

Program Notes

While studying composition at the University of Texas at Austin during the 1960s, I had the extraordinary experience of singing in the UT Chamber Singers under the direction of Dr. Morris J. Beachy, the well-known choral master. Through his performances and teaching, he influenced generations of conductors, singers and composers with his expansive knowledge of repertoire, expressive technique and profound musicality. One of my most treasured memories of singing under Dr. Beachy was performing Claudio Monteverdi's exquisite madrigal *O Mirtillo*.

When Dr. Beachy died in February 2011, I was moved to compose a choral work honoring him and the deep influence he had on my life and work.

Italian Text

O Mirtillo, Mirtillo, anima mia,
se vedessi qui dentro
come sta il cor di questa
che chiami crudelissima Amarilli,
so ben che tu di lei
quella pietà, che da lei chiedi, avresti.
O anime in amor troppo infelici!
Che giova a te, cor mio, l'esser amato?
Che giova a me l'aver sì caro amante?
Perchè, crudo destino,
ne disunisci tu, s'Amor ne stringe?
E tu, perchè ne stringi,
se ne parte il destin, perfido Amore?

—Giovanni Battista Guarini
Il pastor fido, Act III, Scene 4 (1590)

English Translation

*Oh, Mirtillo, Mirtillo my love,
if you could look within and see
in what state is the heart of her
you call "most cruel Amarilli,"
I know you'd feel for her
the same mercy that, instead, you ask of her.
Oh, our spirits, too unhappy in our love!
What use to you, my heart, to be thus loved?
What use to me,
to have so dear a lover?
Why, cruel Fate, do you separate
those whom Love has joined?
And why join us two, if Fate drives us apart?*

—Translation by John Yaffé.
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The result was a collaborative project with another former student of Beachy's, conductor/poet Robert Bode: a memorial choral work based on *O Mirtillo*. Bode's text and my music are an evocation of the experience of singing Monteverdi's madrigal, and certain fragments of his madrigal have been folded into our work—both textually and musically.

Fantasy on *O Mirtillo* was commissioned and premiered by the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory Singers in October 2011 under Robert Bode's direction. The performance of the *Fantasy* immediately followed a performance of Monteverdi's madrigal without pause.

—John David Earnest

O Mirtillo

First, the silence...
and the thought,
and the body,
and the breath:

"O Mirtillo, l'anima mia"

And Monteverdi, called,
sings his song of broken love.

Phrase upon phrase,
and breath upon breath,
Until all is phrase and breathing.
And colors, urgent and dark,
and words...
and love...
and the pain...

"Che chiami crudelissima Amarilli"

And the sighing beyond time,
And the singing beyond sound,
[And the soaring beyond wing,]
And the air, waiting...

—Robert Bode
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*To the memory of Morris J. Beachy**Commissioned by the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory Singers, Robert Bode, Director*

Fantasy on *O Mirtillo**

for SATB Chorus unaccompanied

Robert Bode

John David Earnest

Adagio (♩ = ca. 60)
pp

Soprano
First, first, the si - lence,

Alto
pp
First, first, the si -

Tenor
pp
First, first, first, the

Bass

Adagio (♩ = ca. 60)

Keyboard
(for rehearsal only)
**

* Inspired by Claudio Monteverdi's madrigal *O Mirtillo* from *Il quinto libro de madrigali a cinque voci* (1605), and fragments of a text by Giovanni Battista Guarini, from *Il pastor fido* (1590). The composer recommends that Monteverdi's madrigal precede performances of the *Fantasy* without pause.

** Parentheses, traditionally employed around unison notes shared between the two hands in a rehearsal accompaniment, are excluded throughout this setting because of the crowding they would cause.

