
Cascadian Chorale
Conducted by Dr. Gary D. Cannon
Firesong Madrigals
Saturday, June 1, 2024
7:30 PM
Holy Cross Episcopal Church
11526 162nd Ave NE
Redmond, WA
Sunday, June 2, 2024
4:30 PM
Highland Community Center
14224 Bel-Red Road
Bellevue, WA

The Cascadian Chorale

Sopranos

Cravixtha Acheson
Frances Acheson
Holly Allin
Daria Barteneva
Kris Bryan
Debra DeFotis
Hannah Durasoff
Heather Irwin*
Sue Maybee
Genie Middaugh
Grete Norquist
Tessa Ravagni
Jenifer Rees
Billie Shung
Rachel Spence
Cami Woodruff

Altos

Annie Doubleday
Christine Dunbar
Carol Fielding
Alecia Hawthorne-Heyel*
Nicole Kister
Ann Marten
Tara O'Brien Pride
Jacquelin Remaley
Debbie Roberts
Nikki Schilling
Dale Schlotzhauer
Pamela Silimperi

Tenors

Matthew Blinstrub
Brandon Higa
Brian Matthewson
Kalinda Pride
Fred Williams

Basses

Alazel Acheson
Ken Black
Jeremy Kings
David Nichols
Glenn Nielsen
Andrew Payne
Trevor Tsang
Jim Whitehead
Doug Wyatt*

** Section leader*

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Gary D. Cannon, Artistic Director

Dr. Gary D. Cannon is one of Seattle's most versatile choral personalities, active as conductor, singer, and musicologist. Since 2008 he is Artistic Director of Cascadian Chorale and of the 100-voice Vashon Island Chorale. In 2016 he founded the Emerald Ensemble, a professional chamber choir. At the invitation of the Early Music Guild, he founded and directed a Renaissance choir, Sine Nomine (2008–15). He has conducted for Vashon Opera three times, and has also directed Anna's Bay Chamber Choir, Choral Arts, Earth Day Singers, Kirkland Choral Society, and the Northwest Mahler Festival.

As a tenor soloist, he has appeared with Pacific Northwest Ballet, Seattle Philharmonic, and the Auburn, Eastside, Rainier, and Sammamish Symphony Orchestras, as well as many Seattle-area choirs. He lectures for Seattle Symphony and provides program notes for choirs across the country. His independent musicological research has a special emphasis on the music of William Walton. A California native, Dr. Cannon holds degrees from the University of California at Davis and the University of Washington.

Firesong Madrigals

Madrigali (1987) ..... Morten Lauridsen (b.1943)

Six "Fire Songs" on Italian Renaissance Poems

1. Ov'è, lass', il bel viso?
2. Quando son più lontan
3. Amor, io sento l'alma
4. Io piango
5. Luci serene e chiare
6. Se per havervi, oime

intermission

Se per havervi, oime (1587)..... Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

Lugebat David Absalon (1564) ..... Nicolas Gombert (c.1495–c.1560)

O Absalom (2024).....Gary D. Cannon (b.1975)

Ubi caritas (1960).....Maurice Duruflé (1902–1986)

Free toes (2019) .....Tara O'Brien Pride (b.1964)

world premiere performances

Cascadian Chorale

Gary D. Cannon, *conductor*

Program notes by Gary D. Cannon

Program produced by Doug Wyatt

Cover design by Cami Woodruff

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Madrigali: Six "Fire Songs" on Italian Renaissance Poems (1987) by **Morten Lauridsen** (born 1943)

Here in the Northwest, Morten Lauridsen's story is very much one of "Local Boy Makes Good." The town of his birth is Colfax, Washington, nestled at a crossroads between Spokane and Pullman. He grew up in Portland, studied at Whitman College in Walla Walla, and worked as a firefighter near Mount St. Helens. Upon relocation to Los Angeles, Lauridsen undertook further studies at the University of Southern California, where he then began teaching in 1967. For decades he divided his time between Los Angeles and a summer cabin on one of the more remote islands in our San Juan archipelago (no ferry, no electricity, no running water, no stores, no paved roads, population 104). However, Lauridsen retired from his USC professorship in 2019. Now that he and his wife have relocated to our region permanently, I am told that their new home has a few more amenities.

