



Creatures Great and Small

The Gregorian Singers

Saturday, April 20, 2024, 7:30 pm
Olivet Congregational Church
259 Dewey St., St Paul, MN 55104

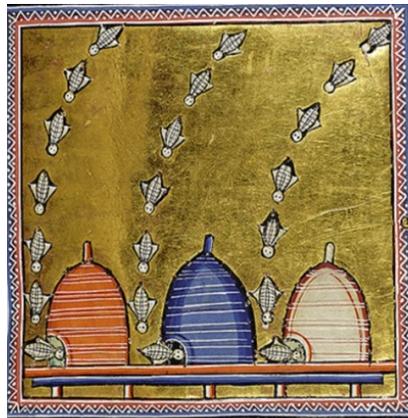
Sunday, April 21, 2024, 4:00 pm
Abiding Savior Lutheran Church
821 Red Oak Dr., Mounds View, MN 55112

Welcome to our concert!

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For more information about us, including past concerts, recordings and auditions, go to www.thegregoriansingers.org. To be added to our mailing list please contact us at tgs@thegregoriansingers.org.



The cover illustration, “Adam Naming the Animals,” and the other illustrations in this program, are from *The Aberdeen Bestiary*, a 12th-century English illuminated manuscript bestiary currently held in the Aberdeen University Library in Scotland.

The Program

Birds

For The Hearn and Ducke
Like As The Doleful Dove
The Blue Bird
Chant des Oyseaux

John Bennett
Thomas Tallis
Charles Villiers Stanford
Clement Janequin

Invertebrates

Baby Bye
The Centipede
The Praying Mantis
Luciérnagas

Patricia E. Hurlbutt
Monte Mason
Monte Mason
Liam Moore

Reptiles & Amphibians

Ye Spotted Snakes
The Tortoise
Il Cocodrillo Geme
Si Salamandre

Richard John Samuel Stevens
Monte Mason
Orazio Vecchi
Thomas Crecquillon

Mammals

The Gurt Black Dog of Somerset
Contraponto Bestiale Alla Mente
Wynken, Blynken and Nod
Tomorrow The Fox Will Come To Towne

Oliver Barton
Adriano Banchieri
Monte Mason
Thomas Ravenscroft

Guest & Rehearsal Conductors: Dominic Bulger, James Hevel, Mary Larew, Jonathan Posthuma
Soloists: Kathryn Eakright, Mary Larew, Clara Elisabeth Sanders



The Music



In this concert we celebrate Earth Day with music about animals, and we have organized the performance not by musical style but by animal classification. There has been music about (and in some cases by) animals for centuries, with birds as a favorite subject. Birds produce their own music, and many composers have employed that attribute; Janequin's *Chant des Oyseaux* is probably one of the most famous examples of human-composed birdsong. In *Contraponto Bestiale Alla Mente* we hear the songs of two birds - the cuckoo and the owl - as well as those of a dog and a cat. We are also presenting new music by three Minnesota composers who have chosen invertebrates and reptiles as their non-singing subjects. So here are our musical tributes to all creatures great and small, cute or creepy, benevolent or predatory, inspiring or spectral. We hope you enjoy all of them.

Birds

For The Hearne and Ducke - John Bennet (c. 1575 -1615), was a composer of the English madrigal school whose style was influenced by the better-known John Downland and Thomas Morley. He is best known for his madrigal *Weep, O Mine Eyes*. He seems to have had connections in high places; many of his madrigals were written for festive occasions at the residences of wealthy patrons or at the courts of noble families. This hunting madrigal is quite the falconer's romp.

Lower, Faulkners, lower,
Give warning to the field,
Let fly, make mounting hearnes to yield!
Die, fearful ducks,
And climb no more so high!

The Nyas hawk will kiss the azure sky,
But when our soar hawks fly
And stiff winds blow,
Then long too late
We falc'ners cry Hey ho!
Hey lo, hey lo, hey lo!

