



# *The Ensemble*

Patrick McDonough, Artistic Director

## *My Sweetest Life*

**Vancouver:** November 18, 2016, 7:00p

**Eugene:** November 19, 2016, 7:00p

**Portland:** November 20, 2016, 3:00p

[theEnsembleOregon.org](http://theEnsembleOregon.org)

# The Ensemble

Patrick McDonough, Artistic Director

P.O. Box 8624, Portland, OR 97207 | 503.753.8368 | info@theensembleoregon.org | www.theEnsembleOregon.org

## My Sweetest Life

Fifth Book of Madrigals Carlo Gesualdo (1566–1613)

*Dolcissima mia vita*

*O voi troppo felici*

*Correte, amanti, a prova*

*Deh, coprite il bel seno*

Scenes from Nature Jan Mittelstaedt

I. *The Beauty of this World*

II. *Gulls*

III. *The Swan*

*Luci serene e chiare* Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

*Luci serene e chiare* Brandon Stewart

*Luci serene e chiare* Carlo Gesualdo

*Sweet Dreams* Paul Safar

*An Open World* Greg Bartholomew

*Love Tender Breathing Fragrant* Stacey Philipps

Sixth Book of Madrigals Carlo Gesualdo (1566–1613)

*Candido e verde fiore*

*Ardita zanzaretta*

*Moro, lasso, al mio duolo*

*Volan quasi farfalle*



Catherine van der Salm  
Soprano

Laura Beckel Thoreson  
Alto

Nicholas Ertsgaard  
Tenor

Tim O'Brien  
Baritone

Patrick McDonough  
Bass

“The city’s top small  
vocal ensemble”  
~Oregon Arts Watch

### *Scenes from Nature: Jan Mittelstaedt*

This song cycle includes the musical settings of three poems from Gene Jackson's *Lyric Verses*, published in 2009 by iUniverse, Inc. Gene was a long-time friend, and I am a fan of his poetry. Tragically, he was killed in an accident in 2013. The poems are written in lyric form. They portray scenes from nature and their parallel in human life. Gene Jackson, a medical doctor, wrote six published books of poetry before his death. My music is dedicated to the memory of this exceptional man.

Jan Mittelstaedt holds a BS in education from Bucknell University, a BA in music from Marylhurst University and a MM in composition from The University of Portland. She studied with Sister Anne Cecile Daigle at Marylhurst and Dr. Walter Saul at The University of Portland. Dr. Saul continues to be her mentor. President of Cascadia Composers, NACUSA, Jan is published by Schaum Publications, and Music Sales International. She was selected to participate in the 1993 Ernest Bloch Composers Symposium, was Oregon Music Teachers Association (OMTA) Composer of the Year in 1994, and has received many ASCAP Plus awards. Her biography is included in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in American Women*. Nationally Certified by Music Teachers National Association, Jan serves as a member of the OMTA piano syllabus adjudicating staff, presents composition workshops and programs to piano teachers around the state of Oregon, and adjudicates student compositions. In 2013, she received Portland District's Honorary Lifetime membership (OMTA).

### *Luci serene e chiare: Brandon Stewart*

*Luci serene e chiare* is a poem written by Ridolfo Arlotti in the 16th century and harkens back to the troubadours of Medieval times. These men would travel far and wide meeting lovely ladies and playing in glamorous courts. Their songs were often written about these ladies, and since they were often of elevated status or just plain married, these songs often spoke of a love which would always be unrequited and often left unspoken. This love burned and wounded the men who carried it with them on their travels but they relished the pain it caused them.

Born in 1985 in Las Vegas and raised in Vancouver, WA, Brandon Stewart reluctantly began his music career due to a public school arts requirement. He started first as a clarinetist, dabbled in most of the instruments which comprised the wind ensemble (with differing degrees of success), was informed he could sing in college, and finally started composing soon after. His music has been performed in the US and abroad by groups including the Delphinium Quartet, Northwest New Music, the Oregon Chamber Players, KBOO radio, CoMA Bristol, the Bristol Ensemble, the American Creators Chorus (Craig Hella Johnson, dir.) at the 2013 and 2014 Oregon Bach Festival Composer Symposia, as well as during the Portland new music festival, March Music Moderne. Brandon holds an Associate of Arts from Clark College, a BM in composition from Marylhurst University, and a MA in music composition with distinction from the University of Bristol. His past composition mentors include Robert Priest, John F. Paul, Michael Ellison, and John Pickard. His vocal mentors include April Brookins Duvic, James Schmitt, and Jill Soltero.

