

# GEORGE SHANGROW CHORALE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2002 – 3:00 PM  
ILLSLEY BALL NORDSTROM RECITAL HALL – BENAROYA HALL

GEORGE SHANGROW CHORALE  
George Shangrow, conductor

HEINRICH SCHÜTZ (1585-1672)  
“Cantate Domino” from *Cantiones sacræ*

GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI DA PALESTRINA (1525/6-1594)  
*Sicut cervus*

JACOB HANDL (1550-1591)  
*Ascendo ad Patrem meum*

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)  
*Trois chansons de Charles d’Orléans*  
*Dieu! qu’il la fait bon regarder!*  
*Quant j’ai ouy le tabourin*  
*Yver, vous n’estes qu’un villain*

BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913-1976)  
Choral Dances from *Gloriana*  
Time – Concord – Time and Concord – Country Girls – Rustics and Fishermen – Final Dance of Homage

– Intermission –

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI (1567-1643)  
Four Madrigals

*Jo mi son jovinetta*  
*Lasciate mi morire*  
*Zefiro torna*  
*Si, ch’io vorei morire*

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)  
*Fünf Gesänge, Op. 104*

*Nachtwache I*  
*Nachtwache II*  
*Letztes Glück*  
*Verlorene Jugend*  
*Im Herbst*

GUSTAV HOLST (1874-1934)  
“I Love My Love” from *Six Choral Folksongs, Op. 36b*

arr. PERCY GRAINGER (1882-1961)  
“Brigg Fair,” BFMS7

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)  
arr. ARTHUR SOMERVELL (1863-1937)  
“Linden Lea”

ALEC ROWLEY (1892-1958)  
“Tune Thy Music to Thy Heart”

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)  
“The Lover’s Ghost” from *Five English Folksongs*

Please disconnect signal watches, pagers and cellular telephones. Thank you.  
Use of cameras and recording equipment is not permitted in the concert hall.

## CANTATE DOMINO

Cantate Domino canticum novum;  
 laus ejus in ecclesia sanctorum.  
 Lætetur Israel in eo qui fecit eum,  
 et filiae Syon exultent in rege suo.  
 Laudent nomen ejus in tympano et choro:  
 in psalterio psalant ei.

## SICUT CERVUS

Sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum,  
 ita desiderat anima mea ad te Deus.

## ASCENDO AD PATREM MEUM

Ascendo ad Patrem meum et Patrem vestrum, Deum meum et  
 Deum vestrum. Elevatis manibus benedixit eis, et ferebatur in  
 coelum. Alleluia!

## TROIS CHANSONS DE CHARLES D'ORLÉANS

Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder  
 La gracieuse bonne et belle;  
 Pour les grans biens que sont en elle  
 Chascun est prest de la louer.  
 Qui se pourroit d'elle laisser?  
 Tousjours sa beauté renouvelle.

Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder  
 La gracieuse bonne et belle!  
 Par de ça ne de là, la mer  
 Ne scay dame ne damoiselle  
 Qui soit en tous bien parfaits telle.  
 C'est ung songe que d'i penser:  
 Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder!

Quant j'ai ouy la tabourin  
 Sonner, pour s'en aller au may,  
 En mon lit n'en ay fait affray  
 Ne levé mon chief du coissin;  
 En disant: il est trop matin  
 Ung peu je me rendormiray:  
 Quant j' ay ouy le tabourin  
 Sonner pour s'en aller au may,  
 Jeunes gens partent leur butin;  
 De nonchaloir m'accointeray  
 A lui je m'abutineray  
 Trouvé l'ay plus prouchain voisin;  
 Quant j'ay ouy le tabourin  
 Sonner pour s'en aller au may  
 En mon lit n'en ay fait affray  
 Ne levé mon chief du coissin.

Yver, vous n'estes qu'un vilain;  
 Esté est plaisant et gentil  
 En têmeing de may et d'avril  
 Qui l'accompagnent soir et main.  
 Esté revet champs, bois et fleurs  
 De sa livrée de verdure  
 Et de maintes autres couleurs  
 Par l'ordonnance de nature.

