

Ars Nova SINGERS

Our 37th Season
2022-2023



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PROGRAM

Carlo Gesualdo, *Madrigals from Books 5 & 6*

Gioite voi col canto *Book 5, No. 1*
Asciugate i begli occhi *Book 5, No. 14*

Celeste Giglio (from *La Noblita della Donna*, 1600) Fabritio Caroso (ca.1530-1618)

Felicissimo sonno *Book 5, No. 7*
Tu segui, o bella Clori *Book 6, No. 20*

Prelude John Jenkins (1592-1678)
Ballet (from *The Scolding Wife*) Nicholas Hotman (ca.1610-1663)
Excerpts from *Captain Hume's Lamentations* Tobias Hume (ca.1579-1645)

Chiaro risplender suole *Book 6, No. 5*
Già piansi nel dolore *Book 6, No. 22*

Medley of Traditional Northern Tunes
Långdans från Sollerön / Jag Långtar arranged by Sandra Wong

Two Modern Madrigals:
Wishes (2012) Fraser Wilson (b. 1984)
Grown About by Fragrant Bushes (2020) Howard Skempton (b. 1947)

Sandra Wong, *violin and nyckelharpa*
Ann Marie Morgan, *viola da gamba*

Ars Nova Singers:

Mo Bailey, Alice Del Simone, Shannon Pennell, Emma Vawter, Tara U'ren,
Ellen Moeller, Sam Bruckner, Brian du Fresne, Daniel J. Cosio, Maxwell McKee
Tom Morgan, *Artistic Director and Conductor*
Kimberly Brody, *Executive Director*

Today's program will be performed without an intermission.

www.arsnovasingers.org





Praised by the *Baltimore Sun* for her “beguiling musicality,” viola da gamba soloist **Ann Marie Morgan** performs regularly with the Bach *St. John* and *St. Matthew Passions*. She appeared with The Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Bach specialist Helmuth Rilling and, upon hearing her perform the solo aria with Alto Ingeborg Danz, was invited by the maestro to appear as violist da gamba in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* at the Oregon Bach Festival. Other Bach *Passion* performances have included those with The Minnesota Orchestra; The Cleveland Orchestra; the Colorado Symphony; the Quad Cities Symphony Orchestra; and at numerous international Bach Festivals. She has appeared on viola da gamba in Bach’s *Brandenburg Concerto No. 6* with The Cleveland Orchestra under the direction of Franz Welser-Möst, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and at the Boulder Bach Festival. Ms Morgan has been concerto soloist on viola da gamba and cello piccolo with Apollo’s Fire: The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra and with the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado. Other recent highlights from her now 30-year career include collaborations with tenor Nicholas Phan including Chautauqua NY and Cleveland (2017), Istanbul (2016) and Carnegie Hall (2015). The two also collaborated on a virtual video duet sponsored by Ars Nova Singers during the pandemic in March of 2021.

Reviews of her playing include “Before hearing Ann Marie Morgan, I would not have believed that so pure a tone could be drawn from a viola da gamba; it is straight from heaven.” (– *H&B Recordings Direct*) and “... my hands down favorite is Ann Marie Morgan’s viola da gamba solo in Skinner’s *Cradle Song*... If there was a dry eye in the studio when this was recorded I say someone needs sensitivity training.” (– *Classical Disc Digest*). She has her own solo viola da gamba album (with William Simms and Daniel Rippe, continuo) of French and English repertoire entitled *Among Rosebuds* (on the Centaur label). Other labels upon which one can hear her perform include AVIE, Chandos, Dorian and Naxos.

Active in the front range on viola da gamba, baroque cello and cello piccolo she appeared recently with the Colorado Bach Ensemble, Colorado Chamber Players and Seicento Baroque Ensemble. An experienced choral singer and director, Ms Morgan holds professional singer positions with Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Littleton, Ars Nova Singers, and St. Martin’s Chamber Choir.



Sandra Wong started her life journey in upstate New York, displaying a deep love of music as a youngster. She began studying the violin at age seven with the intention of becoming a concert violinist. This remained her sole focus for fifteen years, until she discovered fiddling... and her musical world was turned upside down! Since then, Sandra’s focus with her music has shifted from being an isolated striving for technical perfection to a focus on connecting other people and cultures through music as a way to build community and express our common humanity. Opening this door with an exploration of Irish, Old-time and Bluegrass music, her folk music journey has moved her into her current livelihood of teaching, performing, recording and collaborating with other musicians from a diverse range of musical genres.

