

PARTHENIA

Lawrence Lipnik, treble and tenor viol
Rosamund Morley, treble viol
Beverly Au, bass viol
Lisa Terry, bass viol
with
Daniel Moody, countertenor
Motomi Igarashi, tenor viol
Charles Weaver, theorbo

THEATRICAL MUSIC *for* DRAMATIC TIMES

Long live fair Oriana	Ellis Gibbons (1573-1603)
Pour down ye powers divine ~ No grief is like to mine	Robert Parsons (c. 1534-1572)
Pavan ~ Galliard	Peter Philips (c.1560-1628)
Arm, arm	Robert Johnson (c.1583-1633)
Fantasia “Attendite”	Martin Peerson (1572-1651)
Sweeter than roses	Henry Purcell (1659-1695)
Fantasia	Thomas Lupo (1571-1627)
What is our life?	Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)

PAUSE

Gagliarda Quarta, alla Spagnola	Giovanni Maria Trabaci (c.1575-1647)
Canzonetta Spirituale sopra alla nanna	Tarquinio Merula (1594/95-1665)
Two madrigal fantasias: Ond’ei di morte Clorinda	Luca Marenzio (1553/54-1599) Orazio Vecchi (1550-1605)
Sestina: <i>Lagime d’amante al sepolcro dell’amata</i> Prima parte: Incenerite spoglie Seconda parte: Detelo o fiumi Terza parte: Darà la notte il sol Quarta parte: Ma te raccoglie Quinta parte: O chiome d’or Sesta & ultima parte: Dunque amate reliquie	Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Parthenia is represented by GEMS Live! Artist Management and records for MSR Classics.

This concert was recorded live on February 7th, 2020 at
The Church of Saint Luke in the Fields, New York City.

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

The English Reformation—beginning in 1534 with Henry VIII’s dissolution of the monasteries—instituted a remarkable shift in England’s musical culture. The replacement of Latin texts with vernacular ones demanded a new, more syllabic style of liturgical composition, which was readily supplied by the court musicians of the Chapel Royal. This new style ushered in the beginning of a golden age of English secular music, which reached its apex during the long and relatively stable reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603), herself an avid musician and dancer. Literature and the theatrical arts also prospered under Elizabeth, who saw the rise of the English sonnet and the success of plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries at performances in public and at court, with songs and incidental music heightening moments of joy and tragedy on the stage.

English Renaissance music kept in close contact with continental developments. Chief among the forms imported from mainland Europe was the Italian madrigal, a polyphonic secular song form that influenced both vocal and instrumental music in England. Alfonso Ferrabosco I, an Italian musician working at Elizabeth’s court, composed a number of madrigals in the 1550s and 60s, and in 1588 Londoner Nicholas Yonge published *Musica Transalpina*, a book of Italian madrigals fitted with English words. Yonge’s book, and the works in it, were widely imitated, setting off a fashion for Italianate polyphonic style and dramatic text setting among English composers.

Tonight’s program opens with a panegyric to Queen Elizabeth. Ellis Gibbons’ “Long Live Fair Oriana” is one of two madrigals Gibbons contributed to Thomas Morley’s 1601 anthology *The Triumphs of Oriana*; the works may originally have been composed for a pageant or masque performed in front of the queen. Each madrigal in Morley’s collection closes with a salutation to the Oriana, queen of Arcadia, standing in allegorically for the English monarch: “Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana: Long live fair Oriana!”

Robert Parsons was one of the musicians called upon during Elizabeth’s reign to prove that vernacular English liturgy could be as splendid as the Latin music that characterized Catholic practice. While this task occupied the majority of his time, he also wrote a number of secular works, including the songs “Pour down, you pow’rs divine” and “No

grief is like to mine.” Though little is known about the provenance of these pieces, the plaintive setting and the alliteration in the texts—a feature parodied by Shakespeare in *Pyramus and Thisbe*, the play-within-a-play in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*—suggest that they might have originally punctuated a theatrical entertainment.

Like many other Catholics living under Elizabeth’s reign, Peter Philips, a virtuoso keyboard player and Catholic priest, left England’s shores in 1582. Philips traveled widely in Europe; on a 1593 trip to Amsterdam to hear the Flemish organist Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, he was imprisoned and tried for complicity in a plot on Queen Elizabeth’s life. (He was later acquitted.) Despite his expatriate status, Philips continued to write traditionally “English” forms of keyboard and consort music, including fantasias and dance pairs, including the pavan, a stately entrance dance, and its closely associated galliard, a more agile triple-time form.

