Luca Marenzio (1553/54–1599)
The Eighth Book of Madrigals for Five Voices (1598)

Blue Heron
Carol Schlaikjer, soprano
Martin Near, alto
Aaron Sheehan, tenor
Mark Sprinkle, tenor
Paul Guttry, bass
Olav Chris Henriksen, lute
Scott Metcalfe, director

Saturday, April 29, 2006
The French Library, Boston

Program

i. O occhi del mio core e d’Amor lumi
ii. Dunque romper la fè, dunque degg’io
iii. Filli, volgendo i lumi al vago Aminta
iv. Vita soave e di dolcezza piena

v. Provate la mia fiamma
vi. Ahi, chi ti insidia al boscareccio nido
vii. Ite, amari sospiri
viii. Pur venišì, cor mio

ix. Quand’io miro le rose
x. Deh, Tirsi mio gentil, non far più stratio
xi. Questi leggiadri odorosetti fiori
xii. Care lagrime mie

xiii. La mia Clori è brunetta
xiv. Non sol—dissi—tu puoi, anima fera
xv. Se tu, dolce mio ben, mi saettašì
xvi. Laura, se pur sei l’aura
O occhi del mio core e d’Amor lumi,
A me d’affanni e di perpetuo sonno.
Ah, ch’è meglio è morir, mora Amarilli
A le tue belle membra, e vedi et odi
Anima bella, se quì intorno sei
Anzi fonti di tenebre e di pianto,
Teco m’accogli, ch’io ti seguo. —In questo
Troppo vedeste: hor vi chiudete homai.
Tu’l mio foco accendesti, hor sei di ghiaccio,
Ch’è fatto a brevi sonni et a diletti,
Ohime, qual io ti veggio! O luci triste,
O bocca già di rose, hor di viole,
O volto già di fiam, ’hora di neve,
—O eyes of my heart and lights of Love,
which death now returns
beneath the moon and the starry skies;
O countenance once of flame, now snowy;
O mouth once rosy, now violet blue,
do I behold you and not die? Beloved Alcippus,
you ignited my fire, now you are icy,
and does your chill not extinguish my blaze?
Woe is me that I see you! O grieving eyes,
Fountains of darkness and tears,
Take me with you, that I might follow you. —At this
Alcippus revived and, opening his weary eyes,
Perhaps you will wish to follow me: ah, how much more I fear
What do you do with me now, disconsolate and sad?
It is surely time to die, if my love
has already been made another’s. Happy death, if I had died while my faith still lived!
Her faith is dead, it is not released, so she
May not be another’s, if she is not mine
as long as I live. Ah, already I feel myself dying!
Grow, grieve, and do the compassionate and cruel
office that my hand was ready to do,
and release her faith and my life.

O life, sweet and full of delight
while it pleased my evil fate and Heaven,
what do you do with me now, disconsolate and sad?
It is surely time to die, if my love
has already been made another’s. Happy death, if I had died while my faith still lived!
Her faith is dead, it is not released, so she
may not be another’s, if she is not mine
as long as I live. Ah, already I feel myself dying!
Grow, grieve, and do the compassionate and cruel
office that my hand was ready to do,
and release her faith and my life.

Ah, who sets a trap for you in his woody den,
O my gentle wild creature! Ah, who boldly lays
a snare for you? Ah, poor wretch, who waits for you
in the passage—the wicked, faithless shepherd Bifolco?
Stay, flee the empoisoned pastures, and behold your faithful
Lido, who, grieving, extends
his friendly arms to receive you, and regards
with scorn the hound and the hunter’s cry.
Come, ah, come to me, timid and lovely one,
and do not scorn him who often allured you
with the sweet bait of true love.

Or pur deggio morir misera prima?
S’io moro, ohime! quanto martir,
Portando che la tua, dolente e vedi et odi
Forse vorrai seguire: ah, che di più temi
L’incerta tua, che la mia certa morte.
Ma s’io poi resto in quest’amara vita,
E se allor mora quando viveva sua fea!
Sua fede è morta, non è sciolta, ché
Esser d’altro non può, se non è mia
Mentre ch’io vivo. Ah! già morir mi sento.
Cresci, dolor, e fa il pietosio e crudo
Ufficio, che a far pronta la mano,
E sciogli la sua fede e la mia vita.
Tasso, Il convito di pastori, 189–200
Per quella soavissima dolcezza
Che trar solevi già da gl'occhi miei,
Che tue stelle chiamavi, hor son due fonti;
Per queste amare lagrime: ti prego,
Habbi pietà di me, misera Filli.

Guarini, Il pastor fido, II, 6: 905–917

Questi leggiadri odorosetti fiori
Fur già Ninfe e Pastori
Et hor de miei pensieri
Son muti messaggieri.

