**Program Notes**

**February 2015**

**Valentine’s Day Concert**

**Roland de Lassus** (also known as Orlande de Lassus, Orlando di Lasso, and several other variations; (c. 1530-2 – 1594) was a Franco-Flemish composer of the late Renaissance, a period also known as the High Renaissance. Today, he is considered to be the finest representative of the mature polyphonic style of the Franco-Flemish school, and along with Palestrina, Victoria, and Byrd he is one of the most influential composers of the late sixteenth century. A prolific and versatile composer, Lassus wrote over 2,000 works in Latin, French, Italian, and German, employing all the vocal genres known in his time. His compositions include 530 motets, 175 Italian madrigals and villanellas, 150 French chansons, and 90 German lieder. For his charming and beautiful chanson, *Bonjour mon coeur,* Lassus utilized a simple homorhythmic texture. It is among the best known of his secular works.

**Lassus: *Bonjour mon coeur***

Bonjour mon coeur, bonjour ma douce vie

Bonjour mon oeil, bonjour ma chère amie!

Hé! Bonjour ma toute belle,

Ma mignardise,

Bonjour mes délices, mon amour,

Mon doux printemps, ma douce fleur nouvelle,

Mon doux plaisir, ma douce colombelle,

Mon passereau, ma gente tourterelle!

Bonjour ma douce rebelle.

Hello, my heart, hello, my sweet life;

Hello, my eye, hello, my dear friend.

Hey, oh hello, my beauty,

my sweetheart;

Hello, my sweet one, my love,

My sweet spring, my delicate new flower,

My sweet pleasure, my gentle little dove,

My sparrow, my turtledove!

Hello, my sweet rebel.

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**Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina** (c. 1525 – 1594) began the dedication of his fourth book of motets to his patron, Gregory VIII, with the following declaration: “There are far too many poems with no other subject than love of a kind quite alien to the Christian faith.” With this book, the *Canticum Canticorum Salomonis* (composed in 1583), Palestrina swore never again to create any secular music. This dramatic vow was somewhat disingenuous. First, Palestrina chose in this book to set to music the most sensual texts in the Bible – the poetry of the Song of Songs, also known as the Song of Solomon. Second, he had made a similar statement in writing fourteen years earlier, and then continued to write in a secular vein. Palestrina’s sincerity aside, this cycle of five-part motets has secured itself in the Renaissance canon as among his most richly evocative works. All 29 motets demonstrate the hallmarks of his style, including vocally idiomatic lyrical writing and fluid melismatic polyphony.

**Palestrina**: ***Canticum canticorum*, selections**

#25: *Quam pulchri sunt*

7:1: Quam pulchri sunt gressus tui in calciamentis filia principis iunctura feminum tuorum sicut monilia quae fabricata sunt manu artificis.

7:2 Umbilicus tuus crater tornatilis numquam indigens poculis venter tuus sicut acervus tritici vallatus liliis.

7:1: How beautiful are thy steps in sandals, O prince's daughter! The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, that are made by the hand of a skillful workman.

7:2 Thy navel is like a round bowl never wanting cups. Thy belly is like a heap of wheat, set about with lilies.

#26: *Duo ubera tua*

7:3: Duo ubera tua sicut duo hinnuli,

gemelli capreae;

7:4: collum tuum sicut turris eburnea;

oculi tui sicut piscinae in Hesebon quae sunt

in porta filiae multitudinis;

nasus tuus sicut turris Libani

quae respicit contra Damascum;

7:5: caput tuum ut Carmelus et comae capitis tui

sicut purpura regis iuncta canalibus.

7:3: Thy two breasts are like two young roes

that are twins;

7:4: thy neck is a tower of ivory.

Thy eyes like the fishpools in Hesebon,

which are in the gate of the daughter of the multitude.

Thy nose is as the tower of Libanus,

that looketh toward Damascus;

7:5: thy head is like Carmel:

and the hairs of thy head

as the purple of the king

bound in the channels.

#27: *Quam pulchra es*

7:6 Quam pulchra es et quam decora, carissima, in deliciis!

7:7 Statura tua adsimilata est palmæ, et ubera tua botris.

7:8 Dixi: Ascendam in palmam et apprehendam fructus eius; et erunt ubera tua sicut botri vineæ et odor oris tui sicut malorum.