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5

p

si - - - lence, first, the si - lence... -

- - - lence, first, first, the si - lence, -

si - - lence, first, the si - lence... -

6/4 6/4 6/4 6/4

4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4

9

pp

first, the si - - - lence, first, -

pp

first, first, the si - - - lence, -

pp

first, the si - - - - - lence, first,

4/4 4/4 4/4 4/4

5/4 5/4 5/4 5/4

14

mp the si - lence... and the thought, the thought,

mp first, the si - lence... and the thought, the thought,

mp the si - lence... and the thought, the thought,

p ...and the thought, the thought,

mp

19

mf and the bod - - y, and the

mf and the bod - - y, and the

mf and the bod - - y, and the

mf and the bod - - y,

mp

24

pp *f* *dim.*

breath, — the breath: — “O, — O Mir - til - - lo, —

p *f* *dim.*

breath, — the breath: — “O — Mir - til - - - lo, —

p *f* *dim.*

breath, — the breath: — “O — Mir - til - - lo, —

mp *pp* *f* *dim.*

and the breath: — “O, — O Mir - til - - lo, Mir -

30

mp *p* *mp*

O Mir - til - lo, — l'a - ni - ma, l'a - - ni -

mp *p* *mp*

O Mir - til - lo, — l'a - ni - ma, l'a - - ni -

mp *p* *mp*

O Mir - til - lo, — l'an - i - ma, l'a - - ni -

mp *p* *mf*

til - - lo, — O Mir - til - - lo, — And

36

mf

ma, l'a - - ni - ma mi - a" — sings his song, his

mf

ma, l'a - - ni - ma mi - a" — sings his song, his

mf

ma, l'a - - ni - ma mi - a" — sings his song, his

Mon-te-ver-di, — called, — sings — his song, — his song of brok - en

41

Poco animato

f (non dim.)

song of brok - en love. — "O Mir - til - lo, — se ve - des - si —

f

song of brok - en love. — "O Mir - til - lo, — se ve - des - si, — se ve -

f

song of brok - en love. — "O Mir - til - lo, — se ve - des - si, —

f

love, of brok - en love. — "O Mir - til - lo, — se ve - des - si, —

Poco animato

45 *p* *rall.* **Meno mosso** (♩ = ca. 52)

qui den - tro co - me sta il cor." —

des - si qui den - tro co - me sta il cor - di que - sta..." —

ve - des - si qui den - tro co - me sta il cor..." —

ve - des - si qui den - tro co - me sta il cor..." —

Phrase up - on phrase, and

Phrase up - on phrase, and

rall. **Meno mosso** (♩ = ca. 52)

50 *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

Phrase up - on phrase, and breath up - on breath, phrase up - on phrase, and breath, —

Phrase up - on phrase, and breath up - on breath, phrase up - on phrase, and breath

breath up - on breath, phrase up - on phrase, and breath up - on breath, phrase up - on phrase, and

breath up - on breath, phrase up - on phrase, and breath up - on breath, phrase up - on phrase, and

cresc. poco a poco

allarg.

Broadly (♩ = ca. 48)

54

and breath up-on breath, un-til all is
 up - on breath, and breath up-on breath, un - til all, un-til all is
 breath, and breath up-on breath, un-til all, un-til all is
 breath, and breath up-on breath, un-til all, un-til all is

allarg. **Broadly** (♩ = ca. 48)

Tempo I, ma ♩ = ca. 60
With urgency

58

phrase and breath-ing, and breath-ing, breath - ing.
 phrase and breath - ing, breath - ing, breath - ing. *Che*
 phrase and breath-ing, and breath-ing, breath - ing. *Che*
 phrase and breath - ing, breath - ing, breath - ing. *Che*

Tempo I, ma ♩ = ca. 60
With urgency

63

f

Che chia - - mi, che

f

chia - mi cru - - de - lis - si - ma, che chia - mi, -

f

chia - mi cru - - de - lis - si - ma, che chia - mi, -

f

chia - - - mi cru - de - lis - si - ma, che chia - - mi -

69

dim. *rall.* **Meno mosso** (♩ = ca. 52) *p*

chia - - mi cru-de-lis - si - ma A - ma - ril - - li...

dim. *p* *mp*

— che chia-mi cru-de-lis - si - ma A - ma - ril - li, cru - del -

dim. *p*

— che chia-mi cru-de-lis - si - ma A-ma-ril - li.” Col - ors, ur-gent and dark, col - ors,

dim. *p*

— cru - de-lis - si - ma A-ma-ril - li.” Col - ors, ur-gent and dark, col - ors,

rall. **Meno mosso** (♩ = ca. 52)

