Thomas Morley's *First Book of Balletts to Five Voices:* An Introduction For Conductors

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It is likely that Thomas Morley's popularity with the majority of twentieth-century lovers of his music rests chiefly upon his balletts. In spite of this, the music of Morley's *First Book of Balletts to Five Voices* remains largely unknown to many choral musicians.[1] While a few of the pieces in the collection, such as "Now Is the Month of Maying" or "Sing We and Chant It," have become fixtures in the repertory of many choirs, many of the *Balletts* are rarely, if ever, performed.

Morley's *Balletts* is a rich source of literature well suited to the needs of many high school and college vocal chamber ensembles, literature which will make for interesting and entertaining programming and which will provide musical challenge and enjoyment for choir members and conductors. As an introduction to this music for conductors, this article will examine the historical background of the *Balletts,* survey the contents of the collection, discuss applicable performance practice considerations, and add some suggestions concerning performance of the *Balletts* designed to facilitate use of this literature by high school and college choirs.

Historical Background on the "Balletts"

Elizabethan England was deeply interested in the assimilation and imitation of Continental culture, scholarship, and social conventions. During the last three decades of the sixteenth century the Petrarchan poetry of Italy and its allied musical form, the madrigal, became extremely fashionable among English artists and courtiers. This Italian influence was imported both by Englishmen who had travelled abroad and by Italian musicians working in England. The influence of Italian poetry was a strong factor in the "new poetry" of Sidney and Spenser, and the Italian madrigal, together with the lighter secular Italian forms such as the *canzonetta* and *balletto,* served as the model for the sudden and quite imitative development of the English madrigal, "a rare example," says Jerome Roche, "of the naturalization of a foreign form."[2]

In Italy the spirit that generated the madrigal was very much a literary matter: musical setting of serious poetry by the greatest Italian poets, such as Petrarch and Tasso, was a highly sophisticated art primarily focused on the structure, the meaning, and even the verbal sounds of the poem. Purely musical considerations were secondary to the primacy of the word. Madrigals were composed for literary academies and for a highly cultured nobility who employed professional musicians and strove for the highest possible level of artistic and aesthetic sophistication and rarification. For the Italians, madrigal singing was expected to be a poetic as well as or even more than a musical experience. The lighter Italian musical forms *(canzonetta, villanelle,* and *balletto)* were relished for their simplicity in contrast to the highly sophisticated madrigal, but this predilection for simplicity was still the attitude of court aesthetes, and had much the same character as Marie Antoinette's fondness for her "dairy farm" at Versailles centuries later. The focus of the *canzonetta, villanelle,* and *balletto,* like the focus of the madrigal, was still on the poem.

The consumers of madrigals in England, however, were the new gentry and the rising middle class, as well as the higher reaches of society; and since these consumers did not know the long tradition of Italian poetry, and were hearing either Italian which they often did not know well or English translations which frequently obscured the sophisticated structure and content of the originals, they were primarily interested in the music rather than the words of the new Italian pieces. In short, in England the madrigal was very much a musical and not a literary matter.

Italian madrigals circulated in England both in manuscript and in influential printed collections, such as Nicolas Yonge's *Musica Transalpina* and Thomas Watson's *Italian Madrigals Englished,* for some time before English composers began to imitate the Italian models. William Byrd and his generation were cool to the new style, preferring the native English secular song. Thomas Morley was the first composer to employ the Italian style. Says Joseph Kerman,

> No other musicians of Morley's generation distinguished themselves in Italianate composition, and the younger men looked instinctively to him as their model. But Morley looked instinctively to Italy; his historic position is that of a pioneer who digested the Continental style, naturalized it, and presented it to his countrymen in a form that they could immediately appreciate and utilize further. It is first of all from this point of view that Morley's work should be approached. Morley set the tone definitively for a class of composition that is characteristic of the English books [of madrigals] that came after him. The popularity and cultivation of the English madrigal was in large measure due to him alone.[3]

This popularity and cultivation began with the publication of Morley's *Balletts* in simultaneously-issued English and Italian versions in 1595.

The new English style which Morley and his successors established differed from its Italian model in several respects, most of which stemmed from the predominantly musical rather than literary interests of the English composers and music lovers. Since the English composers were not as interested in poetic subtleties of the same kind, they preferred more musical elaboration and interest than could be found in the Italian forms, and tended to prefer the lighter forms to the madrigal itself, since many of these lighter forms were musically less subordinate to the text. English compositions generally displayed more melodic interest than their Italian counterparts (Reese refers to their "songfulness"), and generally avoided devices of the Italian mannerists such as extreme chromaticism or monodic recitative. English composers preferred on the whole to set light and frivolous rather than great or serious poetry: the Italian tradition of setting to music the greatest native poets had no English counterpart. In fact, English composers were frequently content to set rough translations of the texts of Italian pieces.[4]

Although choral musicians tend to refer to all sixteenth-century English secular vocal compositions indiscriminately as madrigals, there are actually a number of more or less distinct varieties, as was also true in Italy, and intelligent analysis requires that these be recognized. Carelessness on the part of composers and printers often contributes to modern confusion in this regard, since title pages of original prints often mislabel some or all of the pieces they contain. This sort of confusion in the original prints was perhaps

heightened by the fact that forms and form names newly imported from Italy were involved. An approach to Morley's *Balletts,* therefore, must necessarily involve consideration of the characteristics which distinguish the ballett from the other late-sixteenth-century English secular vocal forms.

Kerman's study of Elizabethan-Jacobean secular vocal music distinguishes four main varieties of Italianate secular vocal compositions by English composers: the ballett, serious madrigal, canzonet, and light madrigal.[5]

The ballett is normally strophic, primarily homophonic, and usually dominated by an obvious and regular dance rhythm. It is characterized by a bipartite division, and each of these two sections ends with a fa-la-la or similar refrain and is repeated in its entirety, including the refrain. The ballett is musically the simplest of the four varieties and normally employs a predetermined musical scheme of regular phrase lengths which takes precedence over the poetry. The text is almost always of a light and frivolous character suitable for dancing and entertainment.

