



Legends, Lands, & Laments

Saturday, August 24, 2019 ~ 7:30pm
St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Bellevue

John Wilbye — I am quite tired with my groans
Quartet: Vera Giles, Gail Erickson, Aaron Giles, Trevor Tsang
What needeth all this travail? / O fools! can you not see?
Weep, weep, mine eyes

William Byrd — Look down, O Lord, on me poor man
Quartet: Abigail Rausch, Elaine Tsang, Sam Hauer, Doug Wyatt
Come, woeful Orpheus
Penelope that longèd for the sight

Thomas Weelkes — Most mighty and all-knowing Lord
Quartet: Heather Irwin, Kathy Rausch, Christopher Kruse, Jim Whitehead
Thule, the period of cosmography / The Andalusian merchant

Orlando Gibbons — O Lord how do my woes increase
Quartet: Heather Irwin, Dawn Fosse Cook, John LaFond, Trevor Tsang
I see ambition never pleas'd
Drop, drop, slow tears

John Ward — O let me tread in the right path
Quartet: Vera Giles, Elaine Tsang, John LaFond, Rick Commo
A satyr once did run away
Come, sable night

Francis Pilkington — Hidden O Lord are my most horrid sins
Quartet: Elisabeth Baeskens, Dawn Fosse Cook, Aaron Giles, Jim Whitehead
Rest, sweet nymphs

Traditional — Perspice Cisticola

SIR WILLIAM LEIGHTON

Program notes by Aaron Giles

Do you have a hopeful or a cynical view of human nature? The answer to that question may very well color how you view Sir William Leighton's (c. 1565–1622) magnum opus, *The Tears or Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul*.

Leighton was born into a notable family of Shropshire in the mid-1500s and leveraged his fortunate circumstances to acquire a diverse education and make a name for himself. He obtained a share of the family fortune, was elected into local Parliament in 1601, appointed a gentleman pensioner in 1602, and knighted in 1603. So far, so good.

His subsequent dealings, however, took a sour turn. He became involved in shady property deals, fell in with the wrong sorts of people, and built up an extensive portfolio of debts. It was, as he would later describe in the dedication to his book, "a woeful, large, and long experience of imprisonment, troubles, crosses, sicknesses, and afflictions."

After a decade of such misfortune, he was apparently compelled to write a set of poetic lamentations. The first edition of *The Tears or Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul* was published in 1613, without music, but with dedications addressed to royalty, including Prince Charles (later King Charles I). Were these truly poems of remorse for his misdeeds? Or were they a cynical attempt at public relations, attempting to curry favor and perhaps even redemption at the hands of royalty?

Regardless of interpretation, Leighton upped the ante the following year by republishing his collection of poems, only this time set to music. For this effort he recruited what we recognize today as a rather astounding collection of twenty-one different composers of the era—including the likes of William Byrd, Thomas Weelkes, Orlando Gibbons, John Dowland, and many others—to assist him in this effort.

In total, this second edition comprises a total of 55 works, some written for voice and consort (including eight penned by Leighton himself), with the remainder composed for either 4-part or 5-part choir.

Our program today highlights six of these composers, in each case opening with a 4-part sample from Leighton's book sung by a quartet, followed by an example or two of that composer's works which reference the common topics of faraway lands or Greek mythology.



JOHN WILBYE

John Wilbye (1574–1638) was born in Brome, in the Suffolk county of England. Few details of his early years are documented, but it is known that he spent several decades working at Hengrave Hall, near Bury St. Edmonds, also in Suffolk county. Hengrave Hall was the seat of the Kitson and Gage families, who were Roman Catholic recusants, refusing to attend Church of England services after the 1593 schism. Although it seems logical that Wilbye would have produced sacred works given his position, there are very few examples known. Rather, he preferred to focus on madrigals, publishing two collections, in 1598 and 1608, together comprising 64 works.

I am quite tired with my groans

From Leighton's *The Tears or Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul*.

I am quite tired with my groans,
o'ercharged with a heavy load:
of miseries breaking all my bones,
laid on me justly by my God.

