

Cipriano de Rore, *I madrigali a cinque voci* (1542)

1.

Cantai mentre ch'ì arsi del mio foco
La viva fiamma, ov'io morendo vissi,
Ben che quant'io cantai e quant'io scrissi
Di madonna e d'amor fu nulla o poco.

Ma se i begli occhi ond'il mio cor s'accese
Del lor chiaro divin almo splendore
Non m'havessero a torto fatto indegno,
Col canto havrei l'interno e grave ardore
A gl'orecchi di tal fatto palese
Che pietà fora ov'alberga ira e sdegno.
A gli amorosi strali fermo segno
Sarei, pieno di dolce aspro martiro
Ov'hora in libertà piango e sospiro.
Ahi, pace in cor d'amanti non ha loco!

Giovanni Brevio, *Rime e prose volgari* (Venice, 1545)

2.

Hor che 'l ciel et la terra e 'l vento tace,
Et le fere e gli augelli il sono affrena,
Notte 'l carro stellato in giro mena,
Et nel suo letto il mar senz'onda giace,

Veggio, penso, ardo, piango, e chi mi sface
Sempre m'è inanzi per mia dolce pena.
Guerra è 'l mio stato, d'ira e di duol piena,
Et sol di lei pensando ho qualche pace.

Così sol d'una chiara fonte viva
Move 'l dolce e l'amaro ond'io mi pasco,
Una man sola mi risana e punge,

Et perche 'l mio martir non giunga a riva,
Mille volte il dì moro, e mille nasco,
Tanto da la salute mia son lunge.

Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 164

3.

Poggiand'al ciel coll'ali del desio,
Icaro il fol'ardir' menol'in parte
Dove si sfe la cera a parte a parte,
Che di pium'e d'orgoli'il padre ordio.

Miser, ove ti mena il fatto rio,
Fuor del dritto camin ad infiammarto,
Fer sepultura a le tue membra sparte
Le belle nimphe Galathea e Spio.

I sang while I burned from the living flame
of my fire, whence I, dying, lived,
although what I sang and what I wrote
about my lady and Love were nothing, or little.

But if the fair eyes which ignited my heart
with their bright, divine, noble splendor
had not wrongfully made me ashamed,
with a song I would have revealed
my grievous, inward passion to those ears,
so that there might be pity where anger and disdain dwell.
I would be a sure mark for those amorous darts,
full of sweet, bitter suffering
where now in freedom I weep and sigh:
Oh, peace has no place in the hearts of lovers!

Now that the heavens and the earth and the wind are silent
and sleep reins in the beasts and the birds,
Night drives her starry car about,
and in his bed the sea lies without a wave,

I wake, I think, I burn, I weep; and she who destroys me
is always before me, to my sweet pain.
War is my state, full of wrath and suffering,
and only thinking of her do I have any peace.

Thus from one single clear living fountain
spring the sweet and the bitter on which I feed;
one hand alone heals me and pierces me;

and so that my suffering may not reach an end,
a thousand times a day I die and a thousand am born,
so far am I from my health.

Rising up to the heavens on wings of desire,
Icarus was led by mad daring to a place
where bit by bit the wax was undone
that his father had woven from feathers and pride.

Unhappy one, where the wicked deed leads you,
leaving the straight path to be consumed in flames,
a sepulchre for your scattered limbs
was made by the fair nymphs Galateia and Speio.

Tal si trova dinanzi al lume vostro,
Donna gentil, ogni ardimento humano
Che d'honor et virtute si desvia,

Dinanzi a voi Amor lascivo et vano
Perd'ali e strali. O dov'è chi mi dia
Per honorarv'assai ingegn'e ingiostro?

anonymous

5.

Solea lontana in sonno consolarne
Con quella dolce angelica sua vista
Madonna; hor mi spaventa et mi contrista,
Né di duol né di tema posso aitarne:

Che spesso nel suo volto veder parme
Vera pietà con grave dolor mista,
Et udir cose onde 'l cor fede acquista
Che di gioia, et di speme si disarme.

