



*Susan Swerdlow,
Guest Conductor*

Matt Bourne, Accompanist

Voci

WOMEN'S VOCAL
ENSEMBLE

**Come, Lovers,
Follow Me:
*Madrigals of
Love and Life***

Sunday, May 5, 2024

4 pm

St. Stephen's Church
66 St. Stephen's Dr., Orinda

Today's Program

Dear friends,

Welcome to Voci's celebration of the world of madrigals!

I have been thrilled to work with the wonderful singers in this group for the last five weeks, preparing a varied program of madrigals from the 16th, 17th, and 20th centuries. The pieces' countries of origin range from Italy to England to France to Macedonia, and our final set was written (on Shakespeare texts) by a composer from the US. You'll hear some pieces sung by the full chorus, some by small ensembles, a couple of solos, and a duet.

What is a madrigal? Secular (not religious), mostly polyphonic (with independent melodies intertwined), and very expressive of the text, the form originated in Renaissance Italy, quickly took hold of the imaginations of musicians, poets, and laypeople, and traveled to England and other countries, where it was transformed according to each local culture.

Some of the pieces we're sharing today were composed for performance by professional singers at court or in wealthy households, but others would have been sung by "regular" folks in their own homes. Picture four or five friends gathered around a table after a satisfying meal together, each reading from their own part-book as they sang through the latest hits. ("Hits" is not an exaggeration; in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, madrigals were what we would call "popular music".)

Each madrigal's music celebrates the poem that it sets. The songs create vivid pictures of a multitude of situations. Love, with all its joys and frustrations, is a very common theme. So are the importance of living in the present (since the future is uncertain) and the enjoyment of the beauty of the outdoors, especially in springtime. More serious themes include personal struggles with fear and grief and trying to come to terms with death. In the Renaissance, as opposed to medieval times and earlier, direct expression of the text was paramount. As you listen today, notice ways in which the music very specifically enhances — even "describes" — images and concepts in the text, a technique called word painting.

Thank you so much for joining us. Enjoy the concert!

Susan Swerdlow
Guest Conductor

About Voci

Now in its 32nd year, **Voci Women's Vocal Ensemble** is recognized as one of the finest choral groups in the Bay Area. Voci is dedicated to musical excellence in the performance of new and innovative music, as well as treasured repertoire within the classical choral tradition. It enjoys a reputation among Bay Area audiences and critics for its adventurous programming and elegant, passionate sound. Composed of 24-28 experienced choral singers, Voci has performed with a wide range of artists and choruses at concerts, festivals, and benefits and has commissioned and premiered over 35 new works.

Voci Ensemble

Samantha Grath =	Joanna Powell +	Susan Draeger >
Pauline Ma-Senturia =	Heather Roman +	Lezlee Flagg >
Alissa McLean =	Lisa Sanders +	Terry Meyers >
Hannah Parrilla =		Adina Sara >
Sally Shute =	Nicky Deremiah ^	
Kathy Walrath =	Cassandra Forth ^	Liz Binning
	Karla Sagramoso ^	Rose Hansen
	Sarah Williams ^	Vicky Faulk

= Small Group I, + Small Group II, ^ Small Group III, > Small Group IV

Board of Directors:

Karla Sagramoso (President), Lezlee Flagg (Vice President), Emily Kirk (Secretary), Lisa Sanders (Treasurer), Nicky Deremiah, Adina Sara, Rose Hansen



Program

ENGLAND

Sing We and Chant It	Thomas Morley (c. 1557–1602)
Beauty Is a Lovely Sweet +	Thomas Bateson (c. 1570–1630)
Come, Lovers, Follow Me ^	Morley
Since Tears Could Not Obtain >	Michael East (c. 1580–1648)
What Ails My Darling? =	Morley
Draw on, Sweet Night	John Wilbye (1574–1638)

FRANCE

Revey venir du printans (excerpt) ^	Claude Le Jeune (1529–1600)
Ayez pitié =	Jean de Castro (c. 1540–c. 1600)
Il est bel et bon	Pierre Passereau (fl. 1509–1547)

ITALY AND MACEDONIA

La fiera vista +	Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)
Morte! Que voi?	Maddalena Casulana (c. 1544–c. 1590)
Vaghe ninf'e pastori >	Giovanni Maria Artusi (c. 1540–1613)
Lasciatemi morire	Monteverdi
	<i>Lezlee Flagg, soprano</i>
Reka (from <i>Madrigals</i>)	Tomislav Zografski (1934–2000)



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

It Was a Lover and His Lass **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872–1958)

Heather Roman, soprano and Lisa Sanders, mezzo

O Mistress Mine **Willam Byrd** (c. 1539–1623)

Susan Draeger, soprano

Three Madrigals **Emma Lou Diemer** (b. 1927)

1. O mistress mine
2. Take, oh take those lips away
3. Sigh no more, ladies



Voci Guest Musicians

Guest Conductor

Conductor, singer and music educator **Susan Swerdlow** has focused almost entirely on Early Music in recent years. She currently applies her skills in that area as the Artistic Director of Women's Antique Vocal Ensemble (WAVE) and the Associate Conductor of Tactus SF, and as a chorister and soloist both in Tactus and in the Berkeley Bach Cantata Group.

A decades-long East Bay resident who journeyed to Philadelphia to earn her Master's Degree in Choral Conducting at Temple University, Susan trained the choruses for many productions at Berkeley Opera (now West Edge Opera) and Oakland Opera Theater. She was the Music Director of Sacred and Profane Chamber Chorus and the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, and the Choral Director for Westwind International Folk Ensemble.

Susan also loves working with young people. She directed choirs for several decades at the College Preparatory School in Oakland and has enjoyed working with youngsters in a number of other organizations, among them the SF Early Music Society's Music Discovery Workshop, the San Francisco Girls Chorus, the Pre-College Division at the SF Conservatory, and the SF Community Music Center.

Accompanist

Voci accompanist **Matt Bourne** performs and accompanies for vocalists and choral groups all around the Bay Area. He is a musical director and conductor for musical theater productions and local companies. He is staff accompanist for Campolindo High School, pianist at First United Methodist Church of Hayward, a piano teacher, and a composer. He is a Bay Area native and a graduate of the music program at UCLA.



A heartfelt thank you to The Reed Family Foundation and all our other generous donors; Nick Jones, Terry Meyers, and Edna Yeh; all the friends, family and members of Voci who give their time to make our performances possible. Thank you also to Orinda Community Church, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, and the Alameda County Arts Commission, Grants for the Arts Program.

As with all arts organizations, ticket receipts are not enough to sustain this choir's operation. To support Voci with your donation, please visit VociSings.org or scan the QR code below.



Voci is a not-for-profit 501c3 organization and welcomes contributions.

Sing with Voci!

Voci seeks experienced women choral singers in all voice parts to join the ensemble. Auditions will be held in July and August. Visit our website (VociSings.org) to learn more. Contact info@VociSings.org to inquire and schedule an audition.

Watch Our Site

Please visit our website at VociSings.org for our coming 2024–2025 concert season. We look forward to sharing many exciting musical moments with our audience and feel very grateful for your ongoing support.

