



SWEETEST  
LOVE

by  
Chris Meyer

Commissioned by  
The Aradia Ensemble

Ptolomeus

Marinus

Strabo

Aratus

Polibius

Hipparchus

Geometria

Astronomia

Arithmetica

Musica

MERCVRIVS

VIRESCIT VV L NERE VERITAS

IB: F

# SWEETEST LOVE

## Performance Notes

The English poet John Donne (1572-1631) wrote a poem entitled *Song* perhaps as a farewell to his wife when he set out on a journey to Europe in 1611. I chose it as the text for this piece since it matched the theme of the Aradia Ensemble's concert, of a journey to Europe (Venice), and because each verse of the poem expressed a different aspect of the experience of separation. The poet's emotions seem to range widely and wildly, fitting the concert's *capriccio* title. Musically, I wished to focus on the tenderness of feeling of Donne for his wife, which is realized with long, expressive musical phrases and a pulsing, mostly harmonious accompaniment. As the poet explores other feelings that wax closer to loneliness, despair, and powerlessness, I indulge musical caprices that follow this emotional course, allowing the musical language to grow more dramatic and intense. Eventually the poet consoles himself with a theme of sleep and the music likewise ebbs and draws to a close.

January 30, 2012

Chris Meyer

## *Song* by John Donne (c. 1611)

Sweetest love, I do not goe,  
For weariness of thee,  
Nor in hope the world can show  
A fitter Love for mee,  
But since that I  
Must dye at last, 'tis best,  
To use myself in jest  
Thus by fain'd deaths to dye;

Yesternight the sun went hence,  
And yet is here today,  
He hath no desire nor sense,  
Nor halfe so short a way:  
Then feare not mee,  
But beleeve that I shall make  
Speedier journeyes, since I take  
More wings and spurres than hee.

O how feeble is mans power,  
That if good fortune fall,  
Cannot adde another houre,  
Nor a lost houre recall!

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not winde,  
But sigh'st my soule away,  
When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,  
My lifes blood doth decay.  
It cannot be  
That thou lov'st me as thou say'st,  
If in thine my life thou waste,  
That art the best of mee.

Let not thy divining heart  
Forethinke me any ill,  
Destiny may take thy part,  
And may thy fears fulfill,  
But thinke that wee  
Are but turn'd aside to sleepe;  
They who one another keepe  
Alive, ne'er parted bee.

**Timing:** Approximately 8 minutes

## Performances

Saturday, February 18, 2012  
at the Glenn Gould Studio, Toronto, Ontario  
with the Aradia Ensemble  
and Mezzo-soprano Marion Newman

Saturday, February 25, 2012  
at the Old Firehall, Ottawa, Ontario  
with the Aradia Ensemble  
and Mezzo-soprano Marion Newman

# Sweetest Love

Commissioned by the Aradia Ensemble with Marion Newman

Music by Chris Meyer  
Poem by John Donne (1572-1631)

