

The  
**Semibreves**

present  
**Amore**

**Claudio Monteverdi** L'Orfeo *The Orfeo*  
**John Dowland** Can She Excuse My Wrongs?  
**Barbara Strozzi** Lagrime Mie *Tears of Mine*  
**Henry Purcell** Thy Hand Belinda  
**Claudin de Sermisy** Tant Que Vivray *As Long as I Live*  
**Henry Purcell** If Love's a Sweet Passion

*with the Boston  
Symphony Orchestra*



Sir Edward Burne-Jones. *The Beguiling of Merlin*  
(*Merlin and Vivien*). 1870-1874.

Thursday, May 17th, 2007 — 8:00 p.m.  
Symphony Hall  
301 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston  
*Further information at [www.semibreves.org](http://www.semibreves.org) or 617-555-4242*

admission  
\$35  
students and  
seniors \$28

# Amore

songs of love from the Medieval and Renaissance eras

Love is by far the most common subject matter of songs, perhaps paralleled only by religion. As one of the most fundamental and universal forms of human experience, it makes sense that so much music is written about it! However, love is an abstract reality covering an array of emotions from happy to sad and everything in between. Thus, it takes a very skillful composer to write about love and communicate directly and unequivocally to the listener their particular interpretation of love in a particular instance of songwriting.

Our program of Medieval and Renaissance music this evening presents to you a wide range of songs on love by some of the best composers of the time. Some are happy and pleasant sounding, some are sad and lamenting, some are intense and some are harsh – all, however, are *par excellence* examples of Medieval and Renaissance songs and each is beautiful in its own way.

**I-Claudio Monteverdi** s a n c e  
L'Orfeo *The Orfeo* s o n g s

**II-John Dowland** is beau-  
Can She Excuse My Wrongs? o w n

**III-Barbara Strozzi**  
Lagrime Mie *Tears of Mine*

**IV-Henry Purcell**  
Thy Hand Belinda

**V-Claudin de Sermisy**  
Tant Que Vivray *As Long as I Live*

**VI-Henry Purcell**  
If Love's a Sweet Passion

## **Claudio Monteverdi** (1567-1643)



Act I from **L'Orfeo**

1607

Claudio Monteverdi is widely regarded as the most important Italian composer of the late 16th and early 17th centuries. His music is expressive, dynamic, and innovative, and bridges the music of the Renaissance and Baroque music. Leo Schrade even assessed Monteverdi as the creator of modern music!

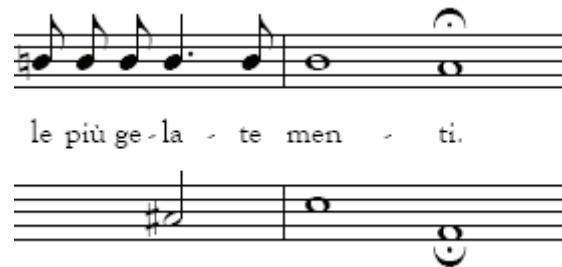
Monteverdi has an uncanny ability to express human emotions, such as love, through his music. As an anonymous librettist of Monteverdi's lost Venetian opera *Le nozze d'Enea con Lavinia* (1641) once said, "Monteverdi was born into the world to rule over people's emotions since no one is so unfeeling that he could not move them with his talent, fashioning the music of the worlds and the passions so that the singers are compelled to laugh or cry, become angry, or compassionate, and do everything else that they command, with the listener led in the same way, by the variety and strength of the same emotions."

The young Claudio was a child prodigy, producing music for publication when he was only fifteen. Giovanni Maria Artusi, a prominent musician of the time, criticized Monteverdi's music for being offensive to the ear and containing errors in traditional harmony and counterpoint. Monteverdi responded to this by calling his music *seconda pratica*, distinguishing his music from the older, more conservative *prima pratica*. It was from the *seconda pratica* that the music of the Baroque emerged.

In 1607, Monteverdi's first opera, *L'Orfeo*, was performed. It tells the legend of Orpheus and Euridice, based on the ancient Greek myth of Orpheus. The tale goes as follows: Orpheus, son of the god Apollo, was married to Euridice until she was bitten by a snake, died, and descended into the underworld. Although stricken by grief, Orpheus' love for her compels him to delve into the underworld and attempt to rescue her.

