. Recent highlights include the premiere of Edward Smaldone's *Cantari di amore* in Merkin Concert Hall and Martha Sullivan's *Wassails and Alleluias* with the Manhattan Choral Ensemble. In addition to her experience as a harpist, Ms. John is an active singer and conductor in the New York area. She serves on the adjunct faculties of Queens College—CUNY and the Special Music School at the Kaufman Center. Past conducting appointments include The Amadeus Chorale, the Center for Preparatory Studies in Music at Queens College, and the Mineola Choral Society. Her compositions and arrangements have been performed by groups as diverse as the Orleans All-County Elementary Chorus, the Mineola Choral Society, Bella Voce Singers, and regional high school choirs, and selected works are available through Pavane Publishing and Cambiata Press. Her publications include a recent article on works for choir and harp in the *American Harp Journal*, a companion article (coauthored with her husband, James John) in *Choral Journal*, and "By the Book: An Annotated Bibliography of Music-Based Picture Books" in *General Music Today*. Ms. John is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, where she studied harp with Kathleen Bride.

Kurt Alakulppi, Tenor

Lyric tenor Kurt Alakulppi made his debuts at both Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in 2007, singing Schubert's *Mass in G* with MidAmerica Productions and Victor Herbert's *The Red Mill* with The Little Orchestra Society, respectively. In 2008, he sang the Rachmaninoff *Vespers* and Haydn's *Heiligmesse* with the Riverside Choral Society, Easter and Christmas performances of Handel's *Messiah* at the First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York, and Stephen Paulus's opera *The Three Hermits* at the Quick Center for the Arts. The Seattle native opened the 2009 season with Mozart's *Requiem* at the Tilles Center, followed by a return to First Church's oratorio series for Haydn's *Creation* and the Bach *Magnificat*. In 2010, Mr. Alakulppi soloed in John K. Paine's rarely heard *Mass in D* with the Choral Arts Society of New Jersey and returned to the Mozart *Requiem* with Hudson Opera Theater. 2011 has brought both Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* and Schubert's *Mass in G* with the Canadian Chamber Orchestra of New York City.

Mr. Alakulppi has sung Britten's *War Requiem*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Haydn's *Creation*, and Handel's *Messiah* with the Queens College Choral Society, the latter a part he has also sung with the Norwalk Symphony, in the Bravo Vancouver Series, and with the Seattle Symphony. Additional concerts have included Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Walla Walla Symphony; Britten's *Serenade for Tenor and Horn* with the Port Angeles Symphony; and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* in a return engagement with the Seattle Symphony. Mr. Alakulppi is the winner of the Norwalk Symphony Oratorio Competition and the Seattle Opera Michael Mitchell Award. He holds degrees in vocal performance and editorial journalism from the University of Washington.

M. Elizabeth Martignetti, horn

M. Elizabeth Martignetti has performed chamber music, orchestral concerts, and in master classes in the United States, Europe, and Asia. Ms. Martignetti has served as principal horn in the Wallingford Symphony, Ensemble du Monde, Ensemble Polifonica, Yale Philharmonia, and in New Music New Haven performances, and has performed with the NYC Master Chorale in the New York City premiere of Paul Leavitt's *Requiem* at Alice Tully Hall and with the Greenwich Choral Society and Mystic River Chorale. She has performed in chamber music concerts at Carnegie's Zankel Hall and Norfolk's acclaimed Music Shed and at summer festivals, including the Norfolk and the Sarasota Chamber Music Festivals and the Brevard Music Center. As an orchestral hornist, Ms. Martignetti has performed under the baton of such notable conductors as Marin Alsop, Peter Oundjian, Robert Spano, Yoel Levi, Xian Zhang, Keith Lockhart, and David Effron.

Ms. Martignetti is an instructor of music at Southern Connecticut State University, where she teaches music appreciation, music history, and world music and coaches chamber music. She is also the adjunct professor of horn at the University of Bridgeport. She received Master of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees from the Yale School of Music and a Bachelor of Music degree from the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. Her master's document is an exploration of nostalgia in Hindemith's 1943 "Alto Horn Sonata." A native of the Atlanta area, Ms. Martignetti has also done commercial recording for the Cartoon Network.