*Teneremente ed espressivo* ♩. = 50 *p*

1 2 3

1

2

3

Sweetest Love

Vc. *mf* love, *p* do *mf* not goe, For

Vln. 1 *mp* *pp* *mp*

Vln. 2 *mp* *pp* *mp*

Vla. *mp* *pp* *mp*

Vcl. *mp* *pp* *mp*

Hpscd. *mp* *pp* *mp*

4

5

6

Vc. wea - ri - ness of thee, Nor in

Vln. 1 *mf* *p* *mf* *f* *sub. p* *pp*

Vln. 2 *mf* *mf* *f* *sub. p* *pp*

Vla. *mf* *p* *f* *sub. p* *pp*

Vcl. *mf* *p* *f* *sub. p* *pp*

Hpscd. *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *pp*

7

8

9

10

Sweetest Love

*mf* *p* *mf*

Vc. hope the world can show A

Vln. 1 *mp* *pp* *mp*

Vln. 2 *mp* *pp* *mp*

Vla. *mp* *pp* *mp*

Vlc. *mp* *pp* *mp*

Hpscd. *mp* *pp* *mp*

11

12

13

*p*

Vc. fit - ter Love for mee, But since that I Must dye

Vln. 1 *mf* *p* *p*

Vln. 2 *mf* *p* *p*

Vla. *mf* *p* *p*

Vlc. *mf* *p*

Hpscd. *mf* *p* very slowly

14

15

16

Sweetest Love

Vc. *mf* at last, *p* 'tis best, To use my-self in

Vln. 1 *mf* *f* *p*

Vln. 2 *mf* *f* *p*

Vla. *mf* *f* *p*

Vlc. *mp* *mf* *f* *p* *mp*

Hpscd. *f*

17

18

Vc. *mf* jest *p* Thus by

Vln. 1 *mf* *f* *fp*

Vln. 2 *mf* *f* *fp*

Vla. *mf* *f* *fp*

Vlc. *mf* *f* *fp*

Hpscd.

19

20

Musical score for measures 21-24. The score includes parts for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Harpsichord. The lyrics are: "fain'd \_\_\_ deaths to dye;". The music features a melodic line in the Violoncello and a rhythmic accompaniment in the strings and harpsichord. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, and *cresc.*. A fermata is present over the first measure of measure 21.

21

22

23

24

*poco rit.* **Lento, ma con mosso** ♩ = 50

Musical score for measures 25-26. The score includes parts for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Harpsichord. The lyrics are: "Yes - - - ter - night the sun went". The music features a melodic line in the Violoncello and a rhythmic accompaniment in the strings and harpsichord. Dynamics include *f* and *dim.*. A fermata is present over the first measure of measure 25. The Harpsichord part has a fingering of 10.

25

26

Vc. hence, And

Vln. 1 *mp*

Vln. 2 *mp*

Vla. *f*

Vcl. *mp*

Hpscd.

27

Vc. yet is here to - day,

Vln. 1 *f* *dim.* *mp*

Vln. 2 *f* *dim.* *mp*

Vla. *f* *dim.* *f*

Vcl. *f* *dim.* *mp*

Hpscd.

28

29



Sweetest Love

Vc. He hath no de - sire nor sense, Nor halfe so short a way: \_

Vln. 1 *p* *mf* *mf*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p*

Vcl. *p*

Hpscd. *p*

30 31 32

Vc. *f* *poco allargando*  
Then feare not mee, But be - leeve that I shall make

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *molto espress. e fortissimo*

Vcl. *f*

Hpscd. *f*

33 34

Vc. Spee - dier jour - neyes, since I take More wings and spurres than

Vln. 1 *mp*

Vln. 2 *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Vlc. *mp*

Hpscd.

35 36

Vc. hee... *molto rit.*

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

Hpscd.

37 38 39

Sweetest Love

Poco Grave  $\text{♩} = 45$

Musical score for measures 40-44. The score includes parts for Violin (Vc.), Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Harpsichord (Hpscd.). The lyrics are: "O how fee - ble is mans power, That if good for - tune". Dynamics include *p* and *pp*. The Vc. part has a fermata over the first measure and a *p* dynamic. The Vln. 1, 2, and Vla. parts have *pp* dynamics. The Hpscd. part is silent.

40 41 42 43 44

Musical score for measure 45. The score includes parts for Violin (Vc.), Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Harpsichord (Hpscd.). The lyrics are: "fall,". Dynamics include *f* and *fp*. The Vc. part has a fermata and a *f* dynamic. The Vln. 1, 2, and Vla. parts have *f* dynamics and are marked with *fp*. The Vcl. part has a *f* dynamic. The Hpscd. part has a *f* dynamic.

45

Vc. *f* Can - not adde a - no - ther hour,

Vln. 1 *f* *fp*

Vln. 2 *f* *fp*

Vla. *f* *fp*

Vlc. *f* *fp*

Hpscd.

46 47

Vc. Nor a lost hour re -

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Hpscd.

