

#### **PRESENTS**

## ...to St. Cecilia

Tuesday, October 22, 2013 & 7:00PM & St. Peter's Episcopal Church & Port Royal, VA
Saturday, October 26, 2013 & 7:30PM & Guilford College & Greensboro, NC
Saturday, November 2, 2013 & 7:00PM & Morristown Presbyterian Church & Morristown, NJ
Sunday, November 3, 2013 & 7:00PM & St. Mark's Lutheran Church & Pennsburg, PA

# **PROGRAM**

Hymn to St. Cecilia, Op. 27

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Allison Faulkner, soprano

Gaude gloriosa Dei Mater

Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585)

## INTERMISSION

Two Madrigals

Che fa oggi il mio sole

Luca Marenzio (c. 1553-1599)

Vezzosi Augelli

Giaches de Wert (1535-1596)

Jeffrey Paul Cutts, conductor

Missa Cantantibus organis Caecilia

**Kyrie** 

Annibale Stabile (c. 1535-1595)

Christe

Francesco Soriano (1548/9-1621)

Kyrie

Giovanni Andrea Dragoni (c. 1540-1598)

Gloria

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525-1594)

Domine Deus

Unknown, poss. G.P. da Palestrina

Qui Tollis

G.A. Dragoni

Credo

A. Stabile

Crucifixus

A. Stabile

Et Ascendit Et in Spiritum

Sanctus

Agnus Dei

F. Soriano

Ruggiero Giovanelli (c. 1560-1625) Prospero Santini (fl. 1591-1614)

Curzio Mancini (c. 1553-after 1611)

## ABOUT THE THIRTEEN

Founded in 2012, The Thirteen has quickly garnered a reputation of excellence among American Chamber Choirs. The Thirteen is an elite ensemble of twelve professional singers based in the New York City area, specializing in music of the Renaissance and Baroque. The Thirteen performs regularly throughout the northern mid-Atlantic. The 2013-2014 Season is marked by two East Coast tours, and the release of The Thirteen's first CDs: ...to St. Cecilia and Christmas with The Thirteen. The 2013-2014 Season is also marked by a presentation on Renaissance Performance Practice for the High School Choral Musician, given at the joint 2014 Conference of the New Jersey Music Educator's Association and the New Jersey Chapter of the American Choral Director's Association.

The Thirteen is committed to historically informed performance and is known for programming works infrequently performed by American Choirs, and for their World and North American premieres, of music new and old.

## THE FIRST TWELVE

Sopranos	Tenors
Allison Faulkner	Ignacio Angulo-Pizarro
Elise Figa	Jeffrey Paul Cutts
Diana Maye Whitener	Timothy Smith
Altos	Basses
<b>Al</b> tos Biraj Barkakaty	Basses Adam Strube
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Jeffrey Paul Cutts, Assistant Conductor

#### THE THIRTEENTH

Matthew Robertson, a conductor praised for his "sensitive and nuanced" conducting (Oberlin News-Tribune) is in his second season as Artistic Director and Conductor of The Thirteen. As Assistant Conductor of the Westminster Symphonic Choir he assisted in the preparation of Symphonic Choir for performances with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, New Jersey Symphonic Orchestra and Westminster Festival Orchestra for such conductors as Yanick Neget-Seguin, Peter Schreier and Jacques Lacombe. Additionally, Mr. Robertson conducted the Symphonic Choir on their 2011-2012 season. At Westminster, he conducted Westminster Master Singers, Symphonic Choir and Williamson Voices.

Mr. Robertson is Director of Music at Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, MD where he oversees five choirs and a concert series which has had performers such as Leon Fleischer, Donald Sutherland, Phyllis Bryn Julson, Marie-Claire Alain, David Craighead, Gerre Hancock, Andre Marchal and Ned Rorem. Prior to Bradley Hills he served as Director of Music and Organist at Grace Episcopal Church in Haddonfield, NJ where he directed three choirs and served as Artistic Director of the Haddonfield Center and School for the Performing arts where he oversaw a thriving concert series.

Mr. Robertson was the Robert P. Fountain Scholar at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, earning a degree in Organ Performance. While at the Oberlin Conservatory he conducted the Oberlin College Choir, College Singers, Musical Union, Conservatory Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra. In 2008, Matthew founded and conducted the Oberlin Bach Society — an elite group of instrumentalists and singers who performed the music of Bach and his contemporaries throughout Ohio. In January 2007 and 2009, he served as Music Director of the Oberlin Winter Term Orchestra and Choir, performing full-length choral-orchestral concerts.