### *Sweet Dreams: Paul Safar*

My initial desire was to compose a soothing lullaby without any text. I then decided to include only the phrase "sweet dreams" in various languages to tie the piece together. I hope the effect created is one of listening to pure sound, not focus on text. This lullaby is dedicated to my mother, Eva, who has been so supportive of my music my whole life.

Paul Safar (b.1969) is a versatile composer/performer and music educator living and working in Eugene, Oregon. In addition to a busy private piano teaching studio, Paul also performs as an accompanist to the soprano Nancy Wood. Paul and Nancy are the co-founders and artistic directors of Cherry Blossom Musical Arts, a performing arts non-profit organization that produces original, collaborative, live performances. Having received his B.Mus from the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati, OH, Paul draws upon his classical music training while often incorporating various popular styles like jazz and rock. He has had his chamber music performed in New York City's CAMI Hall, choir music in Seattle and a folk opera in Ohio. His most recent large scale work is a *Concerto for Electric Guitar and Chamber Orchestra*. Paul is a member of Cascadia Composers, the northwest chapter of NACUSA as well as BMI. Paul was awarded the Oregon Music Teachers Association Composer of the Year Award in 2013 and has received commissions from the DelGani String Quartet and the Oregon Parks Department.

### *An Open World: Greg Bartholomew*

*An Open World* is the first in a group of three settings of poems from Fletcher LaVallee Bartholomew's collection entitled *And the Wind: Gnostic Poems 1945 - 1979*. Minneapolis native Fletcher Bartholomew spent most of his life in aviation, beginning with a childhood flight in a Curtis Robin in 1929. His work in aviation started with a job as an inspector in an aircraft factory. He went on to become a test pilot in World War II, serving at the South India Air Depot at Bangalore, India, where he was sent by ship, an experience he always remembered.

The music of award-winning American composer Greg Bartholomew is frequently performed across the United States and in Canada, Europe and Australia. NPR classical music reviewer Tom Manoff called Bartholomew “a fine composer not afraid of accessibility.” Born in 1957, Bartholomew studied trombone at John Muir Elementary School and piano at Cornish College of the Arts before earning degrees from the College of William & Mary in Virginia and the University of Washington. He sang with Seattle Pro Musica for more than fifteen years and studied violin with Teo Benson. Winner of the 2013 Cheryl A. Spector Prize (for *Summer Suite*), the 2012 Spector Prize (for the *First Suite from Razumov*), the Silver Platter Repertoire Award (for *The Tree*), and First Place in the 2006 Orpheus Music Composition Competition (for *Beneath the Apple Tree*), Bartholomew was also awarded the Masterworks Prize from ERM Media in 2005 and 2006. A two-time Finalist for the American Prize in Choral Composition (2012 and 2013), Bartholomew was the 2012/2013 Composer in Residence for the Cascadian Chorale.

### *Love Tender Breathing Fragrant: Stacey Philipps*

Fendell's simple, alliterative poem inspired a musical setting exploring the beauty and expressivity of harmony, dissonance, and meaning in each word. Tonal centers shift throughout and focus on phrases to the point of abstraction, meditating on the general theme of love, its myopic nature, its intensity, its fragility, its capriciousness, and its evanescence.

Stacey Philipps writes music of close, lush harmonies and contrapuntal textures, exploring the timbre of voices and instruments in minute detail and sweeping gestures. A lifelong choral singer, Stacey is an early and new-music devotee, and she currently sings with the Oregon Repertory Singers. Her vocal interests extend to a love for composing choral music and art song, as well as collaborating with solo instrumentalists and chamber music ensembles. A sometime pianist and frequent dabbler in playing underappreciated instruments – she has an accordion, mountain dulcimer, and ukulele on hand and is pining for a harpsichord, banjo, and viola da gamba – Stacey graduated with a degree in music composition from Portland State University and also holds a degree in philosophy and math from St. John's College, Santa Fe. Philipps is a member of the American Composers' Forum, the National Association of Composers, Cascadia Composers, Crazy Jane Composers, and ASCAP, and she is the proprietor of Sirensong Publishing.

**Dolcissima mia vita,**  
a che tardate la bramata àita?  
Credete forse che'l bel foco ond'ardo  
sia per finir perchè torcete il guardo?  
Ahi, non fia mai, ché brama il mio desire  
o d'amarti o morire.

