

*P*ARTHENIA

BEVERLY AU, bass viol
LAWRENCE LIPNIK, tenor viol, recorders
ROSAMUND MORLEY, treble viol
LISA TERRY, bass viol
and
ELLEN HARGIS, soprano
PAUL HECHT, actor

MUSICAL VISIONS | POETIC GENIUS

A Reliquary for William Blake Will Ayton (b.1948)

The Tyger
The Principle, Application & Therefore
The Garden of Love
The Remembrance of Sin
Meditation
Come Hither
The Little Vagabond
The Look of Love
The Clod & the Pebble
Grown Old in Love
Why was Cupid a Boy
Dance - Prayer – Dance
Principle – Argument - Fancy
Piping Down the Valleys Wild

Fantasia on a theme of Henry Purcell Ayton

Rest Sweet Nymphs Ayton

From *Songs of the British Isles* Ayton
The Berryfields of Blair – *a Tinkers' song*
Young Edwin in the Lowlands Low – *English folk song*
The Standing Stone – *Song of the Orkney Isles*
The Milking Song – *Song from the Isle of Man*

INTERMISSION

It was a lover and his lass . Thomas Morley (1557-1602)
The Triple Foole ***John Donne (1572-1631)***
Fantasy on *All in a Garden Greene* . John Jenkins (1592-1678)
Go and catch a falling star ***Donne***
Galliard: *The Fairy Round* Anthony Holborne (c.1545-1602)

The Flea ***Donne***
Come live with me and be my love . William Corkine (fl.1610-1620)
The Bait ***Donne***
A Merry Conceit: *The Queenes delight* Tobias Hume (c.1569-1645)

Sonnet 29: When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes ***William Shakespeare (1564-1616)***
Fantasy a 4 Byrd
Sonnet 23: As an unperfect actor on the stage ***Shakespeare***
The fair young virgin . Byrd

A lecture upon the shadow ***Donne***
So, so, leave off this last lamenting kisse . Alfonso Ferrabosco (c.1580-1628)
The Relic ***Donne***
Harke harke . Hume
Death be not proud ***Donne***

Ah dear heart Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)
Hugh Ashton's Maske Hugh Ashton? (c.1485-c.1558)
Sonnet 71: No longer mourn for me when I am dead ***Shakespeare***
Pavan: *Paradiso* . Holborne
A Valediction Forbidding Mourning ***Donne***

• ABOUT THE PROGRAM •

The viola da gamba arrived in the British Isles during the reign of Henry VIII who in 1540 hired a whole consort of six viol players from Italy. Music for consorts of viols continued to flourish there for a century and a half, with a particularly rich flowering at the time of Orlando Gibbons and culminating in the astonishingly beautiful set of fantasies written by the young Henry Purcell in the summer of 1680. The contrapuntal ingenuity and emotional richness of these pieces, so idiomatically written for the viol, contain a perfect union of instrumental and vocal styles for which it is so aptly suited.

The popularity of the viol declined in Europe by the end of the 18th century, but in the 20th century it has regained its unique voice. The first half of our program is dedicated to the music of American composer Will Ayton whose intimate familiarity with the historical repertoire and his knowledge of the viol as a player himself is clear throughout these pieces. In his vocal compositions the voice and the viols are

equal partners using imitative textures in the same way as the Elizabethan masters did. Though his harmonic language is modern, the cadences bring out the poetic structure of his chosen texts in a similar way. His instrumental pieces show influences of folk music from the British Isles and the Appalachian Mountains in the shape, structure and rhythms of the melodies. But the jewel in the crown of our program is the song cycle, *A Reliquary for William Blake*, composed for Parthenia, and presented here in its entirety.

The second half of this concert takes us to the Elizabethan world, a place in time when poetry and music were inseparable: poetry was conceived as song and music took its forms and phrasing from poetry. Parthenia and guests intersperse dramatic readings of the poetry of Shakespeare and Donne with instrumental and vocal musical vignettes, creating an evening of sung poetry and spoken music.