Like As The Doleful Dove - Thomas Tallis (1505 - 1585). Tallis was organist of the Royal Chapels under Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth, which indicates his consistent royal favor despite the chaos created by the creation of the Anglican Church during the reign of Henry VIII and the subsequent persecution of Catholics. In comparison with his considerable body of splendid music for the church, Tallis' secular works are few and not well-known. This song, which is similar in style and form to the French *chanson*, might have been originally written for solo voice and viols; the unusually low pitch of the bass line suggests that it could have been at first a consort song. Although the text by the ardently Protestant poet and dramatist William Hunnis (d. 1597) is ostensibly secular,



apparently lamenting a misspent youth and misplaced love, there is a strong undercurrent of Christian imagery.

Like as the doleful dove
Delights alone to be,
And doth refuse the bloomed branch,
Choosing the leafless tree,
Where on wailing his chance,
His bitter tears besprent,
Doth with his bill his tender breast
Oft pierce and all to rent;

Whose grievous groanings though,
Whose grips of pining pain,
Whose ghastly looks, whose bloody streams
Outflowing from each vein,
Whose falling from the tree,
Whose panting on the ground,
Examples be of mine estate,
Though there appear no wound.

- William Hunnis (d. 1597)



The Blue Bird - Charles Villiers Stanford (1852 - 1924) was an Irish composer and professor of music. Stanford tended to reject modernism, and instead taught classical composition techniques as exemplified by Brahms. His students included composers who became more famous than their teacher, including Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams. He is best-known for choral works in the Anglican tradition intended for performance in church services. *The Blue Bird* is one of Stanford's *Eight Partsongs*, Op. 119. The text is by Mary Coleridge, the great-grandniece of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and the great niece of Sara Coleridge, author of *Phantasmion*. Surely, there can be no better setting of Coleridge's ultra-blue poem than that of Stanford's equally breathtaking and atmospheric composition.

The lake lay blue below the hill.
O'er it, as I looked, there flew
Across the waters, cold and still,
A bird whose wings were palest blue.

The sky above was blue at last,
The sky beneath me blue in blue.
A moment, ere the bird had passed,
It caught his image as he flew.

- Mary Coleridge (1861 - 1907)

Chant des Oyseaux - Clement Janequin (1485 - 1558), was a prolific composer of a particular form called the Parisian *chanson*. These *chansons*, which were influenced to some extent by the Italian madrigal but were simpler and more homophonic, were intended to evoke particular imagery - in this case, birds. For aficionados of choral music, this piece is certainly the best-known work on the program. It is in four parts, each in ABA form, in which the A sections use combinations of two recurring themes and the B themes are made up of stylized calls of the blackbird, the nightingale and the cuckoo.

Awake, sleepy hearts,
The god of love calls you.
On this first day of May,
The birds will make you marvel.
To lift yourself from dismay,

Nightingale of the pretty woods,
Whose voice resounds,
So you don't become bored,
Your throat jabbars away:
Frian, frian, frian, etc...

Unclog your ears.
And fa la la la ...
You will be moved to joy,
For the season is good.

You will hear, I advise you,
A sweet music
That the royal blackbird will sing
In a pure voice.
Ti, ti, pi-ti, etc...
To laugh and rejoice is my device,
Each with abandon.

Flee, regrets, tears and worries,
For the season commands it.

Turn around, Master Cuckoo,
Get out of our company.
Each of us gives you a "Bye, bye,"
For you are nothing but a traitor.
Cuckoo, cuckoo, etc...
Treacherously in others' nests
You lay without being called.
Awake, sleepy hearts,
The god of love calls you.

