

Music
in the
Pavilion

Variant 6

September 29, 2017

*Variant 6 in Concert:
Music of Lassus, Jackson, Sciarrino, and more*

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Sibylline Prophecies (c. 1550) - Orlando di Lasso
I. *Carmina Chromatico*
II. *Sibylla Persica*

Zero point reflection (2014) - Gabriel Jackson

Sibylline Prophecies (c. 1550) - Orlando di Lasso
IV. *Sibylla Cimmerica*

To Be Sung on the Water (1968) - Samuel Barber

Sibylline Prophecies (c. 1550) - Orlando di Lasso
V. *Sibylla Samia*

Music for the Star of the Sea (1996) - JoAnn Metcalf

Sibylline Prophecies (c. 1550) - Orlando di Lasso
VII. *Sibylla Hellespontiaca*
VIII. *Sibylla Phrygia*

Selection of Trios (Villanelle) by Luca Marenzio
I. *Dagli occhi il dolce giro*
II. *Ad una fresca riva*
III. *Amatemi ben mio*

Sibylline Prophecies (c. 1550) - Orlando di Lasso
X. *Sibylla Tiburtina*

Selections from L'alibi delle parole (1994) - Salvatore Sciarrino

Sibylline Prophecies (c. 1550) - Orlando di Lasso
XII. *Sibylla Agrippa*

Twelfth Night (1968) - Samuel Barber

Variant 6



Variant 6 is a virtuosic vocal sextet that explores and advances the art of chamber music in the twenty-first century. The ensemble's work includes radically reimagining concert experiences, commissioning substantial new works, collaborating closely with other ensembles, and educating a new generation of singers. Variant 6 believes that the process of compromise achieved from the diversity of opinion and the specialty of its six individual artists can create deeply impactful experiences for its audiences, collaborators, and students.

Steven Bradshaw, tenor
Jessica Beebe, soprano
Dan Schwartz, bass-baritone
Rebecca Myers, soprano
Michael Jones, tenor
Elisa Sutherland, mezzo-soprano

www.variantsix.com

Texts and Translations

From the *Prophetiae Sibyllarum* - Orlando di Lasso

Carmina Chromatico

*Carmina Chromatico quae audis modulata tenore,
Haec sunt illa quibus nostrae olim arcana salutis
Bis senae intrepido cecinerunt ore Sibyllae.*

These songs you hear, which move chromatically,
Are those of the twelve Sibyls, who long ago
sang fearlessly
the mysteries of our salvation.

I. Sibylla Persica

*Virgine matre satus pando residebit asello
Jucundus princeps unus qui ferre salutem
Rite queat lapsis tamen illis forte diebus
Multi multa ferent immensi fata laboris
Solo sed satis est oracula prodere verbo
Ille deus casta nascetur virgine magnus.*

Born of a virgin mother, he will sit upon a crook-backed ass.
The prince of joy who alone
in time to come can bring true salvation.
Many will be the prophets of his suffering, many the prophecies.
Sufficient though, to sum up the prophecies in a single line:
He, the lord god, will be born of a pure virgin.

Zero point reflection - Gabriel Jackson, text by Doris Kareva

Blindingly, agonizingly clean
The morning like a Japanese flag
It seems that the hour will come
The world diverges and deviates until
Yesterday my mind was like the sea
A butterfly, the beat of whose wings
I don't know if all roads lead to truth
With clocklike precision
Language is truly the house of being
Language flows

Whoever has even once known true beauty
Life teaches one thing and another
Like a bald man who collects combs
Our destiny is in our hands
Everything spins, everything throbs
Bitter and scarce is the northern light
All those delicate and stubborn
The three-sided glass house: one side
The nights write themselves into mornings
All of a sudden I am speaking in an intertwined language
The best part of day is night's The Swordfish, The Kiss, and The Lizard
Beneath the full moon and stars the motorbike
The sparks from your fiery eyes
The reader casts his shadow over the poem
Yes, inhale, yes, everything is just like this
To live more clearly
Life's living expression surges
I walked along the seashore
I listen for hours and hours
The which is can be expressed
Golden black my feathery tail
Desert dogs run through my dreams
Blazing unmoving sun
One night he went swimming
Lift up then, sun, a seaside house
The falling stars rain ever more steadily