*Sweetest life of mine,  
why tarry in offering the help I long for?  
Do you think perhaps the bright flame within me  
will wane because you turn your gaze away?  
Ah, may that never be, for my desire yearns  
either to love you, or to die.*

**O voi troppo felici**  
che mirate il mio sole  
e cangiate con lui sguardi e parole.  
Quel che a voi sopravanza, ahi, potessi io  
raccor per cibo a gli occhi del cor mio.

*O you too fortunate people  
who gaze upon my sun  
and exchange words and glances with her.  
If only I could gather, alas, that which  
you have in excess to feed my own heart's eyes.*

**Correte, amanti a prova,**  
a mirar meco quello  
onde s'adorna il mondo e si fa bello.  
Vista dolce ed acerba, in cui si trova  
virtù di forza tale  
c'or breve fa la vita, or immortale.

*Run, lovers, to be tested,  
to gaze with me upon  
that which adorns and beautifies the world.  
A sight both bitter and sweet, in which is found  
a virtue so powerful  
that one moment it cuts life short, the next grants  
immortality.*

**Deh, coprite il bel seno**  
che per troppo mirar l'alma vien meno.  
Ahi, no'l coprite, no, che l'alma avezza  
a viver di dolcezza  
spera, mirando, àita,  
da quel bel sen, che le dà morte e vita.

*Ah, cover your fair breast  
for my soul is faint from gazing so upon it.  
Alas, cover it not, no, for my soul accustomed  
to living on sweetness  
hopes, as it gazes, for help from  
that fair breast, which gives both life and death.*

**The beauty of this world** is such  
That it remains mysterious,  
We cannot see, nor can we touch  
A grace so deep and serious.

When young we do not even try,  
We pay attention to our lives  
And make no effort to comply  
With harmony when it arrives.



In middle life we are deceived  
Into believing fortune favors  
The things that we ourselves achieved,  
Our self-assurance never wavers.

Much later, we become aware  
Of symmetries we have neglected,  
And all too late we learn to care  
When loveliness lies undetected.

The beauty of this world is such  
We value it when we are old,  
And finally we love too much  
The things that we no longer hold.

We give them up reluctantly  
With sadness when we must depart,  
For only far too late we see,  
We have not held them in our heart.

**The gulls** are greedy  
Clamoring for things they have not earned.  
Nor do they justify gratuities a naïve tourist brings  
And casts without concern into the sky.

They swarm and scramble for discarded scraps,  
The stale, abandoned and not-so-fresh,  
Each packet that a passerby unwraps,  
Like little children, destitute in Bangladesh.

They clamor and demand insistently  
That they be satisfied at our expense,  
And agitate with great audacity  
Regardless of the fragments we dispense.

The gulls, insatiable, evoke our disgust,  
They crave and thus solicit,  
Then coerce, unlike the poor who beg because they must  
To keep ill fortune from becoming worse.

The powerless elicit our despair,  
Unknown and faceless, easy to ignore,  
We disregard them, being unaware  
That each of them embodies something more.

The paupers we encounter on the street  
Are part of all humanity, of us;  
So no one should be vain and show conceit or arrogance,  
But all be generous.

Thus those with altruistic dispositions  
Will aid all those in need whom they can reach,  
Yet charity allows one omission;  
They need not feed the gulls along the beach.  
Don't feed the gulls.

### **The Swan**

Serene upon the surface of the lake,  
The swan is present, absolute and pure,

With beauty that exists for its own sake,  
Reserved and quiet, stately and demure.

To glide unhurried, without urgency  
But also not displaying indolence  
Shows great awareness and security,  
And indicates its matchless confidence.

The color of the purest beauty,  
White, untarnished, free of stain, immaculate,  
Expresses all the hope, the pure delight  
Which we can sense, but not articulate.

As black absorbs the light, so white reflects,  
And thus the swan gives back what it receives,  
The uncorrupted image it projects is mirrored  
In the memory it leaves.

If truth is beauty, beauty truth,  
The swan is all we need in life,  
To understand our soul and essence,  
Which depend upon the complex mystery of God.

*~Gene Jackson*

**Luci serene e chiare,**  
Voi m'incendete, voi, ma prova il core  
Nell'incendio diletto, non dolore.

Dolci parole e care,  
Voi mi ferite, voi, ma prova il petto  
Non dolor nella piaga, ma diletto.