In 1999, Sandra opened another door when she discovered a 14th-century Swedish folk instrument called the *nyckelharpa* and fell in love. This is a 16-stringed, keyed instrument played with a bow. It has become an integral part of her musical expression. Sandra has toured nationally and internationally as a solo artist and in collaboration with various musicians. She has appeared at numerous festivals and concert series. Her current projects include *Kaleidoscope* with Ty Burhoe and Bill Douglas; *Marrakech Express* with El Yesefi Samir, Brett Bowen and Dexter Payne; *From The Fjords to the Andes* with Victor Mestas, Gonzalo Teppa and Jill Fredrickesen; *Teresa Storch and the Sharp Eleven*, *The Sandra Wong, Dominick Leslie, Ty Burhoe Trio* as well as work as a solo artist and freelance musician collaborating with musicians in all musical genres. She has released two solo albums; *It’s About Time* in 1999, and *Joy* in 2000. She released two collaborative albums; *Frolic and Romp* in 2009 and *Sunny Side Up* in 2010.

Another important aspect of Sandra’s work is education and nurturing a deep love of music and the arts in both children and adults. She teaches privately, and in group and workshop settings, and presents family and children’s concerts. Sandra also creates and personally facilitates musical study trips to different countries leading people into the heart of individual folk cultures through the music and dance of each country. A percentage of all Sandra’s CD sales and proceeds from concerts supports responsible projects working to create sustainability on our Planet Earth. In addition, Sandra also supports numerous other charitable organizations.

Carlo Gesualdo: Madrigals from Books 5 & 6 – Program Notes by James Weeks

Four hundred years after his death, Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, remains the most tantalizing of musicians, the most alluring of myths. We are drawn back to the dark flame of this strange, obsessive music like moths to the candle, like lovers who can't let go. At the heart of his work we sense a mystery, an inward-turning, a kind of silence: its extreme chromatic harmonies and wild polarities no mere artifice or exoticism, but emanating from a soul whose nature is other, lying apart from us, outside our cosmology, orbiting a different sun.

This is music which begets myths, and its composer's sad and troubled life supplies plenty. In his time, Gesualdo was recognized to be of odd character. He was widely described as melancholic (a catch-all term), although we also hear that he "talks a great deal, and gives no sign, except in his mien, of being a melancholy man." Music was a consuming obsession for him: he would speak of nothing else, driving listeners to distraction and showing his works "in score to everybody in order to induce them to marvel at his art." The scholar Glenn Watkins hypothesizes bipolar disorder; others have suggested that the diagnosis of an underlying Type B personality disorder (typified by instability of self-image and tendency to see things as all-good or all-bad) might illuminate his behavior (and art). It would certainly be simplistic to assume that his notorious uxoricide, committed in 1590 when Gesualdo was 24 years old, was the sole, or even main trigger for his psychological traits; rather, a picture emerges of a man whose underlying personality disorder is exacerbated by various physical and mental traumas at different points in his life into a final state of severe and constant mental torture. The music cannot help but reflect this, and without a doubt the polarities – of mood, texture, harmonic style – on which Gesualdo's style is based are indicative; but this is not incoherent, "mad" music: it remains, for all its non-normative behavior, lucid, communicative (albeit in a very extreme way), artfully structured and technically virtuosic.

The madrigals of the Fifth and Sixth Books are often described as "late" works, having been published at the end of Gesualdo's life in 1611. Yet by Gesualdo's own assertion they were composed around the time of his extended sojourn at the court of Ferrara between 1594 and 1597, withheld from publication in the manner of *musica reservata* (a private music for the exclusive appreciation of connoisseurs) and only finally published in order to set the record straight and confound his several imitators and plagiarists. Gesualdo was, like many aristocratic composers of the time, a natural *avant-gardist*, and the importance of his visit to Ferrara cannot be overstated.