Invertebrates

Baby Bye – Patricia E. Hurlbutt. This piece is a product of the early days of the Minnesota Composers Forum, an organization founded in 1973 by a group of University of Minnesota graduate students and which later became the American Composers Forum. In those days a small choir, the Forum Chorale, was also assembled for the purpose of performing new choral works by local composers. The group was led by our director, Monte Mason, and it also included one of our current singers. The composer of this piece, Patricia Hurlbutt, is currently the Director of Music Ministries at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Woodbury. She has written many choral works, as well as music for handbells and for organ. While most of Ms. Hurlbutt's music is for the church, this earlier work is distinctly and weirdly secular. The poem, called "The Fly" by its author, Theodore Tilton, became quite well known soon after it was published in 1859, and it was included in children's books for many years. It was written for the author's daughter, but it was also intended to improve children's knowledge of biology, which the author decried as woefully inadequate at that time; illustrations showed insects with eight legs and foxes climbing trees. Tilton, writing in the 1890s, commented: "A children's literature – fanciful, poetical and beautiful – but, at the same time, correctly based on a solid foundation of truth to nature – has grown up mainly within the present generation. Such a literature did not exist – at least, it did not abound – when "The Fly" was written. The trash and balderdash which "The Fly" was meant to offset would not now be tolerated."

Baby Bye, here's a fly;
Let us watch him, you and I.
How he crawls up the walls,
Yet he never falls.
I believe with six such legs
You and I could walk on eggs.
There he goes on his toes,
Tickling baby's nose.

Spots of red dot his head,
Rainbows on his back are spread.
That small speck is his neck,
See him nod and beck.

I can show you, if you choose,
Where to look to find his shoes:
Three small pairs made of hairs,
These he always wears.

Black and brown is his gown,
He can wear it upside down.
It is laced round his waist;
I admire his taste.
Yet though tight his clothes are made,
He will lose them, I'm afraid,
If tonight he gets sight
Of the candlelight.

In the sun webs are spun.
What if he gets into one?
When it rains he complains
On the windowpanes.
Tongues to talk have you and I;
God has given the little fly
No such things, so he sings
With his buzzing wings.
He can eat bread and meat;
There's his mouth between his feet.
On his back is a pack
Like a peddler's sack.

Does the baby understand?
Then the fly shall kiss her hand.
Put a crumb on her thumb,
Maybe he will come.
Catch him? No! Let him go!
Never hurt an insect so;
But no doubt he flies out
Just to gad about.

Now you see his wings of silk
Drabbled in the baby's milk.
Fie, oh fie, foolish fly!
How will he get dry?
All wet flies twist their thighs
Thus they wipe their heads and eyes.
Cats, you know, wash just so,
Then their whiskers grow.
Flies have hairs too short to comb,
So they fly bareheaded home.
But the gnat wears a hat.
Do you laugh at that?

Flies can see more than we,
So how bright their eyes must be!
Little fly, ope your eye,
Spiders are nearby.
For a secret I can tell,
Spiders never use flies well.
So away, do not stay.
Little fly, good day!

-Theodore Tilson

The Centipede – Monte Mason. This is one of three short pieces comprising an attempt to translate Ogden Nash's poetical finesse to a musical medium. The listener must be the final arbiter on whether the compositions have succeeded in doing so, but it has been reported that the composer had a great deal of fun writing them. In this piece the centipede glides along, provoking loathing until the awful moment of its demise.

I objurgate the centipede,
A bug we do not really need.
At sleepy-time he beats a path
Straight to the bedroom or the bath.
You always wallop where he's not,
Or, if he is, he makes a spot.

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The Praying Mantis – Monte Mason. In the second piece in the Ogden Nash trilogy, the eponymous insect is portrayed in a tango, of which there is a shameful lack in the choral repertoire.

From whence arrived the praying mantis?
From outer space, or lost Atlantis?
glimpse the grin, green metal mug
at masks the pseudo-saintly bug,
Orthopterous, also carnivorous,
And faintly whisper, Lord deliver us.

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Luciérnagas (Fireflies) (Liam Moore) Minnesota native Liam Moore is an eclectic and versatile composer who has spoken about letting his world of classical music mix with his world of “everything else,” and that like many things, genre is a spectrum, and that all music has always been everything else. This is a setting of a poem by the Mexican poet José Juan Tablada, one of the first modern Mexican poets. *Luciérnagas* is included in a collection of calligrams – an item of text in which the layout of the words and letters creates a visual image related to text’s the meaning - in *Li-Po y otros poemas* (1920). Tablada is also credited with the introduction of Spanish-language haiku to Mexico.