7:6: How fair and pleasant you are, O loved one, in delights!

7:7: Your stature is as a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters.

7:8: I say I will climb the palm tree and lay hold of its branches.

O may your breasts be like clusters of the vine,

and the scent of your breath like apples.

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With degrees in law, organ, and voice pedagogy, **Hildor Lundvik** (1885 – 1951) was an active church and choral musician in Stockholm from the 1920s until his death in 1951. His compositional style is in the lyrical, pastoral vein of many of his contemporaries, with references to the French Impressionist musical language. The author of this sensual poem, “Som ett blommande mandelträd,” is Nobel Prize laureate Pär Lagerkvist (1891-1974), considered among Sweden’s foremost poets. Lagerkvist is known for his poems about the Swedish landscape and for his merging of the Romantic and the modernist aesthetics. With its imaginative use of metaphor, “Som ett blommande mandelträd” alludes to the extended biblical love poem from which Palestrina also drew inspiration: the *Song of Songs*.

**Lundvik: *Som ett blommande mandelträd***

Text: Pär Lagerkvist

Som ett blommande mandelträd

är hon som jag har kär.

Sjung du vind,

sjung sakta för mig

om hur ljuvlig hon är.

Som ett blommande mandelträd,

så späd, så ljus, och skär.

Bara du, ömmaste morgonvind,

vet hur ljuvlig hon är.

Som ett blommande mandelträd

är hon som jag har kär.

När det mörknar så tungt omkring mig

kan hon väl leva här?

Like a Flowering Almond Tree

Translation: Karin Seeman

Like a flowering almond tree

is my beloved.

Sing, wind,

Sing gently for me

of how lovely she is.

Like a flowering almond tree,

So delicate, so light and sweet.

Only you, gentlest morning breeze,

Knows how lovely she is.

Like a flowering almond tree

is my beloved.

When the darkness gathers so heavily around me,

might she then live here?

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**Ernest John Moeran** (1894 – 1950) was an English composer and ethnomusicologist. He studied piano and composition at the Royal College of Music with the English composers Charles Villiers Stanford and John Ireland. As an ethnomusicologist, he collected and arranged about 150 folk songs of Norfolk and Suffolk. The influence of folk music from these English regions and from Ireland can be seen in his compositional style, which shares the lyrical qualities of late Romantic English composers such as Delius and Vaughan Williams. Moeran was also devoted to the Renaissance English form of the madrigal: he once told a friend that if he were ever arrested and forced to state his profession, he would have to say “madrigalist.” His “The River-God’s Song,” from the choral cycle *Songs of Springtime,* reflects this affection for the madrigal style in its diatonic harmony, its juxtaposition of polyphonic and homorhythmic sections, and of course its subject of love.

**Moeran: The River-God’s Song**

Text: Francis Beaumont

Do not fear to put thy feet

Naked in the river sweet;

Think not leech, or newt, or toad,

Will bite thy foot, when thou hast trod;

Nor let the water, rising high,

As thou wadest, make thee cry

And sob; but ever live with me,

And not a wave shall trouble thee!

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American composer **Samuel Barber** (1910 – 1981) composed his first piece of music at age seven and his first opera at ten, took an organist’s post at twelve, and entered the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia at fourteen. His studies at Curtis led to a position there as a professor of orchestration and composition. During his long and successful career he won numerous awards, including two Pulitzer Prizes (in 1958 for the opera *Vanessa*, libretto by his partner Gian Carlo Menotti, and in 1963 for the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*) and the Rome Prize. Barber is often referred to as the father of the Neo-Romantic style, as he rejected the modernist methods of Schönberg, Stravinsky, and other contemporary composers in favor of a return to the beautiful melodies, rich harmonies, and expressive tempos of the nineteenth century.

*Reincarnations* is a set of three pieces written for the Curtis Institute Madrigal Chorus, which Barber conducted from 1938 to 1941. The title refers to a set of poems that Irish poet James Stephens (1882 – 1950) wrote based on the work of 19th century poet Anthony Raftery. Stephens’ command of Gaelic was poor enough that when he set out to translate Raftery’s work he wound up with something more than just simple translations; he called his results “reincarnations.” The third work in the series, *The Coolin*, takes its name from the curly lock of hair at the nape of one’s neck, a word that came to be used as a nickname for a loved one. James Stephens commented on his poem: “I sought to represent that state which is almost entirely a condition of a dream, wherein the passion of love has almost overreached itself, and is sinking to a motionless languor.” Barber seems to have shared his intention, and the music is luxuriant and warm.