Non ti soven di quell' ultima sera,
Dic'ella, ch'i' lasciai li occhi tuoi molli
Et sforzata dal tempo me n'andai?

I' non tel potei dir all'hor, né vollen;
hor tel dico per cosa experta et vera,
Non sperar di vedermi in terra mai.

Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 250

7.

Strane rupi, aspri monti, alte tremanti
Ruine e sassi al ciel nudi e scoperti,
Ove a gran pena pon salir tant'erti
Nuvoli in questo fosco aer fumanti;

Superbo horror, tacite selve e tanti
Negr'antr'herbosi in rotte pietre aperti,
Abbandonati sterili deserti
Ove han paura andar le belve erranti:

A guisa d'hom che da soverchia pena
Il cor trist'ange fuor di senn'uscito
Se n' va piangendo ove la furia il mena,

Vo piangend'io tra voi, e se partito
Non cangia il ciel, con voce assai più piena
Sarò di là tra le mest'ombre udito.

?Niccolò Amanio or Luigi Tansillo

Before your light, noble lady,
every human audacity that turns away
from honor and virtue finds itself in the same plight:

before you lascivious and vain Love
loses his wings and arrows. Oh, where is he who might give me
skill and ink to honor you sufficiently?

Galatea and Speio Nereids who made a tomb for Icarus when he fell into the sea

From afar, my lady used to console me in sleep
with her sweet angelic countenance,
but now it terrifies me and makes me sorrowful,
nor can I defend myself against sorrow or fear:

for often I seem to see in her face
true pity mixed with grave pain,
and to hear things that persuade my heart
to disarm itself of joy and hope.

“Do you not remember that last evening,”
she says, “when I left your eyes moist
and, forced by time, I departed?”

“I could not tell you then, nor did I wish to;
now I tell you as something tested and true:
Do not hope to see me on earth ever again.”

Strange cliffs, harsh mountains, high shaking
ruins, and rocks naked and exposed to Heaven,
where with great effort such steep clouds
of smoke rise in the gloomy, fuming air;

magnificent horror, silent woods, and so many
black grass-grown caves opened into broken stones;
abandoned, barren deserts
where wandering beasts go in fear:

As a man who, with sad heart, torn with
excessive pain, out of his mind,
goes weeping wherever his madness leads him,

I go weeping among you: and if Heaven does not
take my side, with a much fuller voice
will I be heard from there among the sad shades.

8.

La vita fuge, et non s'arresta un' hora,
Et la morte ven dietro a gran giornate,
Et le cose presenti, et le passate
Mi danno guerra, et le future anchora,

E 'l rimembrar et l'aspettar m'accora,
Hor quinci, hor quindi, sì che 'n veritate,
Se non ch'i' ho di me stesso pietate,
I' sarei già di questi pensier fora.

Tornami avanti, s'alcun dolce mai
Hebbe 'l cor tristo; et poi da l'altra parte
Veggio al mio navigar turbati i venti;

Veggio fortuna in porto, et stanco homai
Il mio nochier, et rotte arbore et sarte,
E i lumi bei, che mirar soglio, spenti.

Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 272

9.

Tu piangi, et quella per chi fai tal pianto
Ne ride, et ride 'l ciel che l'ha raccolta
Fra l'alme elette, libera e disciolta
Dal fral, caduco et corruptibil manto.

Lei, tutta intenta al lume divo e santo,
Dolc'harmonia per ogni parte ascolta,
Poi volgendos'a se si dice, "O stolta,
Perche se' in terra dimorata tanto?"

Et quando gli occhi suoi qua giù declina,
Vedendo la pregon d'ond'è partita,
Si duol di tua miseria e trista sorte.