O miracol d'Amore!  
Alma che è tutta foco e tutta sangue  
Si strugge e non si duol, more e non langue.

*Eyes serene and clear  
you inflame me, but the heart  
finds pleasure, not sorrow, in the fire.*

*Words sweet and dear,  
you wound me, but my breast  
finds pleasure, not sorrow, in the wound.*

*O miracle of love!  
The soul that is all fire and blood  
destroys itself, grieves not, dies without languishing.  
~Ridolfo Arlotti*

### **Sweet Dreams**

The text of this piece contains the words *sweet dreams* in Arabic, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

### **An Open World**

There is a certain madness born of sailing  
From port to distant port the world around.  
There is a certain way it has, unveiling  
Unused chambers of the mind so that the sound  
Of many different voices can be heard.

– The range of human thoughts and views,  
From which with joy can be inferred,  
An open world, and paths to choose.

~Fletcher LaVallee Bartholomew

### Love Tender Breathing Fragrant

Love lasts like a lily,  
Tender on Time's trail;  
Breathing burning beauty,  
Fragrant, fine, and frail.

~Solomon J. D. Fendell

### Candido e verde fiore

che di speranza e fede,  
tu pur m'imbianchi e mi rinverdi il core.  
Lasso, sì come chiaro in te si vede il tuo color sincero,  
scorgessi io sì de la mia donna il vero.  
O di mia speme allor goder potrei,  
o di mia fede nè tormenti miei.

*Flower of purest white and freshest green,  
how you purify me and refresh my heart  
with hope and faith.*

*Alas, I see your true colors so clearly: if only  
I could so easily discern the truth about my lady.*

*Then could I enjoy either my hope  
or the torments of my faith.*

### Ardita zanzaretta

morde colei che il  
mio cor strugge e tiene  
in così crude pene.  
Fugge poi e rivola  
in quel bel seno  
che il mio cor invola,  
indi la prende e stringe e le dà morte  
per sua felice sorte.  
Ti morderò ancor io,  
dolce amato ben mio,  
e se mi prendi e stringi,  
ahi, verrò meno  
provando in quel bel  
sen dolce veleno.

*A daring little mosquito  
bites the woman who is  
destroying my heart and  
causing it such cruel suffering.  
Then it flees, and flies back  
to that fair breast  
that has stolen my heart,  
there she takes it, crushes it and kills it,  
such is its own happy destiny.  
I shall bite you too,  
my sweet beloved,  
and if you take me and crush me,  
ah, I shall faint,  
tasting the sweet venom  
upon that fair breast.*

### Moro, lasso, al mio duolo:

e chi mi può dar vita?  
Ahi, che m'ancide e non vuol darmi aita.  
O dolorosa sorte,  
chi dar vita mi può,  
ahi, mi dà morte.

*I am dying, alas, of sorrow:  
and the one who might save me,  
alas, is killing me and will not help me.  
O grievous fate,  
the one who might save me,  
alas, is bringing about my death.*

### Volan quasi farfalle

ai vostri almi splendori,  
o bella donna, i pargoletti amori.  
Indi scherzando intorno al chiaro lume,  
chiaro sì, ma cocente,  
provan l'altra virtù, quella ch'è ardente,  
ne le tenere piume;  
e intorno a voi cadendo a mille a mille  
tranno da le faville  
di lor penne riarse il foco e poi  
fanno l'incendio onde avampate voi.

*Like moths to a flame, amorous little cupids  
flutter to your noble splendors,  
my lady so fair.  
There, as they play within the clear light,  
clear yes, but scorching,  
they feel another power, that which burns,  
upon their delicate plumage;  
and falling around you by the thousand  
they draw fire from the sparks  
of their scorched feathers and then  
start the blaze which sets you alight.*

### WEIHNACHTSKONZERT

Saturday, December 17 — 7:00 pm  
Bach | Buxtehude Dana Marsh, conductor  
Portland Baroque Orchestra

### NEW YEAR'S EVE CONCERT

Saturday, December 31 — 7:00 p.m.  
Varied line-up of performers  
raise money for Trinity Hunger Ministries



For tickets: [trinity-episcopal.org/music](http://trinity-episcopal.org/music)

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## *Venetian Vespers*

**Tacoma:** January 20, 2017, 7:00p

**Eugene:** January 21, 2017, 7:00p

**Portland:** January 22, 2017, 3:00p



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