**Barber: The Coolin**

Text: James Stephens after Anthony Raftery

Come with me, under my coat,

and we will drink our fill

of the milk of the white goat,

or wine if it be thy will.

And we will talk,

until talk is a trouble, too,

out on the side of the hill;

And nothing is left to do,

but an eye to look into an eye,

and a hand in a hand to slip;

and a sigh to answer a sigh;

And a lip to find out a lip!

What if the night be black!

And the air

on the mountain chill!

Where all but the fern is still!

Stay with me, under my coat!

and we will drink our fill

of the milk of the white goat,

out on the side of the hill!

•••

**Eric Whitacre** is one of the most popular and frequently performed composers of choral music of his generation. Whitacre holds a masters’ degree in composition from the Juilliard School, where he studied with John Corigliano. He has received numerous prestigious composition awards and commissions, and his works are often recorded internationally. His compositional style is recognizable by his signature “Whitacre chords” -- seventh or ninth chords, often with suspended seconds and fourths, which result in a lush cluster harmony.

Whitacre writes about his work, *Water Night*:

In January of 1995 I spent the day with Dr. Bruce Mayhall, and in one amazing four-hour conversation he basically convinced me to stay in school, finish my degree, and continue my life as a professional artist. Heavy stuff. I wanted so much to show my appreciation to him, to write him a piece worthy of his wisdom and understanding. I got home, opened up my book of Octavio Paz poetry, and started reading.

I can’t really describe what happened. The music sounded in the air as I read the poem, as if it were a part of the poetry. I just started taking dictation as fast as I could, and the thing was basically finished in about 45 minutes. I have never experienced anything like it, before or since, and with my limited vocabulary I can only describe it as a pure and perfect and simple gift. It has become one of my most popular pieces, and I’ve heard countless people who sing it or hear it describing the same feeling I had when I wrote it down. I remain eternally grateful for this gift.

**Whitacre: Water Night**

Text: Octavio Paz (1914-1998)

(Adapted by Eric Whitacre, Translation by Muriel Rukeyser)

Night with the eyes of a horse that trembles in the night,

night with eyes of water in the field asleep

is in your eyes, a horse that trembles,

is in your eyes of secret water.

Eyes of shadow-water,

eyes of well-water,

eyes of dream-water.

Silence and solitude,

two little animals moon-led,

drink in your eyes,

drink in those waters.

If you open your eyes,

night opens, doors of musk,

the secret kingdom of the water opens

flowing from the center of night.

And if you close your eyes,

a river fills you from within,

flows forward, darkens you:

night brings its wetness to beaches in your soul.

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 American Midwesterner **Paul Sjolund** (b. 1935) is a composer of church and choral music whose works include anthems, fanfares and festival hymns, children's music, spirituals, and folksongs. *Love Lost*, composed in 1969, is a cycle of satirical poems on love. The first, “One Perfect Rose,” is a setting of a poem by Dorothy Parker (1893 – 1967), the American critic, satirical poet, short-story writer, and film playwright known for her malicious wit, her participation in the Algonquin Round Table group of writers in New York in the 1920s, and her involvement in the early days of the New Yorker magazine. The second and fourth movements of the cycle, “When You’re Away” and “Your Little Hands,” are settings of poems by Samuel Hoffenstein (1890 –1947), a writer of light verse for Collier's magazine. The third movement, “Careless Talk,” is a setting of a poem by Mark Hollis. These texts share a wry and jaded sensibility, ridiculing the pieties of sentimental love.

**Sjolund: Love Lost**

1. One Perfect Rose

Text: Dorothy Parker

A single flow’r he sent me, since we met.

All tenderly his messenger he chose;

Deep-hearted, pure, with scented dew still wet

One perfect rose.

I knew the language of the flow’ret;

“My fragile leaves,” it said, “His heart enclose.”

Love long has taken for his amulet

One perfect rose.

Why is it no-one ever sent me yet

One perfect limousine, do you suppose?

Ah no, it’s always just my luck to get

One perfect rose.

