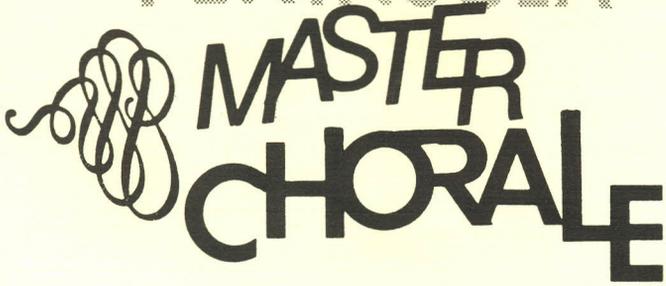


PENINSULA

CAÑADA COLLEGE



Carl Sitton, Conductor

# MONTEVERDI

*Vespro della Beata Vergine*

**Vespers of 1610**

Nile Norton, Tenor  
Reuben Moulton, Tenor  
Bruce Matthew Thompson, Tenor  
Joseph Hansen, Organ

Nancy Wait, Soprano  
Anne Hodgkinson, Soprano  
Charles Fidler, Bass  
Mitchell Sandler, Bass

**SAT., NOVEMBER 7.**  
8:00 p.m.

**LOS ALTOS METHODIST CHURCH**  
655 Magdalena, Los Altos

**TUES., NOVEMBER 10.**  
8:00 p.m.

**ST. MARKS LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
1111 O'Farrell, San Francisco

This concert is dedicated to the memory of our dear Friend  
Robert Newton

## *Vespro della Beata Vergine* Claudio Monteverdi

### *Deus in adiutorium*

Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

### *Domine ad adiuvandam*

Make haste to help me, O Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia.

### *Dixit Dominus (Psalm 109)*

The Lord said to my lord, sit at My right hand while I set your enemies as a stool for your feet. The Lord sends the staff of your strength out of Zion, to rule in the midst of your enemies. Your kingdom is with you in the day of your strength, in the splendor of holiness; I have begotten you from the womb before the dawning. The Lord has sworn, and shall not repent. You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchisedech. The Lord at your right hand shall smash the kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge against the nations. He shall wreak destruction; He shall strike to earth the heads of many. He shall drink from the stream by the road; for this shall He lift up the head. Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

### *Nigra sum*

I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem. Therefore the King hath loved me and hath brought me into his chambers, and he said to me: "Arise my love and come away, for lo, the winter is past. The rains are over and gone, and the flowers appear in our land. The time of pruning is at hand."

### *Laudate, pueri, Dominum (Psalm 112)*

Praise, O ye servants of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations and his glory is above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the thing that are in heavens and on the earth?

He raiseth up the poor out of the just, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill: that He may set him with princes, even with princes of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house and to be a joyful mother of children. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

### *Pulchra es*

Thou art fair, my love, beautiful and comely, O daughter of Jerusalem. Thou art fair, my love, beautiful and comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army seen in array. Turn thine eyes from me, for they have made me flee.

### *Laetatus sum (Psalm 121)*

I was glad when they said unto me: Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together. Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say: Peace be within thee; because the house of the Lord our God I will seek the good. (Doxology.)

*Duo Seraphim clamabant*

Two Seraphims cried out one to the other: Holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth. The whole earth is full of His Glory. There are three that bear record in Heaven; the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. Holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth. The world earth is full of His Glory.

*Nisi Dominus (Psalm 126)*

None but the Lord builds the house. They labor in vain that build it. None but the Lord keeps the city. The watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He giveth His beloved sleep. Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them. They shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate. (Doxology.)

INTERMISSION

*Audi coelum*

Heaven hear my words, full of desire and suffused with joy. Tell me, who is she who rises bright as the dawn; that I may bless her. Say if this one, beautiful as the moon and chosen as the sun fills the heavens and earth with joy, be Mary, the sweet Virgin Mary, foretold by Ezekiel, the prophet from the East. This holy and happy portal through which death was driven out and which established that life is ever the perfect and sure link between God and man for overcoming sin. Let us all therefore strive, with what grace we can, to attain this eternal life. And may the Father, Son, and Mother, whose sweet name we invoke, give comfort to the afflicted. Blessed art thou, O Virgin Mary, world without end.