At the other end of the formal spectrum is the serious madrigal. As in the Italian model, the text is here the controlling force. In Kerman's words,

> the madrigal calls for an extended, "progressive" kind of musical form, working forward like a motet from line to line, dwelling at the dictate of the text on whichever phrase seems best, with no fixed ending-point ahead.[6]

It displays no regular or pre-conceived musical pattern, is not strophic but through-composed, and is quasi-contrapuntal and quite variable in texture rather than homophonic. It attempts to reflect in the music the sense and mood of the poem and even of individual words within the poem. The poetry employed is normally of a good quality and a serious nature.

The canzonet borrows characteristics from both the ballett and the madrigal and is in some senses a hybrid of the two. Like the ballett, it is strophic and subordinates the text to a pre-conceived musical form. Here the division is usually tripartite, and this is marked by the repetition of the words and music of the outer sections, with a non-repeated section in the center. The text is also normally light in character. But while the ballett is primarily homophonic, the canzonet is

> built up from brief phrases declaimed to individual and characteristic little melodic ideas, often treated polyphonically with facile stretto imitations. This results in many text repeats, many rests in the voice parts, more inner movement, and more complicated harmonic structure.[7]

These little melodic ideas are often related to the words, and in this respect, albeit within a regular musical framework, the canzonet bears some resemblance to the madrigal.

The light madrigal differs from the serious madrigal primarily in text and mood. It normally involves light and inconsequential poetry and a frivolous musical mood. It remains a madrigal, however, in that the text governs and no preconceived formal structure is possible.

Morley himself defines the ballett in this way:

> There is also another kind . . . which they term balletti or dances, and are songs which being sung to a ditty may likewise be danced . . . There be also another kind of balletts commonly called "fa-las." The first set of that kind which I have seen was made by Gastoldi; if others have labored in the same field I know not, but a slight kind of music it is, and, as I take it, devised to be danced to voices.[8]

Kerman points out that Morley's definition notes both the general Continental use of the term to denote any simple composition suited for dancing and also the specific meaning associated with "fa-la" refrain pieces typified by Giovanni Gastoldi's already-famous *Balletti a* 5. In discussing English music, says Kerman, "we are justified in restricting the term to Gastoldi's quite specific idea of a ballett, because it was in this sense alone taken up by the

Elizabethans."[9] As we shall see, Morley's reference to Gastoldi is not irrelevant to consideration of his own *Balletts.*

The Content of Morley's "Balletts"

The pieces which comprise Morley's *Balletts* were the first of their type to be composed in England. They provide an unusually clear illustration of the Italian origin of the new English style, for they are directly based, both as a collection and, in many cases, as individual pieces, on Gastoldi's *Balletti a* 5 of 1591.

Gastoldi's *Balletti* had achieved an instant and overwhelming success. Alfred Einstein points out that the influence of this collection both in Italy and in such foreign countries as Germany and England was the greatest of any light music of the time.[10] The important characteristics of Gastoldi's pieces are those already cited in the definition of the ballett: homophony, diatonicism, regular accent pattern (a rarity in sixteenth-century art music), regular phrase lengths (mostly two- or four-bar phrases), a bipartite division in which each section ends with a fa-la refrain and together with its refrain is repeated. Most of the pieces in the *Balletti* begin with an anacrusis accompanied by sufficient rests before the first note to fill up a complete measure, something which is completely unknown in the madrigal, and is undoubtedly connected with the fact that the *balletti* are meant for dancing.[11] (The title page is inscribed "Balletti per sonare, cantare e ballare.")

Einstein cites the *Balletti* as in fact, if not in name, the first madrigal comedy.

> To understand Gastoldi's work one must suppose that a merry company has come together to sing, to play, and to dance, and that the revelry has begun to take on the character of a comedy, in that the participants endeavor to represent in imagination every conceivable character.[12]

The first piece in the set, a sort of "Invitation to the Dance" *(Introducttione a i Balletti),* is followed by fifteen balletts, each with a title which indicates the "humor" of the character supposedly singing and dancing the ballett, e.g., *L'innamorato, Il contento, La sirena.* (Many of these "characters" undoubtedly derived from the *commedia dell'arte* and the long tradition of mummery.) These fifteen balletts are followed by a three-piece *Mascherata a Cacciatori* (sung by six singers dressed as warriors), a *canzonetta,* and a concluding *Concerto de Pastori* which is a dialogue for two four-part choruses.[13]

Morley's *Balletts* is clearly modelled as a collection on Gastoldi's *Balletti.* The English set has the same overall dimensions as the Italian, containing fifteen balletts, five non-balletts, and a concluding dialogue for double chorus which Kerman cites as the only one of its sort composed in England. Morley does not provide an *introduttione* or *mascherata;* his five non-balletts include one madrigal and four canzonets, not labelled as such, but clearly distinguished by their compositional style (for instance, they have no fa-la refrains) and differentiated from the two-or-three strophe balletts by being settings of only a single strophe.[14]

The music of Morley's fifteen balletts in part closely follows Gastoldi's style and introduces it to England, and in part displays important differences which reflect the English interest in the music rather than the poetry of such pieces. As Kerman has pointed out, Morley's balletts fall into two groups. Eight of them are directly based on the poems and in many ways on the music of eight of Gastoldi's *balletti:* these correspondences can be seen in Table I. The remaining seven derive textually from the poems of Italian canzonets by Marenzio, Vecchi, Croce, and other Italian composers; and musically five of these seven depart considerably from Gastoldi's musical style. These Kerman labels as balletts in canzonet style.[15]

The interest and variety of Gastoldi's pieces lie in the subtle metrical variety of the poetry. His music is extremely simple: it follows exactly the meter of the text, is uniformly homophonic, involves no textual repetition, and has a lively and absolutely regular dance rhythm of alternating strong and weak beats. Gastoldi's fa-la refrains continue the style of the verse sections. By contrast, Morley is clearly not interested in varied poetic meter — he has selected the most regular of Gastoldi's poems — and is not content with the sparse and simple musical style of Gastoldi, but adds musical elaboration in a new English ballett style of his own.

The verse sections of Morley's Gastoldi-style balletts are written in Gastoldi's simple, homophonic, and metrically regular manner, and employ rhythms and sometimes even melodies identical to those of the parallel Gastoldi pieces. Morley does substitute a few slightly more varied rhythms, e.g.

for Gastoldi's unvaryingly even quarter notes. The Englishman's new musical style appears in the fa-la refrains. "The main interest of Morley's balletts, in contrast to Gastoldi's," says Kerman, "is in the 'fa las'; they are almost always a signal for some virtuoso counterpoint . . . with many rapid figurations that recall the English instrumental style."[16] Morley's refrains are longer than Gastoldi's, and several of them are

varied by means of different mensuration, the addition of a coda, or the contrasting of rapid movement with long notes.