The light of the fireflies is a soft sigh
 Alternated with pauses of gloom
 Dark thoughts that dissolve
 In instant drops of clarity

The garden is full
 Of sighs of light
 And down its fronds
 Trickling like tears
 Go the last drops
 Of the lunar rain

Reptiles & Amphibians

Ye Spotted Snakes – (Richard John Samuel Stevens, 1757–1837). Stevens was an English composer and organist who is best known as a composer of glees, which were a type of English part song composed mostly for men’s voices during eighteenth until the mid-nineteenth centuries. The perfectly chosen term “glee” comes from the Old English *glēo*, meaning “entertainment, music, fun.” Gentlemen’s singing clubs began to appear in London from around 1726 upon the establishment of the Academy of Vocal Music (renamed the Academy of Ancient Music in 1731 and revived in 1973, now as an internationally esteemed early music ensemble). Due to their repertoire, these organizations became known as glee clubs, which became popular in high schools and colleges in the United States beginning in the late 19th century. The oldest of these, the Harvard Glee Club, was founded in 1858 and continues to perform. The composer of this glee was especially interested in Shakespeare’s poetry, and composed fifteen Shakespearean glees, of which “Ye spotted snakes” (1782, rev. 1791) is one of the best-known. He was also a professional member of the Anacreontic Society, a popular gentleman’s club for musicians. Stevens’ journal records that one John Stafford Smith wrote their club song, “The Anacreontic Song,” which, with different words, became “The Star-Spangled Banner.” The text of *Spotted Snakes* is from Act 2, Scene 2 of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, in which the fairies sing a song to protect Queen Titania from the perils posed by spotted snakes, beetles, newts, blindworms, spiders and other unwelcome creatures because many of these animals were believed to be poisonous. The “spotted snake” could be the common adder, *Vipera berus*, which is widespread in Britain, and in fact is venomous. The blindworm and the newt are not, but evidently the fairies assumed they must have been.

Ye spotted snakes with double tongue,
 Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
 Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
 Come not near our fairy queen.
 Philomel, with melody
 Sing in our sweet lullaby;

Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:
 Never harm nor spell nor charm,
 Come our lovely lady nigh;
 So, good night, with lullaby.
 Weaving spiders, come not here;
 Hence, you long-legg’d spinners, hence!

Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.
Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:

Never harm nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady night;
So, good night, with lullaby.

-William Shakespeare



The Tortoise (Monte Mason). This is the only one of the three Nash pieces based on a vertebrate animal - the tortoise, which is often confused with the turtle. Perhaps the difference between the two is irrelevant if a wager is made against a hare, which is often confused with a rabbit.

Come crown my brows with leaves of myrtle;
I know the tortoise is a turtle.
Come carve my name in stone immortal;
I know the turtoise is a tortle;
I know to my profound despair;
I bet on one to beat a hare.
I also know I'm now a pauper
Because of its tortley turtley torpor.

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Il Cocodrillo Geme (Orazio Vecchi, 1550-1605). Vecchi was affiliated with the Venetian School of the late Renaissance, having collaborated with Giovanni Gabrieli and Claudio Merulo in preparing music for a ducal wedding. He wrote sacred music in the polychoral Venetian style but he is best known for his many madrigals and canzonettas like *Il Cocodrillo*, which are generally shorter and simpler than madrigals.

The crocodile weeps
over the prey, when it has killed it.
But from a seed more cruel,
lady, you are born,
for constantly you make me die
and do not weep.
The basilisk releases man from suffering
with his eyes; and with your glance

you offer me hope,
shortly after you kill me,
for you want me neither dead nor alive.
More cruel than you have a heart
than a crocodile, and eyes than a basilisk;
hence for the sorrow
I fell in pain and woe
all compassion will be forever extinct.