English-born lutenist Robert Johnson’s life was also dramatic, though in a different sense. His employer, the Lord Chamberlain George Carey, patronized not only musicians—including England’s best-known lutenist, John Dowland—but also The King’s Men Players, a theater company who performed masques at the Globe and Blackfriars theaters. Johnson soon became involved in the composition and performance of music for these entertainments, including composing original settings of Shakespeares’ texts.

Like Johnson, organist and virginalist Martin Peerson was associated with Blackfriars, and spent much of his early life writing music for theatrical entertainments in his early life. He also composed madrigals, consort songs, which he published in his 1620 collection *Private Musicke*, and instrumental fantasias, all of which were intended for noble amateurs to perform at home.

Although Henry Purcell’s best-known contribution to the London stage was his development, alongside John Blow, of fully-sung English opera, he spent much more time composing incidental music for spoken plays. Purcell’s famous song “Sweeter than Roses,” composed in the last year of his life, was written to accompany Richard Norton’s tragic play *Pausanius, the Betrayer of his Country*. In happy contrast the ominous title of the play, the song itself describes the memory of a lover’s first kiss.

Several families of Italian musicians secured prominent positions at the English court. Thomas Lupo, a viol player at Elizabeth's court and one of the principal figures in the development of the consort fantasia in England, was born to a Venetian musician who settled in London via Antwerp. His contrapuntal style nonetheless recalls the work of Italian madrigalists.

Orlando Gibbons, younger brother to Ellis, was a leading figure in the development of a distinctly Protestant style of Anglican church music; he was also one of the publishers of *Parthenia*, the first printed book of English keyboard music. His melancholic madrigal "What is Our Life," from his 1612 collection *Madrigals and Motets*, sets a text written by Sir Walter Raleigh, a favorite of Elizabeth who after her death was imprisoned and faced execution at the hands of James I; the text was likely written during his incarceration.

While it was the polyphonic vocal madrigal that was most influential in England, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw an expansion of ever-more-virtuosic madrigal styles in different regions in Italy. Meanwhile, the monodic style established by operas like Monteverdi's 1607 *Orfeo* challenged the traditional polyphonic madrigal styles, expanding the form to comprise mixed compositions for voices and viols, and virtuosic and theatrical solo singing in addition to polyphony. The expansion of the modes of expression available to madrigalists allowed them to convey a heightened range of emotions, and broadened the form to include narrative compositions.

Little is known of Antonio Troilo beyond the fact that he was born in Verona and worked in the nearby Vicenza. He published two books of instrumental *canzonas*, which differ from *fantasias* like Lupo's in their markedly rhythmic and separation into distinct sections. Giovanni Maria Trabaci, a Neapolitan tenor and organist with a wide and varied output, served as organist of the royal chapel for the Spanish viceroys in Naples. He thus had a close connection to the "Spanish" style he imitates in this Galliard.

Cremonese organist Tarquinio Merula's innovative and affecting "Canzonetta Spirituale sopra alla

nanna" is a prayerful lullaby, sung by the Virgin Mary to her infant son as she imagines his passion on the cross. The hypnotic, oscillating two-note figure that forms the greater part of the accompaniment conjures a hypnotic and mournful image of the mother rocking the infant to sleep while imagining his death.

Luca Marenzio and Orazio Vecchi were prolific madrigalists. Marenzio moved frequently, serving prominent families including the Gonzaga, the Este, and the Medici, before settling for a time in Rome. He wrote an astonishing seventeen books of madrigals between 1580 and 1589—more than the entire sum of madrigal publications in England—and a number of his early madrigals appeared in *Musica Transalpina*. Orazio Vecchi, a collaborator of Monteverdi, traveled widely in Italy before settling in his native Modena. His "Clorinda" comes from his first book of madrigals (1589). Vecchi was most famous for his "madrigal comedies," light entertainments that strung madrigals together in a loosely-structured narrative. Such works were an important precursor to opera. [These three madrigals copied in the early 17th century by an English musician, likely intended for viol consort performance, are preserved in a manuscript at Christ Church, Oxford].