48

*tempo rubato*

Musical score for measures 49 and 50. The score includes parts for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Harpsichord. The Violin parts feature a 'call!' marking and a *ff* dynamic. The Viola and Violoncello parts also feature a *ff* dynamic. The Harpsichord part is marked *dim.*. Measure numbers 49 and 50 are indicated in boxes at the bottom.

Grave ♩ = 82

Musical score for measures 51, 52, and 53. The score includes parts for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Harpsichord. The Violin parts feature a *p* dynamic. The Harpsichord part is marked *p*. Measure numbers 51, 52, and 53 are indicated in boxes at the bottom.

Sweetest Love

Vc. *p*

Vln. 1 *p* sul ponticello

Vln. 2 *p* sul ponticello

Vla. *p* sul ponticello

Vcl. *p* simile

Hpscd. *p*

When thou sigh'st, — thou sigh'st — not winde, But sigh'st — my soule a - way, —

54

55

56

Vc. *f*

Vln. 1 *p* normale *cresc.*

Vln. 2 *p* normale *cresc.*

Vla. *p* normale *cresc.*

Vcl. *cresc.*

Hpscd.

When thou weep'st, — un - kind - ly kind, My lifes blood doth<sup>2</sup> de - cay. It —

57

58

59

Vc. can - not be That thou lov'st me as thou say'st,

Vln. 1 *f* *p*

Vln. 2 *f* *p*

Vla. *f* *p*

Vcl. *f* *p*

Hpscd. *f* *p*

60 61

*poco rit.* *a tempo*

**Teneramente ed espressivo** ♩ = 50

Vc. If in thine my life thou waste, Thou art the best of mee.

Vln. 1 *mf* *p* *pp*

Vln. 2 *mf* *p* *pp*

Vla. *mf* *p* *pp*

Vcl. *mf* *p* *pp*

Hpscd. *mf* *p* *pp*

62 63 64

Vc. *p* *Let* *not*  
 Vln. 1 *p*  
 Vln. 2 *sub. p*  
 Vla. *sub. p*  
 Vcl. *p*  
 Hpscd. *pp*  
 65 66

Vc. *mf* *p*  
 thy di - vi - ning  
 Vln. 1  
 Vln. 2 *mp* *pp*  
 Vla. *mp* *pp*  
 Vcl. *mp* *pp*  
 Hpscd. *mp* *pp*  
 67 68



*mf*

Vc. heart Fore - thinke me

Vln. 1 *f* *p* *mf*

Vln. 2 *mp* *f* *mf*

Vla. *mp* *f* *p*

Vcl. *mp* *f* *p*

Hpscd. *mp* *f* *p*

*f* *molto* *p*

Vc. a - ny ill, De - sti -

Vln. 1 *f* *p*

Vln. 2 *f* *p*

Vla. *f* *p*

Vcl. *f* *p*

Hpscd. *mf* *f*

Sweetest Love

*mf* *p*

Vc. ny may take thy

Vln. 1 *mp* *pp*

Vln. 2 *mp* *pp*

Vla. *mp* *pp*

Vlc. *mp* *pp*

Hpscd. *mp* *pp*

75

76

*mf* *f*

Vc. part. And may thy fears ful - fill,

Vln. 1 *mp* *f*

Vln. 2 *mp* *f*

Vla. *mp* *f*

Vlc. *mp* *f*

Hpscd. *mp* *f* *p* very slowly

77

78

79

# Sweetest Love

*quasi recitativo  
e piu lento*

Vc. *pp*  
But think that wee Are but turn'd a-side to sleepe; They who one a - no - ther keepe

Vln. 1 *pp*

Vln. 2 *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vlc. *pp*

Hpscd. *p*

80 81 82

## Piu Lento ♩ = 45

Vc. *p*  
A - live, ne'er par - ted bee.

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

Hpscd. *p*

83 84 85

*p* *poco* *sub. p* *molto rit.* *poco a poco molto lento*

Vc. Swee - test love, I do not goe,

Vln. 1 *sub. p*

Vln. 2 *sub. p*

Vla. *sub. p*

Vlc. *sub. p*

Hpscd.

86

87

88

89