Mais vous, Yver, trop estes plein  
 De nège, vent, pluye et grézil.  
 On vous deust banir en éxil.  
 Sans point flater je parle plein,  
 Yver, vous n'estes qu'un vilain.

– Charles Duc d'Orléans (1394-1465)

O sing ye to the Lord, sing ye a new song;  
 His praise is in the company of his saints.  
 Let all of Israel rejoice now in him who made us,  
 let children of Zion rejoice now and praise Jehovah.  
 Let them praise Him forever, with tymbrel and harp and dancing:  
 let everything praise God.

As the deer longs for running water,  
 So longs my soul for Thee, Lord.

I ascend unto my Father and your Father, my God and your God.  
 He lifted his hands, blessing them, and was carried into  
 heaven. Alleluia!

God! But she is fair,  
 graceful, good and beautiful.  
 All are ready to praise  
 her excellent qualities.  
 Who could tire of her?  
 Her beauty is ever new.

God! but she is fair,  
 graceful, good and beautiful!  
 Nowhere does the sea look on  
 so fair and perfect  
 a lady or maiden.  
 Thinking on her is but a dream.  
 God! but she is fair!

When I heard the tambourine  
 call us to go a-Maying,  
 I did not let it frighten me in my bed  
 or lift my head from my pillow,  
 saying, "It is too early,  
 I will go back to sleep."  
 When I heard the tambourine  
 call us to go a-Maying,  
 young folks dividing their spoils,  
 I cloaked myself in nonchalance,  
 clinging to it  
 and finding the nearest neighbour.  
 When I heard the tambourine  
 call us to go a-Maying,  
 I did not let it frighten me in my bed  
 or lift my head from my pillow.

Winter, you're naught but a rogue.  
 Summer is pleasant and kind,  
 as we see from May and April,  
 which accompany it evening and morn.  
 Summer, by nature's order, clothes fields, woods and flowers  
 with its livery of green  
 and many other hues.

But you, Winter, are too full  
 of snow, wind, rain and sleet.  
 We must send you into exile.  
 I'm no flatterer and I speak my mind.  
 Winter, you're naught but a rogue.

– English translation © 2001 Faith J. Cormier

#### CHORAL DANCES FROM *GLORIANA*

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!

Concord is here  
our days to bless  
and this our land to endure  
with plenty, peace and happiness.

Concord and Time  
each needeth each:  
the ripest fruit hangs where  
not one, but only two  
can reach.

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 or Roman  
queenly woman  
knew such favor  
from Heavn' above  
as she whose presence  
is our pleasance:  
Gloriana  
hath all our love!

Sweet flag and cuckoo-flower,  
cowslip and columbine,  
king-cups and sops-in-wine,  
flower-de-luce and calaminth,  
harebell and hyacinth,

myrtle and bay, with rosemary between,  
Norfolk's own garlands for her Queen!

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 flaskets,  
their country largess –  
the best they know!

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.

– William Plomer

#### FOUR MADRIGALS

"Jo mi son giovinetta, e rido  
E canto alla stagion novella!"  
Cantava la mia dolce pastorella.  
Quando subitamente  
A quel canto il cor mio canto  
Quasi augellin vago e ridente:  
"Son giovinett' anch' io , e rido e canto  
Alla gentil e bella primavera d'amore,  
Che ne begl' occhi tuoi fiorisce!"  
Et ella: "Fuggi, se saggio sei,"  
disse, "l'ardore,  
Fuggi, ch' in questi rai,  
Primavera per te non sara mai!"

– Giovanni Boccaccio

Zefiro torna, e'l bel tempo rimena,  
E i fiori e l'herbe, sua dolce famiglia,  
E garir progne e pianger Filomena,  
Primavera candida e vermiglia.  
Ridono i prati e'l ciel si rasserena.  
Giove s'allegra di mirar sua figlia,  
L'aria e l'acqua, e la terra d'amor piena,  
Ogni animal d'amar si raconsiglia.  
Ma per me lasso tornano i piu gravi sospiri,  
Che dal cor, che dal cor profondo tagge  
Quella ch'al ciel se ne porto le chiavi,  
E cantar augelletti e fiorir piaggie,  
E'n bella donn' honesti atti e soavi.  
Sono un deserto, e fer' aspre e selvaggie.