*Lauda, Jerusalem (Psalm 147)*

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; Praise thy God, O Zion! For He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates. He hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders and filleth thee with the finest of wheat. He sendeth forth His commandment upon the earth. His word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool. He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels; who can stand before His cold? He sendeth out His word, and melteth them. He causeth His wind to blow and the waters to flow. He declareth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgement unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation, neither hath He made known to them His judgements. (Doxology.)

*Sonata Sopra "Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis"*

Holy Mary, pray for us.

*Ave Maris Stella (Hymn)*

Hail, O star that pointest towards the point of heaven,  
Thou to whom as Maiden God for Son was given.

When the salutation Gabriel had spoken,  
Peace was shed upon us, Eve's bonds were broken.

Bound by Satan's fetters, health and vision needing,  
God will aid and light us at thy gentle pleading.

Jesu's tender Mother, make thy supplication  
Unto him who chose thee at his Incarnation:

That, O matchless Maiden, passing meek and lowly,  
Thy dear Son may make us blameless, chaste and holy.

So, as now we journey, aid our weak endeavour,  
Till we gaze on Jesus, and rejoice for ever.

Father, Son, and Spirit, three in One confessing,  
Give we equal glory, equal praise and blessing. Amen.

*Magnificat*

My soul doth magnify the Lord.

And my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour.

For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For He that is mighty hath done for me great things; and holy is His name.

And His mercy is on them who fear Him from generation to generation.

He hath shewed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich He hath sent away empty.

He hath received Israel, His servant, in remembrance of His mercy.

As He spake to our father, to Abraham, and to His seed forever.

Glory be to the father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

## Program Notes

Since its introduction to audiences of the modern era, Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine* has established itself as one of the standard monuments of the choral repertory. It is most often presented, as it is tonight, in a concert version with all of its various movements presented in the order given in the original publication of 1610. This order differs considerably, however, from that of a liturgically acceptable vespers service; for this and other reasons, the original form and purpose of Monteverdi's concept remain the subject of intense debate among scholars. Some have questioned whether a complete performance was ever envisioned; others, conversely, have shown how easily the order can be rearranged to adapt the piece as a whole to liturgical need. Adding to the mystery is the fact that Monteverdi's duties at this period as court composer to the Gonzaga in Mantua did not – officially at least – include the production of any sacred music. Attempts, based on archival evidence, to determine a probable occasion for a Mantuan performance of any large-scale Marian vespers have so far been inconclusive. In the most recent contribution to the discussion (*Early Music Quarterly*, August, 1987) Graham Dixon has even dared to suggest that the bulk of the 1610 Vespers music was not originally Marian at all (Monteverdi's title page notwithstanding), but that instead it had comprised a service in honor of Saint Barbara (to whom the ducal basilica of Gonzaga was dedicated). By converting it from a "*Vespro di Santa Barbara*" to the *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, Monteverdi was able to make his publication appealing to a much wider market. The conversion would primarily have entailed the addition of a few items, including specifically the *Audi coelum* and the *Ave Maris Stella*.

We may never know for certain Monteverdi's purpose and design – if indeed the concept of a single, inalterable ideal form for it was even possible at the time. The order as published has much to recommend it as the basis for a concert performance, however. As a "grand scheme" it provides for both variety and unity, alternating the large choral setting of the psalms (sections 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10) and the hymn *Ave maris stella* (section 12) with pieces for solo voices. The settings of the psalms themselves display considerable variety of style and texture despite their consistent use of Gregorian chant melodies as *cantus firmi*. The interspersed concerti for solo voices demonstrate their own dramatic progression from solo (*Nigra sum*) to duet (*Pulchra es*) to trio (*Duo seraphim*), then back again to duet (with climactic choral response – *Audi coelum*), and finally to the striking juxtaposition of simple solo chant against elaborate instrumental accompaniment (*Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*). The deployment of instrumental forces also follows a larger plan which helps give shape to the work as a whole. After the opening fanfare in which they are prominently displayed, their role is subservient to the voices until the *Sonata*. They then alternate on equal footing with the voices in the *ritornelli* of the *Ave Maris Stella*, while their operatically inspired appearances in the *Magnificat* inject a new and brilliant musical element into the finale.