Morley's balletts in canzonet style represent even greater musical elaboration. Not only are their fa-la refrains in his more elaborate new style, but their verse sections are composed in the manner of a canzonet, with motivic imitation, textual repetition, and rhythmic variety rather than Gastoldi's plain homophony. They can still be classed as balletts rather than as canzonets by virtue of their bipartite structure and fa-la refrains. This canzonet style can also be seen in the music of the non-ballett pieces in the collection.

Each of Morley's fifteen balletts has two strophes with the exception of No. 3, the famous "Now Is the Month of Maying," which has three.[17] (As noted earlier, the remaining six pieces in the collection have only one strophe each.)

Harmonic analysis of the pieces in the *Balletts* will reveal that in their composition Morley was not thinking in terms of functional tonal harmony, but was following a modal harmonic procedure as discussed in his *Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music.* English treatises of the time speak of pieces as being "on a key," a way of speaking which is appropriate to harmonic modal procedure and which is usefully distinct from the phrase "in a key" appropriate to fully tonal music. In this sense twenty of the twenty-one pieces in the *Balletts* can be said to be on F, G, or A, in the Ionian mode, the Aeolian mode, or a conflation of the Dorian and Aeolian modes. The only piece not on one of these three keys is No. 9, "What Saith My Dainty Darling," which is on C. The key signatures employed are uniformly incomplete, being modified by frequent manuscript accidentals.

Two theories exist as to who was responsible for the translations of the Italian texts (and possibly the addition of some original verse) set by Morley in the *Balletts.* Edmund Fellowes, editor of the first modern edition of the collection, believes that the text is attributable to the English poet Michael Drayton. Fellowes bases this conjecture on the little congratulatory verse for Morley at the beginning of the original print which is signed with the initials M.D.[18] John Uhler, an American Morley scholar, argues that Morley himself was responsible for both the translations and additions.[19] Whoever was responsible, the translations have a charmingly English character.

> It is engaging to find that Gastoldi's "La dolce sirena" has turned into Morley's smiling "bonny lass." May is the English springtime and the most appropriate time for dancing and singing. Italy knows none of it. Daffadillies replace roses, and those faithful Italian nymphs and shepherds foot it around a very English maypole.[20]

Performance Practice Considerations

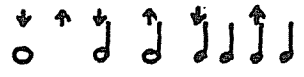
Information provided by musical scholarship concerning the sort of performance of the *Balletts* which would likely have been given in Morley's own time can provide indispensable guidance for the conductor who approaches this music. The following suggestions concerning performance practices are offered for that purpose.

1. TEMPO. The range of acceptable tempi for performances of Morley's balletts is indicated by the original notation and mensuration signs. Music of the late Renaissance was still temporally controlled by the *tactus,* the down-and-up motion of the conductor's hand to which the notes of each part were rhythmically related according to the given mensuration sign. The *tactus* employed by Renaissance musicians fell within a range describable in modern terms as M.M.60-80 for the half-*tactus* (i.e., M.M.30-40 for the full tactus).[21] Within that range the conductor (then and now) must choose the appropriate tempo considering such factors as the content and mood of the text; the harmonic, rhythmic, contrapuntal, or textural complexity of the music; the character of the mode of the piece (some modes were regarded as excited, others as calm); the occasion for which the piece is being performed; and the size and the acoustical characteristics of the hall. The conductor must know what note values and mensuration signs were employed in the original notation of a Renaissance work in order to intelligently apply this knowledge and choose a tempo. This process is made easier in the case of Morley's *Balletts* by the fact that the major modern edition of the collection by Fellowes faithfully reproduces (with one exception discussed in footnote 22) the original mensuration signs (though it often misinterprets them, as we shall see when considering proportions) and transcribes the original note values without reduction (i.e., semibreves are transcribed as whole notes, etc.). It is therefore usable to a degree uncommon among modern editions of Renaissance music.

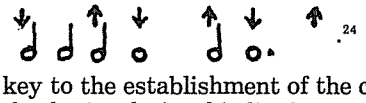
All but one of the pieces in Morley's *Balletts* are basically governed by the mensuration sign C indicating *tactus alla semibreve,* and the correct basic tempo for their performance therefore lies somewhere in the range ♩ = M.M. 60-80 (where transcribed without reduction, as in the Fellowes edition). Their lighthearted texts and relatively uncomplicated compositional characteristics suggest a choice toward the upper part of that range. The exception is No. 6, "No, no, Nigella," the mensuration of which is C3, *tactus alla semibreve* in *sesquialtera* proportion. Since here three *semibreves* are equal to each two *tactus* (rather than the normal one-to-one correspondence of *tactus* and *semibreve* under the simple sign C), the correct tempo is approximately 𝅗𝅥. (♩♩♩) = M.M.30-40.[22]

2. PROPORTIONS. Gastoldi's *Balletti* contains only one instance of the use of mensural proportion, but Morley (in keeping with his general tendency to musical elaboration) employs *sesquialtera* proportion in eight of the pieces in his *Balletts.*[23] This is the point on which most modern editions and performances go astray. The chief and perhaps only major defect of the Fellowes edition is its misleading and inaccurate indications as to how to relate the *integer valor* and proportional sections of the pieces involved. Conductors should studiously ignore Fellowes's indications of notational equivalency at points where proportions exist, and interpret the relationships for themselves. This is made relatively easy by Fellowes's inclusion of the correct original mensuration signs.

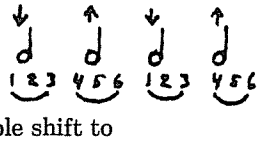
The practical problem of rhythmic/tempo relationships in the performing of *sesquialtera* proportion can be solved as follows. In *integer valor* sections the tactus will normally be proceeding like this (↓ and ↑ together, representing the downward and upward motion of the hand, equal one *tactus*):



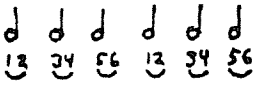
Under *sesquialtera* proportion (the relationship of three to two) the situation will be like this:



The key to the establishment of the correct rhythmic relationship lies in mentally subdividing the two strokes of the *tactus.* At the end of the *integer valor* section the conductor should mentally count as follows:



A simple shift to



while keeping the six-count steady will produce an exact sesquialtera proportion. To pass from C3 or 3 (which were equivalent signs in Morley's time) to C, this procedure can simply be reversed. The triple sections will obviously move one-third faster than the duple ones.