Aaron Korn, horn

Aaron Korn, a native of Long Island, New York, has been playing the horn since he was 12 years old. Mr. Korn currently plays fourth horn with the Allentown (Pa.) Symphony Orchestra and has previously held the position of second horn with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra in Israel. He has recently performed with the New Haven and Princeton Symphonies, the Rhode Island Philharmonic, and the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra.

Mr. Korn teaches horn in Connecticut and New York and is on faculty at the USDAN Center for the Creative and Performing Arts. He is also an active freelancer in the New York area and in 2009 won the position of principal horn with the Radio City Hall Orchestra. Mr. Korn received his Bachelor of Music degree from the Manhattan School of Music and his Master of Music degree from the Yale School of Music under the tutelage of Michelle Baker, Erik Ralske, and William Purvis.

David Schober

Composer, music theorist, and pianist David Schober (b. 1974) studied at the Oberlin Conservatory, the University of Michigan, and Yonsei University in South Korea. Recognition for his composition work includes a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Theodore Presser Foundation grant, the Aaron Copland Awards, and the Wayne Peterson Composition Prize. He has received commissions from the Minnesota Orchestra, the Naumburg Foundation (for the Miró String Quartet), the Fromm Foundation, and the BMI Foundation/Carlos Surinach Fund. “Split Horizon,” his concerto for the sextet *eighth blackbird*, was premiered by the American Composers’ Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and has been performed by the Utah Symphony and the IRIS Chamber Orchestra. He spent the spring 2010 semester as an artist fellow at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France, and is the recipient of the 2010 Sylvia Goldstein Award from Copland House. Dr. Schober wrote an analytical dissertation on the music of George Perle and currently teaches at Queens College in New York City.

Program Notes

Welcome to the third and final concert of Cerddorion’s 2010–2011 season, *With Harp and Voice*. The idea for this program grew out of an article on harp-choral repertoire that I co-authored with my wife, harpist Emily John, and which was published in *Choral Journal* in August 2009. Although harp is one of the most ancient instruments, the double-action pedal harp (what we could call the modern harp), was invented in 1810 and has only been in wide use since the 1850s. Since then, countless composers have been inspired to write for chorus and harp, but only a handful of pieces, such as Benjamin Britten’s *A Ceremony of Carols*, have entered the standard repertory. Our hope, in annotating over one hundred harp-choral works, was to make this exquisite genre better known and more accessible, as well as to encourage performances featuring this extraordinarily beautiful pairing. Today’s program is a collection of some of our favorite pieces, chosen in equal measure for the quality of the choral writing and the idiomatic use of the harp. Cerddorion has also commissioned a lovely new work—David Schober’s *Curiosity*—for this occasion, in an effort to add to this rich and rewarding repertory.

Alleluia, Dies Sanctificatus

William Hawley (b. 1950) is a prolific composer, with more than one hundred choral works to his credit. He grew up in Bronxville, New York, and attended both the Ithaca College School of Music and the California Institute of the Arts. Hawley writes, “I have found the venerable combination of choir and harp to be a deeply rewarding ensemble to compose for. A composer who has taken to heart the received caveats concerning writing aptly for the harp as well as for the voice will find an abundance of expressive resources in this compelling genre.” *Alleluia, Dies Sanctificatus*, which was premiered in 1996, is based on the plainchant Alleluia for the Third Mass for Christmas. Hawley weaves phrases of the plainchant together seamlessly with newly composed music, creating rich harmonies and elegant counterpoint that capture the serene and uplifting mood of this joyful text.

Alleluia, Dies Sanctificatus

Alleluia, alleluia.
Dies sanctificatus illuxit nobis:
Venite gentes, et adorete Dominum:
Quia hodie descendit lux magna super terram.
Alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia.
A holy day has dawned for us:
Come, ye people, and pray to the Lord:
For today the great Light has descended on earth.
Alleluia.

The Water is Wide and God's World

Born in Somerset, NJ, Stephen Paulus (b. 1949) moved to Minnesota with his family when he was two years old. He attended the University of Minnesota, where he studied with Dominic Argento, and he still makes his home in the Minneapolis area. He is perhaps best known for his opera *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, as well as for his many choral works, though his oeuvre extends thorough all genres and includes more than four hundred compositions. With more than twenty harp-choral works in his catalogue, he has written more for this combination than almost any other living American composer.