Mr. Robertson spent the summer of 2008 at the Interlochen Arts Camp as co-conductor of the Interlochen Reading Orchestra, conductor of the student composition recordings, and rehearsal conductor of the World Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Additionally active as an organist, Mr. Robertson has performed throughout the United States and in Western Europe. He served as a conductor and organist at Saint Alban's Episcopal Church on the close of the National Cathedral, New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and Holy Trinity Church in Georgetown – the parish John F. Kennedy attended.

Mr. Robertson began his musical studies at age five on the piano, followed by organ, cello and voice with his first appointment as Director of Music at the age of 16. He has studied conducting with Joe Miller, James Jordan, Andrew Megill, JoAnn Falletta, Bridget-Michaele Reischl and Hugh Ferguson Floyd.

# **PROGRAM NOTES**

## Hymn to St. Cecilia

In 1942 after three years of living in New York where he composed, among other things, his first opera (*Paul Bunyan*) and a choral work (*Ballad of Heroes*), Benjamin Britten boarded a cargo ship, the *MS Axel Johnson*, returning to his home in England in the midst of World War II. The U boat threat was very real at the time and yet while sailing across the Atlantic ocean Britten composed two of his most joyful choral works, *Hymn to St. Cecilia*, and *A Ceremony of Carols*.

Upon boarding the ship Britten's draft for the first section of *Hymn to St. Cecilia* was confiscated by customs officials (thinking it might be coded information!) but Britten wrote out the words and what he had already composed from memory and proceeded with the work— a piece in honor of St. Cecilia. As there is a long tradition in England of writing odes and songs to St. Cecilia he wished to do the same. Poet W.H. Auden had supplied the composer with the text for the hymn in 1940.

In the opening section, Auden's text celebrates an aesthetic and spiritual appeal as well as an erotic one, moving in the second section ("I cannot grow") to words spoken by music itself. The third section begins by praising music for its power to express all emotion innocently ("O dear white children, casual as birds") but then moves to an admonition of failure. Auden concludes by asking the reader to accept one's loss of innocence and celebrate it ("O wear your tribulation like a rose").

Musically, Britten opens the *Hymn* with a spacious, graceful lilt—the women's voices in triplets floating on simple triads while the men in duple time descend in fourths, coming together at each cadence. The first section, as is true of all three sections, concludes with an invocation ("Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions to all musicians"), this first being soft and in unison. The second section is a scherzo, light and fast, playful and childlike, with the sopranos and tenors tossing the words to each other while altos and basses offer us a quasi cantus firmus on the same text. Once again this section concludes with an invocation, harmonized this time. The final section is more instrumental in feeling (St. Cecilia odes traditionally describe different instruments), beginning with a ground which comments on Auden's reference urging us (with solo voices) to end the struggle and concluding the solo tenor's trumpet call, which brings us back to the tonality of the opening of the work. The final invocation comes to a sublime, peaceful cadence in E major.

And so Britten arrived back in England with a work of great joy and beauty, having completed it on 2 April 1942. It was first performed that year on St. Cecilia's Day, one of the marvelous choral treasures of our time.

Program Note by Philip Brunelle

### Gaude gloriosa Dei mater

Gaude gloriosa Dei Mater is a gigantic votive antiphon, with text honoring the Virgin Mary. It would not have been sung as part of a mass, but rather most likely after a service of compline. Opinions differ as to the date of this work, but from its musical sophistication we can conclude that it was almost surely the final culmination of all of Tallis' previous experience in this genre. Some musicologists have placed Gaude gloriosa during the reign of Henry VIII, and others have placed it during the reign of Mary. It is the position of most scholarship and of this author that it was most likely written during the reign of Queen Mary. If the work was written during the reign of Henry, it would have necessarily have been written late in his reign, as this was the only time during his reign when such a large-scale Catholic musical composition would have even been tolerated. Yet, even with the tolerance of Catholic worship at the end of Henry's reign, this tolerance would likely have not extended to those few institutions with musicians capable of performing this work (such as the Chapel Royale or Westminster Abbey). It is much more likely to have been written during the reign of Queen Mary who, during her brief reign from 1553-1558, reinstituted a brief "Indian summer" of Catholicism.