The final work on tonight's program comes from Claudio Monteverdi's sixth book of madrigals (1616). Most of the songs from this book deal with grief and loss, themes central to Monteverdi's life while he was composing the works. In 1607 Monteverdi's wife Claudia died, leaving behind two young sons; in the following year, his former student Caterina Martinelli died at the age of eighteen shortly before debuting the title role in Monteverdi's 1608 opera *Arianna*. Monteverdi's patron, the Mantuan duke Vincenzo Gonzaga, had discovered Martinelli and treasured her talent; he commissioned Monteverdi to set a sestina by Scipione Agnelli in her memory. Monteverdi sets each of the six verses of the poem—the plangent lament of the shepherd Glauco over the tomb of his beloved nymph, Corinna—as a brooding, declamatory madrigal, reminiscent of his dramatic style.

~ Cat Slowik

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Long live fair Oriana

Hark, did you ever hear so sweet a singing?
They sing young love to waken
The nymphs unto the woods their Queen are bringing
There was a note well taken!
O good! hark how joyfully 'tis dittied
A queen and song most excellently fitted
I never heard a rarer
I never saw a fairer
Then sing ye shepherds and nymphs of Diana
Long live fair Oriana.

Anon., *Triumphs of Oriana* 1601

Pour down you powers divine on me,
poor wretch and silly maid,
Some hope of him to have, my heavy heart to aid.
Pandolpho, some pity, Pandolpho.
Frame else with fiery flames your force on me,
you furious fates, Unless my hated heart have help,
my hopes are but my hates.
Pandolpho, some pity, Pandolpho.
Thus restless will I rest,
in ruth respecting what remains,
If pitiless, then pleasureless, if pityful no pain.
Pandolpho, some pity, Pandolpho.

No grief is like to mine,
Which naught but death can swage.
My help is hurt; my weal is woe;
My rest is ruthless rage.
My comfort is my care;
My safety shipwreck is.
My medicine is my misery,
And bale is all my bliss.
Farewell, my friendly foe!
Pandolpho proud, farewell!
Farewell the causer of my woe!
I love, and loathe to live,
I live and long to die.
Come death, dispatch her life,
She yield, to die;
Come death, dispatch her life,
She doth desire to die.

Attrib. John Bayle, *King John*, c.1558

Arm, arm, arm, arm! The scouts are all come in.
Keep your ranks close, and now your honours win.
Behold from yonder hill the foe appears;
Bows, fills, glaves, arrows, shields, and spears;
Like a dark wood he comes, or a tempest pouring;
Oh, view the wings of horse the meadows scouring.
The vanguard marches bravely. Hark, the drums.
They meet, they meet; now the battalia comes.
Dub-a-dub-a-dub, Dub-a-dub-a-dub.
See how the arrows fly, That darken all the sky;
Hark how the trumpets sound, Hark how the hills rebound.
Ta-ra-ra-ra-ra-ra, Ta-ra-ra-ra-ra-ra,
Hark how the horse charge! In boys, in boys, in!
Ta-ra-ra-ra-ra-ra, Ta-ra-ra-ra-ra-ra,
The battle totters; now the wounds begin;
Oh, how they cry. Oh, how they die!
Room for the valiant Memnon arm'd with thunder!
See how he breaks the ranks asunder.
They fly, they fly! Eumenes has the chase,
And brave Polybius makes good his place.
To the plains, to the woods, To the rocks, to the floods,
They fly for succor. Follow, follow, follow!
Hark how the soldiers hollow!
Brave Diocles is dead, And all his soldiers fled,
The battle's won, and lost, That many a life hath cost.

Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Mad Lover*, c.1616

Sweeter than roses, or cool evening breeze
On a warm flowery shore, was the dear kiss,
First trembling made me freeze,
Then shot like fire all o'er.
What magic has victorious love!
For all I touch or see since that dear kiss,
I hourly prove, all is love to me.

Richard Norton, *Pausanias, the Betrayer of his Country*, 1696

What is our life, our life? A play of passion.
Our mirth the music of division.
Our mother's wombs the 'tiring houses be,
where we are dress'd for this short comedy.
Heav'n the judicious sharp spectator is,
that sits and marks still who doth act amiss.
Our graves, that hide us from the searching sun
are like drawn curtains when the play is done.
Thus march we, playing to our latest rest;
Only we die in earnest, that's no jest.
Sir Walter Raleigh (c.1554-1618)

Canzonetta Spirituale sopra alla nanna

Hor ch'è tempo di dormire
Dormi figlio e non vagire
Perche il tempo ancor verrà
Che vagir bisognerà
Deh ben mio, deh, cor mio,
Fa la nina nina na.