By some accounts, Lauridsen is the most often performed living American composer, both at home and abroad—no mean feat for a creator of almost exclusively vocal music. As with many composers, far too often one hears only a few pieces performed with great frequency. This can lead to a misconception that all of Lauridsen's music fits roughly the same mould. His earlier style is best exemplified in *Mid-Winter Songs* (1980) and *Madrigali* (1987). *Les chansons des roses* (1993) is a transitional work that solidified his mature style, based largely on melodic fluidity, prominence of inner voices, prevailing ninth chords, and steady expansion with perfectly timed culminations. Thus his calling card, the sumptuous *O magnum mysterium* (1994), and the much beloved *Lux æterna* (1997). The twenty-first century, as one hears in his S*ure on this shining night* (2005), brought an even greater emphasis on melody.

Written for the University of Southern California Chamber Singers, the *Madrigali* may be an early(-ish) work, but we find Lauridsen's great hallmarks nevertheless. The cycle was inspired by the late-Renaissance madrigals of Monteverdi and Gesualdo. Lauridsen has written: "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 imagery of flames, burning and fire that recurred." Hence the so-called "Fire-Chord:" the first sonority we hear, which recurs in various forms throughout all six movements. (Those well-versed in music theory might describe the chord as a minor triad colored by a major ninth.) Subtle tempo changes abound, as would befit many Renaissance madrigals themselves. Most are in ternary form, meaning that the opening music returns after a contrasting middle section.

The first song serves as an introduction to the "Fire-Chord," which returns for "Oimè, lass', ch'io il chiamo" ("Woe's me, that I call it," e.g., the "beautiful face" of the poem's first line). In the second song we hear chromatic harmonies appropriate to Gesualdo or late Monteverdi, with C against C-sharp and D against D-sharp, and tritones such as C-sharp against F. These are especially clear when the initial text returns in canon, the tenors and basses following the sopranos and altos. Quick and slow tempos mark the third and fourth songs respectively. Lauridsen writes: "The cycle has its dramatic high point in movement four, 'Io piango', where the music gradually builds from pianissimo to a fortissimo, seven-part explosion of the 'Fire-Chord' before settling

to a quiet return of the opening measures." You'll hear it at the text "Sorte fiera e inaudita" ("What cruel, unheard-of fate"). The sixth and final song includes the same text that begins the second half of our concert. There are Monteverdian flourishes of quick sixty-fourth notes. It closes with a modification of the "Fire-Chord," now soft, but always despairing.

All translations below from the Italian are by Erica Muhl.

1. Ov'è, lass', il bel viso? ecco, eì s'asconde.
Oimè, dov'il mio sol? lasso, che velo
S'è post'inanti e 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!

—From a madrigal (published 1549) by Henri Schaffen (d.1604)

*Lord of Delos = Apollo, mythical god of the sun

2. 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.

—From a madrigal by Ivo, perhaps Ivo de Vento (c.1544–1575) or Ivo Barry (flourished 1525–50)

3. 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.

—Jhan Gero (flourished 1540–55), after a ballata by Machiavelli

4. Io piango, chè'l dolore

Pianger' mi fa, perch'io	I'm weeping, for the grief
Non trov'altro rimedio a l'ardor' mio.	Makes me cry, since I
Così m'ha concio' Amore	Can find no other remedy for my fire.
Ch'ognor' viv'in tormento	So trapped by Love am I
Ma quanto piango più, men doglia sento.	That ever I lie in torment
Sorte fiera e inaudita	But the more I cry the less pain I feel.
Che'l tacer mi d'a morte e'l pianger vita.	What cruel, unheard-of fate
	That silence gives me death and weeping life!

—Vincenzo Ruffo (c.1508–1587)

5. Luci serene e chiare,

Voi m'incendete, voi; ma prov'il core	Eyes serene and clear,
Nell' incendio diletto, non dolore.	You inflame me, but my heart must
Dolci parole e care,	Find pleasure, not sorrow, in the fire.
Voi mi ferite, voi; ma prov' il petto	Words sweet and dear,
Non dolor ne la piaga, ma diletto.	You wound me, but my breast must
O miracol d'amore!	Find pleasure, not sorrow, in the wound.
Alma ch'è tutta foco e tutta sangue,	O miracle of love!
Si strugge e non si duol, mor'e non langue.	The soul that is all fire and blood,
	Melts yet feels no sorrow, dies yet does not languish.