2. When You’re Away

Text: Samuel Hoffenstein

When you’re away, I’m restless, lonely, wretched, bored, dejected;

Only here’s the rub my darling dear: I feel the same when you are near.

3. Careless Talk

text: Mark Hollis

Bill was ill. In his delirium, he talked of Miriam.

This was an error, as his wife was a terror

Known as Joan.

4. Your Little Hands

Text: Samuel Hoffenstein

Your little hands, your little feet

Your little mouth, Oh God, how sweet!

Your little nose, your little ears,

Your eyes that shed such little tears.

Your little voice, so soft and kind,

Your little soul, your little mind!

•••

**Thomas Morley** (c. 1557 – 1602), born the son of a Norwich brewer, rose through his career to become a central figure in Elizabethan musical culture. In addition to his work as organist, church composer, and editor, he assumed the Crown Monopoly on music printing, a distinction initially awarded to the man thought to be his teacher, William Byrd. Morley is probably most famous for bringing Italian music, most notably the madrigal, to his native England, where it became at least as popular as it had been in Italy. *Fyre, Fyre* is among his best-known madrigals.

**Morley: Fyre, Fyre!**

Fyre, fyre!
My heart! My heart!
Fa la la la la la
O, help! O, help! Alas, O, help!
Ay me! Ay me!
I sit and cry me,
and call for help,
alas, but none comes nigh me.
Fa la la la la la.

•••

**Morten Lauridsen** (b. 1943) is among the most frequently performed living composers of choral music. His choral cycles *Les Chansons des Roses* (Rilke) and *Lux Aeterna,* and his motet *O Magnum Mysterium,* have entered the choral canon and are performed and recorded regularly around the world. Lauridsen is a member of the composition faculty at the USC Thornton School of Music in Los Angeles. He has held numerous university residencies as guest composer and lecturer, and has received hundreds of commissions. In 2007, he was awarded the lifetime achievement award from the National Endowment for the Arts. A Pacific Northwest native, he divides his time between Los Angeles and his summer cabin on a remote island off the northern coast of Washington.

Lauridsen writes about his *Madrigali: Six* “*Fire Songs*” *on Italian Renaissance Texts*:

The choral masterpieces of the High Renaissance, especially the madrigals by Monteverdi and Gesualdo, provided the inspiration for my own *Madrigali*. Italian love poems of that era have constituted a rich lyric source for many composers, and while reading them I became increasingly intrigued by the symbolic image of flames, burning and fire that recurred within this context. I decided to compose an intensely dramatic cycle based on Renaissance love poems employing this fire motive while blending stylistic musical features of the period with a contemporary compositional idiom. These characteristics include word painting, modality, bold harmonic shifts, intricate counterpoint, and *augenmusic*, or “eye music,” which occur throughout the cycle.

I wanted this music to emanate (like ripples from a pebble thrown into a pond) from a single, primal sonority – one dramatic chord that would encapsulate the intensity of the entire cycle and which would provide a musical motivic unity to complement the poetic. This sonority, which I've termed the “Fire-Chord,” opens the piece and is found extensively throughout all six movements in myriad forms and manipulations.

Like several of my cycles, the *Madrigali* are designed in an arch form with significant sharing of material between movements I and VI, and II and V. The cycle has its dramatic high point in movement IV, “Io Piango,” where the music gradually builds from pianissimo to a fortissimo, seven-part explosion of the Fire-Chord before settling to a quiet reprise of the opening measures. The Fire-Chord returns in its original key and spacing in the final movement, on the word “you.” The final cadence in the cycle is left unresolved – this love will forever remain unrequited.

Lauridsen’s *Madrigali* were premiered in 1987 by the USC Chamber Singers, conducted by Rodney Eichenberger.

**Lauridsen: *Madrigali: Six “Fire Songs” on Italian Renaissance Poems***

Translations by Erica Muhl

1. *Ov’è, lass’, il bel viso?*

Text: from a madrigal by Henricus Schaffen

Ov’è lass’, il bel viso? ecco, eì s’asconde.

Oimè, dov’il mio sol? lasso, che velo

S’è post’inanti et rend’oscur’il cielo?

Oimè ch’io il chiamo et veggio; eì non risponde.