3. OBLIGATORY REPEATS. In each of the fifteen balletts the repeat of each half of the bipartite structure is written out musically for each verse in the original part books and, therefore, would never have been omitted in Elizabethan performances. While these repeats can be varied by a changed number of singers, instrumental doubling, or ornamentation, they should not be omitted in modern performances.

4. INDEPENDENCE FROM BAR LINES. By now it is fairly common knowledge among choral musicians that Renaissance notation did not include bar lines, that the singer(s) of each part had only his (their) own part and sang it according to its own natural accent pattern, and that notes following the editorial bar lines in modern editions of Renaissance music should not automatically be accented. While the regular rhythmic patterns which are generally a feature of the ballett proper obviate this problem to some degree, care should still be taken to avoid regular accentuation based on the bar line in the seven balletts in canzonet style and the non-ballett pieces in Morley's collection where rhythmic irregularity and rhythmic counterpoint are important features.

5. EDITIONS. As discussed above, the Fellowes edition is generally reliable if the conductor will do his own work concerning the proportions. It also provides a piano reduction for rehearsal purposes.[25] An experiment which might prove worthwhile would be the use of copies (easily made from the microfilm) of the original part-books. The relative simplicity of the music and the easily-seen equivalence of the smaller mensural note values with our modern ones (𝅝 = 𝅗𝅥, 𝅗𝅥 = ♩, etc.) should make this practical, and the procedure would surely pay dividends in terms of part independence.

6. VOCAL FORCES AND VOCAL SOUND. The *Balletts* are clearly designed for entertainment at Elizabethan social gatherings. Morley's collection was undoubtedly performed frequently with only one voice per part on such occasions, the value placed on skilled musical performance by amateurs as well as professionals being what it was, but it seems likely that when more singers were present and available vocal doubling may have occurred. At any rate, choral performance of Morley's *Balletts* accords well enough with the general Renaissance practice of using whatever combination of forces was available on a given occasion, provided that the number of singers on each part is kept fairly small. Variety and interest can be added by having sections or even whole balletts sung by soloists from the choir as a contrast to the choral sound.

The vocal sound which Morley had primarily in mind was very likely an all-male one. The choirs of Morley's day were comprised exclusively of men and boys. Morley was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and Organist of St. Paul's Cathedral (and hence one of London's and therefore England's leading musicians) when he composed the *Balletts.* Both the men and (perhaps more surprisingly to us) the boys of the Chapel Royal, St. Paul's, and other leading London choirs played an active part in the secular musical life of the capital, singing at social gatherings ranging from Court banquets to dinners of the city's merchant guilds.[26] It is highly likely that the *Balletts* may have been first and most prominently performed on such occasions by men and boys of the choirs with which Morley was associated. Some performances in the composer's time may also have combined women's and men's voices. The social value which Elizabethan and Jacobean society placed on skilled amateur music-making by both sexes, the relatively wide distribution of the *Balletts* suggested by their printing, and the relatively small number of highly trained choral establish-

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ments suggest the possibility that at least on some less grand or formal social occasions women's voices may have replaced those of boys on the *Cantus* and, where appropriate, the *Quintus* parts in singing of the *Balletts.* (The range of the *Altus* parts and the common use of male falsetto at the time both indicate that women would have been very unlikely to have replaced men on the *Altus* part.)

Elizabethan-Jacobean music employed three types of men's voices, namely bass, tenor, and countertenor, and two types of boys voices, namely mean and treble. The characteristic sound of these voice types and the ranges of parts written for them by Renaissance composers provide clues to a vocal sound ideal for modern conductors who approach Morley's *Balletts.* (The range given by David Wulstan as employed for each voice type in English Renaissance music is given in Table II.)

The range of the parts, the clefs used, and the common practice of the time indicate that Morley intended the *Bassus, Tenor,* and *Altus* parts in the *Balletts* for the lowest (bass), middle (tenor), and highest (countertenor) adult male voice types, respectively. In the case of the *Tenor* and *Altus* parts in particular this implies a sound different in important respects from the sound the modern conductor instinctively pictures when he sees the label "tenor" or "alto." In Renaissance England the tenor was the most common and hence least prized adult male voice, and tenor parts avoided both extremes of the possible adult male range and were regarded as suitable for rather middling or "indifferent" voices.[27] (It is notable that Elizabethan-Jacobean verse anthems contain far fewer solo parts for tenors than for the other adult male voices.) The countertenor was perhaps the most highly prized voice in Renaissance England. Countertenors sang primarily in male falsetto, adding chest voice for the lower notes of the wide range called for in alto parts of the period. The sound of men's voices singing at the top of the adult male compass in falsetto obviously differs considerably from that of women's voices singing at the bottom of the female compass in chest voice (the sound picture called to mind for most modern conductors by the word "alto"), not only in vocal color and vibrato but in power.

Cantus parts in Elizabethan Renaissance music were sung by either means or trebles, the lower and higher boys' voice types, respectively. The mean, with a range of approximately c' to e" or f", was the most common boys' voice, and was the high voice called for in most vocal music of the period. The treble, a rarer voice usually belonging to fairly young boys, added a high, brilliant upper range reaching as high as b-flat". It was used somewhat sparingly in English Renaissance music, perhaps both because the voice itself was rather rare and because it was held in reserve for pieces and occasions calling for special brilliance and verve.[28]

It is likely that Morley intended trebles to sing the *Cantus* parts in Nos. 7-12 and 18-20 in the *Balletts,* and intended means to sing *Cantus* in Nos. 1-6, 13-17, and 21. In the *Plain and Easy Introduction* Morley specifically associates trebles with pieces scored in the combination of clefs now known as *chiavette* (which he calls the "high key"), and means with the combination known as *chiavi naturali* (which he calls the "low key").[29] Nos. 7-12 and 18-20 in the *Balletts* are scored in *chiavette,* while the other pieces are scored in *chiavi naturali.* The range of the *Cantus* part in the two groups of pieces thus created would also indicate use of trebles in the former and means in the latter group; the *Cantus* part goes to g" or a" in all but one of the pieces scored in *chiavette,* but only to e" or f" in those scored in *chiavi naturali.*[30] This corresponds with Wulstan's ranges for the two voice types (see Table II). The clefs assigned and the range actually called for in the various voice parts in the Balletts can be seen in Table III.