We will be performing Act I of Monteverdi's five act opera. In this act, Orpheus and Euridice celebrate their wedding. As the esteemed operatic scholar Mark Ringer suggests in his novel on Monteverdi, "Opera's First Master," the masculine-sounding opening toccata is a musical embodiment of Orfeo, which then yields to the gentler, more feminine string ritornello representing Euridice.

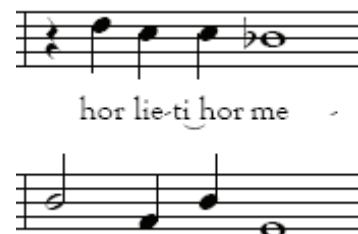
As La Musica describes her ability to invoke emotions such as "noble anger" or "love," notice how Monteverdi craftily paints the phrase *le piu gelate menti* (the coldest hearts) with a noticeable dissonance.



le piu ge - la - te men - ti.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a vocal line in G major, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a sequence of notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), followed by a whole rest. The bottom staff is a lute or basso continuo line with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. It contains a sequence of notes: G3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), B3 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), followed by a whole rest. The dissonance is highlighted by the simultaneous presence of G4 and G3 in the final measure.

A little further in the score Monteverdi uses a G minor chord on the words "hor mesti" (now sadly).



hor lie-ti hor me -

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a vocal line in G minor, with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). It contains a sequence of notes: G4 (quarter), Ab4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), Ab4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), followed by a whole rest. The bottom staff is a lute or basso continuo line with a bass clef and a key signature of two flats. It contains a sequence of notes: G3 (quarter), Ab3 (quarter), Bb3 (quarter), C4 (quarter), Bb3 (quarter), Ab3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), followed by a whole rest. The G minor chord is clearly visible in the final measure.

Although Monteverdi writes the first chorus (“Vieni, Imeneo, deh, vieni”) in G minor, he uses a transition to G major to suggest the love of and a move toward the wedding celebration of Orfeo and Euridice.

## **PROLOGUE**

### **Toccata**

### **Ritornello**

### **MUSIC**

From my beloved Permessus I come to you,  
illustrious heroes, noble scions of kings,  
whose glorious deeds Fame relates,  
though falling short of the truth, since the target is too high.

I am Music, who in sweet accents  
can calm each troubled heart,  
and now with noble anger, now with love,  
can kindle the most frigid minds.

Singing to a golden lyre, I am wont  
sometimes to charm mortal ears;  
and in this way inspire souls with a longing  
for the sonorous harmony of heaven's lyre.

Hence desire spurs me to tell you of Orpheus,  
the immortal glory of Pindus and Helicon,  
Orpheus who drew wild beasts to him by his singing,  
and who subjugated Hades by his entreaties.

Now while I alternate my songs, now happy, now sad,  
let no small bird stir among these trees,  
no noisy wave be heard on these riverbanks,  
and let each little breeze halt in its course.

### **FIRST ACT**

#### **FIRST SHEPHERD**

On this happy and auspicious day  
which has put an end to the amorous torments  
of our demigod, let us sing, shepherds,

that our strains shall be worthy of Orpheus.  
Today fair Eurydice's heart,  
formerly so disdainful,  
has been touched with compassion;  
today Orpheus has been made happy  
in the bosom of her for whom he once  
sighed and wept so much amongst these woods.

Therefore, on so happy and auspicious a day  
which has put an end etc.

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Come, Hymen, ah come,  
and let your fiery torch  
be like a rising sun  
to bring these lovers peaceful days  
and henceforth banish afar  
the horrors and shadows of anguish and grief.

NYMPH

Ye Muses, the honour of Parnassus, beloved by heaven,  
tender consolation to the dejected heart,  
let your harmonious lyres  
rend the dark veil from every cloud;  
and while we today,  
on well-tuned strings,  
invoke Hymen's favour on our Orpheus,  
let your singing accord with our playing.

**Balletto**

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Leave the mountains,  
leave the fountains,  
charming, happy nymphs,  
and in these meadows  
rejoice your fair feet  
with your accustomed dances.  
Here let the sun behold  
your roundelays,  
lovelier far than those  
which the stars in heaven  
dance to the moon  
in the darkness of night.