Dhe se mai sieno a tue vele seconde

Aure, dolce mio ben, se cangi pelo

Et loco tardi, et se ‘l signor di Delo

Gratia et valor nel tuo bel sen’asconde,

Ascolta I miei sospiri et da’ lor loco

Di volger in amor l’ingiusto sdegno,

Et vinca tua pietade il duro sempio.

Vedi qual m’arde et mi consuma fuoco;

Qual fie scusa miglior, qual magior segno

Ch’io son di viva fede et d’amor tempio!

Alas, where is the beautiful face? Behold, it hides.

Woe’s me, where is my sun? Alas, what veil

Drapes itself and renders the heavens dark?

Woe’s me, that I call and see it; it doesn’t respond.

Oh, if your sails have auspicious winds,

My dearest sweet, and if you change your hair

And features late, if the Lord of Delos

Hides grace and valor in your beautiful bosom,

Hear my sighs and give them place

To turn unjust disdain into love,

And may your pity conquer hardships.

See how I burn and how I am consumed by fire;

What better reason, what greater sign

Than I, a temple of faithful life and love!

2. *Quando son più lontan*

Text: from a madrigal by Ivo

Quando son più lontan de’ bei vostri occhi

Che m’han fatto cangiar voglia et costumi,

Cresce la fiamma et mi conduce a morte;

Et voi, che per mia sorte

Potresti raffrenar la dolce fiamma,

Mi negate la fiamma che m’infiamma.

When I am farther from your beautiful eyes

That made me change my wishes and my ways,

The flame grows and leads me to my death;

And you, who for my fate

Could restrain the sweet flame,

Deny me the flame that inflames me.

3. *Amor, io sento l’alma*

Text: Jhan Gero, parody of a Machiavelli balata

Amor, io sento l’alma

Tornar nel foco ov’io

Fui lieto et più che mai d’arder desio.

Io ardo e ‘n chiara fiamma

Nutrisco il miser core;

Et quanto più s’infiamma,

Tanto più cresce amore,

Perch’ogni mio dolore

Nasce dal fuoco ov’io

Fui lieto et più che mai d’arder desio.

Oh love, I feel my soul

Return to the fire where I

Rejoiced and more than ever desire to burn.

I burn and in bright flames

I feed my miserable heart;

The more it flames

The more my loving grows,

For all my sorrows come

From out of the fire where I

Rejoiced and more than ever desire to burn.

4. *Io piango*

Text: Ruffo

Io piango, ch’è’l dolore

Pianger’ mi fa, perch’io

Non trov’altro rimedio a l’ardor’ mio.

Così m’ha concio’ Amore

Ch’ognor’ viv’in tormento

Ma quanto piango più, men doglia sento.

Sorte fiera e inaudita

Che’l tacer mi d’a morte e’l pianger vita.

I’m weeping, for the grief

Makes me cry, since I

Can find no other remedy for my fire.

So trapped by Love am I

That ever I lie in torment

But the more I cry the less pain I feel.

What cruel, unheard-of fate

That silence gives me death and weeping life!

5*. Luci serene e chiare*

Text: Ridolfo Arlotti

Luci serene e chiare,

Voi m’incendete, voi; ma prov’ il core

Nell’ incendio diletto, non dolore.

Doci parole e care,

Voi mi ferite, voi; ma prov’ il petto

Non dolor ne la piaga, ma diletto.

O miracol d’amore!

Alma ch’è tutta foco e tutta sangue,

Si strugge e non si duol, mor’ e non langue.

Eyes serene and clear,

You inflame me, but my heart must

Find pleasure, not sorrow, in the fire.

Words sweet and dear,

You wound me, but my breast must

Find pleasure, not sorrow, in the wound.

O miracle of love!

The soul that is all fire and blood,

Melts yet feels no sorrow, dies yet does not languish.

6. *Se per havervi, oime*

Text: Monteverdi, from *Primo Libro de Madrigali*

Se per havervi, oime, donato il core,

Nasce in me quell’ardore,

Donna crudel, che m’arde in ogno loco,

Tal che son tutto foco,

E se per amar voi, l’aspro martire

Mi fa di duol morire,

Miser! Che far debb’io

Privo di voi che sete ogni ben mio?

If, alas, when I gave you my heart,

There was born in me that passion,

Cruel Lady, which burns me everywhere

So that I am all aflame,

And if, loving you, bitter torment

Makes me die of sorrow,

Wretched me! What shall I do

Without you who are my every joy?