What needeth all this travail? / O fools! can you not see?

This two-part madrigal can be found in Wilbye's earlier collection and is filled with references to both treasure—coral and ambergris (a product of

a sperm whale's digestive tract)—and far-off lands, including the South Seas, the Indies (both East and West), and Moluccas (an archipelago in eastern Indonesia). Because of its focus on geography, it is sometimes spoken of as a companion to Thomas Weelkes' madrigal *Thule, the period of cosmography*, which was published at around the same time (and appears later in this program).

What needeth all this travail and turmoiling,
short'ning the life's sweet pleasure,
to seek this far-fetch'd treasure
in those hot climates under Phoebus broiling?

O fools! can you not see a traffic nearer,
in my sweet lady's face, where nature showeth
whatever treasure eye sees or heart knoweth,
rubies and diamonds dainty,
and orient pearls such plenty,
coral and ambergris, sweeter and dearer
than which the South Seas or Moluccas lend us,
or either Indies, East or West, do send us?

Weep, weep, mine eyes

Found in Wilbye's second publication, this madrigal is presented as a dialog between two star-crossed lovers, Flaminia and Leander, who are unafraid of death and seek to be reunited in the afterlife. Although the source of the text is unknown, it has been suggested that it may be excerpted from a drama presented at Hengrave Hall during Wilbye's tenure there.

Weep, weep, mine eyes, my heart can take no rest.
Weep, weep, my heart, mine eyes shall ne'er be blest.

Weep eyes, weep heart, and both this accent cry:
A thousand deaths I die, Flaminia.

Ay me, ah cruel Fortune! ay me.

Now, Leander, to die I fear not.
Death, do thy worst! I care not!

I hope when I am dead in Elysian plain
To meet, and there with joy we'll love again.



WILLIAM BYRD

William Byrd (c. 1540–1623) was born in London and began composing from a very early age, spending time as a pupil and eventual protégé of Thomas Tallis. He became organist at Lincoln Cathedral in 1563, then was named a gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1572. Shortly afterwards, Queen Elizabeth I granted Byrd and Tallis a joint monopoly over printing music and music paper, which lasted 21 years. During this time and beyond Byrd published a vast array of works, primarily motets and masses in Latin, but also several collections of music in English and some keyboard works.

Look down, O Lord, on me poor man

From Leighton's *The Tears or Lamentations of a sorrowful Soul*.

Look down, O Lord, on me poor man,
in Thee I live, I move, and am,
O clear my soul and conscience,
that I in Thee my peace may find,
rest to my heart, joy to my mind,
freed from my sin and mine offence.

Come, woeful Orpheus

This interesting madrigal comes from Byrd's final collection of his own works, *Psalmes, Songs, and Sonnets: some solemne, other joyfull, framed to the life of the Words*, published in 1611. It calls upon Orpheus, famed musician and poet of Greek mythology, to inspire the voice through the use of chromatic notes and "sourest sharps and uncouth flats."

Come, woeful Orpheus with thy charming lyre,
and tune my voice unto thy skillful wire.

Some strange chromatic notes do you devise
that best with mournful accents sympathize;
of sourest sharps and uncouth flats make choice,
and I'll thereto compassionate my voice.

Penelope that longèd for the sight

This five-voice madrigal appeared in Byrd's 1589 publication, *Songs of Sundrie Natures, some of Gravitie, and others of Myrth, Fit for all Companies and Voyces*. It compares Penelope's unwavering devotion to her lost Ulysses to the author's apparent wrongdoing of his beloved, ending in a typically overdramatic fashion.

Penelope, that longèd for the sight
of her Ulysses, wand'ring all too long,
felt never joy, wherein she took delight,
although she liv'd in greatest joys among.

So I, poor wretch, possessing that I crave,
both live and lack, by wrong of that I have:
then blame me not, although to heavens I cry,
and pray the gods that shortly I might die.