The *Vespero della Beata Vergine* consists of 13 sections:

- 1) *Deus in adjutorium* – Following the opening chant, the response beginning *Domine ad adiuvandum* combines a simple chordal harmonization of the chant melody in the choir with the opening toccata (originally a fanfare for trumpets) of the composer's opera *Orfeo* of 1607.
- 2) *Dixit Dominus* (Psalm 109) – A six-voice setting of Psalm Tone IV, the voices alternating between polyphonic settings of the chant melody and simple chordal harmonization, interrupted periodically by instrumental echoes.
- 3) *Nigra Sum* – A setting of a passage from the Song of Solomon for solo voice in the operatic style of expressive monody.
- 4) *Laudate pueri* (Psalm 112) – An eight-voice setting of Psalm Tone VII, in which an endless variety of textures are generated.
- 5) *Pulchra es* – Another passage from the Song of Solomon, this time set as a duet. Each portion of the text is introduced by the first soprano and then repeated in an adaptation for both.

6) *Laetatus sum* (Psalm 121) – A six-voice setting of Psalm Tone VIII, featuring a recurrent "walking bass" reflecting the happy mood of the text.

7) *Duo Seraphim* – A motet making use of the most operatic vocal ornamentation and madrigalesque word-painting (particularly striking in the depiction of "these three are one"). The trinitarian thrust of this text is especially appropriate for a work in honor of Saint Barbara, who was martyred for maintaining her belief in the Trinity.

8) *Nisi Dominus* (Psalm 126) – A setting of Psalm Tone VII for two five-part choirs which are literally "divided against themselves" for much of the piece.

9) *Audi caelum* – An echo piece for two tenors, based on a clever but long-established poetic device in which the final syllables of the first singer find new meaning in their repetition by the echoing voice.

10) *Lauda Jerusalem* (Psalm 147) – A seven-voice setting of Psalm Tone III, which resides at first almost exclusively in the tenor voice, surrounded by antiphonal choirs of three voices each. At the *Gloria Partii* the texture changes to seven-part polyphony, with the *cantus firmus* now in the soprano parts at two different pitches.

11) *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* – This movement consist of an eleven-fold repetition of the simple chant melody (with rhythmic variations) against a seemingly unrelated instrumental canzona for brass and strings. With characteristic dramatic sense, Monteverdi withholds the vocal entry until almost the middle of the piece, allowing the supplications to recur with increasing urgency towards the end.

12) *Ave Maris Stella* – A setting of a popular hymn. The opening and closing verses (in duple rhythm) are given to double choir. The interior verses (recast in the triple-dance rhythm of a galliard) are sung by the choirs individually and by solo voices, interspersed with instrumental *ritornelli*.

13) *Magnificat* – This hymn consists of twelve sub-sections, whose settings demonstrate a variety of textures of concerted style united only by the consistent use of the Psalm Tone I as *cantus firmus*.

Those who have attended other performances of the Vespers may notice that the "orchestra" of tonight's performance is somewhat smaller than the one which is customary. Despite Monteverdi's rather explicit directives concerning instrumentation, it has become common to augment the instrumental resources by doubling string parts and adding period wind instruments not actually specified. While such augmentation can be justified by knowledge of the practice of Monteverdi's day, we hope that by following somewhat more closely his stated specifications we may come closer to achieving his desired effects. We have also chosen to follow the somewhat controversial suggestion of Andrew Parrott, who argues – convincingly, in our opinion – for the downwards transposition of the *Lauda Jerusalem* and the *Magnificat* by the interval of a fourth. Sources presented by Parrott (*Early Music Quarterly*, November 1984) show that the "high clefs" used by Monteverdi for these sections constituted a sort of code by which musicians of the time knew that such transposition was to take place; the adjustment then normalizes the ranges of both instruments and voices, bringing them into line with those of the other sections of the Vespers.

**Herbert W. Myers**

## The Soloists

**Nancy Wait** is a member of the music faculty at Santa Clara University. Her graduate study in vocal performance was done at the University of Illinois and Stanford University. A winner of the Young California Artists Awards, her solo credits include the Carmel Bach Festival, Aspen Music Festival and Harvard and Cornell Summer Concert Series. She will appear soon at Davies Hall on the San Francisco Symphony "Pipe Dreams" concerts.