- Rosamund Morley

• NOTES FROM THE COMPOSER •

Will Ayton likes to characterize the music chosen for this program as an effort to “put new wine into old bottles,” merging the beautiful sound of the viola da gamba (the “old bottles”) with music composed beyond its historical period (the “new wine”) and flavored with his passions: the music of his Celtic heritage, Elizabethan poetry, his love of stories, his devotion to the art of polyphony, and his preoccupation with the philosophical and the spiritual.

William Blake (1757-1827) was a poet, painter, visionary mystic and engraver. His multifaceted work has been a constant source of contemplation, fascination, and even bewilderment for those who view

his paintings and prints as well as those who read the narrative of his visions. *A Reliquary for William Blake*, commissioned by Edward Truettner, is another homage, a deep reverent bow to an artist, a humanist, and a mystic -- a man of many dimensions. Using Blake's song lyrics and selections from his prose, these pieces attempt to musically illustrate his philosophical and spiritual credo, his view of institutionalized religion and its impositions, his understanding of human love, and finally, his own role as the perennial scribe and witness of life.

- Will Ayton

• BIOS •

PARTHENIA, hailed by the New Yorker as "one of the brightest lights in New York's early-music scene," is a dynamic ensemble exploring the extraordinary repertory for viols from Tudor England to the court of Versailles and beyond. Known for its remarkable sense of ensemble, Parthenia is presented in concerts across America, and produces its own lively and distinguished concert series at Corpus Christi Church in New York City, collaborating regularly with the world's foremost early music specialists and has been featured on radio and television and in prestigious festivals and series as

wide-ranging as Music Before 1800, Maverick Concerts and the Regensburg Tage Alter Musik.

Noteworthy among Parthenia's inventive programs have been presentations of the complete viol fantasies of Henry Purcell at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the complete instrumental works of Robert Parsons at Columbia's Miller Theatre, as well as the popular touring program “When Music & Sweet Poetry Agree,” a celebration of Elizabethan poetry and music with actor Paul Hecht. Parthenia performs often at The

Metropolitan Museum of Art, both in Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium and in the Museum's Medieval Sculpture Hall, and appeared in conjunction with the exhibition "Searching for Shakespeare" at the Yale Center for British Art.

Parthenia's enduring interest in the bonds between poetry and music will be heard in a forthcoming release of 16th-century settings of the poems of Pierre de Ronsard, *Les Amours de Mai*, with soprano Julianne Baird and Renaissance violinist Robert Mealy. Parthenia has also recorded *Within the Labyrinth*, *Parthenia Sampler*, *A Reliquary for William Blake*, and *Trumpet after Dark*, with jazz trumpeter Randy Sandke.

Parthenia has commissioned, premiered and recorded many new works by composers such as Phil Kline, Brian Fennelly, Will Ayton, Randy Sandke, Frances White, Nicholas Patterson, funded in part through grants from the Fromm Foundation, American Composers Forum, the Camargo Foundation, Roger Williams University, the Viola da Gamba Society of America, and private donors. An ASCAP/CMA Award honored Maverick Concerts' 2002 Season, which included two world premieres of works by Brian Fennelly, commissioned especially for Parthenia by Maverick Concerts. Through a 2006 grant from the Jerome Foundation, Parthenia premiered "Nothing Proved," a song cycle for viol consort, voice and interactive audio processing, set by composer Kristin Norderval to the extraordinary poetry of Queen Elizabeth I. More information about Parthenia's activities can be found at www.parthenia.org.