Deh, mentre voi pietosa
Volgete gl'occhi a la lor sorte ria,
Pietà vi mova de la doglia mia.

Celiano (Grillo)

La mia Clori è brunetta,
Ma così mi diletta
Che non invidio candida bellezza
A chi l’ama et apprezza,
E di bruna beltà tanto son pago.
Quanto misto colore
Più gl’occhi appaga e più rallegra il core.

Celiano (Grillo)

—Non sol—dissi—tu puoi, anima fera
Levar a questi miei languidi lumi
Il lor più caro obietto,
Ma questo afflitto cor trarmi dal petto;
Non farai già mentre havrò spirto e core,
Idolo mio crudel, ch’io non t’adore.

—Ah, my gentle Thyrsis, torment no longer
one who adores you. Alas! you are not a beast,
you do not have a heart of marble or stone.
Behold me at your feet. If ever I offended you,
ido of my heart, I ask your pardon.
By these beautiful, dear, and more than human
knees of yours, which I embrace, to which I bow;
by that love which once you bore me;

Ah, when you, compassionate lady,
turn your eyes to their hard fate,
may you be moved by pity for my pain.

Giovambattista Guarini

Ite, amari sospiri,
A la bella cagion del morir mio
E dite: —O troppo di pietate ignuda,
S’havete pur desio
Di lungamente conservarvi cruda,
Allentate il rigore,
Che quel meschin si more,
E darà tosto fin co’l suo morire
A la durezza vostra, al suo languir.

Go, bitter sighs,
to the lovely cause of my death
and say: —O too barren of pity!
if it is indeed your desire
to stay cruel for a long time,
relax your harshness,
for that wretch is dying,
and with that death will soon put an end
to your hardness, to his pining.

Ce lo senti ne tu dischi vegghianti!

Giovambattista Guarini

Quand’io miro le rose
Ch’in voi natura pose,
E quelle che v’ha l’arte
Nel vago seno sparte,
Non so conoscer poi
S’o voi le rose o sian le rose voi.

When I see the roses
that nature placed in you,
and those that art
has strewn on your lovely breast,
I cannot tell
whether you are the roses, or the roses you.

Ah, my gentle Thyrsis, torment no longer
one who adores you. Alas! you are not a beast,
you do not have a heart of marble or stone.
Behold me at your feet. If ever I offended you,
ido of my heart, I ask your pardon.
By these beautiful, dear, and more than human
knees of yours, which I embrace, to which I bow;
by that love which once you bore me;

Dear tears of mine,
sorrowful envoy of my cruel pains.

Quando vidi le rose
e nel vago seno sparsi,
Non so quel che lor darsi,
e se siano o no i bei fiori.

Ah, fleeting vision of lovers,
you are like a dream in seeing eyes!

Angelo Grillo

Laura, se pur sei l’aura
Chiogn’asso cor d’Amor dolce ristora,
Come si m’arde il core
D’inusitato ardore?
Ah, che cangi costume
Sol perch’io mi consuma
E neghi desser l’aura, e Laura sei,
Per non rinfierar gli spirì miei.

Perfidia, pur potevi
Negarmi ancor in sì estremo aita,
Non dando lode a l’aspra mia ferita?
Hor godi di mia morte
Chi’opero, ignudo spirto, haver in sorte
Di tormentar quel dilapidato core
Che non hebbe piétà del mio dolore.

Celianno (Grillo); elsewhere attributed to Tasso

Laura, if instead you are the breeze that enflames all burning hearts with sweet Love, why does my heart burn so with unusual heat?
Ak, you change your habits only so that I burn myself out, and you deny being the breeze—yet Laura you are!—in order not to refresh my spirits.

Perfidious one, could you yet deny me aid, even to the last, refusing to believe in my harsh wound?
Now enjoy my death, for I hope that, as a naked spirit, my lot is to torment that pitiless heart, which did not take pity on my sorrow.

Translations by Scott Metcalfe & Mauro Calagone
The vocal ensemble Blue Heron combines a commitment to vivid live performance with knowledge of the latest research into source materials and historical performance practice. Blue Heron’s principal repertoire interests in the last few years have been Franco-Flemish polyphony from Du Fay to Gombert, sacred and secular Spanish music between about 1500 and 1757, and neglected early sixteenth-century English music, especially the rich and unexplored repertory of the Peterhouse partbooks (c. 1540). Founded in 1999, Blue Heron presents its own series of concerts in Cambridge and has appeared regularly at Monadnock Music in New Hampshire. This season the group performed at the 92nd Street Y in New York City at the invitation of Sanford Sylvan, singing music of Carissimi, Charpentier, and Rossi, appeared in a lecture-demonstration at Boston University on a setting of Lamentations by Cristóbal de Morales, sang Luca Marenzio’s Eighth Book of Madrigals at Harvard University as part of an international conference on Marenzio, and gave concerts in Vermont and upstate New York.