-Translation, Gerhard Weydt

Si Salamandre (Thomas Crecquillon c.1505 - 1557?). Crecquillon, a composer of the Franco-Flemish school, was a prolific writer of masses, motets and chansons. His *chansons*, with their imitative style, were models for the later development of the canzona, and many were arranged for the lute and other instruments.

A salamander knows how to survive
among flames.
So what?
Nothing surprises me anymore
in the miracles of Nature.
Because she who is made of ice - and I of fire
who lives in the middle of my heart
and always remains there,

without anyone defending her in such a hot
place,
it should melt, but instead hardens.
Love therefore made it contrary to Nature
itself,
and despite herself, she survives,
which no one understands.

Mammals



The Gurt Black Dog of Somerset (Oliver Barton). Barton is a composer and arranger of choral music, mostly for Christmas and other church occasions, but also including some folk-style pieces like *The Gurt Black Dog*. The composer describes the piece as “The absolutely true tale of a cottager who walks up the Quantock hills (in Somerset, England) only for the mist to come down. A muzzle presses into his hand - ‘Aha!’ he cries, ‘Tis my faithful sheepdog Shep come to guide me home.’ But when he reaches home and opens his cottage door, there is Shep inside. Who then guided him home? Originally for choir and piano, with interesting effects to

convey such things as a phantom dog growing in size and disappearing. The unaccompanied version was made for four solo voices, with the interesting effects realised somewhat differently.” The words are by Martin Forrest, a member of the Henbury Singers of Bristol, UK, for whom the piece was written. The “gurt” (great) black dog is an old English legend about a supernatural creature that, unlike most spectral black dogs, is a benevolent guardian who guides travelers and protects them from danger. The composer has informed us that although he once spent a weekend in the Quantock Hills, he never got to see the dog.

A kind and gentle cottager
There once did live, 'tis said
Near Bicknoller in Somerset
Not far from Quantoxhead.
He chose to climb the Quantock Hills
One dreary winter's day;
Through Weacombe and towards the top
He went his cheerful way.
Good countryfolk of Somerset,
Whoever ye may be,
The Gurt Black Dog up over,
He'll take care of ye.

But then all unexpectedly
Just as his goal was neared,
A seaborne mist so damp and cold
There suddenly appeared.
That he might freeze to death with cold
To him it did occur;

But as he groped his cautious way
He felt, he felt a coat of fur.
Good countryfolk of Somerset,
Whoever ye may be,
The Gurt Black Dog up over,
he'll take care of ye.

'Twas his old faithful sheepdog, Shep,
The cottager believed,
Who'd come to guide him safely home;
So he was much relieved.
He followed, as he thought, his Shep;
“Whoame boy, whoame boy,” he cried
But when they reached the cottage door,
His own dog was inside.
Good countryfolk of Somerset,
Whoever ye may be,
The Gurt Black Dog up over,
He'll take care of ye.

Just then he spied his guide dog:
 It slowly grew in size;
 Then gradually it disappeared
 Before his very eyes.
 Who was it then who'd brought him back
 To safety through the fog?

"God bless him," cried the cottager,
 "It was the Gurt Black Dog!"
 Good countryfolk of Somerset,
 Whoever ye may be,
 The Gurt Black Dog up over,
 He'll take care of ye.

-Martin Forrest

Contraponto Bestiale Alla Mente (The Animals Improvise Counterpoint) (Adriano Banchieri, 1568-1634). The composer explained that the piece portrays "a dog, a cat, a cuckoo and an owl, for amusement, improvising counterpoint over a base" Banchieri was one of the developers of a form called madrigal comedy, an unstaged performance of a collection of madrigals which, when sung consecutively, told a story. This madrigal is from one of those madrigal comedies, *Festino nella sera del giovedì grasso*. *Controponto*, while comedic, is an illustration of what might happen when you let animals improvise. The bass line is sung in a sort of nonsensical Italo-Latin.



Nulla fides gobbis
 Similiter es soppis
 Si squerzus bonus est,
 Super annalia scribe.