Morley uses the *Quintus* part in the *Balletts* to add a second part for treble, mean, countertenor, or tenor to the basic *Cantus, Altus, Tenor, Bassus* texture. The voice assigned to the *Quintus* part is indicated by the clef used, within the context of either the *chiavette* or *chiavi naturali* combination of clefs.[31] The assignment of the *Quintus* part in the various pieces in the *Balletts* can also be seen in Table III.

All this suggests several elements in a tonal ideal for modern performances of the *Balletts.* Overall, what is desirable is a clear, bright, light vocal sound without excessive vibrato or vocal weight. Especially when choral performance is involved, one essential avenue to this sort of sound will undoubtedly be a degree of restraint in the matter of dynamics: a dynamic range in which mezzo-forte or mezzo-piano singing is the norm and forte is a maximum level reserved for sparing use seems indicated. (This need not imply the colorless absence of dynamic variety or expressive vitality which unfortunately characterizes many choral performances of Renaissance music.) Tenors should sing with lyric rather than dramatic tenor sound. An authentic sound and the originally-intended balance of the parts will perhaps be most ideally served by the use of male falsettists on *Altus* parts when they are available. (The rising popularity of male falsetto sound in popular music suggests that the potential availability of such male voices in many high schools and colleges could be greater than many choral conductors imagine.) If, as will often be necessary, female altos are used, a bright sound free of noticeable or excessive vibrato is desirable. The conductor should also consider reinforcement of this part by

some additional singers to compensate for the less penetrating sound of female voices in this range as compared with countertenor sound. Nearly all modern conductors will need to use female voices on the parts originally meant for means and trebles, and here, too, a bright sound free of noticeable or excessive vibrato is indicated. Parts originally intended for means can be sung by sopranos, mezzo-sopranos, and/or even altos, provided that they can easily reach f''. Parts originally intended for trebles call for a brilliant high soprano sound.[32]

7. INSTRUMENTAL DOUBLING. It is now commonly acknowledged that instrumental doubling of vocal parts was a feature of some Renaissance performances, and the conductor who approaches the *Balletts* may wish to consider this. It seems relevant in this connection that Gastoldi's *Balletti,* the model for Morley's work, was inscribed as *per sonare* as well as *per cantare e ballare.* Any attempt at producing an approximation of an authentic Renaissance sound, however, would be destroyed by the use of modern instruments, and Renaissance instruments and skillful players of them may not be available. *A cappella* performance is also within the proper style.

8. DANCING. The pieces in Gastoldi's *Balletti* were clearly intended to be danced, as both their musical nature and the inscription on the title page of the collection make explicit. Kerman's argument that the music of Morley's *Balletts* was not so intended seems persuasive on two counts. First, Kerman points out that Morley's way of referring to the dance-related character of Gastoldi's work in the *Plain and Easy Introduction* suggests that it was not customary to dance balletts in England, where they were an alternate kind of purely musical entertainment. Kerman concludes that "the ballett was apparently not danced in England, but served (with the madrigal and the canzonet) as music to be sung and listened to; an idealized dance, like the allemande and the minuet of later centuries."[33] Secondly, this view is supported by the music itself, for Morley's musical elaborations (elaborate fa-la refrains, phrases of irregular length, canzonet-style verses, and so on) tend to obscure the basic dance structure visible in Gastoldi's simple *balletti.* This would make dancing to Morley's balletts a more difficult matter. Any attempt at dancing the *Balletts* should certainly be limited to the eight balletts modelled on Gastoldi.

Suggestions for Performance

One main obstacle to performance of many pieces in the *Balletts* by modern vocal chamber ensembles, particularly small high school or college choirs, lies in the wide ranges of Morley's *Altus* and *Tenor* parts (including the *Quintus* parts assigned by clef as *Altus* or *Tenor*). The *Altus* parts in the collection have a range from d to d'', the lower end of which poses obvious problems for female altos (as does the upper end in a possible substitution by tenors). The *Tenor* parts employ a basic range of c to g', and in three pieces rise to a' and b-flat', and the upper end of this range can be difficult or even impossible for young high school and college tenors.

Table IV lists suggested voicings and minor adjustments designed to facilitate performance of the *Balletts* by high school or college vocal chamber groups composed of female sopranos and altos and male tenors and basses. The employment of transposition by either a half or whole step and/or of the exchange of certain portions of some *Altus* and *Tenor* parts, where needed, will bring all but two of the pieces in the collection within vocal ranges which should be possible for most such ensembles. The absence of a universal pitch standard in the Renaissance — although the pitch of English Renaissance secular vocal music was the closest to our own of the pitch standards of the time, one cannot assume a scientific exactitude or uniformity of practice even here — seems to justify this small degree of latitude regarding transposition in modern practice. The part exchanges required seem, like the use of female altos rather than countertenors, also justifiable, since this technique will put virtually this whole collection of important music within the reach of the great majority of modern vocal chamber ensembles for the first time.

Morley's *Balletts* does not have even the loose, madrigal-comedy-related coherence as a single entity which is found in Gastoldi's *Balletti,* but the pieces in the *Balletts* can certainly stand alone in performance. A conductor wishing to perform groups of several pieces from the collection can also find several possible bases for selecting such

groups in the nature of the *Balletts* as a collection. One might consider such possibilities as performing the fifteen Morley balletts, the six Morley non-ballett pieces, the eight balletts modelled on Gastoldi, or the five balletts in canzonet style.[34] Interesting performance groupings might also come from a mixed selection from all these types, or the grouping of pieces whose poems connect with each other in some narrative way. A particularly attractive idea would be the performance of some or all of the balletts after Gastoldi together with the Gastoldi *balletti* on which they were modelled. One might even have part of one's choir do the appropriate Renaissance dance with a Gastoldi *balletto,* followed by the singing of the corresponding ballett by Morley.

Conductors considering performance of music from the *Balletts* who wish to know approximate performance times for given pieces can use Table V, which shows the length of each piece in *tactus,* to calculate the approximate performance time needed for a given piece at a chosen tempo, and to compare the pieces in the collection in terms of length.

