



## ***Due Voci: French and Italian Duets***

***for soprano and tenor***

**Sunday 12 June 2011 (12 and 2PM)**

**with**

### **Music's Quill**

Timothy Neill Johnson, tenor

Erin Chenard, soprano

Timothy Burris, lute and theorbo

Elliott Cherry, 'cello

Cloris attends un peu (duet)	François Richard (fl. ca 1637)
Rosette	Anonymous
Ils s'en vont ces roys de ma vie	Antoine Boësset (1586 – 1643)
Ballet de M <sup>r</sup> Le Dauphin	Robert Ballard (ca 1575 – after 1650)
Lors que tes beaux yeux mignonnes	Grand-Rue
La Rousée du joly mois de may	Jean Planson (ca 1545 - after 1612)
Mourons Tircis (duet)	Antoine Boësset
Toccatà Arpeggiata	Giovanni G. Kapsperger (c1580 – 1651)
Lontan dalla sua fille (duet)	Giovanni Carlo Maria Clari (1677 – 1744)
Vergine bella	Arranged by G.F. Handel (1685 – 1759)
O Donna troppo cruda (duet)	Richard Dering (ca 1580 – 1630)
Donna, mentre io vi miro	
Capricio detto il Favorito	Pietro Paolo Melii (active 1610 – 1620)
Quando tramonta il sole (duet)	Clari—Handel

## The Music

**François Richard** produced only one book of *airs de cour*, but they are pieces of considerable sophistication and beauty. Richard's book (1637) was published in two forms: a version for four voices, dedicated to the king, and a version for voice(s) and lute, dedicated to the queen. "Cloris attends un peu" is drawn from the latter edition.

Richard was also an accomplished lutenist, something reflected in the quality of the accompaniments. As Georgie Durosoir described him in *L'air de cour en France: 1571-1655* (Mardaga: Liège, 1991):

*Among the petits maîtres of the airs de cour, François Richard distinguished himself by the quality of his musical personality, although he only produced two volumes of music. Lutenist at the court of France like his son of the same name, from 1629 he bore the title of musicien et vallet de chambre ordinaire du Roy.*

**Antoine Boësset**, *sieur de Villedieu*, was the superintendent of music at the French court and a composer of secular music, particularly *airs de cour*. He and his father-in-law, Pierre Guédron dominated the court's musical life for the first half of the 17th century under Louis XIII.

At the age of 26, Boësset was made master of the children within the musical household of the *Chambre du roi* in 1613. He rose to be the queen's music master in 1617 and secretary to the *chambre du roi* in 1620, and finally *surintendant* of the musical household of the *chambre du roi* in 1623.

Boësset was known to prominent figures at court, including Descartes, Mersenne, and Huygens.

The poem "Ils s'en vont ces roys de ma vie" was penned by **François de Malherbe (1555-1628)**, who began to make a name for himself in 1600, by means of an ode of welcome that he presented to Maria de' Medici.

Malherbe's personal life had its ups and downs. Though he corresponded affectionately with his wife after joining the court, for example, he would see her only twice in the next twenty-odd years. His son, Marc Antoine, a young man of promise, died in a duel in which foul play may have played a role. Malherbe filed suit against his son's opponent and the man's second, but died before the suit was settled, outliving his son by only fifteen months.

Malherbe contributed to the gradual development of the poetic rules of "Classicism" that would dominate French poetry until the Romantics.

**Robert Ballard** was a prominent French lutenist and composer. His father, Robert Ballard Senior (ca. 1527-1588) was the head of the well-known music publishers, "Le Roy and Ballard", founded in 1551 with cousin Adrian Le Roy (a notable virtuoso lutenist and composer of the period).

Ballard published two books of lute solos in 1611 and 1614. A number of these pieces are orchestral works transcribed for solo lute, in some cases the only surviving version of those pieces.

**Grand-Rue** is credited with a number of compositions in several of the books of *Airs de cour de différents auteurs*, published in Paris in the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Durosoir (op. cit.) lists the volumes (*livres*) by publication year, and includes the number of songs by composer for each, but provides no biographical information on Grand-Rue.

**Jean Planson** served as organist of St Germain l'Auxerrois and later St Sauveur, both in Paris. He enjoyed some renown in his time, and published motets, sonnets, and airs.