Si, ch'io vorrei morire, hora, ch'io bacio amore  
La bella bocca del mio amato core!  
Ahi! cara e dolce lingua!  
Datemi tant' humore,  
che di dolcezz' in questo sen m'estingua!  
Ahi! vita mia! A questo bianco seno  
Deh! stringetemi sin ch'io venga meno!  
Ahi bocca! Ahi baci! Ahi lingua! I tom' a dire:  
Si! ch'io vorrei morire!

"I am a young girl  
And I laugh and sing in springtime,"  
So sang my sweet shepherdess,  
When all of a sudden  
My heart began to sing, too,  
Like a fair, joyous bird,  
"I too am young and I laugh and sing at  
the sweet, beautiful springtime of love  
which blossoms in your lovely eyes."  
And she said: "Flee, if you are wise,  
Flee from passion;  
for in the glances of my eyes  
There will never be springtime for you."

Lasciate mi morire,	Let me die.
E che volete voi,	Do you think there can be
che mi conforte	any comfort for me
In cosi dura sorte,	In such torment
in cosi gran martire?	and anguish?
Lasciate mi morire!	Let me die!

Zephyr returns and brings back good weather,  
flowers, grass – all his sweet family.  
Philome delights in the Spring;  
the fields laugh,  
the sky is serene.  
Jove delights to see his daughter;  
the air, wind and earth are full of love.  
Everything thinks of love.  
But for me, only the heaviest sighs return –  
Sighs, which she draws out of my innermost heart;  
She who took the keys to my heart to heaven  
To be among the birds and the beautiful flowers  
With other women of kindly and gentle acts.  
I am a desert; a bitter and savage beast.

Yes, I should like to die, now that I kiss, o love,  
The beautiful mouth of my beloved one.  
Ah, dear sweet tongue.  
Give me such happiness  
that I should die for the sweetness I feel in my breast.  
Ah, my life! Press me close  
to your white breast until I faint.  
Ah, mouth! Ah, kisses! Ah, tongue! I say again,  
Yes, I should like to die.

## FÜNF GESÄNGE

Leise Töne der Brust, geweckt vom Odem der Liebe,  
Hauchet zitternd hinaus, ob sich euch öffnet ein Ohr,  
Öffn' ein liebendes Herz, und wenn sich keines euch öffnet,  
Trag' ein Nachtwind euch seufzend in meines zurück!

Ruh'n sie? ruft das Horn des Wächters drüben aus Westen,  
Und aus Osten das Horn ruft entgegen: Sie ruh'n!  
Hörst du, zagendes Herz, die flüsternden Stimmen der Engel?  
Lösche die Lampe getrost, hülle in Frieden dich ein.

– Friederich Rückert

Leblos gleitet Blatt um Blatt  
Still und traurig von den Bäumen;  
Seines Hoffens nimmer satt,  
Lebt das Herz in Frühlingsträumen.

Noch verweilt ein Sonnenblick  
Bei den späten Hagerosen,  
Wie bei einem letzten Glück,  
Einem süßen, hoffnungslosen.

– Max Kalbeck

Brausten alle Berge,  
Sauste rings der Wald,  
Meine jungen Tage,  
Wo sind sie so bald?

Jugend, teure Jugend,  
Flohest mir dahin;  
O du holde Jugend,  
Achtlos war mein Sinn!

Ich verlor dich leider,  
Wie wenn einen Stein  
Jemand von sich schleudert  
In die Flut hinein.

Wendet sich der Stein auch  
Um in tiefer Flut,  
Weiss ich, dass die Jugend  
Doch kein Gleiches thut.

– Josef Wenzig

Ernst ist der Herbst.  
Und wenn die Blätter fallen,  
sinkt auch das Herz zu trübem Weh herab.

Still ist die Flur,  
und nach dem Süden wallen  
die Sängler, stumm, wie nach dem Grab.