THOMAS WEELKES

Thomas Weelkes (c. 1576–1623) was an organist and composer baptized in the village of Elsted, near Chichester in West Sussex, England. He published his first book of madrigals shortly after his 20th birthday in 1597, then served as organist at Winchester College, where he studied and published two additional volumes of madrigals in 1598 and 1600. He received a degree in music in 1602 and went to work at Chichester Cathedral as choirmaster and organist, where he published a fourth and final collection of works in 1608. Unfortunately, while there, Weelkes developed a reputation as a drunkard and troublemaker. He was reported to the bishop in 1616 and again in 1619, lost his position at least once, but managed to get reinstated and remained in the post until his death.

Most mighty and all-knowing Lord

From Leighton's *The Tears or Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul*.

Most mighty and all-knowing Lord,
true spring of consolation:
I do confess with heart and word,
Thou art my preservation.

Thule, the period of cosmology / The Andalusian merchant

Famously cited in the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music as "one of the most remarkable examples of musical settings of ostensibly unmusical words," this two-part madrigal contains a wealth of references to geographical sites. Thule here refers effectively to Iceland, or the end of the (known) world, and two volcanoes, Hecla and Etna, make their appearance in the first part. In the second part, Spanish (Andalusian) travelers have returned from Asia with either red dyes (cochineal, aka carmine) or porcelain (cutchinele), along with tales of a third volcano, Fogo.

Thule, the period of cosmography,
doth vaunt of Hecla, whose sulfurious fire
doth melt the frozen clime and thaw the sky;
Trinacrian Aetna's flames ascend not higher.

These things seem wond'rous, yet more wond'rous I,
whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry.

The Andalusian merchant, that returns
laden with cochineal and China dishes,
reports in Spain how strangely Fogo burns,
amidst an ocean full of flying fishes!

These things seem wond'rous, yet more wond'rous I,
whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry.



ORLANDO GIBBONS

Composer Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625) was born to a notable family of musicians in Oxford. He attended the University of Cambridge, where he acquired a degree in music. At some point prior to 1615, Gibbons was appointed by King James I as a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, and in 1623 he became senior organist. Sadly, he died of apoplexy just a few short years later at the age of 41. Published collections of his works include his *First Set of Madrigals and Motets* in 1612, in addition to later collections of hymns, fantasias, and keyboard works.

O Lord how do my woes increase

From Leighton's *The Tears or Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul*.

O Lord how do my woes increase,
how many are my miseries:
my troubles rise and never cease,
O judge Thou wilt not hear my cries.

I see ambition never pleas'd

This madrigal, taken from his 1612 collection, represents the third entry in a four-part series: (1) *I weigh not fortune's frown or smile*; (2) *I tremble not at noise of war*; (3) *I see ambition never pleas'd*; (4) *I feign not friendship where I hate*. The short text includes two mythological references reflecting man's unquenchable thirst for more. Tantalus was sentenced to eternal punishment under a fruit tree whose branches he could never reach to eat, while standing in a pool of water that always receded from his grasp. And Midas is of course a reference to the king whose every touch turned objects into gold, including his beloved daughter.

I see ambition never pleas'd,
I see some Tantals starve in store,
I see gold's dropsy seldom eas'd,
I see each Midas gape for more,
I neither want, nor yet abound,
enough's a feast, content is crown'd.

Drop, drop slow tears

From his one and only publication of madrigals came perhaps Gibbons' most famous work, *The Silver Swan*. Later, however, it appears that either Gibbons himself or some future arranger took Phineas Fletcher's (1582–1650) sacred lament *Drop, drop slow tears*, and set it to the same tune. Certainly Gibbons was familiar with Fletcher's text, as he used it for one of his famous 4-part hymn tunes (song 46). This practice of *contrafactum*, or reusing existing musical settings with new texts—and in particular the practice of replacing secular texts with sacred ones—was common at the time, and in fact will come up again before this program is finished!

Drop, drop, slow tears,
and bathe those beauteous feet
which brought from Heav'n
the news and Prince of Peace.

Cease not, wet eyes,
His mercies to entreat;
to cry for vengeance
sin doth never cease.