IV. Sibylla Cimmeria - Orlando di Lasso

*In teneris annis facie insignis honore
Militiae aeternae regem sacra virgo cibavit
Lacte suo, per quem gaudebunt pectore summo Omnia,
Et Eoo lucebit sydus ab ore Mirificum.
Sua dona magi cum laude ferentes
Objicient puero myrrham, aurum, thura sabaea.*

In her tender years, outstanding in appearance and in honour,
The holy virgin will feed the king of the eternal army
With her own milk; through him all things will rejoice with full hearts,
And a wondrous star will shine in the East.
Wise men bringing their gifts will present them to the boy
with praises: myrrh, gold & Sabaeian incense.

To Be Sung on the Water - Samuel Barber, text by Louise Bogan

Beautiful, my delight,
Pass, as we pass the wave,
Pass, as the mottled night
Leaves what it cannot save,
Scattering dark and bright.
Beautiful, pass and be
Less than the guiltless shade
To which our vows were said;
Less than the sound of an oar
To which our vows were made,
Less than the sound of its blade
Dipping the stream once more.

V. Sibylla Samia - Orlando di Lasso

*Ecce dies, nigras quae tollet laeta tenebras,
Mox veniet solvens nodosa
volumina vatum Gentis Judaeae.
Referent, ut carmina plebis Hunc poterunt
clarum virorum tangere regem,
Humano quem virgo sinu inviolata fovebit.
Annuit hoc coelum, rutilantia sidera monstrant.*

Behold the joyful day will soon come,
which will remove the black clouds,
unravelling the knotty writings of the prophets of the Jewish people,
as the songs of the people say.
They will be able to touch this shining king of men,
Whom the untouched virgin will nurse with human breast.
Heaven affirms this,
the shining stars show it.

Music for the Star of the Sea - Joanne Metcalf

Ave maris stella

Hail, star of the sea

VII. Sibylla Hellespontiaca - Orlando di Lasso

*Dum meditor quondam vidi decorare puellam
Eximio castam, quod se servaret honore.
Munera digna suo, et divino numine visa
Quae sobolem multo pareret splendore micantem:
Progenies summi speciosa et vera tonantis,
Pacifica mundum qui sub ditione gubernet.*

Once while meditating I saw,
decorating a girl with matchless honour
(for she kept herself chaste),
Gifts which seemed worthy of her own divine holiness;
She would bear a son, shining with great splendour,
The fair and true child of the highest Thunderer,
Who will govern the world under his peace-bringing authority.

VIII. Sibylla Phrygia

*Ipsa Deum vidi summum punire volentem
Mundi homines stupidos et pectora caeca rebellis,
Et quia sic nostram complerent crimina pellem.
Virginis in corpus voluit demittere coelo
Ipse Deus prolem, quam nuntiat angelus alma Matri
Quo miseros contracta sorde lavaret.*

I myself have seen the greatest God wishing to punish
The foolish men and blind hearts of a rebellious world.
And because sin so fills our hides.
God himself wished to send his son from heaven
into the body of a virgin, whom the angel announces to his dear mother,
to wash the
wretched from their suffocating fate.

Selections of Trios (Villanelle) - Luca Marenzio

Dagli occhi il dolce giro

*Dagli occhi il dolce giro
E'l guardo ond'ardo s'io miro sospiro
E s'io no'l miro partir o fuggire,
partir o fuggire, partir o fuggire
Non so voglio morire, voglio morire.*

*Di gioia or chi mi priva
Ch'io moro, adoro, una Diva ch'è schiva
Pietà omai se non ch'ardendo e struggendo,
ch'ardendo e struggendo, ch'ardendo e struggendo
Vivrò sempre e piangendo, sempre e piangendo.*

*Amor deh, dammi pace
Ch'invero io pero e la face mi sface
O da gli occhi col dardo forte in sorte,
dardo forte in sorte, dardo forte in sorte
Ormai mi dona morte, mi dona morte.*

From the eyes the sweet turn
And the look in which I burn, in which I sigh if I look at
And if I don't look shall I leave or escape,
Shall I leave or escape, leave or escape
I don't know, I want to die, want to die.