Chiudi quei lumi divini
Come fan gl'altri bambini
Perchè tosto oscuro velo
Priverà di lume il cielo.
Deh, ben mio, deh, cor mio,
Fa la nina nina na.

Posa or queste membra belle
Vezzosome e tenerelle
Perche puoi ferri e catene
Gli daran acerbe pene
Deh ben mio, deh cor mio
Fa la nina nina na.

Queste mani e questi piedi
Ch'hor con gusto e gaudio vedi
Ahimè com'in varii modi
Passeran acuti chiodi.
Questa faccia gratiosa
Rubiconda hor più che Rosa
Sputi e schiaffi sporcheranno
Con tormento e grand'affanno

Ah, con quanto tuo dolore
Sola speme del mio core
Questo Capo e questi crini
Passeran acuti spini

Now it is time to sleep,
Sleep, my son, and do not whimper,
for the time to cry
will come later on.
Ah, my love, ah, my heart,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby.

Close the divine lights of your eyes,
just as other children do,
for soon enough a dark veil
will hide the light of the sky.,
Ah, my love, ah, my heart,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby.

Now rest these beautiful,
pretty little, tender soft limbs,
because you will have irons and chains
that will give them bitter pain,
Ah, my love, ah, my heart,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby.

These hands and these feet
which we look on now with delight and joy,
ah me, how in various ways
they will suffer sharp nails.
This pretty face
ruddier now than a rose,
will be defiled by spitting and blows,
with torment and great suffering.

Ah, with what pain for you,
Only hope of my heart,
this Head and this hair
will suffer sharp thorns.

Ah eh'in questo divin petto
Amor mio dolce e diletto
Vi farà piaga mortale
Empia Lancia e disleale

Dormi dunque figliol mio
Dormi pur, Redentor mio
Perchè poi con lieto viso
Ci vedrem in Paradiso.

Hor che dorme la mia vita,
Del mio cor gioia compita,
Tacia ogn'un con puro zelo,
Tacian sin la terra e'l cielo.

E fra tanto io che farò?
Il mio ben contemplerò
Ne starò col capo chino
Sin che dorme il mio Bambino.
Anonymous, 17th c.

Sestina: *Lagrima d'amante al sepolcro dell'amata*

Incenerite spoglie, avara tomba
Fatta del mio bel Sol, terreno Cielo,
Ahi lasso! I' vegno ad inchinarvi in terra.
Con voi chius'è 'l mio cor
a marmi in seno,
E notte e giorno vive in foco, in pianto,
In duolo, in ira, il tormentato Glauco.

Ditelo, O fiumi, e voi ch'udiste Glauco
L'aria ferir di grida in su la tomba,
Erme campagne - e'l san le Ninfe
e 'l Cielo:
A me fu cibo il duol, bevanda il pianto,
- Letto, O sasso felice, il tuo bel seno -
Poi ch'il mio ben copri gelida terra.

Darà la notte il sol lume alla terra
Splenderà Cintia il dì, prima che Glauco
Di bacciar, d'honorar lasci quel seno
Che fu nido d'Amor, che dura tomba
Preme; né sol d'alti sospir, di pianto,
Prodighe a lui saran le sfere e 'l Cielo!

Ma te raccoglie, O Ninfa, in grembo 'l Cielo,
Io per te miro vedova la terra
Deserti i boschi e correr
fium' il pianto.
E Driade e Napee del mesto Glauco
Ridicono i lamenti, e su la tomba
Cantano i pregi dell'amante seno.

O chiome d'or, neve gentil del seno
O gigli della man, ch'invido il cielo
Ne rapì, quando chiuse in cieca tomba,
Chi vi nasconde? Ohimè! Povera terra
Il fior d'ogni bellezza, il Sol di Glauco
Nasconde! Ah! Muse! Qui sgorgate il pianto!

Ah, how this divine breast,
my sweet love and my delight,
will be given a mortal wound
by a wicked, treacherous spear.