Bleich ist der Tag,  
und blasse Nebel schleiern  
die Sonne wie die Herzen, ein.

Früh kommt die Nacht:  
denn alle Kräfte feiern,  
und tief verschlossen ruht das Sein.

Sanft wird der Mensch.  
Er sieht die Sonne sinken,  
er ahnt des Lebens wie des Jahres Schluß.

Feucht wird das Aug',  
doch in der Träne Blinken,  
entströmt des Herzens seligster Erguß.

– Klaus Groth

Gentle vibration of the soul, awakened by love's tender spirit,  
breathe tremblingly forth, if you could but open an ear,  
open a loving heart – and should none open to thee,  
return, borne upon an evening breeze, sighing, to me.

Do they rest? the watchman's horn calls from the west,  
and from the east the horn calls again: they rest!  
Hear'st thou, trembling heart, the whispering voices of the angels?  
Put out the lamps in good faith, lay yourself peacefully down.

Lifeless leaves flutter down  
silently, sadly, from the trees.  
Its hopes ever unfulfilled,  
the soul lives in dreams of Spring.  
Yet there still lingers a friendly glance  
of the late-blooming wild roses,  
like a last bit of happiness,  
a sweet hopelessness.

The mountains alive,  
the woods ringing with life --  
my days of youth,  
where have you so soon departed?

Youth, dear youth,  
flown away from me;  
O precious youth,  
carefree was my soul!

I lost you easily  
like a stone  
one carelessly tosses  
into a stream.

A stone can sometimes be chumed up  
and returned from deep waters --  
I know, though, that with youth  
that can never happen.

Autumn is unsmiling,  
and as the leaves fall  
so sinks the heart down to melancholy grief.  
The meadow is silent,  
and off to the south  
the songsters have silently flown as if to the grave.

The day is dreary  
and pallid clouds veil  
the sun as they do the heart.

Night comes on early:  
all work falls fallow,  
and, deeply shuttered, all is at rest.

Man becomes tender,  
he sees the sun sinking,  
he sees that his life, as the end of the year, must close.

A tear comes to the eye,  
yet shining through the tears  
streams from the heart a blissful outpouring.

### "I LOVE MY LOVE"

Abroad as I was walking, one evening in the spring,  
I heard a maid in Bedlam so sweetly for to sing;  
Her chains she rattled with her hands, and thus replied she:  
"I love my love because I know my love loves me!  
"O cruel were his parents who sent my love to sea,  
And cruel was the ship that bore my love from me;  
Yet I love his parents since they're his although they've ruined me:  
I love my love because I know my love loves me!  
"With straw I'll weave a garland, I'll weave it very fine;  
With roses, lilies, daisies, I'll mix the eglantine;  
And I'll present it to my love when he returns from sea.  
For I love my love, because I know my love loves me."  
Just as she there sat weeping, her love he came on land,  
Then, hearing she was in Bedlam, he ran straight out of hand;  
He flew into her snow-white arms, and thus replied he:  
"I love my love, because I know my love loves me."  
She said: "My love, don't frighten me; are you my love or no?"  
"O yes, my dearest Nancy, I am your love, also  
I am return'd to make amends for all your injury;  
I love my love because I know my love loves me!"  
So now these two are married, and happy may they be  
Like turtle doves together, in love and unity.  
All pretty maids with patience wait that have got loves at sea;  
I love my love because I know my love loves me.

### BRIGG FAIR

It was on the fifth of August  
Er' the weather fine and fair,  
Unto Brigg Fair I did repair,  
For love I was inclined.  
I rose up with the lark in the morning,  
With my heart so full of glee,  
Of thinking there to meet my dear,  
Long time I'd wished to see.  
I took hold of her lily-white hand,  
O and merrily was her heart:  
"And now we're met together  
I hope we ne'er shall part".  
For it's meeting is a pleasure,  
And parting is a grief,  
But an unconstant lover  
Is worse than any thief.  
The green leaves they shall wither  
And the branches they shall die  
If ever I prove false to her,  
To the girl that loves me.