**Ritornello**

Leave the mountains, *etc.*

Then let these lovers' locks  
be honored by you  
with fair flowers,  
that now they may rejoice,  
happy at the ending of torments,  
satisfied in their desires.

**Ritornello**

THIRD SHEPHERD

But you, gentle singer, if once you made  
these fields weep at your laments,  
why now do you not make the vales and hills  
rejoice with you to the sound of your famous lyre?  
Let some happy song that Love may inspire  
bear witness to your heart.

ORPHEUS

Rose of heaven, light of the world, and worthy  
offspring of him who holds the universe in thrall,

**Balletto**

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Leave the mountains,  
leave the fountains,  
charming, happy nymphs,  
and in these meadows  
rejoice your fair feet  
with your accustomed dances.  
Here let the sun behold  
your roundelays,  
lovelier far than those  
which the stars in heaven  
dance to the moon  
in the darkness of night.

**Ritornello**

Leave the mountains, *etc.*  
Then let these lovers' locks  
be honoured by you  
with fair flowers,

that now they may rejoice,  
happy at the ending of torments,  
satisfied in their desires.

**Ritornello**

THIRD SHEPHERD

But you, gentle singer, if once you made  
these fields weep at your laments,  
why now do you not make the vales and hills  
rejoice with you to the sound of your famous lyre?  
Let some happy song that Love may inspire  
bear witness to your heart.

ORPHEUS

Rose of heaven, light of the world, and worthy  
offspring of him who holds the universe in thrall,

O Sun, who dost encircle and see all  
from thy celestial orbits,  
tell me, hast thou ever seen  
a lover more joyful and fortunate than I?  
Happy indeed was the day,  
my dearest, when first I saw you,  
and happier still the hour  
when I sighed for you,  
since you too sighed at my sighing;  
happiest of all the moment  
when you gave me your white hand  
as a pledge of pure faith.  
Had I as many hearts  
as eternal heaven has eyes,  
Or these pleasant hills and verdant May have leaves,  
all would be full to overflowing  
with that joy which today delights me.

EURYDICE

I will not say how great  
is my joy at your rejoicing, Orpheus,  
since my heart is no longer with me,  
but resides with you in the company of Love.  
Ask of it, therefore, if you wish to know  
how gladly it rejoices and how much it loves you.

**Balletto**

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Leave the mountains,  
leave the fountains,  
charming, happy nymphs,  
and in these meadows  
rejoice your fair feet



with your accustomed dances.

Here let the sun behold  
your roundelays,  
lovelier far than those  
which the stars in heaven  
dance to the moon  
in the darkness of night.

Come, Hymen, ah come,  
and let your fiery torch  
be like a rising sun  
to bring these lovers peaceful days  
and henceforth banish afar  
the horrors and shadows of anguish and grief.

**SECOND SHEPHERD**

But if our joy derives from heaven,  
as everything we encounter down here is from heaven,  
it is surely meet that we should devoutly  
offer up incense and prayers:  
therefore let each turn his steps to the temple,  
to pray to him who holds the world in his right hand,  
that he may long preserve our well-being.

**Ritornello**

**FIRST & SECOND SHEPHERDS**

Let there be no one who, in despair, gives himself up in prey  
to grief, though at times it may powerfully  
assail us and darken our lives.

**Ritornello**

**NYMPH, THIRD & FOURTH SHEPHERDS**

For after a malign cloud, its womb heavy  
with a fearful storm, has affrighted the world,  
the sun displays more brightly his radiant beams.

**Ritornello**

**THIRD & FIRST SHEPHERDS**

And after the sharp frost of naked winter,  
Spring decks the fields with flowers.

**CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS**

Here is Orpheus, for whom but recently  
sighs were food and tears drink:  
today he is so happy  
that he has nothing more to long for.

**END OF FIRST ACT**



**John Dowland** (1563-1626)



## **Can She Excuse My Wrongs?**

C. 1597

John Dowland is recognized as England's finest composer of lute songs. He is also known for his extensive collection of melancholy songs, of which *Can She Excuse My Wrongs?* falls into. Having this reputation, Dowland is also known as John Dowland de Lacrimae, Lacrimae being the Latin word for "tears."