Bass-baritone Paul Guttry enjoys a varied career including opera, oratorio, and chamber music. He recently played the Mother in Weill’s 7 Deadly Sins with Intermezzo and Balthasar in Schumann’s Genoveva with Emmanuel Music. Paul has sung with the medieval music ensemble Sequentia and is a former member of Chanticleer. In Boston he has performed with Emmanuel Music, Handel & Haydn, the Boston Cecilia, Boston Revels, Prism Opera, and Collage New Music. Paul can be heard on BMG recordings of medieval music with Sequentia, Erato recordings of the Boston Camerata, and Koch International recordings of Bach with Emmanuel Music.

Olav Chris Henriksen has been acclaimed throughout Europe and North America as soloist and ensemble player on lutes, theorbo and early guitars. He has performed with the Boston Camerata, the Handel & Haydn Society, the Waverly Consort, Boston Baroque, Emmanuel Music, and Chanticleer. His solo recording, La Guitare Royale: French Baroque and Classical Guitar Music, is on the Museum Music label; he has also recorded for Nonesuch, Erato, Pro Musica, Telarc, Centaur and Decca. He has lectured at Harvard University; Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City; Musikkhogskolen, Oslo; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Rutgers University; and Lincoln Center Institute. He teaches at the Boston Conservatory and the University of Southern Maine.

Scott Metcalfe, music director of Blue Heron, is a specialist in music between 1400 and 1750 whose twenty-year career as a baroque violinist and conductor has taken him across North America and Europe. He directs the Renaissance choir Convivium Musicum, is concertmaster of the Trinity Consort in Portland, Oregon, and has conducted Messiah in Seattle, Bach’s St. John Passion in Princeton, and Monteverdi’s Vespers and Handel’s Amadigi at Monadnock Music in New Hampshire. Metcalfe was a founding member of La Luna and of The King’s Noyse and appears on recordings on harmonia mundi, ATMA, Dorian, Wildboar, and elsewhere. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Brown University, where he majored in biology, and has recently completed a master’s degree in historical performance practice at Harvard.

Countertenor Martin Near has been a professional singer since age nine, working his way up to Head Chorister at Saint Thomas Fifth Avenue in New York City, and currently sings with Blue Heron and with the choir of the Church of the Advent. He studied composition at New England Conservatory of Music with Michael Gandolfi. On a grant from the American Composers Forum Boston, Mr. Near served as composer and music director of the one act opera Six Characters in Search of an Opera for Project ARIA (AIDS Response by Independent Artists), which was given five performances in Boston. Mr. Near is an advocate of the performance of new music and has been a soloist in numerous world premieres, including a microtonal piece in 72-note equal temperament performed in Jordan Hall.

Carol Schlaikjer, soprano, received her vocal training at the Music Conservatory in Cologne, Germany, and the Schola Cantorum in Basel, Switzerland. She lived for almost two decades in Germany, where she was a frequent soloist for the Lutheran Church radio broadcasts in Frankfurt am Main. She has performed throughout Europe, Australia and the US as a concert and recording artist, both as a soloist and as a member of various early music ensembles, including Sequentia’s Vox Feminae and the Huelgas Ensemble. Carol is co-director of the Orpheus Vocal Performance Laboratory, which holds workshops for young singers on the South Shore. She also teaches voice in after-school programs in local high schools and at her private voice studio.

Aaron Sheehan, tenor, sings with Blue Heron and Fortune’s Wheel, and has also performed with Theater of Voices, the Handel & Haydn Society, and Liber unUsualis. In January he made his debut with San Francisco’s American Bach Soloists, last fall he toured the United States and Canada with Tragicomedia and Concerto Pala-tino in a production of Monteverdi’s Vespers of 1610, and in June 2005 he appeared as Ivan in the Boston Early Music Festival production of Johann Mattheson’s Boris Goudowen. He keeps an active teaching schedule with students from Brown University and Wellesley College.

Tenor Mark Sprinkle enjoys an active and varied career as a soloist and ensemble singer in repertoire ranging from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. He has appeared as a soloist with Concerto Palatino and with the Handel & Haydn Society under Grant Llewellyn and Christopher Hogwood, and sang in the Boston Early Music Festival productions of Rossini’s Orfeo, Lully’s Thésée, Conradi’s Ariadne, and Mattheson’s Boris Goudowen. In May 2005 he sang the Evangelist in Bach’s St. John Passion with the Andover Choral Society. He worked for many years with Emmanuel Music and can be heard on their recordings of the motets of Heinrich Schütz and the St. John Passion. He keeps an active voice studio at aton College.
Acknowledgements

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Donations from April 30, 2005 through April 23, 2006

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