**Anne Hodgkinson** received her B. A. in music from UC Berkeley, and has appeared with numerous Bay Area ensembles including Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, La Corte Musical and the San Francisco Chamber Singers. In 1980 she sang the role of La Ninfa in Monteverdi's opera "L'Orfeo". For three years she sang and played early instruments at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival.

**Nile Norton**, Director of Choral Activities at Foothill College for the past seven years, earned both his Master of Arts and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees at Stanford University. Dr. Norton is an active tenor soloist, who has appeared in the Bay Area with the San Jose Symphony, Schola Cantorum, San Jose Symphonic Choir, Pacific Mozart Ensemble, San Francisco Bach Choir, and the Carmel Bach Festival. He recently returned from Europe where he performed nine concerts as soloist with the Classical Music Seminar in Eisenstadt, Austria.

**Reuben Moulton**, a frequent soloist with the Peninsula Master Chorale over the last six years, has appeared as guest tenor soloist with the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, the Baroque Choral Guild, the Neighborhood Chorus of Pasadena and at the San Francisco Festival of Masses directed by Robert Shaw. He has sung with the San Francisco Symphony Chorus and is a former member of the U. S. Army Chorus in Washington, D. C.

**Bruce Matthew Thompson** grew up in Kentucky where, as a student, he appeared in concert and in opera. A recent graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, he was tenor soloist for the Sing-It-Yourself Messiah at the Conservatory and at the Marin Civic Center. Mr. Thompson recently appeared in the West Coast Premiere of Libby Larson's "In a Winter Garden" with the Bay Area Women's Philharmonic.

**Mitchell Sandler**, a long-time veteran of Chanticleer, now sings with several Bay Area ensembles, and specializes in early music. He has a lively interest in opera as well. He was a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus in 1979 and 1980, and took part in the 1986 season of Teatro Lirico Sperimentale in Spoleto, Italy, as Antonio in "Le Nozze di Figaro". During the same season Mr. Sandler also sang in several chamber music recitals in Italy.

**Charles Fidler** is a graduate of Cornell University and the New England Conservatory of Music. He made his professional debut with the Opera Company of Boston, solo oratorio debut with Nadie Boulanger in the Fauré Requiem and the New York Recital debut at Carnegie Recital Hall. He has taught at M. I. T., Stanford and Brown Universities, where he was director of Choral Activities. Currently, he directs the choral / vocal program of San Jose City College.

# Peninsula Master Chorale

## Janet LaBorde, Accompanist

### Sopranos

Eleanor Achuck  
Shirley Fitzgerald  
Laurel Maylan  
Irene Sohm\*  
Kathleen Wade

Helen Caplan  
Valerie Flatt\*  
Mary Belle Nolan  
Dana Swears  
Caryn White

Barbara Caulfield  
Susan Grannis  
Ruth Sitton  
Ruth Vines

### Altos

Deborah Bennett  
Ruth Eskenazi  
Barbara Little  
Pamela Schwarz  
Ruth Warren\*

Karen Broucker  
Connie Feight  
Angela Ludé  
Lorna Thompson

Lois Drieslein  
Marjorie Grimm  
Patricia McDonald  
Paula VanBuskirk

### Tenors

Larry Baer  
David Ecsery  
Robert Ooghe\*

Adrian Boyer\*  
Richard Maddox  
Ed Stewart

Max Capestany  
Reuben Moulton\*  
Jack Wilkinson

### Basses

William Anderson  
Dan Cudworth  
Raymond Krug  
Dick Poage\*  
Norman Wade

Joseph Boyes  
Israel Eskenazi  
David Maurice  
Stephen Pursell  
James White

Robert Brauns  
Ronald Hodges  
Tom Miner  
Douglas Stobie\*

\* Solo Ensemble

### Instrumentalists

Stephen Escher – cornett, flute  
Brian Howard – cornett, recorder  
Richard Van Hessel – alto sackbut  
Anne Witherell – tenor sackbut  
Ernest Rideout – bass sackbut  
Herbert Myers – violin, curtal, flute, recorder  
Shira Kammen – violin  
Barbara Blaker – cello  
Roland Hutchinson – viola da gamba, violone  
Joseph Hansen – organ  
Janice LaBorde – virginals

*Special thanks to Herbert Myers and the Whole Noyse Early Music Ensemble for their assistance in this concert.*

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