In your deep floods
drown all my faults and fears;
nor let His eye see sin,
but through my tears.



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JOHN WARD

Composer John Ward (1571–1638) was born in Canterbury and lived there until 1607 or so, when records indicate that he moved to London, where he served Sir Henry Fanshawe as a musician. It was during this time that Ward published his only known collection of works: *First Set of English Madrigals of three, four, five, and six parts, apt for both Viols and Voices*, in 1613, the same year as Leighton’s first edition of *The Tears and Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul*. Shortly after Fanshawe’s death in 1619, Ward was cut loose and found employment in London as a remembrancer, whose job under the Exchequer was to be “memorator, rememorator, registrar, keeper of the register, and despatcher of business”—a post he maintained almost until his death in 1638.

O let me tread in the right path

From Leighton’s *The Tears or Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul*.

O let me tread in the right path,
and walk from faith to faith in love:
observe Thy laws and shun Thy wrath,
and forward to all virtue move.

A satyr once did run away

The text of this small trifle of a composition comes from the beginning of a sonnet by Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586). The rest of the sonnet muses on the wisdom of braving the unknown or being restrained by fear, ending, “Better like I thy Satyr, dearest DYER! / Who burnt his lips to kiss fair shining fire.”

A satyr once did run away for dread
at sound of horn which he himself did blow!

Fearing and feared, thus from himself he fled,
deeming strange evil in that he did not know.

Come, Sable Night

Amyntas, the focus of this work, was a rather common name among famous ancient Greeks, thus making it difficult to surmise whether Ward was referencing a particular Amyntas, or whether it might be a generic stand-in for an abstract notable person of yore. “Amyntas” is derived from the Greek *amyn-tor*, or defender, which might explain its popularity among those who had high hopes for their offspring.

Come, sable night, put on thy mourning stole,
and help Amyntas sadly to condole.

Behold, the sun hath shut his golden eye,
the day is spent, and shades fair lights supply.

All things in sweet repose
their labors close;

Only Amyntas wastes his hours in wailing,
whilst all his hopes do faint, and life is failing.



FRANCIS PILKINGTON

Francis Pilkington (c. 1565–1638) was a composer for both the lute and the voice. He studied music from an early age, earning a degree from Lincoln College, Oxford in 1595. After spending some time as a lay clerk at Chester Cathedral, he eventually became a minor canon there and took holy orders in 1614. Although one might expect most of Pilkington’s output to be sacred music, his only published works are three books of secular compositions from 1605, 1613, and 1624.

Hidden O Lord are my most horrid sins

From Leighton’s *The Tears or Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul*.

Hidden O Lord are my most horrid sins
unto the world, though open plain to Thee:
he never betters that no time begins,
corruption killeth all good thoughts in me.

ABOUT SUMMER FLING SINGERS — summerfling.org

We are a group of choir ~~needs~~ singers who have joined together for three weeks in the late summer to sing new genres and gain small ensemble experience.

During the traditional choral year, our members participate in various local community choirs including Sine Nomine, Redmond Chorale, Cascadian Chorale, Kirkland Choral Society, Opus 7, as well as several area church choirs.

We'd like to thank our coach and conductor, Heather MacLaughlin Garbes, for helping us refine our sound as an ensemble.

We also wish to thank St. Margaret's Episcopal Church for graciously supporting our efforts and hosting both our rehearsals and our concert.

Be sure to visit summerfling.org for the latest news, or email info@summerfling.org if you are interested in participating or supporting us in the future.

Summer Fling Singers is a registered 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax-deductible.

WHO WE ARE

Artistic Director

Aaron Giles

Coach & Conductor

Heather MacLaughlin Garbes

Soprano

Elisabeth Baeskens

Vera Giles

Heather Irwin

Abigail Rausch

Tenor

Aaron Giles

Sam Hauer

Christopher Kruse

John La Fond

Alto

Dawn Fosse Cook

Gail Erickson

Kathy Rausch

Elaine Tsang

Bass

Rick Commo

Trevor Tsang

Jim Whitehead

Doug Wyatt

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