ELLEN HARGIS, soprano, is one of America's premier early music singers, specializing in repertoire ranging from ballads to opera and oratorio. She has performed with many of the foremost period music conductors of the world including Andrew Parrott, Gustav Leonhardt, Paul Goodwin, Monica Huggett, Jane Glover, Simon Preston, Daniel Harding, Paul Hillier, Harry Bicket, Craig Smith and Jeffrey Thomas. She has performed with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Virginia Symphony, Washington Choral Arts Society, Long Beach Opera, CBC Radio Orchestra, Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Teatro Lirico, Tragicomedia, New York Collegium, The Mozarteian Players, Parthenia, Piffaro, Fretwork, Emmanuel Music and the Mark Morris Dance Group, and has become regular performer with Chicago's Music of the Baroque, the American Bach Soloists, Seattle Baroque and the Portland Baroque Orchestra. She has appeared at many of the world's leading

festivals including the Adelaide Festival (Australia), Utrecht Festival (Holland), Resonanzen Festival (Vienna), Festival Vancouver, The Monadnock Festival, Tanglewood, the Berkeley Festival and New Music America Festival. She has been featured in successive seasons of the Boston Early Music Festival where she has sung Aegle in Lully's *Thésée*, the title role in Luigi Rossi's *L'Orfeo*, Queen Pasiphae in Conradi's *Ariadne* and Irina in Johann Mattheson's 1710 opera, *Boris Goudenow*. Lully's *Thésée* and Conradi's *Ariadne* were recorded for CPO and were nominated respectively for 2007 and 2006 Grammys.

Ellen Hargis teaches voice at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, and for The Music Institute of Chicago, and is Artist-in-Residence with the Newberry Consort at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University. Ms. Hargis teaches the annual Vancouver Baroque Vocal Programme: *The Compleat Singer* each August.

PAUL HECHT made his debut as the Player in *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead* (Tony nomination 1968). Other Broadway appearances include: *Night & Day* with Maggie Smith and *Invention of Love*. (Tom Stoppard), *1776* (original company), the Rothschilds, *Shaw's Caesar & Cleopatra* and *Pirandello's Henry IV* (both with Rex Harrison). Off Broadway: *Harold Pinter's Moonlight*, *Neil Simon's London Suite*, the title role in *Pirandello's Henry IV* (Obie award 1990). *Humble Boy* at the Manhattan Theater Club, and also in the National Theatre of Great Britain tour. Around the country: *Cyrano* at the Guthrie (world premiere Antony Burgess translation). *Marc Antony*, (*Julius Caesar & Antony and Cleopatra*) American Shakespeare Festival, and in plays by Shaw, Shakespeare, Chekhov, Turgenev, Harwood, Kaufman-Ferber, Charles Dickens, at the McCarter in Princeton, Canada's Shaw festival, N.Y Shakespeare Festival, John Drew East Hampton, Bay Street Sag Harbor, and the Berkshire Theater Festival. TV Audiences may have recognized him over the years as Charles in *Kate & Allie* and several unsavory characters in *Law and Order*, plus most of the daytime dramas (soaps). He has appeared in films with Bette Davis, Jane Fonda, Jeremy Irons, Chris Rock, and Howard Stern, and also in *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (Stoppard-Previn) with the Philadelphia Orchestra. He has appeared in many literary programs at the 92nd street Y and reads annually on Selected Shorts at Symphony Space broadcast on NPR. With Parthenia he has developed the program "Sweet Music" reading sonnets of Shakespeare and Donne. He appears also with the music groups Dryden Players (Princeton NJ) and Newbury players (Chicago). he also

presents a bi monthly program of poetry at the Cornelia Street Cafe in Greenwich Village. He served as NY Branch President of the Screen Actors Guild from 1991- 1995.

WILL AYTON was born of missionary parents in Kansu China in 1948. He completed his primary schooling in the US and Taiwan and went to high school in Pennsylvania. His degrees include a Master of Music from the New England Conservatory and a Doctor of Music Composition from Boston. He currently teaches music and culture at Roger Williams University in Rhode Island. Although grading papers seems to be his primary occupation, he also attempts to steal a few moments for his passions, early music and composition.