74

mp *cresc.*

A - - ma - ril - li" and -

cresc.

is - - si - ma A - ma - - ril - li, A - - ma - ril - li" and -

cresc.

ur-gent and dark, and words... and love, and words... and love... col - ors, ur-gent and

cresc.

ur-gent and dark, and words... and love, and words... and love... col - ors, ur-gent and

79

f *allarg.*

col - ors, ur-gent and dark, ur-gent and dark, ur - gent and dark, and -

f

col - ors, ur-gent and dark, ur-gent and dark, ur - gent and dark, and

f

dark, and dark, ur-gent and dark, dark, ur - gent and dark, and

f

dark, and dark, ur-gent and dark, dark, ur - gent and dark, and

allarg.

Broadly (♩. = ca. 48)

83 *ff* (ff)

love, _____ and love... _____ and the pain, _____ the pain, and the

ff (ff)

love, _____ and love... _____ and the pain, _____ the pain, and the

ff (ff)

love, _____ and love... _____ and the pain, _____ and the pain, and the

ff (ff)

love, _____ and love, _____ and the pain, _____ and the pain, and the

Broadly (♩. = ca. 48)

87 (l'istesso tempo) *f*

pain, _____ the pain... _____ and words... _____ and love, _____ and words... _____ and

f

pain, _____ the pain... _____ and words... _____ and love, _____ and words... _____ and

f

pain, _____ and the pain... _____ and words... _____ and love, _____ and words... _____ and

f

pain, _____ and the pain... _____ and words... _____ and love, _____ and words... _____ and

(l'istesso tempo)

92 *dim. poco a poco*

love... and pain, and pain... and words... love...

love... and pain, and pain... and words... and love...

love... and pain, and pain... and words... love...

love... and pain, and pain... and words... and love...

98 (♩. = ♩. = ca. 48) **With tenderness**

p — “so ben che tu di le - i quel-la pie - tà, che da

p — “so ben che tu di le - i quel-la pie - tà, che da

p — “so ben che tu di le - i quel-la pie - tà, che da

p — “di le - i quel-la pie - tà, che da

(♩. = ♩. = ca. 48) **With tenderness**

104

p sempre

lei chie - di, a - vre - sti, — chie - di, a - vre - sti." — And the sigh - ing

p sempre

lei chie - di, a - vre - sti, — chie - di, a - vre - sti." — And the sigh - ing

p sempre

lei chie - di, a - vre - sti, — chie - di, a - vre - sti." — And the sigh - ing

p sempre

lei chie - di, a - vre - sti, — chie - di, a - vre - sti." — And the sigh - ing

110

be - yond time, And the sing - ing be - yond sound,

be - yond time, And the sing - ing be - yond sound,

be - yond time, And the sing - ing be - yond sound,

be - yond time, And the sing - ing be - yond sound,

116

And the soar - ing be - yond wing, And the air, — the
And the soar - ing be - yond wing, And the air, — the
And the soar - ing be - yond wing, And the air, — the
And the soar - ing be - yond wing, And the air, — the

This block contains the musical score for measures 116 through 121. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "And the soaring beyond wing, And the air, — the". The music is in a 3/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

122

air, — wait - ing, — the air, — wait - ing,
air, — wait - ing, — the air, — wait - ing,
air, — wait - ing, — the air, — wait - ing,
air, — wait - ing, — the air, — wait - ing,

This block contains the musical score for measures 122 through 127. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "air, — wait - ing, — the air, — wait - ing,". The music is in a 3/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

126

wait - ing, _____ wait - ing, wait - ing, _____ wait - - -

wait - - ing, _____ wait - ing, wait - - ing, _____ wait - ing, _____

wait - - ing, _____ wait - ing, wait - - ing, _____ wait - - -

wait - ing, _____ wait - ing, wait - ing, _____ wait - - -

130

ing, _____ wait - - - ing, _____ wait - - - ing... *rall.* *pp*

wait - ing, _____ wait - ing, _____ wait - ing, _____ wait - ing, _____ wait - ing... *pp*

ing, _____ wait - - - ing, _____ wait - - - ing... *pp*

ing, _____ wait - - - ing, _____ wait - - - ing... *pp*

rall.

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