El viver nostr'è un fior colto da spina;
Però piange la tua, non la sua morte,
Che morte è quella che si chiama vita.

Antonio Tebaldeo, *Rime* (1498)

13.

Perseguendomi Amor al luogo usato,
Ristretto in guisa d'huom ch'aspetta guerra,
Che si provvede, e i passi intorno serra,
Di miei antichi pensier' mi stava armato.

Volsimi, et vidi un'ombra che da lato
Stampava il sole, et riconobbi in terra
Quella che, se 'l giudicio mio non erra,
Era piu degna d'immortale stato.

Life is fleeting and does not pause for a moment,
and death follows after with great leaps and bounds,
and present and past things
make war on me, and future things also,

and remembering and expecting weigh down my heart,
now on this side, now on that, so that in truth,
except that I take pity on myself,
I would already be beyond these thoughts.

If my sad heart ever knew any sweetness,
it reappears before me; and then ahead
I see the winds turbulent for my voyage,

I see a storm in port, and my helmsman
wearied now, and masts and lines broken,
and the beautiful stars that I used to gaze at, extinguished.

You weep, and she for whom you weep
laughs, and heaven laughs, which has received her
among the elect souls, free and released
from her frail, impermanent, and corruptible mantle.

She, wholly intent on the divine and holy light,
hears sweet harmony all around her,
then, turning to herself, says: "O foolish one,
why did you linger so long on earth?"

And when she turns her eyes down here,
seeing the prison whence she escaped
she grieves over your misery and sad fate.

Our life is a flower plucked from amongst thorns;
so weep for your death, not for hers,
for death is that which is called life.

Since Love was pursuing me to the usual place,
I, drawn up like a man who expects war,
who provisions himself and closes the passes round about,
was armed with my old thoughts.

I turned and saw a shadow to one side,
cast by the sun, and on the ground I recognized
her who, if my judgment does not err,
was more worthy of immortal state.

Io dicea fra mio cor: Perche paventi?
Ma non fu prima dentro il pensier giunto
Che i raggi, ov'io mi struggo, eran presenti.

Come col balenar tona in un punto,
Così fu' io de' begli occhi lucenti
Et d'un dolce saluto insieme aggiunto.

Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 110

17.

Amor, che vedi ogni pensiero aperto
E i duri passi, onde tu sol mi scorgi,
Nel fondo del mio cor gli occhi tuoi porgi
A te palese, a tutt'altri coverto.

Sai quel che per seguirte ò già sofferto,
Et tu pur via di poggio in poggio sorgi,
Di giorno in giorno, et di me non t'accorgi
Che son sì stanco, e 'l sentier m'è troppo erto.

Ben veggio io di lontano il dolce lume
Ove per aspre vie mi sproni et giri,
Ma non ò come tu da volar piume.

Assai contenti lasci i miei desiri,
Pur che ben desiando i' mi consume,
Né le dispiaccia che per lei sospiri.

Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 163

19.

Hor che l'aria et la terra
Per natural destino e pioggia et gielo
Quanto più oltre puote
Et assale et percuote,
Tal che 'l calor si smorza sin al cielo,

Sol nel mio petto ogn'hor lasso si serra
Più vivo ardente lume,
Né per cangiar di ciel cangia costume,
Ma con sì aspra guerra
(Mercè d'una empia et fera) l'alma sface,
Che morte sol desio per trovar pace.

anonymous

I was saying within my heart: "Why are you afraid?"
but the thought had no sooner entered within
than the rays that melt me were present;

as with lightning the thunder comes at the same instant,
so I was overtaken by those beautiful shining eyes
and a sweet greeting all at once.

Love, you who see plainly my every thought
and the harsh steps where you alone guide me,
with your glance you pierce the depths of my heart,
which is revealed to you, but hidden from all others.

You know what I have suffered in following you,
and still you climb from peak to peak,
day after day, and pay no heed to me
though I am so weary, and the path is too steep for me.