Since Nicola Vicentino's Ancient Greek-inspired experiments in chromatic and microtonal music in the 1550s, Ferrara was the undisputed capital of chromaticism: Vicentino's microtonal harpsichord, the *archicembalo*, could still be heard here in the 1590s, played by Luzzasco Luzzaschi, the madrigalist and maestro of the fabled "Concerto delle donne," a group of professional female singers, renowned for their technical and artistic virtuosity. Gesualdo was highly struck by Luzzaschi's music, and it would seem, from the textual congruences between his Fifth and Sixth books and Luzzaschi's published collections of the mid-1590s, that the two composers became engaged in some sort of madrigal-publishing duel, or at least a vigorous artistic exchange. If it is true that these works were written by the 30-year-old Gesualdo in Ferrara, we must jettison some of our most cherished ideas about his isolated, "late" style and embrace instead the idea that these are works written by a young man in the blazing heat of inspiration, working in the very epicentre of musical innovation.



But the sounds of these pieces are not like those of Luzzaschi, still less Monteverdi or any of the others whom the latter cited as exemplars of the *seconda prattica* in 1605. Gesualdo has taken the innovative premise of Ferrarese chromaticism to a place that is overwhelmingly personal and profoundly subjective; in these works he seems to be speaking to himself, composing in order to converse with and alleviate his own melancholy rather than to portray or palliate it for others. In the texts, the focus on the first-person singular, the 'I' of the introspective self, is relentless. Emotions oscillate between extremes of manic joy and lugubrious despondency. Equilibrium is sought but never found, consummation is continually yearned for yet remains fleeting if not entirely illusory.

Ungraspable and elusive, too, is the experience of the music. Once is never enough: the consummation we desire, the sense of emotional wholeness and completion, continually evades us, slips away, luring us back again and again, just as almost every madrigal treads and retreads the same expressive ground, the same unreconcilable extremes of emotion, circling and obsessive. We are drawn in, fascinated, haunted – the music blazes then evaporates into the air – we are left to wonder at these strange messages while they last, and let them fade into the silence which surrounds them.

English conductor and composer James Weeks is best known for his work with the contemporary specialists EXAUDI, a London-based professional vocal ensemble he founded with soprano Juliet Fraser in 2002. We are grateful for his permission to reprint these notes here.

LIBRO SESTO: 243

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Book 5, No. 1 – Gioite voi col canto

*Gioite voi col canto mentre piango e sospiro,
 né dal mio lagrimar punto respiro.
 Ahi, misero mio core, nato sol al dolore,
 piangi, ma piangi tanto
 che vinta dal tuo pianto
 sia la mia donna, e poi rivedi in lei
 gl'affanni e i dolor miei.*

Rejoice you with singing, while I weep and sigh
 and, tormented by my own tears, cannot even breathe.
 Alas, my wretched heart, born only for distress,
 weep, but weep to such a point
 that my lady is won over by your complaint,
 and then you will see in her
 the same suffering which afflicts me.

Book 5, No. 14 – Asciugate i begli occhi

*Asciugate i begli occhi,
 deh, cor mio, non piangete
 se lontano da voi gir mi vedete!
 Ahi, che pianger debb'io misero e sólo,
 ché partendo da voi m'uccide il duòlo.*

Dry your lovely eyes,
 ah, my love, do not weep
 if far from you you see me wandering.
 Ah, that I must weep miserable and alone,
 for in leaving you, the grief kills me.

Book 5, No. 7 – Felicissimo sonno

*Felicissimo sonno che ne le luci di madonna vivi
 e noi di luce privi,
 deh, con un sogno messaggier le mostra
 l'afflitta anima nostra;
 fa' che in partir da lei pietà vi resti
 e pietosa si desti.*

Most happy sleep, dwelling in the eyes of my lady
 and so depriving us of light,
 I beg you, take her a message in a dream
 to show her the affliction of my soul;
 when you leave her, let mercy remain in her
 so that she awakes inclined to pity.

Book 6, No. 20 – Tu segui, o bella Clori

*Tu segui, o bella Clori, un fuggitivo core,
 e 'l mio tu fuggi, ch'arde sòl d'amore.
 Ah, non fuggir chi t'ama,
 sprezza chi te non brama!
 E s'hai d'amor desio
 ama me sòl, perché te sòl amo io.*

You pursue, beautiful Chloris, a fugitive heart,
 and flee from mine, which burns with love alone.
 Ah, flee not from him who loves you,
 despise him who does not desire you!
 And if you desire love,
 love me alone, for I love you alone.