Don't trust the hunchback.
 Nor the hobbler,
 If the squinter is good, he's good,
 Write this down in the annals.

Wyken, Blynken and Nod (Monte Mason) The well-known poem that has been set to music here was written by American poet Eugene Field in 1889. It was originally published under the title "Dutch Lullaby," as reflected in the spelling of the names and the mention of a wooden shoe. But as the composer considered the poem and conceived the music, the composition is atmospheric rather than specific, meant to evoke the sea and its constant motion.

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
 Sailed off in a wooden shoe,
 Sailed on a river of crystal light
 Into a sea of dew.
 "Where are you going,
 and what do you wish?"
 The old moon asked the three.
 "We have come to fish for the herring-fish
 That live in this beautiful sea;
 Nets of silver and gold have we,"
 Said Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,
 As they rocked in the wooden shoe;
 And the wind that sped them all night long

Ruffled the waves of dew;
 The little stars were the herring-fish
 That lived in the beautiful sea.
 "Now cast your nets wherever you wish,
 Never afraid are we!"
 So cried the stars to the fishermen three,
 Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
 To the stars in the twinkling foam,—
 Then down from the skies
 came the wooden shoe,
 Bringing the fishermen home:
 'Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed
 As if it could not be;
 And some folk thought

'twas a dream they'd dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea;
But I shall name you the fishermen three:
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed;

So shut your eyes while Mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock in the misty sea
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen
three:—
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

- Eugene Field (1850 -1895)

Tomorrow The Fox Will Come To Towne – Thomas Ravenscroft (1588-1635) was primarily known as a collector of British folk music, including catches, rounds, partsongs, street cries and vendor songs. The part-song *Tomorrow The Fox* is No. 20 in his 1609 collection, *Deutoromelia*, which also contains the better-known song *Three Blind Mice*. Here we are told to *whoop* as loudly as we can in order to chase the predatory fox away.

Tomorrow the fox will come to town.
Keep, keep, keep, keep, keep.
Tomorrow the fox will come to town
To keep you all well there.

I must desire you neighbours all,
To holler the fox above them all,
And cry as loud as you can call,
Whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop.
O keep you all well there.

He'll steal the cock out from the flock.
Keep, keep, keep, keep, keep.
He'll steal the cock even from his flock
O keep you all well there.
I must desire you...

He'll steal the hen out of the pen.
Keep, keep, keep, keep, keep.
He'll steal the hen out of the pen
O keep you all well there.
I must desire you...

He'll steal the duck out of the brook.
Keep, keep, keep, keep, keep.
He'll steal the ducky out of the brook,
To keep you all well there.
I must desire you...

He'll steal the lamb even from his dam.
Keep, keep, keep, keep, keep.
He'll steal the lamb even from his dam
To keep you all well there.
I must desire you...

Ed. Jonathan Posthuma



The Gregorian Singers

The Gregorian Singers is one of the longest-lived vocal ensembles in the Twin Cities area, founded in 1973 by its current music director, Monte Mason. It was originally constituted as a men's choir to sing the plainsong office of Compline at St. Mark's Cathedral in Minneapolis and to present the great music of the church within the context of its liturgies. It became the second early music choral group in the Twin Cities area, reviving old liturgies such as the Sarum Rite, and adapting others for new purposes, including Great Paschal Vespers and our annual Advent Procession. While our liturgical music has been centered mainly on the Anglican tradition of the Episcopal Church, we have never been a "church choir" as such, and have often provided music for Lutheran, Catholic and other services. However, over the years the choir has changed its artistic course by adding women's voices and by focusing on concerts and more secular and new music, while we continue to perform the great music of the church outside liturgical settings. In March of 2023 we celebrated our 50th anniversary with a performance of selections from our music library of over a thousand titles, and we will continue to offer music of all eras, especially the seldom-heard works that deserve an audience. We have always prided ourselves on presenting music that is not only excellent and inspiring but undeservedly overlooked. For this concert we have continued our tradition of focusing on the unusual by choosing music reflecting the inscrutable and wonderful nature of animals.



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