Sleep therefore, my little Son,
sleep then, my Redeemer,
For later, with joyful faces,
we shall see each other in Paradise.

Now that he who is my life is sleeping
He who is the complete joy of my heart,
Let all be hushed with pure devotion
Let heaven and earth fall silent.

And meanwhile, what shall I do?
I shall look at my darling,
and remain with bowed head,
as long as my Child is sleeping.
Transl. Charles Weaver

O ashes of my beloved, the stingy tomb
lit by my earthly sun is now my heaven.
Alas, I grieve. I come to bury you in the earth.
My heart is buried with thee, as my love
is buried within my breast.
And night and day, Glauco lives in tears,
in fire, in pain, in bitterness and torment.

O rivers and you who hear Glauco,
rend the air with cries over this tomb
and these barren fields, with cries heard only by the
Nymphs and the skies.
Anguish became my food; tears my drink.
Rocks are my bed where I dream of your beautiful breast
since the frozen earth has covered my beloved.

The sun will light the earth by night
and the moon by day before Glauco will cease to kiss,
to honor this breast which was
the nest of love, now crushed by the weighty tomb.
May the heavens be kind to him, now alone
with the pain of his weeping.

Receive her, O Nymphs, in the lap of heaven.
I look to thee, for the earth is widowed,
deserted are the woods, and the rivers are
filled with tears.
The Dryads and the Nymphs
echo sorrowful Glauco's lament
and sing over his beloved's breast.

O golden hair, o delicate snowy breast,
o white hand that heaven, envious, has stolen:
though locked in this blind tomb,
who can hide thee? Ah, me! Poor earth -
will thou hide the flower of beauty, the sun of Glauco?
Ah muses, shed your tears.

Dunque, amate reliquie, un mar di pianto
Non daran questi lumi al nobil seno
D'un freddo sasso? Eco! L'afflitto Glauco
Fa rissonar »Corinna« il mare e 'l Cielo,
Dicano i venti ogn'or, dica la terra
»Ahi Corinna! Ahi Morte! Ahi tomba!«

Cedano al pianto
I detti! Amato seno
A te dia pace il Cielo,
Pace a te, Glauco
Prega, honorato tomba
E sacra terra.

Scipione Agnelli (1586-1653)

Therefore, lovers, unleash a sea of tears;
for do they not light the noble heart
of this cold stone? Here the afflicted Glauco
shouts Corinna's name to the skies,
crying each hour to the winds and the earth:
O Corinna! O death! O tomb!

Let words yield to tears,
beloved breast.
Let heaven give thee peace
and peace to Glauco,
praying at thy honored tomb
and sacred earth.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The viol quartet PARTHENIA brings early music into the present with its repertoire that animates ancient and fresh-commissioned contemporary works with a ravishing sound and a remarkable sense of ensemble. These “local early-music stars,” hailed by *The New Yorker* and music critics throughout the world, are “one of the brightest lights in New York’s early-music scene.” Parthenia is presented in concerts across America, and produces its own series in New York City, collaborating regularly with the world’s foremost early music specialists. The quartet has been featured in prestigious festivals and series as wide-ranging as Music Before 1800, the Harriman-Jewell Series, Maverick Concerts, the Regensburg Tage Alter Musik, the Shalin Lui Performing Arts Center, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Yale Center for British Art, Columbia University’s Miller Theatre, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Parthenia’s most recent tour was to Venice, Italy, with soprano Sherezade Panthaki, to perform at The Brooklyn Rail’s collateral event at the 2019 Venice Biennale. Parthenia’s repertoire ranges from the golden age of the viol in Elizabethan England, to the complete viol fantasies of Henry Purcell, to *Al Naharot Bavel* which features works by Jewish Renaissance composers, and the ensemble commissions and premieres new works regularly.

Parthenia has recorded *As it Fell on a Holie Eve - Music for an Elizabethan Christmas*, with soprano Julianne Baird, *Les Amours de Mai*, with Ms. Baird and violinist Robert Mealy, *A Reliquary for William Blake*, *Within the Labyrinth*, and *The Flaming Fire*, with vocalist Ryland Angel and keyboard player Dongsok Shin. Parthenia’s newest CD release features composers Kristin Norderval, Frances White, and Tawnie Olson: *Nothing Proved: New works for viols, voice, and electronics*.

More information about Parthenia is available at parthenia.org.