Who deprives me from joy now
Now that I die, I adore, I love a retiring goddess.
Have pity, or burning and pining away,
burning and pining away, burning and pining away
I will always live crying, always crying.

Alas, my love give me peace
Because I really suffer and my face melts,
Or from your eyes, with the strong arrow of fate
Strong arrow of fate, strong arrow of fate,
Now give me death, give me death.

Ad una fresca riva

*Ad una fresca riva
Guidommi Amor dove era la mia Diva,
Che con gli occhi, co'l crin e'l visadorno
Fea nascer fiore e vaghe erbett'intorno.
Se a me gli occhi volgea
Invidia agli altri amanti ella porgea,
Che co' sguardi, con risi e con parole
Era a me sol dolcissimo il mio sole.
Se apria le chiome bionde
Garran gli augelli e si fermavan la onde,
E se gioia al mio cor era il lor canto
A ogni altro amante era cagion di pianto.*

At a fresh shore
Led me Love, where my Goddess was,
Who with eyes, and hair and her beautiful face
Let around her flowers and grass grow.
If she turned her eyes to me
She gave envy to other lovers,
She who, with looks, smiles and words
Was my sweetest sun.
If she opened her blond hair
The birds sang, and the waves stopped,
And if joy to me was their singing
To every other lover was a reason to cry.

Amatemi ben mio

*Amatemi, ben mio,
Che se d'amarmi,
dolce vita mia,
Non vi mostrate pia,
Viverò sconcolato,
Sol per amarvi,
Non essendo amato.*

Love me, my dear
if you love me, my sweet life,
Do not show mercy,
I will live unconsciously,
Only to love you,
Not being loved.

X. Sibylla Tiburtina - Orlando di Lasso

*Verax ipse Deus dedit haec mihi munia fandi
Carmine, quod sanctam potui monstrare puellam.
Concipiet, quae Nazareis in finibus illum,
Quem sub carne Deum Bethlemitica rura videbunt.
O nimium felix coelo dignissima mater,
Quae tantam sacro lactabit ab ubere prolem.*

The truthful God himself gave me this task of speaking
In song, because I was able to reveal the holy maid.
She will conceive in Nazarene lands him
Whom the country of Bethlehem will see as God in the flesh.
O too too happy, mother most worthy of heaven,
Who will nurse so great a child at her holy breast.