I do see from afar the sweet light
toward which you spur and turn me along bitter paths,
but I do not have wings, as you do, to fly.

You satisfy my desires enough,
as long as I am consumed with good desiring
and it does not displease her that I sigh for her.

Now that the air and the earth
in the natural order of things
are assailed and struck
by the full force of rain and frost,
so that warmth is extinguished all the way up to the heavens,

in my breast alone, alas, is forever enclosed
a most intensely burning light,
nor does it change with changing weather;
but, with harshest warfare,
at the mercy of a wicked and cruel lady, the soul is undone,
so that I desire only death in order to find peace.

Translations by Scott Metcalfe, drawing in part on translations by Robert Durling (nos. 5, 8 & 13), Martha Feldman (no. 7) and Massimo Ossi (no. 19).

Blue Heron – bios

Bass-baritone **Paul Guttry** has performed throughout the USA and internationally with Sequentia, Chanticleer, the Boston Camerata, and New York's Ensemble for Early Music. A founding member of Blue Heron, he has also appeared in and around Boston as soloist with Emmanuel Music, the Handel & Haydn Society, the Boston Early Music Festival, the Tanglewood Music Center, Cantata Singers, Boston Cecilia, Prism Opera, Boston Revels, Collage, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and Intermezzo. Paul can be heard on all Blue Heron's recordings, on discs of medieval music by Sequentia, Kurt Weill's *Johnny Johnson* and French *airs de cour* with the Boston Camerata, and on Emmanuel Music's Bach CDs.

Acclaimed as a "lovely, tender high tenor" by *The New York Times*, **Owen McIntosh** enjoys a diverse career of chamber music and solo performance ranging from bluegrass to reggae, heavy metal to art song, and opera to oratorio. A native of remote Northern California, Mr. McIntosh has shared the stage with the country's finest ensembles, including Apollo's Fire, Blue Heron, Boston Baroque, Carmel Bach Festival, Les Canards Chantants, New Vintage Baroque, Staunton Music Festival, TENET, Trident Ensemble, True Concord, San Diego Bach Collegium, and the Grammy-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street. Recent solo engagements include Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* with Boston Baroque, Haydn's *L'isola disabitata* with the American Classical Orchestra, Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* with Apollo's Fire, the Green Mountain Project, and True Concord, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Grand Rapids Symphony, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* with Opera Omnia and Boston Baroque, and the Evangelist in Bach's *St. John Passion* with Tucson Chamber Artists.

Reviewers describe **Jason McStoots** as having an "alluring tenor voice" (*ArtsFuse*) and as "the consummate artist, wielding not just a sweet tone but also incredible technique and impeccable pronunciation" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*). In 2015 he won a Grammy in Opera with the Boston Early Music Festival for the music of Charpentier. A respected interpreter of early music whose solo appearances include *Les plaisirs de Versailles* (Charpentier), *Orfeo*, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, *Vespers of 1610* (Monteverdi), *Abduction from the Seraglio* (Mozart), *Christmas Oratorio*, *St. Mark Passion* (Bach), *Dido and Aeneas* (Purcell), and *Messiah* (Handel), he has appeared with Boston Lyric Opera, Emmanuel Music, Pacific MusicWorks, TENET, San Juan Symphony, Bach Ensemble, Casals Festival, Seattle Early Music Guild, Tragicomedia, and Tanglewood Music Center. He is a core member of Blue Heron and can be heard on all Blue Heron recordings. Other recording credits include Lully's *Pysché*, Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, and Charpentier's *Acteon* with BEMF (CPO), Fischer *Vespers* (Toccata Classics), and *Awakenings* with Coro Allegro (Navona).