### LINDEN LEA

Within the woodlands, flow'ry gladed,  
By the oak trees' mossy moot,  
The shining grass blades, timber-shaded,  
Now do quiver underfoot;

### SOPRANO

Sue Cobb  
Crissa Cugini  
Dana Durasoff  
Ann Erickson  
Amy Gerard  
Catherine Haight  
Jill Kraakmo  
Nancy Shasteen

### ALTO

Emily Lunde  
Adrienne McCoy  
Suzi Means  
Laurie Medill  
Julia Akoury Thiel  
Kay Verelius

And birds do whistle overhead,  
And water's bubbling in its bed;  
And there, for me, the apple tree  
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.  
When leaves, that lately were a-springing,  
Now do fade within the copse,  
And painted birds do hush their singing,  
Up upon the timber tops;  
And brown-leaved fruits a-turning red,  
In cloudless sunshine overhead,  
With fruit for me, the apple tree  
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.  
Let other folk make money faster  
In the air of dark-roomed towns;  
I don't dread a peevish master,  
Though no man may heed my frowns.  
I be free to go abroad,  
Or take again my homeward road  
To where, for me, the apple tree  
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

– William Barnes

### TUNE THY MUSIC TO THY HEART

Tune thy music to thy heart;  
Sing thy joy with thanks, and so thy sorrow.  
Though devotion needs not art,  
Sometime of the poor the rich may borrow.  
Strive not yet for curious ways;  
Concord pleaseth more the less 'tis strained.  
Zeal affects not outward praise,  
Only strives to show a love unfeigned.  
Love can wondrous things effect,  
Sweetest sacrifice all wrath appeasing.  
Love the Highest doth ever respect,  
Love alone to Him is ever pleasing.

### THE LOVER'S GHOST

Well met, well met my own true love;  
Long time I have been absent from thee.  
I am lately come from the salt sea,  
And 'tis all for the sake, my love, of thee.  
I have three ships all on the salt sea,  
And one of them has brought me to land.  
I've four and twenty mariners on board;  
You shall have music at your command.  
The ship wherein my love shall sail  
Is glorious for to behold.  
The sails shall be of shining silk,  
The mast shall be of the fine beaten gold.  
I might have had a king's daughter,  
And fain, she would have married me,  
But I forsook her crown of gold,  
And 'tis all for the sake, my love, of thee.

### TENOR

Ralph Cobb  
Alvin Kroon  
Jon Lange  
Timothy Lunde  
Jerry Sams

### BASS

Brian Box  
Andrew Danilchik  
Douglas Durasoff  
Robert Kechley  
Patrick McDonald  
Phil Phillips  
John Stenseth

**CLAUDE-ACHILLE DEBUSSY***Trois chansons de Charles d'Orléans*

*Debussy was born August 22, 1862, at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, near Paris, and died March 25, 1918, in Paris.*

Debussy's family was not a musical one. His father kept a china shop and also worked as a traveling salesman, a printer's assistant, and a clerk, and his mother was a seamstress. When Debussy's piano teacher realized the extent of her student's musical talent, however, she sent the ten-year-old boy to the Conservatory in Paris, where he studied from 1872 to 1884. Beginning in 1879, Debussy served as a tutor and musician to various wealthy families. From 1880 to 1882, he was a pianist in the household of Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky's eccentric patroness, instructing her children and traveling across Europe as an accompanist in vocal and instrumental performances. While the young pianist failed to become a virtuoso, he began in 1880 to study composition at the Conservatory, winning the second Prix de Rome in 1883 and the prestigious first prize the following year.

Not long after his return from the two years of musical study at the Villa Medici in Rome, which he undertook as a result of his winning the Prix de Rome, the penniless composer began a relationship with one Gabrielle Dupont, living with her in virtual poverty for the next nine years. When Debussy left her for model and dressmaker Rosalie Texier, whom he married in 1899, Gabrielle attempted suicide. In 1903, Debussy met Emma Bardac, the wife of a banker and an amateur singer, and the composer soon abandoned Rosalie and moved with Emma into an apartment rented with her money in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, where he spent the rest of his life. Rosalie in her turn attempted suicide, and some of Debussy's friends turned away from him in revulsion. This relationship endured, however, and in the fall of 1905 a daughter, named Claude-Emma and nicknamed Chou-Chou, was born to the new couple, who married three years later.