Though there is some debate about the exact origin of “The Water is Wide,” it almost certainly comes from Great Britain, and was probably introduced into North America by Cecil Sharpe through the publication of his *One Hundred English Folksongs* in 1916. The song became well known during the mid-twentieth century folk-revival movement, made popular by singers such as Pete Seeger and Joan Baez. Seeger writes of the tune, “*The Water is Wide* has long been one of the most widely known love laments in Britain. In both England and Scotland, it has been in folk song collections for over a century or two, and is known by a half-dozen or more names. It means an awful lot to me now, because I keep thinking of the ocean of misunderstanding between human beings.... We can sing all sorts of militant songs, but if we can't bridge that ocean of misunderstanding, we are not going to get this world together.” Paulus’s arrangement is simple and poignant. Graceful arpeggios accompany the traditional melody, not only suggesting the gentle rocking of waves, but also creating subtle dissonances that capture the melancholy of the text.

The poem *God's World*, by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892–1950), one of the twentieth century’s most accomplished poets, describes the beauty of the world on a radiant autumn day. Paulus’s quick tempo, frequent dynamic contrasts, and short, hypnotic codetta capture the youthful passion and overwhelming exuberance of these early verses, written and first published in 1917.

The Water Is Wide

The water is wide, I cannot get o'er,
And neither have I wings to fly.
Give me a boat that can carry two,
And both shall row, my love and I.

I leaned my back ‘gainst some young oak,
Thinking it was a trusty tree.
But first it bent and then it broke,
Just as my love proved false to me.

Oh, love is handsome, love is fine,
Bright as a jewel when first it's new,
But love grows old and waxeth cold,
And fades away like morning dew.

The water is wide, I cannot get o'er,
And neither have I wings to fly.
Give me a boat that can carry two,
And both shall row, my love and I.

God's World

(Edna St. Vincent Millay)

O WORLD, I cannot hold thee close enough!

Thy winds, thy wide grey skies!

Thy mists that roll and rise!

Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag

And all but cry with colour! That gaunt crag

To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!

World, World, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all,

But never knew I this;

Here such a passion is

As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear

Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.

My soul is all but out of me,—let fall

No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

Choral Dances from Gloriana

When Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) set out to write his fifth opera, *Gloriana*, in 1952, it began as a vehicle to fill a void: England, unlike other countries, did not have nationalist operas commemorating their cultural figures and monarchs. *Gloriana*—a nickname given to Queen Elizabeth I by the poet Edmund Spenser—was to tell the tale of the Queen’s very private affair with the Earl of Essex, as described by Lytton Strachey in his book *Elizabeth and Essex*.

However, the death of King George VI in 1952 and the upcoming coronation of Queen Elizabeth II seemed to provide a natural occasion for the opera’s unveiling. Britten was compelled to prioritize it over other works currently underway, such as *The Turn of the Screw*, so that it could be finished in time for the festivities. This decision placed the opera under more public scrutiny than Britten was used to, and in the end many (including the Queen) deemed the work unsuccessful. As with *Peter Grimes*, though, Britten used material from the opera to create separate, stand-alone pieces that became very popular—his *Lute Songs*, the *Courtly Dances* suite for orchestra, and the *Choral Dances* we are performing today.

The *Choral Dances* come from the beginning of Act II of the opera. Elizabeth is on a state visit to the city of Norwich, where the residents present a masque in her honor. A tenor soloist (designated as the “Spirit of the Masque”) opens the work and provides short interludes between each chorus, accompanied by the harp. Originally, each chorus was choreographed using two dancers representing Time and Concord—hence the title *Choral Dances*. Combining styles of songs and dances that hearken back to the sixteenth century (most notably in the choral parts) with a touch of modernity, the *Choral Dances* represent the musical underpinning of the opera itself: modern versus classic, and public versus private.

~Imani Mosley and James John

Choral Dances from Gloriana

(William Plomer)

Introduction: Tenor Solo (The Spirit of the Masque)

The Masque begins...

Chorus

Melt earth to sea,
Sea flow to air,
And air fly into fire.
The elements, at Gloriana's chair,
Mingle in tuneful choir.

Tenor Solo (The Spirit of the Masque)

And now we summon from this leafy bower
The demigod that must appear.
'Tis Time! 'Tis Time! 'Tis Time!