*Can She Excuse My Wrongs?* Is a typical English madrigal and a typical Dowland melancholy madrigal. Here we see the famed composer express the sad and doleful nature of love through magnificent word-painting. In the following example the text is stating that, like words written on sand, love can be washed away. Relatively simple and slow before this, note the florid accompaniment Dowland chooses to write to express the washing away of love. Perhaps this sequence signifies the ever-waning nature of love for Dowland and a possible "we'll all float on" outlook on love he might have had.

Score excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions.  
Vocal line with lute accompaniment.

(For this performance we would like you to welcome Sting, The Police bandleader, as solo singer of this piece. It was also necessary for this performance to expand Dowland's instrumentation from accompanying lute to full orchestra. We have tried to remain faithful to one of the greatest lute players by having the lute music of this piece performed by four lutes.)

### **Verse 1**

Can she excuse my wrongs with Virtue's cloak?  
Shall I call her good when she proves unkind?  
Are those clear fires which vanish into smoke?  
Must I praise the leaves where no fruit I find?

No no: where shadows do for bodies stand,  
Thou may'st be abus'd if thy sight be dim.  
Cold love is like to words written on sand,  
Or to bubbles which on the water swim.

Wilt thou be thus abused still,  
Seeing that she will right thee never?  
If thou canst not o'ercome her will  
The love will be thus fruitless ever.

### **Verse 2**

Was I so base, that I might not aspire  
Unto those high joys which she holds from me?  
As they are high, so high is my desire:  
If she this deny, what can granted be?

If she will yield to that which reason is,  
It is Reason's will that Love should be just.  
Dear make me happy still be granting this,  
Or cut off delays if that die I must.

Better a thousand times to die,  
Than for to live thus still tormented:  
Dear, but remember it was I  
Who for thy sake did die contended



**Barbara Strozzi** (1619-1677)



## Lagrimie Mie

C. 1650

We return to 17th century Italy to find one of the most important woman composers of history: Barbara Strozzi. Although a famed singer, she was also the most prolific composer of printed secular vocal music of her time.

The piece being performed today was meant to be a chamber cantata, music designed to be sung and intended for a small, intimate environment. As the name implies, the text of this song depicts the sad and tormenting nature of love. The narrator longs for his true love, Lidia, but for some reason cannot have her. And if this is so, now deprived of hope, he awaits death to end his bitter suffering. As in the Dowland piece we see Strozzi use word-painting as a means to express how bitter love can be. For example, in measure 42, we see the tormenting of the narrator manifested as a harsh, descending chromatic scale.



Courtesy of the Werner Icking Music Archive. Used with permission.

Soon afterwards, in measure 49, as the narrator recalls the weeping eyes (“And you, pained eyes,”), Strozzi uses the conventional emblem of the lament, the descending bass in triple meter.



Courtesy of the Werner Icking Music Archive. Used with permission.

One can truly feel the despair of the poet as the bass descends for nine measures, only to leap up an octave and descend again. Further seventh chords and suspensions add to the effective application of music to express the somber nature of love. It is dramatic and riveting music like this that gave rise to Strozzi’s fame and fortune.

Lagrimie mie, à che vi trattenete,  
Perchè non isfogate il fier' dolore,  
Chi mi toglie 'l respiro e opprime il core?

Tears of mine, what holds you back,  
why don't you give vent to the fierce pain  
that takes away my breath and weighs on  
my heart?

Lidia, che tant' adoro,  
Perchè un guardo pietoso, ahimè, mi donò,

Lidia, whom I adore so much,  
because of a pitying glance, alas, that she  
gave me,

Il paterno rigor l'imprigionò.  
Tra due mura rinchiusa  
Stà la bella innocente,  
Dove giunger non può raggio di sole,  
E quel che più mi duole  
Ed accresc' il mio mal, tormenti e pene,

paternal severity has imprisoned her.  
Locked up between two walls,  
remains the innocent beauty,  
where no ray of sun can reach,  
and what most pains me  
and increases my discomfort, torments,  
and anguish,

È che per mia cagione  
Prova male il mio bene.  
E voi lumi dolenti, non piangete!  
Lagrimie mie, à che vi trattenete?

is that because of me  
my beloved suffers.  
And you, pained eyes, do not weep!  
Tears of mine, what holds you back?