For Tallis, who was brought up Catholic, and served at the Chapel Royale, the "Indian summer" of Catholicism must have been a significant development in his musical-political life, and may have served as inspiration to compose *Gaude gloriosa*. This piece, which contains a ninefold address to the Virgin, and an exhortation of the divine blessings showered upon her, and is essentially celebratory. Here we find Tallis freed: with the resources and personnel at his disposal he can now write the music that he truly wished to write.

Gaude gloriosa is divided between nine verses, and alternates between solo sections and choral sections. Intensely polyphonic and often melismatic – with one syllable stretching across many notes – there is also a high level of emphasis on expression of text. For instance, at the word "omnia" – all – in the second verse, all of the voice parts enter. At the word "damnando" – damned – the choir takes on a vicious and driving rhythm. The work ends with a virtuosic and jubilant choral section.

Program Note by Matthew Robertson

## Che fa oggi il mio sole

As we leave the florid sound-world of pre-reformation Tallis, we draw our attention to the continent and investigate the high Renaissance madrigalian spirit of Luca Marenzio. Marenzio was born around 1,553 in the northern Italian town of Coccaglia – nestled just between Milan and Verona. Marenzio's genius was shown in his vast output of some 500 madrigals, some of which even made their way to England which evoked the English madrigal craze fostered by such great composers as William Byrd, Thomas Tomkins, Thomas Morely and Thomas Weelkes – all of whom,

like Marenzio, were exemplary in their sacred and secular ventures. Marenzio's affinity for the secular text allowed him to create these tiny gems of music appreciation, and displayed perfectly his dedication to not only the secular prose, but to his deeply-rooted faith. His faith influenced his secular composition so intensely that it enabled him to produce some of the most text-oriented dramaticism found seldom outside Italy herself. Che fa oggi il mio sole, scored for SSATB, creates so clearly the picture of beauty and intense love of music. This madrigal was then, by no mistake, parodied by the famous Papel composer, Gregorio Allegri, whose compositions were closely guarded by the Papel choir. Allegri intentionally chose Marenzio's madrigal as his muse in composing his well-known Missa Che fa oggi il mio sole. Its indifatigably positive writing and crowning stature was the perfect model for any composer to base a Mass – so cherishing this madrigal and its off-spring for centuries to come.

Program Note by Timothy Smith

## Vezzosi augelli

Gaiches de Wert, Flemish-born composer, lived an almost identical life span to that of Italian composer Luca Marenzio. Wert was born sometime in the early half of the 16th century - 1535 most probably - presumably in the vicinity of Ghent or his referred-to namesake, Weert, and died in 1596 of Malaria after some grueling 14 years of health complications. Like Marenzio, Wert was a master of the text-related idiom that is so characteristic of this time, giving the listener a truly kaleidoscopic texture of perfectly faceted harmony. It is in these madrigals of music fascination that we find ourselves listing to the music of the spheres, and allow the compositional palate to resonate, bringing out, all the more, the fascination of painting with words, and in particular, painting with words that speak of love for music and the natural creation of the beauty and fervor of music inherent. Vezzosi augelli, scored for a five-voice choir of SSATB, as was customary for almost all of Wert's some 230 madrigals, is arguably his most popular madrigal even during his lifetime. Wert, being heralded for his madrigalian spirit, was, as was Marenzio, a composer of sacred texts, and a deeply devout person, giving great attention to intent and meaning, even when illustrating secular texts. His bright and positive writing give clear indication of his love and devotion to his art. Wert, being so devoted composed even unto his death in Mantua, Italy as he dedicated his final book of madrigals only just a year before.

Program Note by Timothy Smith

## Missa Cantantibus organis Caecilia

Palestrina trained as a chorister at S Maria Maggiore in Rome and his first appointment was in 1544 as organist of S Agapito in Palestrina. In April 1571 he became maestro of the Cappella Giulia where he remained until his death. He was the pre-eminent composer of his generation and had a wide influence on all musicians who came into contact with his music. He was therefore an obvious choice to be at the

center of a project when seven Roman musicians came together to write a Mass-setting where they each contributed different sections. The resulting work, the twelve-voice Missa Cantantibus organis, is a tribute both to Cecilia (the patron saint of music) and to Palestrina. The seven composers each take themes found in Palestrina's motet of the same name and use them as the starting point for their new compositions.