After Emma Bardac was disinherited by her financier uncle, Debussy was forced to abandon any hope of prosperity. Beginning in 1907, he found it financially necessary to make ten trips abroad to play the piano and conduct his works, neither of which activity he enjoyed. His success in England resulted, however, in international acclaim and he was appointed to the advisory board of the Paris Conservatory in 1909. He also wrote articles that established him as one of the wittiest critics of his day. But soon appeared the first symptoms of the rectal cancer that diminished his energies during his remaining years and that would eventually take his life. His deepening melancholy as World War I progressed also contributed to the decline of his health. After a colostomy in December 1917, he was confined to bed, and he died in March of the following year while Paris was being bombarded by airships and long-distance guns during the last German offensive of World War I.

The famous 20th-century composer Igor Stravinsky once stated, "The musicians of my generation, and I myself, owe the most to Debussy." One of the greatest of all French

composers, Debussy wrote in 1902, "I wanted from music a freedom which it possesses perhaps to a greater degree than any other art, not being tied to a more or less exact reproduction of Nature but to the mysterious correspondences between Nature and Imagination." In this way, he explained his art: "There is no theory. You have only to listen. Pleasure is the law. I love music passionately. And because I love it, I try to free it from barren traditions that stifle it. It is a free art gushing forth, an open-air art boundless as the elements, the wind, the sky, the sea. It must never be shut in and become an academic art."

Composed in part in 1898 and revised a decade later, the *Trois Chansons* are Debussy's only published works for unaccompanied chorus. These settings of the lyric poetry of Duke Charles of Orléans (1391-1465) are outstanding examples of the Debussy's unique ability to create musical atmosphere.

**BENJAMIN BRITTEN***Choral Dances from Gloriana*

*Britten was born November 22, 1916, at Lowestoft, England, and died December 4, 1976, at Aldeburgh.*

The son of a dentist and an amateur singer, and the youngest of four children, Edward Benjamin Britten was born on the feast day of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music. He came to be known as "the greatest English composer since Purcell." Britten studied piano and then viola, and began a life of continuing musical composition at the age of five. When he was six, he wrote a play called *The Royal Family* [sic] about Prince John, the fifth son of George V, who died in 1919 at the age of 13. The boy would compose before breakfast and then go to school, where he enjoyed mathematics and captained the cricket team. In his teens he became a private pupil of composer Frank Bridge, who provided the young Britten with a solid technical foundation upon which to construct his highly creative compositions. Britten entered the Royal College of Music in London at the age of 17, studying piano and composition and taking several prizes for his works. At 20, he completed the significant choral work, *A Boy Was Born*, at a rehearsal for a broadcast performance of which he met tenor Peter Pears, with whom he developed a life-long personal and professional relationship.

Between 1935 the beginning of World War II, Britten wrote music for documentary films produced by the General Post Office Film Unit, for BBC Radio, and for London's small theaters. In rising to meet television's peculiar challenges, he developed the tools he needed for the composition of some 15 operas over the course of his career.

Because they were conscientious objectors, Britten and Pears sailed for North America in the spring of 1939. Upon returning to England in 1942, Britten faced a conscientious objectors' tribunal and was exempted from military service. During the early 1940s, Britten produced a number of important works, including the *Hymn to St. Cecilia*, *A Ceremony of Carols*, *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo*, the *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*, *Rejoice in the Lamb*,

and the *Festival Te Deum*. The outstanding opera, *Peter Grimes*, was completed in 1945. Britten continued to compose operas, and wrote many works for the Aldeburgh Festival, founded by him and Pears in 1948. Britten received many awards and honors over the next 28 years, being appointed a Companion of Honour in 1952, and being named to the Order of Merit in 1965.

In 1968 Britten came down with sub-acute bacterial endocarditis, and this led to the discovery of a valvular heart-lesion for which he underwent surgery in 1973. He was awarded a life peerage in the year of his death, the first musician to be so honored.