**Giovanni Girolamo Kapsperger** was a composer of German descent, the son of a noble military father (a colonel in the Austrian army, who appears to have settled in Venice). The Sonata Arpeggiata on today's program is from Kapsperger's first book (1604), devoted entirely to music of the *chitarone* (or theorbo). He composed four books of music for lute and/or theorbo that we know of, three of which survive, as well as a wide range of other music. He was highly regarded in his time as a composer of remarkable invention.

**Giovanni Carlo Maria Clari** was an Italian composer and *maestro di cappella* at Pistoia. Born in Pisa, he obtained his initial training in music from his violinist father. Clari went on to study with Giovanni Paolo Colonna. Clari was most esteemed for his vocal duets and trios with basso continuo, published between 1740 and 1747. These compositions are said to have been much admired by Cherubini and Handel.

**George Frideric Handel** was a gifted arranger as well as a composer, as attested to by these two duets. Among the scant evidence regarding the duets' origins are entries in volume 2 of Augustus Hughes-Hughes' *Catalogue of manuscript music in the British museum*. "Lontan dalla sua fille" is listed as the third of five pieces by Clari in the manuscript, which are said to come "from Book i of his Madrigals, which appears to have been

published in 1741"; the piece is further described as being "imperfect in the middle". "Quando tramonta il sole" is contained in a different manuscript, which bears the heading "Madrigali a due, Del Sig<sup>re</sup> Gio. Carlo Ma. Clari" and the dates "1740, 1741". (The spelling of Handel's name is taken from a later example of his signature.)

**Richard Dering** had traveled to Italy and gained a Bachelor of Music degree from Christ Church, Oxford by 1610. From 1612–16 he traveled with the British ambassador to Venice, and in 1617 it is known that he was organist to the community of English Benedictine nuns in Brussels. He returned to England in 1625 as organist to the Catholic Queen Henrietta Maria and 'musician for the lutes and voices' to Charles I.

Though far from a household name, Dering was well regarded in his time. Much of his music was brought out by the enterprising Antwerp publisher Pierre Phalèse the Younger between 1612 and 1628. Dering's two- and three-voice pieces were published in London by John Playford in 1662, long after the composer's death, but they may have been written in the Spanish Netherlands, for one has a text honoring St James as patron saint of Spain.

**Pietro Paolo Melii** was active in the second decade of the seventeenth century, including work as lutenist (and, probably, theorbist) in the orchestra of Claudio Monteverdi in Venice. Melii published five books of solo music, four of which survive. Most of the music is for a lute with an extended neck, called the *liuto attiorbato* (theorboed lute), but Book Five (1620) concludes with a number of pieces for theorbo (a larger member of the lute family), from which "Capriccio detto il Favorito" is drawn.

**Program notes by Timothy Burris**

## The Artists

### Timothy Neill Johnson—tenor

Mr. Johnson has performed and recorded with many ensembles here and abroad. These include the Los Angeles Baroque Ensemble, La Petite Bande, Collegium Vocale, Handel Society of Baltimore, Le Concert Spirituel of Paris, and the Portland Symphony. His repertoire ranges from English ayres to the song cycles of Benjamin Britten. He is on the faculty of both Bowdoin College and the University of Maine in Augusta.

### Erin Chenard—soprano

Erin Chenard has performed as a soloist with the USM Chorale, Chamber Singers, and the Downeast Singers. Ms Chenard is a founding member of the St. Mary Schola, based in Falmouth, Maine. She performs Early and Renaissance music as well as opera; she made her Boston debut in Yeomen of the Guard with the Bostonians opera company. She is a graduate of the USM School of Music and Westminster Choir College.

### Timothy Burris—lute

Mr Burris has performed widely in Europe and the US, including appearances with world-renowned early music specialists Derek Lee Ragin and Julianne Baird. His recordings include modern premieres of 18th-century works including lute and written for the Dresden court (the subject of his dissertation—Duke, 1997). Lute instructor at the Royal Flemish Conservatory of Music in Antwerp from 1990-96, he is currently on the faculty of the Portland Conservatory of Music.

### Elliott Cherry—'cello

Elliott Cherry was born and raised in New York City, with first music lessons from his father, who was a cellist in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. His studies continued at the Cathedral Boy's Choir School, High School of Music and Art, Leonard Davis Center for the Arts of City College, and with numerous private teachers. He moved to Maine in 1984 and has been active as a composer, cellist, and teacher. He was also a classical music radio host for many years.

**The Lutes:** liuto attiorbato by Richard Berg, Ottawa (2007); theorbo by Brian Cohen, London (1986)