Lidia, ahimè, veggio mancarmi.  
L'idol mio, che tanto adoro,  
Stà colei tra duri marmi  
Per cui spiro e pur non moro.

Lidia, alas, I feel myself failing.  
My idol, whom I adore so much  
remains between hard marble walls,  
her for whom I sigh and yet I don't die.

Se la morte m'è gradita,  
Or che son privo di spene,  
Dhè, toglietemi la vita  
(Ve ne prego) aspre mie pene.

If death suits me,  
now that I am deprived of hope,  
Oh, take away my life—  
I beg you—my bitter sufferings.

Ma ben m'accorgo, che per tormentarmi  
Maggiormente, la sorte  
Mi niega anco la morte.  
Se dunqu'è vero, o Dio,  
Che sol del pianto mio,  
Il rio destino ha sete,  
[Lagrimie mie, à che vi trattenete?]

Still I realize that to torment me  
the more, destiny  
even denies me death.  
If it is true then, O God,  
that only for my tears  
does cruel fate thirst,  
[tears of mine, what holds you back?]

*Please enjoy a fifteen-minute intermission.*

## IV

**Henry Purcell** (1659-1695)

**Thy Hand Belinda** *from Dido and Aeneas*



C. 1689

Henry Purcell is widely considered one of the greatest English composers of the Renaissance. He was born just a year before the restoration of the English monarchy in 1660, and certainly reawakened music in England after the neglect during Cromwell's Commonwealth.

Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, an early chamber opera, is an adaptation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In the story, Aeneas, an infamous and renowned soldier, has seduced Dido, the Queen of Carthage. However, Aeneas abandons Dido and their love in order to pursue his destiny and find Rome.

We enter the drama tonight by performing for you the third and final act, where Aeneas can bear her abandonment no more and takes her own life. Purcell masterfully depicts Aeneas's sense of failed love and surrender by using a descending chromatic scale (as did Strozzi in *Lagrima Mie*), as she droops into the arms of her servant Belinda.

Musical score for Didon's aria. The score is in 4/4 time and G minor. It features a vocal line and a basso continuo line. The tempo is marked 'Grave' with a metronome marking of 1/4 = 60. The lyrics are: "Thy hand, Be-lin - da; dark - ness shades me, On thy bo - som let me rest; More I would, but Death in - vades me; Death is now a wel - come". The score includes a descending chromatic scale in the bass line, which is a key feature of the piece.

In the lament that follows Purcell captures one of the greatest love tragedies of history by using a ground bass (repeating bass), emphasizing the bitter nature of this love by using a chromatic descent from G to D.

Musical score for the ground bass section of the lament. The score is in 3/4 time and G minor. It features a single bass line with a repeating chromatic descent from G to D. The tempo is marked 'pp sempre' (pianissimo sempre). The score includes a descending chromatic scale in the bass line, which is a key feature of the piece.

Finally, in the ending chorus, Purcell continues his spectacular word-painting by using a descending musical theme to depict Cupid's drooping wings.

**CHORUS**  
SOPRANO

With droop - ing wings ye Cu - pids come, with droop - ing wings, with

ALTO

With droop - ing wings ye

TENOR

With droop - ing wings ye Cu - pids come, with droop - ing.

BASS

With droop - ing wings ye Cu - pids come,

*Larghetto* [ $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ ]

*p*

(For this performance we have thinned the orchestration to include strings and trombones. Although unfaithful to the original orchestration, we feel the use of trombones adds a funeral-march quality that is evident yet at the same time hidden in this piece.)

### ACT THE THIRD

Scene: The Ships

[enter the Sailors, the Sorceress, and her Enchantresses]

#### PRELUDE

FIRST SAILOR [Repeated by Chorus]

Come away, fellow sailors, your anchors be weighing.

Time and tide will admit no delaying.

Take a bouzy short leave of your nymphs on the shore,

And silence their mourning

With vows of returning

But never intending to visit them more.