The Mass has a number of odd features. The setting of the 'Domine Deus' Gloria has no composer ascribed to it in any of the sources. Then there is the bizarre state of the Sanctus. Santini composed an impressive opening section but his setting stops after the words 'Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua' and there is no setting of the Hosanna nor the Benedictus in any of the three extant sources. Perhaps one of the composers missed a deadline, or did another composer fail to contribute?

Annibale Stabile (c1535–1595) was the writer of the first section of the Kyrie, the first section of the Credo and the 'Crucifixus', and as such is the most prominent composer in the piece. He described himself as a pupil of Palestrina and spent most of his life in Rome where he was finally maestro at S Maria Maggiore (1591–1594).

The 'Christe' section was set by Francesco Soriano (1548/9–1621) as was 'Et ascendit' from the Credo. A chorister under Palestrina at S Giovanni in Laterano, Soriano became a priest in 1574 and was maestro at S Luigi dei Francesi in Rome from 1570. He was dismissed from this post in 1581 (due to his too frequent absences) and subsequently moved to Mantua where he served as maestro from 1581 to 1586 (interestingly there was an attempt to remove him from this post also in 1583).

Two sections were contributed by Giovanni Andrea Dragoni (c1540–1598)—the final portions of the Kyrie and the Gloria. In a dedication of 1575 he pays tribute to the education he received from Palestrina.

Ruggiero Giovannelli (c1560–1625) provided music for the culmination of the Credo and he may also have been a pupil of Palestrina (although there is no definite evidence for this). In 1594 he succeeded Palestrina as maestro at the Cappella Giulia but resigned this post in 1599 when he joined the Sistine Chapel Choir as a singer. He served as secretary of the Cappella Sistina in 1607, treasurer from 1610 to 1613 and was elected maestro in 1614.

The incomplete Sanctus is in a setting by the little known Prospero Santini (fl1591–1614). Thus far history has given us neither a birth nor a death date. He was maestro di cappella of the Congregazione dei Preti dell' Oratorio.

Curzio Mancini (c1553-after 1611) was the composer of the Agnus Dei. He was a chorister at S Giovanni in Laterano until February 1567 and may therefore have spent a little time studying with Palestrina.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Hymn to St. Cecilia

In a garden shady this holy lady
With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,
Like a black swan as death came on
Poured forth her song in perfect calm:
And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,
And notes tremendous from her great engine
Thundered out on the Roman air.

Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited, Moved to delight by the melody, White as an orchid she rode quite naked

I cannot grow; I have no shadow To run away from, I only play.

I cannot err; There is no creature Whom I belong to, Whom I could wrong.

I am defeat When it knows it Can now do nothing By suffering.

O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,
Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all
The gauchness of her adolescent state,
Where Hope within the altogether strange
From every outworn image is released,
And Dread born whole and normal like a beast
Into a world of truths that never change:
Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.

I.

In an oyster shell on top of the sea; At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing Came out of their trance into time again, And around the wicked in Hell's abysses The huge flame flickered and eased their pain.

Blessed Cecilia appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

II.

All you lived through, Dancing because you No longer need it For any deed.

I shall never be Different. Love me.

Blessed Cecilia appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

III.

O dear white children casual as birds, Playing among the ruined languages, So small beside their large confusing words, So gay against the greater silences Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head, Impetuous child with the tremendous brain, O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain, Lost innocence who wished your lover dead, Weep for the lives your wishes never led.

O cry created as the bow of sin Is drawn across our trembling violin. O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain.

O law drummed out by hearts against the still Long winter of our intellectual will.

That what has been may never be again.

O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving breath Of convalescents on the shores of death.

#### Gaude gloriosa Dei mater

Gaude gloriosa Dei Mater, Virgo Maria vere honorificanda, quae a Domino in gloria super caelos exaltata adepta es thronum.

Gaude Virgo Maria, cui angelicae turmae dulces in caelis resonant laudes: iam enim laetaris visione Regis cui omnia servirunt.

Gaude concivis in caelis sanctorum, quae Christum in utero illaesa portasti: igitur Dei Mater digne appellaris.