Book 6 , No. 5 – Chiaro risplender suole

*Chiaro risplender suole
a tutti il mio bel sole,
ma oscuro e fosco a me misero appare,
onde, in lagrime amare, consumo la mia vita.
Ah, s'io potessi almen chiederle aita!
Lieto all'or ne morrei
e finirian, oimè, gli affanni miei.*

Book 6, No. 22 – Già piansi nel dolore

*Già piansi nel dolóre;
ór gioisce il mio còre perché dice il ben mio:
“Ardo per te ancor io.”
Fuggan dunque le nòie e'l tristo pianto
omai si cangi
in dolce e lieto canto.*

My fair sun brightly keeps shining
upon everyone,
yet to wretched me she is dark and gloomy,
and in bitter tears I thus waste away my life.
Ah, if I could at least ask for her help!
Then I would die happy
and would end, alas!, my torments.

I've already cried much with sorrow;
now my heart rejoices because my beloved says:
“I also burn with love for you.”
Let thus my troubles be gone and let sad tears
be turned henceforth
into sweet and happy song.

Two Modern Madrigals

Fraser Wilson, *Wishes*

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

– William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

Howard Skempton, *Grown About by Fragrant Bushes*

Grown about by fragrant bushes,
Sunken in a winding valley,
Where the clear winds blow
And the shadows come and go,
And the cattle stand and low
And the sheep bells and the linnets
Sing and tinkle musically.
Between the past and the future,
Those two black infinities
Between which our brief life
Flashes a moment and goes out.

– Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894)

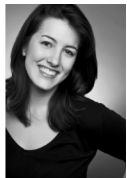
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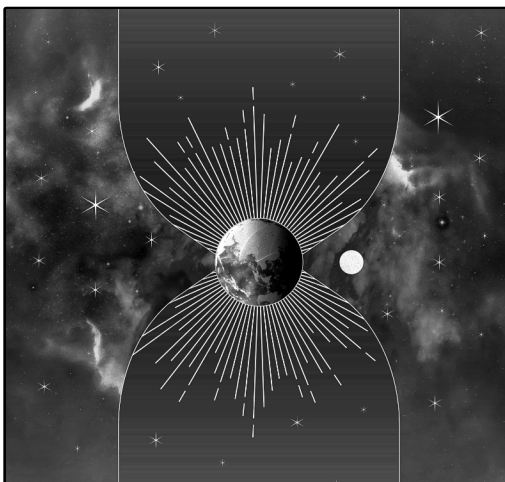
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Solstice

A Colorado holiday tradition! The resplendent, full 40 voices of Ars Nova Singers celebrates the imminent victory of light over darkness this holiday season. Special guest: John Gunther, *saxophone*

Friday, Dec. 9, 7:30pm – United Church of Christ, Longmont
Sunday, Dec. 11, 4:00pm – Saint Paul Lutheran Church, Denver
Thursday, Dec. 15, 7:30pm – Mtn View United Methodist Church, Boulder
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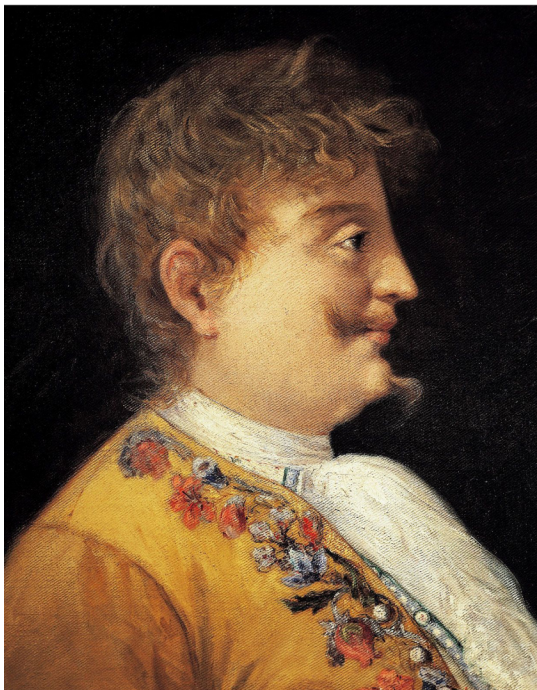
Tickets/info: www.arsnovasingers.org



The Castle at Gesualdo

Carlo Gesualdo

Image: DEA— A DAGLI ORTI/AGE fotostock



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March 1, 2023 – Macky Auditorium, Boulder
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