L'alibi della parola - Salvatore Sciarrino,

text by Augusto de Campos and Francesco Petrarca

Pulsar – concrete poem by Augusto de Campos



Quasar – concrete poem by Augusto de Campos
See image opposite

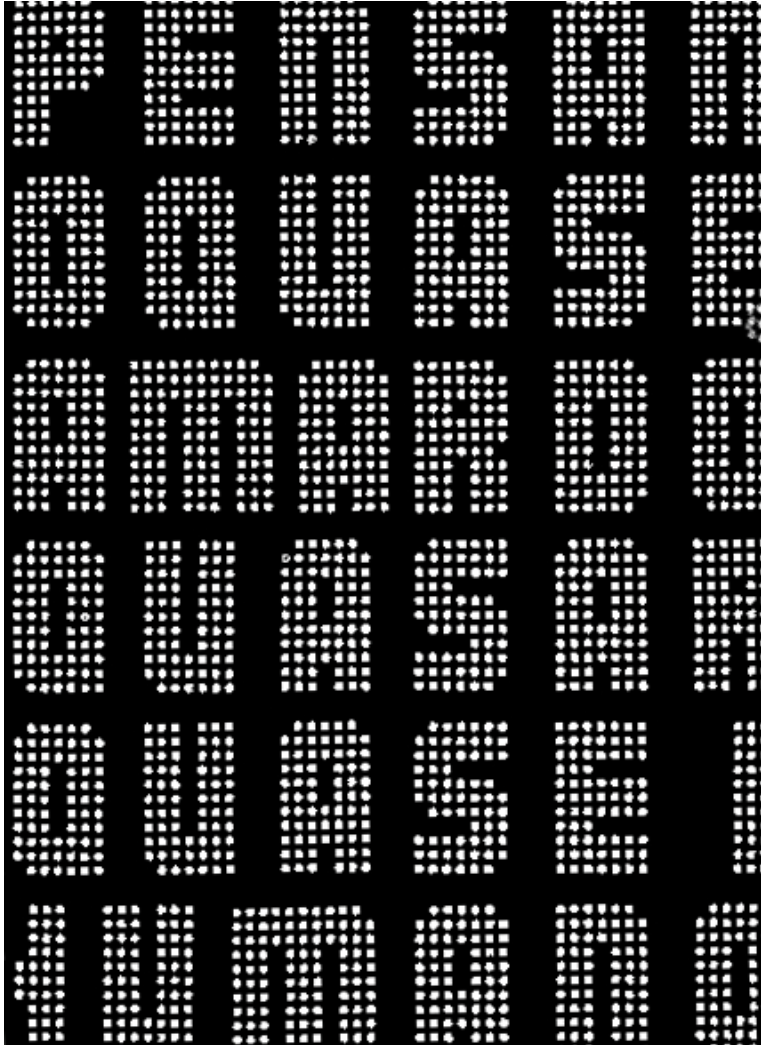
Futuro remoto – “Remote future” – fragment from Petrarch

*E quasi in terra d'erbe ignuda et erma,
né “fia” né “fu” né “mai” né “inanzi” o “indietro”.*

And almost on the ground of herbs, naked and still,
[I could see] no “shall be” or “was” or “never” or “before” or “after”

XII. Sibylla Agrippa - Orlando di Lasso

*Summus erit sub carne satus clarissimus atque Virginis
Et vere complevit¹ viscera sanctum
Verbum consilio sine noxa spiritus almi,
Despectus multis tamen ille salutis amore
Arguet et nostra commissa piacula culpa,
Cuius honos constans et gloria certa manebit.*



The highest and brightest will be born in flesh and of a virgin,
and the holy word truly has filled her womb
according to the plan of the Holy Spirit without harming her;
Though despised by many, for the love of salvation
He will judge the sins committed by our fault,
And his unchanging honour and confirmed glory will endure.

Twelfth Night - Samuel Barber, text by Laurie Lee

No night could be darker than this night,
No cold so cold,
As the blood snaps like a wire,
And the heart's sap stills,
And the year seems defeated.

O never again, it seems, can green things run,
Or sky birds fly,
Or the grass exhale its humming breath,
Powdered with pimpernels,
From this dark lung of winter.

Yet here are lessons for the final mile
Of pilgrim kings;
The mile still left when all have reached
Their tether's end:
That mile where the Child lies hid.

For see, beneath the hand,
The earth already warms and glows;
For men with shepherd's eyes
There are signs in the dark,
The turning stars,
The lamb's returning time.

Out of this utter death he's born again,
His birth our saviour;
From terror's equinox he climbs and grows,
Drawing his finger's light across our blood
The sun of heaven,
And the son of God.

Variant 6 in Concert

Program Notes

Our program was inspired by the Rittenhouse Orrery, the magnificent mechanical planetarium that resides in the Kislak Center at the University of Pennsylvania. When we visited this concert space last spring, we were struck by this large clock that appears through the glass wall at the back of the space. Seeing it covered in stars and dials, with astrological inscriptions overlaid on concentric silver rings, we knew that our music would have to interact with this ever-present visual spectacle. In turn, we chose works that explore time and space, from ancient prophecy, to modern ponderings, to the farthest reaches of the known galaxy. As David Rittenhouse sought to understand the world around him through his mechanical construction, we attempt to understand the human experience through our characteristic mix of old and new music.