Gaude flos florum speciosissima, virga iuris, form morum, fessi cura, pes labentis, mundi lux, et peccatorum refugium.

Gaude Virgo Maria quam dignam laude celebrat ecclesia, quae Christi doctrinis illustrata te Matrem glorificat.

Gaude Virgo Maria, quae corpore et anima ad summum provecta es palacium: et, ut auxiliatrix et interventrix pro nobis miserimis peccatoribus, supplicamus.

Gaude Maria intercessorum adiutrix et damnandorum salvatrix celebranda.

Gaude sancta Virgo Maria cuius prole omnes salvamur a perpetuis inferorum suppliciis et a potestate diabolica liberati. O bless the freedom that you never chose.

O trumpets that unguarded children blow About the fortress of their inner foe.

O wear your tribulation like a rose.

Blessed Cecilia appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

Rejoice, O glorious Mother of God, Virgin Mary truly worthy of honor, who, exalted by the Lord in glory above the heavens, hast gained a throne.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, to whom the hosts of angels in heaven sweetly sing praises: for now thou dost enjoy the sight of the King whom all things serve.

Rejoice, fellow citizen of the heavenly saints, thou who without blemish bore Christ in thy womb: wherefore thou art justly called the Mother of God.

Rejoice, most beautiful flower of flowers, rod of justice, mould of virtues, succor of the weary, a firm foothold for those who fall, light of the world, and refuge of sinners.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, who art worthy of the praise the Church celebrates, which, enlightened by the teachings of Christ, glorifies thee as Mother.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, who in body and soul are borne to the highest palace: and to whom, as Strength and Advocate for us miserable sinners, we make our supplication.

Rejoice, O Mary, celebrated as help of those who intercede and savior of the damned.

Rejoice, holy Virgin Mary, by whose offspring all are saved from the perpetual torments of Hell and freed from the power of the devil. Gaude Virgo Maria Christi benedicta Mater, vena misericordiae et gratiae: cui supplicamus ut nobis pie clamantibus attendas, itaque tuo in nomine mereamur adesse caelorum regnum. Amen.

## Che fa oggi il mio sole

Che fa oggi il mio sole, che fa'l mio canto e'l suono, Che non cantan di lei la Gloria e'l nome?

Or queste mie viole E questi fior gli dono Che ne faci corona a le sui chiome.

#### Vezzosi augelli

Vezzosi augelli infra le verde fronde Tempran' a prova lascivette note, Mormora l'aura, e fa le foglie e l'onde Garir, che variamente ella percote.

Quando tacion gl' augelli alto risponde; Quando cantan gl'augei, piu lieve scote; Sia caso od'arte, or accompagn'ed ora Alternaiversi lor, la Musica ora. Rejoice, Virgin Mary, blessed Mother of Christ, channel of mercy and grace:

to whom we pray that thou wouldst give ear to our devout cry so that in thy name we may deserve to enter the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

What doth today my sun, What doth my song and music, If they sing not of her glory and her name?

Now these my violets And these flowers to her I give That she may make of them a crown for her tresses.

Pretty birds amid the green fronds
Harmonize in competition
their wanton little notes;
Murmurs the breeze,
and makes the leaves and waves
Flutter, as variously she strikes them.

When silent are the birds loudly she replies; When sing the birds, more softly she shakes; Be it by chance or art, now she accompanies and now Alternates their verses with her musical breeze.

## Missa Cantantibus organis Caecilia

Due to the ubiquity of a setting of the Mass text on nearly every one of our programs, The Thirteen has, in an effort to reduce our carbon footprint, refrained from printing this well-known text in our programs. To view the text and translation of the mass, please visit: www.thethirteenchamberchoir.com/Mass.pdf

#### Tanzen

Tanzen und springen,
Singen und klingen,
Lauten und Geigen
Soll'n auch nicht schweigen,
Zu musizieren
Und jubilieren steht mir all mein Sinn.

Schöne Jungfrauen
In grüner Auen,
Mit ihn'n spazieren
Und converzieren,
Freundlich zu scherzen,
Freut mich im Herzen für Silber und Gold.

Dancing and leaping singing and ringing,
Lutes and violins as well are not expected to be silent; playing my instrument and singing joyfully is all my wish.

Pretty maidens
on green meads,
strolling with them
and conversing with them,
dallying gallantly
delights my heart more than silver and gold.

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