"People sometimes seem to think that, with a number of works now lying behind, one must be bursting with confidence," the prolific Britten once observed. "It is not so at all. I haven't achieved the simplicity I should like in my music, and I am enormously aware that I haven't yet come up to the technical standards Bridge set me."

The opera *Gloriana* was Britten's first actual failure. In 1952 the composer decided to write a "national" opera in celebration of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. He based his work on the relationship between Elizabeth I and Lord Essex, as depicted in Lytton Strachey's book, *Elizabeth and Essex*. The result, *Gloriana*, was premiered at Covent Garden during Coronation Week, 1953. The new queen was "not amused," perhaps being offended as she observed the amorous escapades of the first Elizabeth. The general audience and the critics alike reacted to the work with boredom, scorn, and displeasure. Britten became quite despondent as a result. Although *Gloriana* remained Britten's least successful opera, a 1966 revival by Sadler's Wells commemorating Britten's 50th birthday was better received, indicating that the initial performance might have been less than fairly evaluated. In recent years, the opera has been more frequently performed and recorded, and is at last beginning to receive the recognition it deserves.

#### CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

##### Four Madrigals

*Monteverdi was baptized May 15, 1567, in Cremona, Italy, and died November 29, 1643, in Venice.*

His contemporaries called Claudio Monteverdi a "prophet of music." One of the most powerful figures in the history of Western classical music, he stood astride the Renaissance and Baroque style periods. He was a master of the older polyphonic style of composition of the Renaissance. He was also significant as a proponent of the new musical style characteristic of the early Baroque period: the so-called *seconda prattica* that features single-line melodies with chordal accompaniment, and that lent itself to word-painting, emotional nuance, and the depiction of personal feelings. He was an important pioneer in the development of the new musical form, opera, which arose from the combining of music and rhetoric. Using his outstanding gifts for bringing human personality and emotion to life, he produced what is generally considered the first "true opera," *La Favola d'Orfeo*, in 1607

Monteverdi studied as a youth with the Director of Music at Cremona Cathedral. He had composed a book of madrigals by the time he was 17, and had published several books of motets and madrigals before he went to Mantua at age 24 to serve as a string player at the court of the Duke. In 1599 he married a court singer who bore him three children, and two years later he was appointed Mantua's Director of Music. He wrote madrigals, ballet music, and theater music, and by his mid-40s he was the most celebrated composer in Italy. In 1613 he succeeded Giovanni Gabrieli as Music Director at St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice, and he remained there for the rest of his life, writing music in all genres.

Madrigals are short, entertaining, secular compositions for four to six unaccompanied voice parts. This musical form was especially popular in Italy and England during the 16th century. These works often contain sections of music and text that are repeated, and feature contrasting passages of chordal and imitative writing. Their texts often express the mirth and misery of love, and contain mythological references.

#### JOHANNES BRAHMS

##### *Fünf Gesänge*, Op. 104

*Brahms was born in Hamburg on May 7, 1833, and died in Vienna on April 3, 1897.*

The great German master of compositional craft, Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), gave the world *A German Requiem*, four symphonies, four concertos, and many songs, piano pieces, and chamber works. More than any other composer of the second half of the 19th century, Brahms was responsible for resurrecting "absolute" music—compositions meant to be heard simply as tapestries of sound rather than as works that illustrate a scene or tell a story ("program music").

In Brahms' five partsongs for mixed chorus, Op. 104, all but one of which were composed in 1888, texts of nostalgic melancholy and resignation are set to music of a dark but ravishing richness as the composer faces his own mortality. The first three songs, for six-part choir, SAATBB, display the kind of imitative exchanges between the upper and lower sets of voices that Brahms usually employed only in his sacred choruses. In the fourth song, set for SATBB, energetic sections featuring canonic writing, representing the carefree days of youth, alternate with slower-paced, more romantically chordal sections that lament youth's loss. The last partsong, for SATB chorus, was written two years earlier than the others. A chromatic, dark, and deeply depressive setting of Klaus Groth's gloomy text, it nonetheless represents the culmination of Brahms' secular choral writing.

— Lorelette Knowles

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