Morley's *Balletts* seems extremely well suited to the musical needs of high school and college vocal chamber groups. The pieces in the *Balletts* will provide a degree of challenge to the abilities of the singers without presenting a degree of difficulty which would make mastery of them hard to reach. In this regard they possess such advantages as fairly regular rhythm, a large amount of homophony, and repetition of material. They were also intended by their composer to be sung in English. These pieces have a popular, lively, and entertaining character which is easily communicated to audiences. Their appeal for audiences and for modern choral singers is usually more immediate than that of the Italian madrigal proper, due to the fact that their main focus is musical rather than literary. It can be difficult to communicate to choirs and audiences the poetic sophistication which is the central point of the madrigal, since they are often quite unfamiliar with madrigalian poetry and its allied music. By contrast, the simple, easily graspable underlying form and the dominance of music over poetry characteristic of the ballett make the pieces of Morley's collection easily communicable. Conductors who study and perform the *Balletts* will find themselves and their choirs richly rewarded.

TABLE I
Morley Balletts Directly Modelled On Gastoldi Balletti

Morley's *Balletts,* 1595	Gastoldi's *Balletti,* 1591 (first lines)
1. Dainty Fine Sweet Nymph	5. Speme amorosa (Vezzosette ninfe)
2. Shoot, False Love, I Care Not	3. Il bell'humore (Viver lieto voglio)
4. Sing We and Chant It	2. L'innamorato (A lieta vita)
6. No, No, Nigella	15. Il Martellato (Possa morir chi t'ama)
7. My Bonnie Lass, She Smileth	12. La Sirena (Questa dolce sirena)
9. What Saith My Dainty Darling	4. Il contento (Piacer gioia)
10. Thus Saith My Galatea	8. Il piacer (Al piacer alla gioia)
13. You That Wont To My Pipes' Sound	7. Gloria d'Amore (Vaghe ninfe)

TABLE II
English Renaissance Ranges Of Vocal Parts (Wulstan)[35]

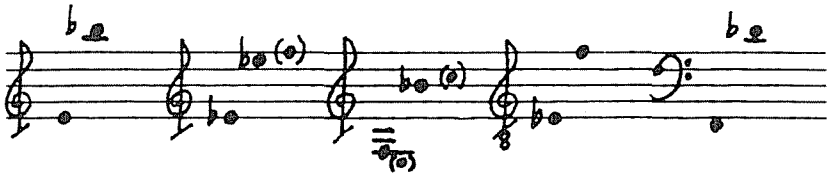
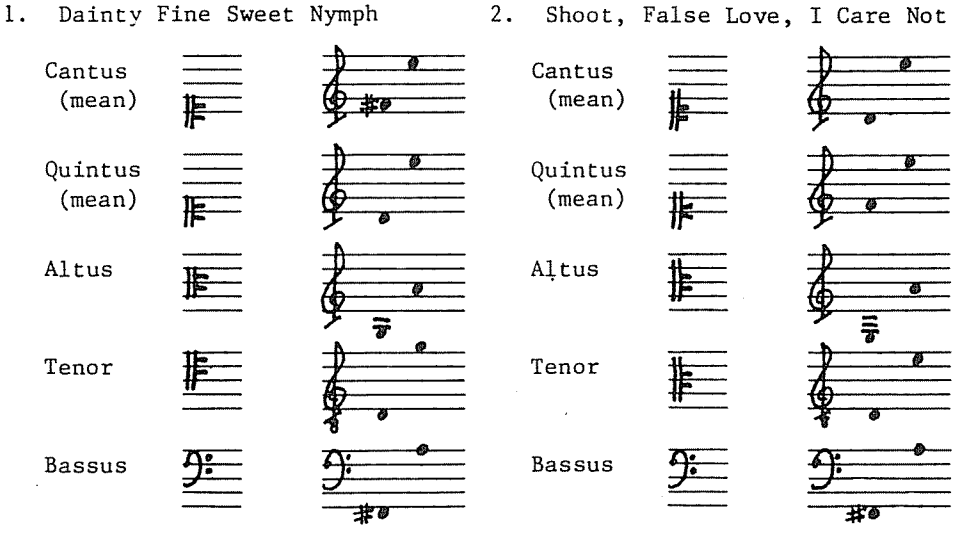
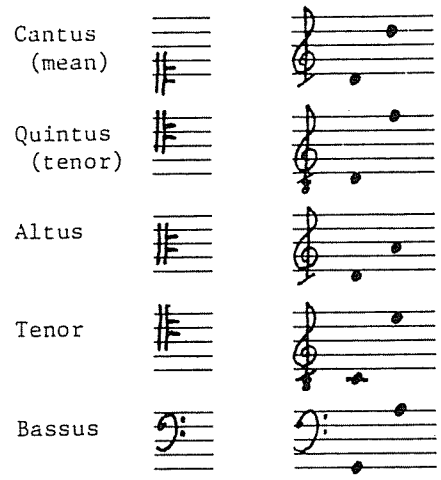


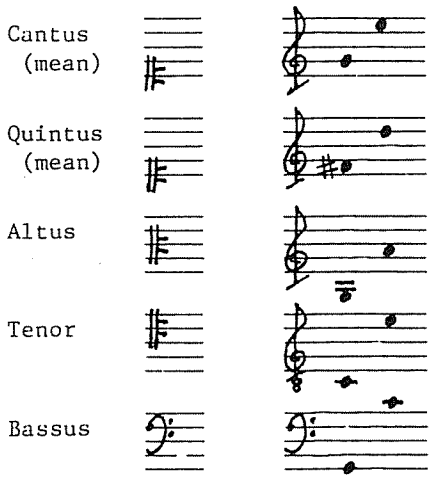
TABLE III
Original Clefs And Ranges Of Parts In Morley's Balletts



