

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



MIDTOWN CONCERTS

Thursday May 11, 2023 1:15 pm

St Malachy's Church – The Actors' Chapel in New York City

Live Streamed to midtownconcerts.org and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

Ekmeles Vocal Ensemble

The Musical Murder Mystery of Gesualdo

*Charlotte Mundy & Angela Yam ~ sopranos Timothy Parsons ~ countertenor Tomás Cruz ~ tenor
Jeffrey Gavett ~ baritone and director Steven Hrycelak ~ bass Adam Cockerham ~ lute*

Mentre, mia stella, miri

Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa (1566–1633)

Roman Rite, A reading of the Bible lesson on October 15, 1590*

1 Maccabees 9:37–41, NABRE**

**the day before Gesualdo's "honor killing"*

Sparge la morte al mio Signor nel viso

Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa

Tu part'ohimè dolente

Crescenzo Salzilli? (ca. 1580–1621)

Se vi duol il mio duolo

Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa

Moro, lasso

Chiaro risplender suole

***New American Bible Revised Edition*

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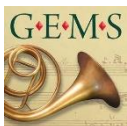
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www.gemsny.org

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This concert of works by Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa has a particular focus on the relationship of his radical chromatic experimentation to the particular systems of tuning employed at the time. Recent scholarship has implied that Gesualdo preferred the intonation system of the lute for the performance of his madrigals. A didactic work, possibly by Crescenzo Salzilli, a contemporary of Gesualdo's, demonstrates the effects of different approaches to tuning in distant keys.

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE AND ARTISTS

Ekmeles is a vocal ensemble dedicated to the performance of new and rarely-heard works, and gems of the historical avant garde. They have a special focus on microtonal works, and have been praised for their “extraordinary sense of pitch” by the *New York Times*. They are the recipients of the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation’s 2023 Ensemble Prize, the first American group to receive the honor.

As part of their work expanding the possibilities of tuning and technique in vocal music, Ekmeles has given world premieres by composers including John Luther Adams, Taylor Brook, Courtney Bryan, Ann Cleare, Zosha di Castri, Erin Gee, Martin Iddon, Hannah Kendall, Christopher Trapani and James Weeks.

In addition to creating their own repertoire, Ekmeles is dedicated to bringing the best of contemporary vocal music to the United States that would otherwise go unheard. They have given United States premieres by composers including Joanna Bailie, Carola Bauckholt, Aaron Cassidy, Beat Furrer, Stefano Gervasoni, Evan Johnson, Bernhard Lang, Liza Lim, Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, Lucia Ronchetti, Wolfgang Rihm, Rebecca Saunders, Salvatore Sciarrino, Mathias Spahlinger, and Agatha Zobel.

Collaborations with other musical ensembles and artists has been a part of Ekmeles’s work from the very beginning. In its first several seasons the ensemble gave the United States premieres of Luigi Nono’s *Quando stanno morendo* with AMP New Music, and Beat Furrer’s *FAMA* with Talea Ensemble. Their collaborations with Mivos Quartet include the United States premieres of Stefano Gervasoni’s *Dir – In Dir* and Wolfgang Rihm’s concert-length *ET LUX*. Ekmeles joined with members of Tilt Brass and loadbang for the United States premiere of Mathias Spahlinger’s monumental *über den frühen tod früuleins anna augusta marggräfin zu baden*, and Wolfgang Rihm’s *SKOTEINÓS*.

Ekmeles also collaborates beyond the traditional concert stage, including the integration of singers into choreographic works by New Chamber Ballet, and a staged memorized performance of David Lang’s *The Little Match Girl Passion* at the MET Breuer Museum directed by Tony award winning director Rachel Chavkin. They also gave sold-out performances with Oliver Beer’s Vessel Orchestra, the first sound-based installation commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Director Jeffrey Gavett performed at the keyboard of this instrument, composed of 32 resonant hollow objects spanning 7,000 years of the museum’s collection. In 2022 they sang as part of John Luther Adams’s installation work *Veils and Vesper*, broadcast on WNYC’s New Sounds.