Like planets in elliptical orbit around a star, themes of our program appear and disappear, align and diverge. Throughout the program we find movements from Orlando di Lasso's chromatic motets, the *Prophetiae Sibyllarum*. Each motet takes on the voice of a different prophetess to foretell the coming of Christ. Like a comet zooming through an asteroid belt, the music flies rapidly through key centers and cadences in a dizzying spectacle.

The first contemporary piece we perform is Gabriel Jackson's setting of a section of Doris Kareva's 2010 book of poetry, *Shape of Time*. *Zero Point Reflection* underlines the ambiguities and uncertainties of the poet's journey through life. Jackson's setting is a virtuosic showpiece for the women of Variant 6. Its musical characteristics are typical of Jackson's writing: melismas, staccato sections, and moments of rhythmic intensity that dissolve into aleatory.

Other selections include a piece by Joanne Metcalf, *Music for the Star of the Sea*. This work serves as an ode to Mary (frequently called 'Maris Stella'); its music draws inspiration from medieval compositions

to create a shifting, watery texture. We also perform a set of trios by Luca Marenzio, a 16th-century court composer. These pieces lament the transient nature of love—one minute in joyous celebration, then next in the depths of sorrow.

We are pleased to add more music of Salvatore Sciarrino to our repertoire: tonight we choose three pieces from his set, *L'alibi della parola*. The titles of the first two movements are allusions to heavenly bodies: a 'Quasar' and a 'Pulsar.' These texts are concrete poems by Augusto de Campos—the position and alignment of the letters on the page are as important a part of the poem as the meaning of the words themselves, and the music is an apt representation of these visual poems. The final movement, 'Futuro remoto,' is a fragment of text taken from Petrarch's vision of the distant future: a dried-up desert planet that is incomprehensible to our human eyes.

We round out the program with two compositions by Samuel Barber. The first, *To Be Sung on the Water*, is a dark reflection of Metcalf's hymn. The second, *Twelfth Night*, tells of the rebirth of the world as Christ is born; a culmination and answer to Lassus' prophecies, and the completion of our concert.

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Musical Partnerships at Play: The Marlboro Music School and Festival



On exhibit through June 21, 2019

Eugene Ormandy Gallery, Otto E. Albrecht Music Library,
Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, 4th floor

Every summer in the rural foothills of southern Vermont, Marlboro Music forms a warm and closely-knit community of exceptional young professional musicians and master artists from around the world, staff members, spouses and children. Fostering a uniquely egalitarian spirit, Marlboro pairs the generations of artists for in-depth rehearsals and performances of chamber music. The objects on to display reflect the joy, inspired playfulness, and history of this influential summer program, founded in 1951. The Marlboro Music School and Festival records came to the Penn Libraries in 2013.

Thursday, October 5, 6-8 PM, Eugene Ormandy Gallery
Penn Chamber Ensemble performance (from 6:00-7:00 pm)
and reception with light refreshments. All are welcome!

www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/marlboro.html

Music in the Pavilion

The University of Pennsylvania's Music Department and the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts are proud to present our second annual music series for the 2017-2018 year.

2017-2018 CONCERT SERIES

Concerts will be held in the Class of 1978 Orrery Pavilion, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, sixth floor on Fridays at 7pm and are free of charge. Join us at 6:15pm for a discussion led by Penn faculty and graduate students prior to the concerts except the last.

Meg Bragle

November 17, 2017: *An Evening of Song with Meg Bragle*
Preconcert talk by Charlie Shrader

Kleine Kammermusik

January 26, 2018: *Kleine Kammermusik: Ensemble Music from the Baroque Period*
Preconcert talk by Emma Barnaby

Concordian Dawn

March 23, 2018: *Fortuna Antiqua et Ultra*

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