#### THE SAILORS' DANCE

SORCERESS

See the flags and streamers curling

Anchors weighing, sails unfurling.

FIRST WITCH

Phoebé's pale deluding beams

Guiding more deceitful streams.



SECOND WITCH

Our plot has took,  
The Queen's forsook.

TWO WITCHES

Elissa's ruin'd, ho, ho!  
Our plot has took,  
The Queen's forsook, ho, ho!

SORCERESS

Our next Motion  
Must be to storne her Lover on the Ocean!  
From the ruin of others our pleasures we borrow,  
Elissa bleeds tonight, and Carthage flames tomorrow.

CHORUS

Destruction's our delight  
Delight our greatest sorrow!  
Elissa dies tonight and Carthage flames tomorrow.  
[Jack of the the Lanthorn leads the Spaniards out of  
their way among the Enchantresses.]

A DANCE

[Enter Dido, Belinda and train]

DIDO

Your counsel all is urged in vain  
To Earth and Heav'n I will complain!  
To Earth and Heav'n why do I call?  
Earth and Heav'n conspire my fall.  
To Fate I sue, of other means bereft  
The only refuge for the wretched left.

BELINDA

See, Madam, see where the Prince appears;  
Such Sorrow in his looks he bears  
As would convince you still he's true.  
[enter Aeneas]

AENEAS

What shall lost Aeneas do?  
How, Royal Fair, shall I impart  
The God's decree, and tell you we must part?

DIDO

Thus on the fatal Banks of Nile,  
Weeps the deceitful crocodile  
Thus hypocrites, that murder act,  
Make Heaven and Gods the authors of the Fact.

AENEAS

By all that's good ...

DIDO

By all that's good, no more!  
All that's good you have forswore.  
To your promis'd empire fly  
And let forsaken Dido die.

AENEAS

In spite of Jove's command, I'll stay.  
Offend the Gods, and Love obey.

DIDO

No, faithless man, thy course pursue;  
I'm now resolv'd as well as you.  
No repentance shall reclaim  
The injur'd Dido's slighted flame.  
For 'tis enough, whate'er you now decree,  
That you had once a thought of leaving me.

AENEAS

Let Jove say what he will: I'll stay!

DIDO

Away, away! No, no, away!

AENEAS

No, no, I'll stay, and Love obey!

DIDO

To Death I'll fly  
If longer you delay;  
Away, away!.....  
[Exit Aeneas]  
But Death, alas! I cannot shun;  
Death must come when he is gone.

CHORUS

Great minds against themselves conspire  
And shun the cure they most desire.

DIDO

[Cupids appear in the clouds o're her tomb]

Thy hand, Belinda, darkness shades me,

On thy bosom let me rest,

More I would, but Death invades me;

Death is now a welcome guest.

When I am laid in earth, May my wrongs create

No trouble in thy breast;

Remember me, but ah! forget my fate.

CHORUS

With drooping wings you Cupids come,

To scatter roses on her tomb.

Soft and Gentle as her Heart

Keep here your watch, and never part.

CUPIDS DANCE

FINIS

# V

**Claudin de Sermisy** (1490-1562)



**Tant Que Vivray**

C. 1528

There is one major country we have not yet touched upon, and that of course is France. To do this, we will perform one work by Claudin de Sermisy, master of the Parisian chanson.

Ironically, although Sermisy was a priest, he is best known for his secular works, such as *Tant Que Vivray*. Although lacking in the abundant word-painting the other pieces in this program have shown, the importance of the composer and country outweigh this fact. Furthermore, Sermisy's beautiful and buoyant melody sheds light on the happy and graceful nature of love, providing a nice contrast to the sadder pieces performed tonight by Dowland, Purcell, and Strozzi. For as Sermisy says himself in this very Medieval themed (of chivalrous love) himself, "For in love there is much good."

(As a chanson, Sermisy wrote this song for SATB and no accompaniment. Thus, for the purposes of this performance, we have expanded upon Sermisy by including a full orchestration for this piece.)