In January of 2020 they released their debut album *A howl, that was also a prayer* on New Focus Recordings, with works by Taylor Brook, Erin Gee, and Christopher Trapani. *Fanfare* magazine said the album's performances were “beyond expert – almost frightening in their precision.” In the spring of 2020 through May 2021, Ekmeles continued to bring performances to audiences in authentic ways despite the difficulty of singing together. The ensemble performed innovative streaming concerts that combined elements of video art created by members of the ensemble, pre-recorded performances, and live synchronous online performing. Ensemble members performed simultaneously from San Francisco, Philadelphia, and New York. ekmeles.com

NEXT WEEK: Gold & Glitter
The Leclair Project

Texts and Translations

Mentre, mia stella, miri

i bei celesti giri,
il ciel esser vorrei
perchè tu rivolgessi
fiso negli occhi miei
le tue dolci faville,
Io vagheggiar potessi,
mille bellezze tue con luci mille.

As, my star, you watch
the celestial bodies turn,
I wish that I were heaven,
that if you were to turn your lovely eyes
and look up into mine,
I could gaze down
upon your thousand beauties through as many
stars.

1 Maccabees 9:37–41***

37 After this, word was brought to Jonathan and his brother Simon: "The tribe of Jambri is celebrating a great wedding, and with a large escort they are bringing the bride, the daughter of one of the great princes of Canaan, from Nadabath". 38 Remembering the blood of John their brother, they went up and hid themselves under cover of the mountain. 39 As they watched there appeared a noisy throng with much baggage; then the bridegroom and his friends and kinsmen had come out to meet them with tambourines and musicians with their instruments. 40 Jonathan and his party rose up against them from their ambush and killed them. Many fell wounded; the rest fled toward the mountain; all their spoils were taken. 41 Thus the wedding was turned into mourning, and the sound of their music into lamentation.

*** *New American Bible Revised Edition*

Sparge la morte al mio Signor nel viso

Tra squallidi pallori
Pietosissimi horrori,
Poi lo rimira e ne divien pietosa;
Geme, sospira, e più ferir non osa.
Ei, che temer la mira,
Inchina il capo, asconde il viso, e spira.

Death spreads over my Lord's face,
Over its bleak pallor,
The most heartrending shade;
Then he looks at him and is moved to pity;
He groans, sighs, and does not dare to wound
him more.
But he who sees him shrinking back
Bows his head, hides his face, and dies.

Tu part'ohimè dolente

Io viv'in fiamme ardenti
Senza di te ben mio
Come viver poss'io
Se'l fier' e rio dolore
Non me di vor' il core?

You depart, Ah, how sad.
I live in burning flames.
Without you my love,
How could I live
If the cruel and sorrowful river
Should not bring back your heart to me?

Se vi duol il mio duolo

voi sola, anima mia,
potete far che tutto gioia sia.
Deh, gradite il mio ardore,
ch'arderà lieto nel suo foco il core,
e quel duol che vi spiace
in me sia gioia, in voi diletto e pace.

Moro, lasso, al mio duolo,
e chi può darmi vita,
ahi, che m'ancide e non vuol darmi aita!
O dolorosa sorte,
chi dar vita mi può,
ahi, mi dà morte!

Chiaro risplender suole

a tutti il mio bel sole,
ma oscuro e fosco a me misero appare,
onde, in lagrime amare,
consumo la mia vita.
Ah, s'io potessi almen chiederle aita!
Lieto all'or ne morrei
e finirian, oimè, gli affanni miei.

If my sorrow saddens you,
you, my beloved, are the only one
who can turn my sorrows all to joy.
Alas, accept my passion:
the heart will gladly burn in its fire,
and that sorrow which displeases you
will turn to joy in me, and in you to delight
and peace of mind.

I die, alas, in my suffering,
And she who could give me life,
Alas, kills me and will not help me.
O sorrowful fate,
She who could give me life,
Alas, gives me death.

My fair sun brightly keeps shining
upon everyone,
yet to wretched me she is dark and gloomy,
and in bitter tears I thus
waste away my life.
Ah, if I could at least ask for her help!
Then I would die happy
and would end, alas!, my torments.