First Dance: Time

Yes, he is Time, Lusty and blithe!
Time is at his apogee!
Although you thought to see
A bearded ancient with a scythe.
No reaper he that cries "Take heed!"
Time is at his apogee!
Young and strong, in his prime:
Behold the sower of the seed!

Tenor Solo (The Spirit of the Masque)

Time could not sow
Unless he had a spouse
To bless his work
And give it life—
Concord, his loving wife!

Second Dance: Concord

Concord is here
Our days to bless
And this our land to endue
With plenty, peace and happiness.
Concord and Time
Each needeth each:
The ripest fruit hangs where
Not one, but only two can reach.

Tenor Solo (The Spirit of the Masque)

Now Time with Concord dances.
This island doth rejoice:
And woods and waves and waters
Make echo to our voice.

Third Dance: Time and Concord

From springs of bounty
Through this county
Streams abundant
Of thanks shall flow!
Where life was scanty
Fruits of plenty
Swell resplendent
From earth below!

No Greek nor Roman
Queenly woman
Knew such favour
From Heav'n above
As she whose presence
Is our pleasance!
Gloriana hath all our love!

Tenor Solo (The Spirit of the Masque)

And now, country maidens,
Bring a tribute of flowers
To the flower of princes all.

Fourth Dance: Country Girls

Sweet flag and cuckoo-flower,
Cowslip and columbine,
King-cups and sops-in-wine,
Flower-de-luce and calamint,
Harebell and hyacinth,
Myrtle and bay,
With rosemary between,
Norfolk's own garlands for her Queen!

Tenor Solo (The Spirit of the Masque)

Behold a troop of rustic swains
Bringing from the waves and pastures
The fruits of their toil!

Fifth Dance: Rustics and Fishermen

From fen and meadow
In rushy baskets
They bring ensamples
Of all they grow!
In earthen dishes
Their deep-sea fishes;
Yearling fleeces,
Woven blankets;
New cream and junkets,
And rustic trinkets
On wicker flasks,
Their country largesse—
The best they know!

Tenor Solo (The Spirit of the Masque)

Led by Time and Concord,
Let all unite in homage
To Gloriana,
Our hope of peace, our flower of grace.

Final Dance of Homage

These tokens of our love receiving,
O take them, Princess great and dear,
From Norwich, city you are leaving,
That you afar may feel us near.

Vier Gesänge für Frauendorch, zwei Hörner und Harfe, Op. 17

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) wrote his *Four Songs for Women's Chorus, Two Horns and Harp*, Op. 17 in 1859–1860 for the *Hamburger Frauendorch* (“Hamburg Women's Chorus”)—which he helped found in 1859, and which he conducted until 1861. The unique combination of horns, harp, and women's voices must have been partly inspired by the opening poem, “Harp notes ring forth,” in which the sound of the harp evokes longing and grief.

Death and lamentation are themes that connect these four rather disparate poems: the first by Friedrich Ruperti (1805–1867), a relatively unknown poet; the second by William Shakespeare (1564–1616), from *Twelfth Night*; the third by Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857), a poet popular among nineteenth-century German composers; and the last by James Macpherson (1736–1796), a Scottish poet who published his poems under the name “Ossian,” claiming them to be the work of this legendary third-century warrior/bard. The first three poems receive straightforward strophic settings (in which each stanza of poetry is repeated to the same music); the fourth unfolds within a more complex ternary design (A B A'), telling the story of a woman who has lost her lover in battle. In this final song, Brahms skillfully depicts, among other things, the “weeping” of the “roaring winds” on the rocks and the growling of the dead warrior's hounds—bringing the cycle to a powerful, haunting conclusion.

**Vier Gesänge für Frauendorch, zwei
Hörner und Harfe, Op. 17**

Es tönt en voller Harfenklang

(Friedrich Ruperti)

Es tönt ein voller Harfenklang,
Den Lieb' und Sehnsucht schwellen,
Er dringt zum Herzen tief und bang
Und lässt das Auge quellen.

O rinnet, Tränen, nur herab,
O schlage, Herz, mit Beben!
Es sanken Lieb' und Glück ins Grab,
Verloren ist das Leben!

**Four Songs for Women's Chorus, Two
Horns and Harp, Op. 17**

Harp notes ring forth

Harp notes ring forth,
Increasing love and longing;
They pierce, deep and quivering, to my heart,
And leave my eyes o'erflowing.