—Ridolfo Arlotti (1546–1613), as set by Monteverdi, Gesualdo, and others

6. Se per havervi, oime, donato il core,

Nasce in me quell'ardore,	If, alas, when I gave you my heart,
Donna crudel, che m'arde in ogno loco,	There was born in me that passion,
Tal che son tutto foco,	Cruel Lady, which burns me everywhere
E se per amar voi, l'aspro martire	So that I am all aflame,
Mi fa di duol morire,	And if, loving you, bitter torment
Miser! che far debb'io	Makes me die of sorrow,
Privo di voi che sete ogni ben mio?	Wretched me! What shall I do
	Without you who are my every joy?

—From the madrigal (published 1587) by Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

intermission

Se per havervi, oime (published 1587)
by **Claudio Monteverdi** (1567–1643)

If you were to ask a musicologist which composer had the greatest influence on the development of Western music, one of the most likely answers would be an enthusiastic "Monteverdi." Claudio Monteverdi was born and trained in Cremona, in north-central Italy. In 1590/1, he took a post at the Gonzaga court of Duke Vincenzo I in nearby Mantua, rising to become the court *maestro della musica* in 1601. His fame spread steadily throughout Europe, and he became the principal defender of a new compositional style that he termed the *seconda prattica*. This "second practice" was in opposition to the florid polyphony which we now know as the High Renaissance style. He argued that the older style subordinated the text to the needs of the music, but the newer style reversed this precedence. He knew of the musical innovations that had been explored in Florence, such as the *basso continuo* and text declamation through recitative, and embraced them in the landmark 1607 opera, *Orfeo*. This shift from the Renaissance to Baroque styles is perhaps best illustrated in Monteverdi's nine books of madrigals, spanning 1587 to 1651.

Se per havervi, oime comes from Monteverdi's first book of madrigals, published when the composer was but twenty years old. It is part of the great flowering of the Italian Renaissance madrigal, which had flourished since the 1530s as an emerging middle class, especially Venetian merchants, wanted music they could make in their homes, thereby to emulate the elaborate musical entertainments of the wealthy. Madrigals, with their secular texts in the local vernacular language, filled this need perfectly. *Se per havervi, oime* is typical of the genre: short melodic phrases are passed back and forth among the voices, and the text is only loosely linked to the music as the mood changes.

Se per havervi, oime, donato il core,	If, alas, when I gave you my heart,
Nasce in me quell'ardore,	There was born in me that passion,
Donna crudel, che m'ard' in ogno loco,	Cruel Lady, which burns me everywhere
Tal che son tutto foco,	So that I am all aflame,
E se per amar voi, l'aspro martire	And if, loving you, bitter torment
Mi fa di duol morire,	Makes me die of sorrow,
Miser! che far debb'io	Wretched me! What shall I do
Privo di voi che sete ogni ben mio?	Without you who are my every joy?

—Text probably by the composer. Translation by Erica Muhl.

Lugebat David Absalon (first published in 1564)
by **Nicolas Gombert** (c.1495–c.1560)

Gombert was born in that region of northern France and southern Flanders that produced so many brilliant musicians in his era. It is believed that he studied under Josquin des Prez, who was resident in the local town of Condé-sur-l'Escaut until his death in 1521. In 1526, Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, engaged Gombert as a singer in his court chapel in Spain. Gombert later rose to the post of *maître des enfants,* overseeing and training the boy choristers. As unofficial court composer, he traveled with the imperial entourage throughout western Europe and gained honorary clerical posts at several cathedrals in Burgundy, including Tournai. Gombert became one of the most influential figures in the generation between Josquin and Palestrina. His genre of choice was the motet, of which he composed over 160, and his cycle of eight Magnificat settings is particularly

noteworthy. Among his other surviving works are eleven masses and about eighty secular chansons. Gombert's compositional style embraces certain innovations that make his texture muddy to modern ears: he tended to use all voices throughout a work, eschewing rests, and each new point of imitation begins while the previous one is still continuing. His fortunes dramatically reversed in 1540, when he was charged with sexual misconduct with a boy in his charge and sentenced to hard labor, rowing in the galleys. Evidently his punishment was eventually commuted, for he seems to have retired to Tournai in 1547. Otherwise nothing is known of his later life; he died sometime between 1556 and 1561. His fame continued, as his music was certainly known to such prominent later figures as Morales, Lassus, and even Monteverdi.