Scott Metcalfe has gained wide recognition as one of North America's leading specialists in music from the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries and beyond. Musical and artistic director of Blue Heron, he was music director of New York City's Green Mountain Project (Jolle Greenleaf, artistic director) from 2010-2016 and has been guest director of TENET (New York), the Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), Emmanuel Music (Boston), the Tudor Choir and Seattle Baroque, Pacific Baroque Orchestra (Vancouver, BC), Quire Cleveland, the Dryden Ensemble (Princeton, NJ), and Early Music America's Young Performers Festival Ensemble. Metcalfe also enjoys a career as a baroque violinist, playing with Les Délices (dir. Debra Nagy), Montreal Baroque (dir. Eric Milnes), and other ensembles, and directing the baroque orchestra at Oberlin Conservatory. He taught vocal ensemble repertoire and performance practice at Boston University from 2006-2015, is teaching a class in vocal ensemble performance at Harvard University this year, and is at work on a new edition of the songs of Gilles Binchois. He holds degrees from Brown University and Harvard University.

Countertenor **Martin Near** enjoys a varied career exploring his twin passions for early music and new music. Mr. Near recently sang in the solo quartet of Arvo Pärt's *Passio* with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, was the countertenor soloist in the premiere performance of Dominick DiOrio's *Stabat mater* with Juventas New Music Ensemble, sang the role of Hamor in Handel's *Jephtha* with Boston Cecilia, and was noted for his "fine work" in *Buxtehude's Heut triumphieret Gottes Sohn* with Boston Baroque. He has been a member of Blue Heron since 2001 and appears on all of the group's recordings. He also sings regularly with Emmanuel Music, Boston Baroque, and the Handel & Haydn Society, and was Music Director of Exsultemus from 2009 to 2012.

Soprano **Margot Rood**, hailed for her “luminosity and grace” by *The New York Times*, performs a wide range of repertoire. Recent and upcoming solo appearances include those with Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, New World Symphony, Handel & Haydn Society, Seraphic Fire, Lorelei Ensemble, Les Délices, A Far Cry, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Rhode Island Philharmonic, Blue Heron, The Thirteen, Cape Symphony, Bach Collegium San Diego, and Grand Harmonie, as well as onstage with the Boston Early Music Festival, Monadnock Music, St. Petersburg Opera, and Green Mountain Opera Festival. Ms. Rood is the recipient of numerous awards, including the St. Botolph Emerging Artist Award, the Lorraine Hunt Lieberson Fellowship at Emmanuel Music, and third place in The American Prize competition in art song and oratorio. Her new music venture, *Mélange*, with percussionist Caleb Herron, makes its debut in Baltimore this season. She has been invited for performances and masterclasses by composers at Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania, McGill University, and Keene State College. Her debut solo recording with composer Heather Gilligan, *Living in Light*, is now available from Albany Records. Ms. Rood holds degrees from the University of Michigan and McGill University.

Praised for his “elegant style” (*The Boston Globe*), **Sumner Thompson** is highly sought after as both baritone and tenor. His appearances on the operatic stage include roles in the Boston Early Music Festival’s productions of Conradi’s *Ariadne* (2003) and Lully’s *Psyché* (2007) and several European tours with Contemporary Opera Denmark as Orfeo in Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo*. He has performed across North America as a soloist with the Handel & Haydn Society, Concerto Palatino, Tafelmusik, Apollo’s Fire, Les Boréades (Montreal), Les Voix Baroques, Pacific Baroque Orchestra, the King’s Noyse, Mercury Baroque, and the symphony orchestras of Charlotte, Memphis, and Phoenix. Recent highlights include Monteverdi’s *Vespers of 1610* and a new *Vespers of 1640* with the Green Mountain Project, Buxtehude’s *Membra Jesu Nostri* with Les Voix Baroques and Houston’s Mercury Baroque, Mozart’s *Requiem* at St. Thomas Church in New York City, a tour of Japan with Joshua Rifkin and the Cambridge Concentus, a return to the Carmel Bach Festival, and Britten’s *War Requiem* with the New England Philharmonic and several guest choruses.