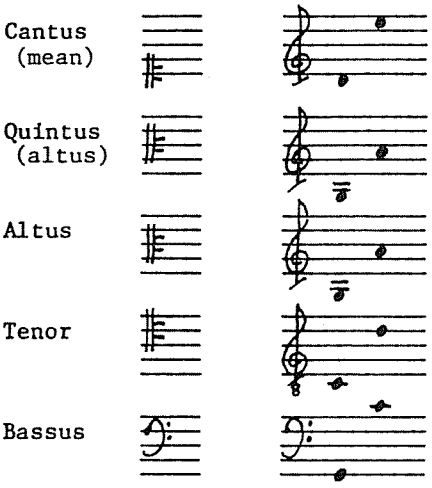
3. Now Is The Month Of Maying



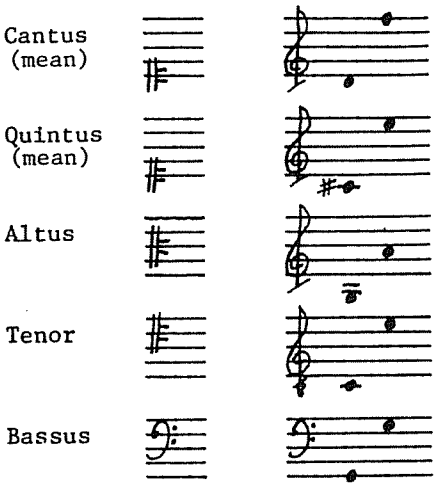
4. Sing We And Chant It



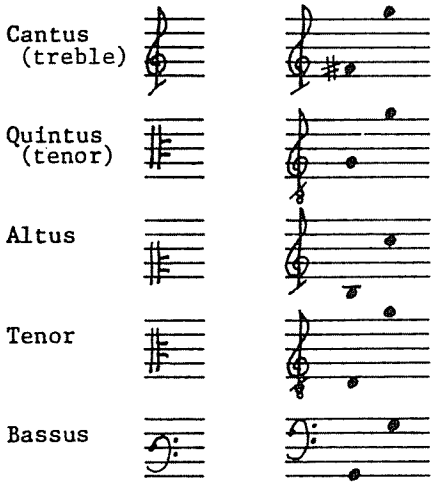
5. Singing Alone



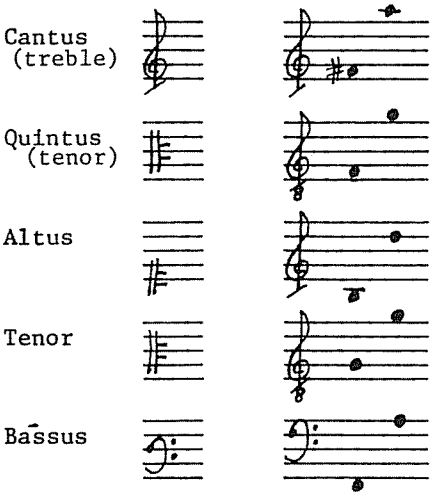
6. No, No, Nigella



7. My Bonny Lass, She Smileth



8. I Saw My Lovely Phyllis



AMERICAN CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES DISSERTATION PRIZE WINNER

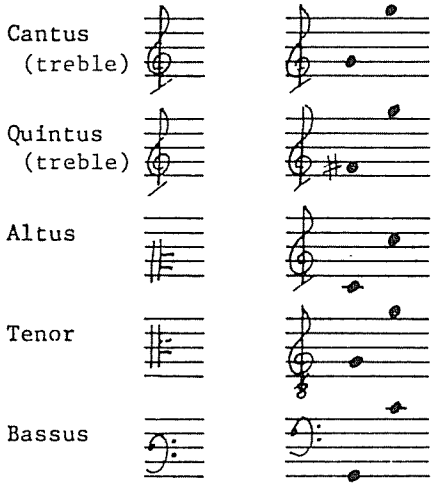
NASHVILLE—Grame Cowen, Director of Choral Activities of the University of Northern Iowa, was awarded the prize for the outstanding doctoral dissertation in 1981 in the field of choral music. The award, which carried with it a cash prize of $250, was presented to Dr. Cowen at the biennial convention of the American Choral Directors Association on March 10 in Nashville, Tennessee.

The award-winning study, entitled "Igor Stravinski's *Threni:* A Conductor's Study for Performance," was completed at the Indiana University School of Music under the supervision of the late Julius Herford.

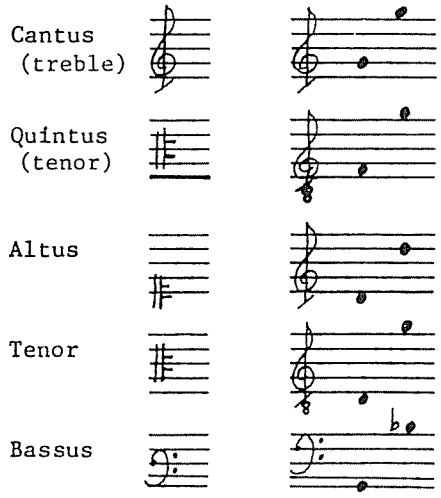
Dr. Cowen is the first recipient of this award, which will be conferred annually to the graduating doctoral student whose thesis makes an original contribution to the performance and study of the choral art.

The Association's Dissertation Prize Committee is now accepting nominations for the 1982 award. Nominations must be submitted through the chief music executive of the institution. All nominations are to be sent to Ray Robinson, Westminster Choir College, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