Gombert's *Lugebat David Absalon* poses several musicological problems. Its primary contemporary source, which dates from 1564 and thus after Gombert's death, attributes the motet to Josquin. The first half, however, is definitely an adaptation of Gombert's chanson *Je prens congié,* which was also applied to at least two other sacred texts. The second half is apparently adapted from a different chanson, a setting of *J'ay mis mon cueur* which does not survive; the music can be attributed to Gombert only on stylistic grounds. It is unknown who first applied this text to the pre-existing music; perhaps it was a unique moment of inspiration on behalf of the otherwise unscrupulous publisher who, hoping for better sales, intentionally misattributed the work to Josquin.

Even though the music and words were not originally intended together, they match surprisingly well. Each line of text is given a unique motive, which is taken up by each of the eight voices in succession, often overlapping into the next section. When certain words do emerge from the texture—as at "heu me" ("alas me", or more colloquially "woe is me"), or "fili mi" ("my son")—it is with effective poignancy. The long, high notes juxtaposed with rising scales powerfully depict King David's pain as he "cries out with a great voice" ("clamabat voce magna"). Gombert's use of imitative sequences (in which each successive voice shifts the motive a step up or down) can create harmonic complications for the performer. In the Renaissance era, singers were trained on how to intuitively modify the written pitches to make the music harmonious, in a practice known as *musica ficta*. The conclusion of *Lugebat* presents special choices in this regard. Though the original score is notated with G-naturals, *Lugebat* is often performed with *ficta* G-flats, interpolating into David's psyche an empty hopelessness. Now, as then, it is left to the performers to decide.

Lugebat David Absalon,
pius pater filium,
tristis senex puerum:
heu me fili mi Absalon,
quis mihi det ut moriar,
ut ego pro te moriar?
O fili mi, Absalon!

Rex autem David filium
cooperto flebat capite:
quis mihi det ut moriar,
O fili mi!
Porro rex operuit caput suum,
et clamabat voce magna:
O fili mi Absalon!

Mourned David for Absalom,
the pious father for the son,
the sad elder for the child:
"Alas me, my son Absalom,
who to me will grant that I may die,
that I for thee may die?
O my son, Absalom!"

But King David for his son
wept with covered head:
"Who to me will grant that I may die,
O my son!"
And the king covered his head,
and cried out with a great voice:
"O my son, Absalom!"

O Absalom (2010/24)
by **Gary D. Cannon** (born 1975)

The composer writes: I began composing my setting of the popular Renaissance text, "When David heard that Absalom was slain," in 2010, intending it for the Renaissance choir, Sine Nomine, which I was directing at the time. I did not complete the work, however, until earlier this year, when I added two brief sections to conjoin my earlier sketches. *O Absalom* is in the form of a prelude and fugue. The fugal writing is intended to convey David's obsessively repeated phrase: "O my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee." Periodic hints of quartal harmony (sometimes based on the pitches G–D–C) add color. The introductory material returns at the end, implying that David's mourning could continue indefinitely.

It has been a pleasure finally completing *O Absalom* for performance this year by the Emerald Ensemble and, now, by the Cascadian Chorale. The work is dedicated to Carl Ryanen-Grant, my childhood best friend who died of cancer when we were twenty-four. Carl was a remarkable fellow; check him out on Wikipedia.

When David heard that Absalom was slain,
he went up to his chamber, over the gate, and wept, and said:
O Absalom, would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.