Fall then, my tears;
Heart, throb and tremble;
Love and happiness lie in the grave,
My life is lost!

Lied (William Shakespeare)

Komm herbei, komm herbei, Tod!
Und versenk in Zypressen den Leib.
Laß mich frei, laß mich frei, Not,
Mich erschlägt ein holdseliges Weib.
Mit Rosmarin mein Leichenhemd,
O bestellt es!
Ob Lieb' ans Herz mir tödlich kommt,
Treu' hält es.

Keine Blum', keine Blum' süß
Sei gestreut auf den schwärzlichen Sarg.
Keine Seel', keine Seel' grüß'
Mein Gebein, wo die Erd' es verbarg.
Um Ach und Weh zu wenden ab;
Bergt alleine
Mich, wo kein Treuer wall' ans Grab
Und weine.

Der Gärtner (Joseph von Eichendorff)

Wohin ich geh' und schaue,
In Feld und Wald und Tal,
Vom Berg hinab in die Aue:
Viel schöne, hohe Fraue,
Grüß ich dich tausendmal.

In meinem Garten find' ich
Viel Blumen, schön und fein,
Viel Kränze wohl draus wind' ich
Und tausend Gedanken bind' ich
Und Grüße mit darein.

Ihr darf ich keinen reichen,
Sie ist zu hoch und schön,
Die müssen alle verbleichen,
Die Liebe nur ohnegleichen
Bleibt ewig im Herzen stehn.

Ich schein' wohl froher Dinge,
Und schaffe auf und ab,
Und ob das Herz zerspringe,
Ich grabe fort und singe
Und grab' mir bald mein Grab.

Song

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,
Oh prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

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

The Gardener

Wherever I go or look,
In field and wood and valley,
From mountain down to meadow,
I greet you a thousand fold,
Loveliest and noble lady.

In my garden I find
Many a lovely, delicate flower;
Many garlands from them I weave,
With a thousand thoughts and greetings
In them intertwined.

None of these dare I offer her,
She is too high and fair;
They all must wither away,
But only love without compare
Remains forever in the heart.

I tend happy things
And labor back and forth,
And though my heart should break
I dig away and sing,
But soon will dig my grave.

Gesang aus Ossians Fingal (James Macpherson)

Wein' an den Felsen der brausenden Winde,
Weine, o Mädchen von Inistore!
Beug' über die Wogen dein schönes Haupt,
Lieblicher du als der Geist der Berge,
Wenn er um Mittag an einem Sonnenstrahl
Über das Schweigen von Morven fährt.
Er ist gefallen, dein Jüngling liegt darnieder,
Bleich sank er unter Cuthullins Schwert.
Nimmer wird Mut deinen Liebling mehr reizen,
Das Blut von Königen zu vergießen.
Trenar, der liebliche Trenar starb,
O Mädchen von Inistore!
Seine grauen Hunde heulen daheim,
Sie sehn seinen Geist vorüberziehn.
Sein Bogen hängt ungespannt in der Halle,
Nichts regt sich auf der Heide der Rehe.

Song from Ossian's Fingal

Weep on the rocks of roaring winds,
O maid of Inistore!
Bend thy fair head over the waves,
Thou lovelier than the ghost of the hills,
When it moves, in a sunbeam, at noon
Over the silence of Morven!
He is fallen! Thy youth is low,
Pale beneath the sword of Cuthullin!
No more shall valor raise thy love
To match the blood of kings.
Trenar, graceful Trenar died,
O maid of Inistore!
His grey dogs are howling at home;
They see his passing ghost.
His bow is in the hall unstrung.
No sound is in the hill of his hinds.

Curiosity (World Premiere)

Physicist Albert Einstein offered insight into his philosophy of living through his thoughtful and witty writings. Above all, he embraced the beauty and grandeur of the universe: vast beyond human comprehension, but at the same time approachable through rational inquiry. *Curiosity* is my effort to capture a glimpse of this delicate paradox. Einstein was an accomplished amateur musician and spoke of scientific “creativity” much as he spoke of music. I find the timbre of choral voices and harp to be a perfect mirror to Einstein’s reflections on the mysterious, and I am delighted to hear Cerddorion’s performance of this new work.