As long as I shall live in a flourishing age  
I shall serve the powerful god of love  
Indeed, in words, in songs and chords.  
For a long time it held me languishing  
But after that woe it made me happy  
For I have the love of the beauty with the fine body.  
Her alliance  
Is my love,  
Her heart is mine,  
Mine is hers.  
Fie on sadness.  
Long live happiness  
For in love there is so much good.

When I want to serve and honor her  
When I want to illustrate her name by writing  
When I see and visit her often  
The envious only mutter;  
But our love should last no less.  
It\* has more or less gone with the wind.  
Despite envy,  
All of my life,  
I will love her  
And sing.  
It's the first,  
It's the last  
That I've served and will serve.

Tant que vivray en aage florissant,  
Je serviray Amour le Dieu puissant,  
En fait, et dictz, en chansons, et accords.  
Par plusieurs jours m'a tenu languissant,  
Mais apres dueil m'a fait resjouyssant,  
Car j'ay l'amour de la belle au gent corps.  
Son alliance  
Est ma fiance:  
Son cueur est mien,  
Mon cueur est sien:  
Fy de tristesse,  
Vive lyesse,  
Puis qu'en Amours a tant de bien.

Quand je la veulx servir, et honorer,  
Quand par escriptz veulx son nom decorer,  
Quand je la voy, et visite souvent,  
Les envieulx n'en font que murmurer,  
Mais nostre Amour n'en scauroit moins  
durer:  
Aultant ou plus en emporte le vent.  
Maulgré envie  
Toute ma vie  
Je l'aymeray,  
Et chanteray:  
C'est la premiere,  
C'est la demiere,  
Que j'ay servie, et serviray.

# VI

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)



Act III from *The Fairy Queen*, **If Love's a Sweet Pas-**

**sion**

C. 1692

We end our program by returning to the great Henry Purcell. Composed after *Dido and Aeneas*, the opera *The Fairy Queen* (of which this excerpt is taken from) is based off of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Dream*.

In this scene, Queen Titania has fallen in love with Nick Bottom, a commoner. *If Love's a Sweet Passion* is sung by a nymph of the pleasures and torments of love. Listen for how Purcell uses descending motion in all four voices when the character looks "languishing[ly] down."

lan - guish - ing down

lan - guish - ing down

Listen also for how Purcell effortlessly modulates from G minor to D major, from a sad key to a happy one, when he describes discovering love.

make\_ my love known. But\_ oh!

nake my love known. But oh!

Score excerpt courtesy of CPDL.

I press her hand gently, look languishingly down,  
And by passionate silence I make my love known.  
But oh! how I'm blest when so kind she does prove,  
By some willing mistake to discover her love.  
When in striving to hide, she reveals all her flame,  
And our eyes tell each other what neither dares name.

(Although we focus on *If Love's a Sweet Passion* in these program notes, the entire third act from *The Fairy Queen* will be performed.)

## **The Semibreves**

*Program Notes by*

***Peter Lamb***

## Further Reading

A recent comprehensive study in music of the Antiquity through the Baroque period is Craig Wright's *Music in Western Civilization, Vol. 1* (USA: Thomson Schirmer, 2006). Not only does this anthology include the music to many of the composers discussed in the book, but also scores and lyrics to these songs! This is a phenomenal early music resource and is highly recommended to listeners.

*(Note to MSC: This text was used as a basis for the majority of comments made in the Dowland and Purcell sections of these program notes.)*

A hands on approach to learning about the music of this program is available through Professor Michael Scott Cuthbert's course at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology entitled "Early Music."

An excellent account of the life and works of Monteverdi is given by Mark Ringer in *Opera's First Master: The Musical Dramas of Claudio Monteverdi* (Canada: Amadeus Press, 2006). Opera lovers are encouraged to explore this nontechnical masterpiece with fresh insights about one of history's greatest composers.

*(Note to MSC: This text was used as a basis for the majority of comments made in the Monteverdi section of these program notes.)*

### **Be sure to check out the following as well!**

*(Note to MSC: I know this is not standard program note protocol, but I thought you might want to know some of the other sources I looked into. Not all are listed here.)*

Buelow, George J. *A History of Baroque Music*. Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2004.

Emerson, Isabelle. *Five Centuries of Women Singers*. London: Praeger, 2005.

Schulenberg, David. *Music of the Baroque*. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