Ubi caritas (1960)
from Quatre motets sur des thèmes grégoriens [Four Motets on Gregorian Themes], opus 10
by **Maurice Duruflé** (1902–1986)

Few of history's great composers have been as self-critical as Maurice Duruflé. In fact, his published works run to only eleven opus numbers. His works for organ and for chorus (especially the 1947 *Requiem*) are justifiably hailed, but all his output is of comparable quality (I especially commend to you his orchestral *Trois danses* of 1932). Duruflé's early training came at the cathedral in Rouen, where chant held sway. While at the Conservatoire in Paris, he was Charles Tournemire's deputy but Louis Vierne's student. Those masters' opposing styles—the former mystical/modal, the latter structural/practical—formed the twin pillars of Duruflé's approach to music. In 1930, he became organist at Saint-Étienne-du-Mont in the medieval Latin Quarter of Paris; he retained the post until his death. He also toured internationally as an organist and taught as professor of harmony at the Conservatoire for twenty-seven years. Not bad for a guy who wasn't very confident in his work.

The *Quatre motets* reveal Duruflé's abiding interest in Gregorian chant. Each of the four begins with a quote of chant, from which Duruflé builds his own polyphonic edifice. 'Ubi caritas' is the best known, especially for its somber open and close, but the dramatic central section ("Exsultemus") reveals his instinctively modal harmonies. Most important, however, is the palpable sense of devotion and spirituality that Duruflé imbues into each moment.

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Exsultemus et in ipso jucundemur.
Timeamus et amemus Deum vivum,
et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.
Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est. Amen.

Where there are charity and love, God is there.
He has brought us together as one in Christ's love.
Let us rejoice and in it be glad.
Let us fear and love the living God,
and in pure heart love one another.
Where are charity and love, God is there. Amen.

Free toes (2019) — *world premiere performances*
by **Tara O'Brien Pride** (born 1964)

Many of Cascadian Chorale's singers find musical outlet in activities other than singing. Tara O'Brien Pride, for example, also plays harp quite nicely. In the Chorale, she sings alto, which is perhaps obvious in her recent composition, *Free toes*. The sopranos rarely get the melody: the altos and basses are most prominent. Jazzy harmonic inflections pop up here and there.

The composer writes: "Not long ago, I read about a scientific study demonstrating that people's moods were lifted when they experienced nature even a little bit, such as being near a patch of grass. That made me think about the common childhood joy of walking barefoot on the lawn, and behold, the idea of *Free toes* sprouted. I wrote the lyrics first, depicting several scenes in which the bare toes have a somewhat unplanned, joyous contact with nature. From there, an easy-going swing rhythm emerged and finally a melody to match. I like to think this piece portrays the mood-lifting power of nature whether or not we experience it barefooted."

When I'm feeling tired, and boxed in all the day,
I like to find a sunny patch and kick my shoes away.
The freedom of my stocking feet to me is just a tease,
And so I strip the socks off and give my toes the breeze.

Free toes! Ah, free toes!
Today's a great day to walk in wildness,
Let my feet feel the world around us.
Suddenly we are floating off the ground,
Oo, my soul has been found!

Hiking through an alpine meadow,
See the path that beckons so.
There's a daisy calling to me,
"Come and let those tootsies go!"

How can I resist temptation?
Grasses cool the feet, I know.
Petals touching skin are pleasing.
Laces loosen, boots heave-ho!

Free toes! Ah, free toes!...

Without cares, I daydream fondly,
Even let my eyelids close.
What's that! Giggles burst upon me
When I feel a puppy licking my toes!

Walking on the beach at sunset,
Distant clouds are pink and blue.
Weathered logs are calling to me,
"Rest a spell, enjoy the view!"

How can I resist temptation?
Shifting sand is in my shoe.
As I perch, my bare feet doodle,
Let the grains of sand sift through.

Free toes! Ah, free toes!...

Not feeling mired any more!
Floating high, me and my toes!
Free toes!

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHOIR'S DECORATIVE SPRAY?

It's the *Firesong Madrigals!*

Special thanks to local (but nationally known) artist Barbara Earl Thomas for allowing me to steal the design idea from "Heaven on Fire," the catalogue of her 2016 exhibit at Bainbridge Island Museum of Art; and to Tessa Ravagni, our much overworked President, and her magnificent Cricut machine.

—Genie Middaugh

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- presenting quality performances of fine choral music from various historical, cultural and stylistic traditions; and
- collaborating with composers, professional musicians and other arts organizations.

Our Vision

is a community engaged in great choral music performed with passion and skill.

Find our web site and links to our social media at CascadianChorale.org.

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