~David Schober

Curiosity (Albert Einstein)

The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious.
The important thing is not to stop questioning.
Curiosity has its own reason for existing.
One cannot help but be in awe when one contemplates
the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality.
It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day.

Harpsonnets

James Bassi (b. 1961), who makes his home in New York City, has written a broad range of music—from choral, orchestral, instrumental, and chamber works to music for theater and film. Ensembles such as Voices of Ascension and the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble, for whom he served as composer in residence, have premiered his choral compositions. The Victor Salvi Foundation commissioned *Harpsonnets* to serve as a benchmark for harp-choral works and to encourage composers to write sophisticated compositions that use harp idiomatically. Completed in 2004, *Harpsonnets* was premiered by New York's Central City Chorus. The title refers to the four contrasting Shakespearean sonnets that comprise the work, each chosen to reflect a different aspect of love. Bassi writes:

For my *Harpsonnets*, I chose four Shakespeare sonnets that offer great contrasts in tone and mood. Each poem centers on the object of the poet's love in a different aspect: as the beloved one, the desired one, the one missed, the one longed for, and the one celebrated.

Sonnet 18 ("Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?") is perhaps the best-known of the sonnets. It ardently boasts of the loved one's qualities as being greater than those of the seasons: "thou art more lovely and more temperate." Shakespeare usually encapsulates the meaning of a whole sonnet in its final couplet, but here he takes a bit of a turn: He says that his writing will endure, keeping the image of his loved one alive and young ("So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.").

Sonnet 97 ("How like a winter hath my absence been") is a song about love lost. The absence of the loved one is a death, or is likened to a death. In melancholy lines, this sonnet sees all things as grey and wintry without the loved one's presence. The irony is that the poet's loss occurs in a fertile season, when all around him is abundance. But to the poet, even this natural world of birds, trees, and sky are transformed by the death: "and thou away, the very birds are mute..."

Sonnet 128 ("How oft when thou, my music, music play'st") allows for a little fun, seduction, and flirtation. Here the loved one is playing the keyboard, while the poet expresses jealousy that the keys are getting all the action, and not him. As the loved one's fingers touch the "saucy jacks" (referring not only to the keys on the keyboard, but also possibly to rival suitors, according to one interpretation), the poet maintains that the greater conquest will ultimately be his: "Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss."

Sonnet 19 ("Devouring time, blunt thou the lion's paws"), a bold and defiant sonnet, rails against the ravages of time, against our own mortality, against death itself. It cites the tremendous power of time: that it can wither even the strongest, wildest beasts (the blunting of the lion's paws, the tiger's loss of

teeth). All life is subject to age and decay, except for the life of the loved one. Here Shakespeare calls upon time to make an exception: "...draw no lines there with thine antique pen," referring to age lines on the face. He finally acknowledges that time may claim his loved one's body, but through his poetry, his love will "ever live young." He made this same claim in sonnet 18; and he was right. His love and writing will indeed live forever, ever young, and ever an inspiration to us all.

Harpsonnets

(William Shakespeare)

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Sonnet 97

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
What old December's barenness every where!
And yet this time remov'd was summer's time;
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
Like widow'd wombs after their lords' decease:
Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me
But hope of orphans and unfather'd fruit;
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute:
Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer,
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

Sonnet 128

How oft when thou, my music, music play'st
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers, when thou gently sway'st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand!
To be so tickl'd, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more bless'd than living lips.
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

Sonnet 19

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood;
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,
And burn the long-liv'd phoenix in her blood;
Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet'st,
And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
To the wide world and all her fading sweets;
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:
O! carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen;
Him in thy course untainted do allow
For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.
Yet, do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.

~Program notes by James John, unless otherwise indicated.

Next Season

Please mark your calendars for next season and join us on November 13 in Brooklyn or November 19 in Manhattan (at St. Ignatius of Antioch) for Cerddorion's first performances of the 2011–2012 concert season.

In addition, Cerddorion's artistic director, James John, will be holding auditions for prospective new members. If you are interested in singing with us next season, please check our web site (www.cerddorion.net) for information, or look for our advertisement on Vocal Area Network (www.van.org).

CERDDORION

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For further information about Cerddorion, please visit our website: www.cerddorion.net.

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The members of Cerddorion are grateful to Doug Keilitz and the Church of Saint Ignatius of Antioch for having provided rehearsal and performance space for this past season.

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