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Countertenor DANIEL MOODY has garnered widespread acclaim for his “sweet and melancholy sound” (*The Washington Post*) and his ability to “pierce hearts” and “utterly silence a room” (*The Boston Musical Intelligencer*). Moody is equally celebrated for his interpretations of contemporary and baroque works, in opera, oratorio, early music and contemporary music.

Daniel Moody has performed as a soloist at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, London’s St. John’s Smith Square and, Cambridge’s Trinity College, with conductors David Hill, Simon Carrington, Masaaki Suzuki, and Matthew Halls. His performances have been broadcast live in concert on BBC Radio 3 in the United Kingdom, on Boston’s WGBH, Indiana’s WFIU, and WSHU’s *Sunday Baroque*. Moody is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory, Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music, where he was in the prestigious Voxtet, and has won several awards in competitions which include Metropolitan National Council Auditions, George London Competition, Handel Aria Competition, New York Oratorio Society Competition, and Russell Wonderlic Competition. Moody recently made his Carnegie Hall Stern Auditorium debut with Oratorio Society of New York and returned to that stage with Musica Sacra (Kent Tritle). He has performed as soloist with the Atlanta Symphony (Thomas Søndergård conducting), Les Violons du Roy in Québec City, (Bernard Labadie), Apollo’s Fire, The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra (Jeannette Sorrell), the Portland Baroque Orchestra (David Hill), and symphonies of Illinois, Charleston (Ken Lam), and Winston-Salem (Robert Moody). He gave the American premiere of George Benjamin’s intricate *Dream of the Song* (Stefan Asbury) at the Festival of Contemporary Music at Tanglewood

Festival. He has also appeared with numerous early music groups including Boston, Indianapolis and Washington Early Music Festivals, renowned group Acronym at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado, Mountainside Baroque (Maryland) and La Fiocco (Pennsylvania).

CHARLES WEAVER is on the faculty of the Juilliard School, where he teaches historical plucked instruments and Baroque music theory. He was music director for Cavalli's *La Calisto* with New York's Dell'Arte Opera in summer 2017, when *The Observer* remarked on "the superb baroque band led by Charles Weaver . . . it was amazing to hear what warm and varied sounds he coaxed from the ensemble." He has served as assistant conductor for Juilliard Opera and has accompanied operas with the Yale Baroque Opera Project and the Boston Early Music Festival. As an orchestral musician, he has performed with the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Virginia Symphony. His chamber appearances have included Quicksilver, Piffaro, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Folger Consort, Apollo's Fire, Blue Heron, Musica Pacifica, and others. He also works with the New York Continuo Collective, an ensemble that mounts workshop productions of seventeenth-century vocal music. He has taught at the Lute Society of America Summer Workshop, the International Baroque Institute at Longy, and the Madison Early Music Festival. He is the schola director at St. Mary's Church in Norwalk, Connecticut, and he is pursuing a doctoral degree in music theory at the City University of New York.

BLISS MICHELSON has been a part of the WRTI team since the fall of 2014. Prior to that he was production manager at WWFM in West Windsor, New Jersey and can count Buffalo's WNED-FM, San Antonio's KPAC and KRTU in years past. A professional double bass player, Bliss was a member of the San Antonio Symphony from 1974 until 1987 and continues to be active as a freelance performer. Bliss is also pursuing a career as a voice actor.

ABOUT THE VIOL

The viol, or viola da gamba, is a family of stringed instruments celebrated in European music from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. Today on both sides of the Atlantic, soloists as well as viol groups—known as “consorts”—have rediscovered the lost repertoire and ethereal beauty of this early instrument. The viol was first known as the “bowed guitar” (vihuela da arco), a joint descendent of the medieval fiddle and the 15th-century Spanish guitar. Unlike its cousin, the arm-supported violin (viola da braccio), the viol is held upright on the leg (gamba) or between the legs; its bow is gripped underhand; and its body is made of bent or molded wood. These characteristics lend a distinctive lightness and resonance to viol sound that have inspired a wave of new works by 21st-century composers and a growing enthusiasm on the part of international audiences.

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SUPPORTER

*Nancy & Robert Boye
Rackstraw Downes
Betty Gallagher
Hans Gesell
Cynthia Shaw & David Simonoff
Edith Yerger*

FRIEND

Brent and Ruth Wissick