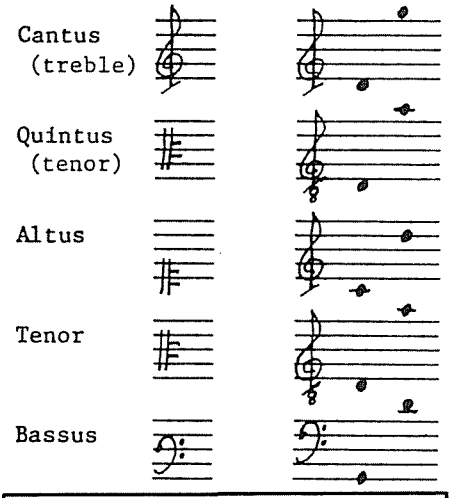
9. What Saith My Dainty Darling



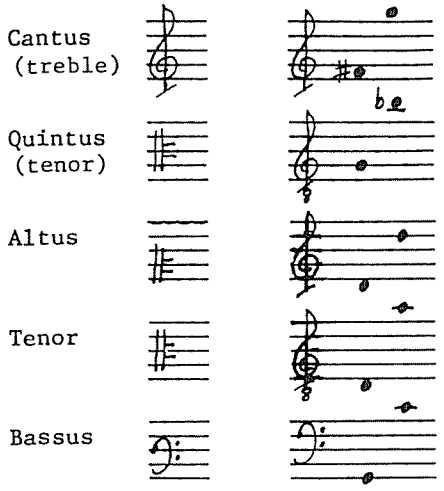
10. Thus Saith My Galatea



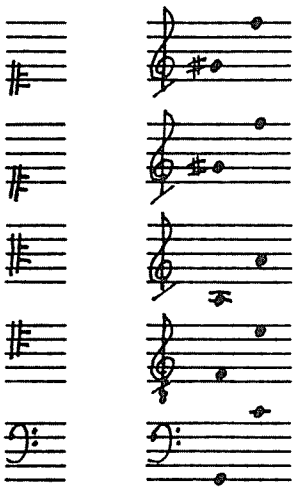
11. About the Maypole New

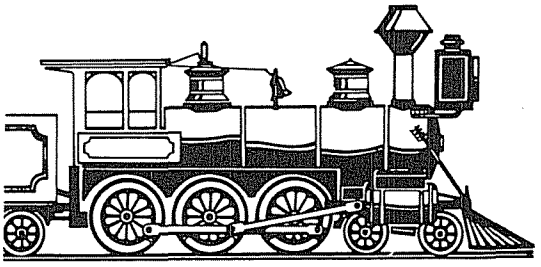


12. My Lovely Wanton Jewel



13. You That Wont To My Pipes' Sound





A Premiere Performance

The Dreadful Dining Car

A melodrama in one act and four scenes

Libretto and *Music* by

Daniel Pinkham

Commissioned for the Centennial Celebration
at the University of North Dakota

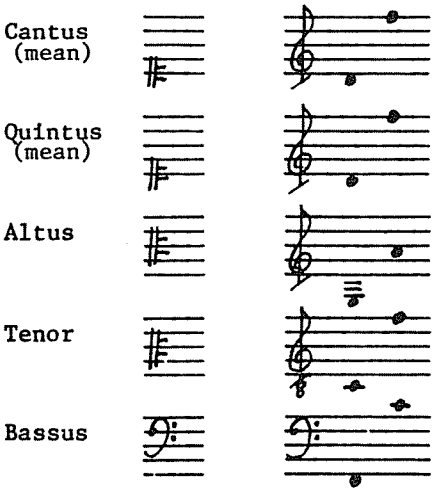
Performed by the

University of North Dakota Concert Choir

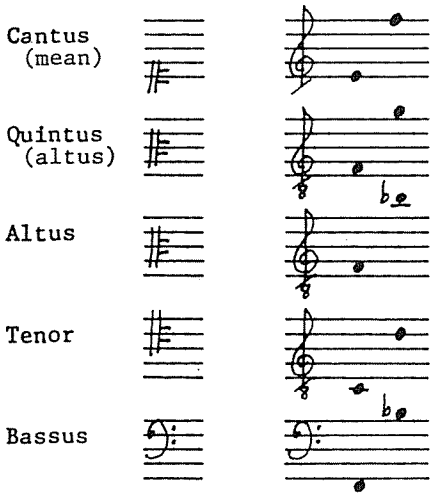
Terry Eder, *Conductor*

Sunday, May 1, 1983, 4:00 p.m.
Chester Fritz Auditorium
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, North Dakota

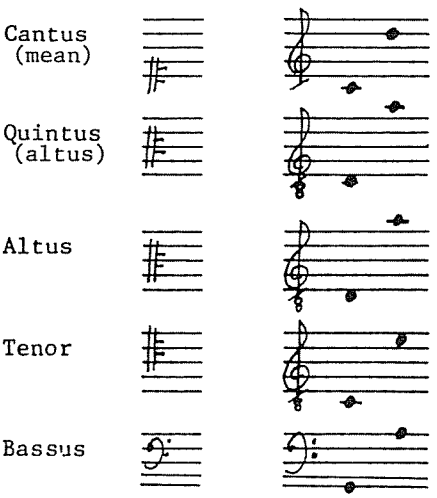
14. Fire, Fire



15. Those Dainty Daffadillies



16. Lady, Those Cherries Plenty



NEWS briefs . . .

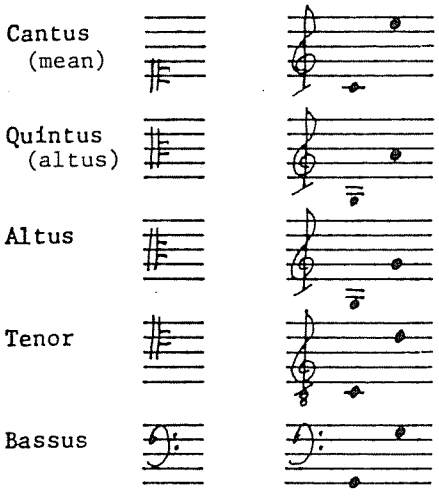
Southern Division President-Elect

Elaine McNamara is currently president of Florida ACDA, the largest state unit in the southern division. She began her professional involvement as a member of the music committee of the Florida Vocal Association, subsequently serving that organization as district chairman and for nine years as executive secretary. During this same period of time, Mrs. McNamara has served her county choral group as chairman three times and has been president of Broward Music Educators Association, representing all music teachers in her county.

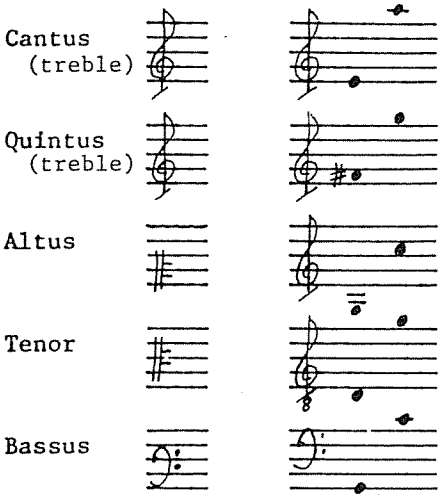
Beginning her teaching career as a junior high school teacher in Orlando, she moved to the junior/senior high level after receiving a master's degree, and is in the nineteenth year as choral director at Plantation High School. At Plantation she has twice been selected teacher of the year and was faculty chairman of the 10-year accreditation study. She also teaches choral methods at Florida Atlantic University.

Mrs. McNamara holds both Bachelor and Master's degrees in music education from Florida State University. In addition to her teaching duties she has, for nineteen years, been assistant organist, assistant choir director and soprano soloist at First Methodist Church in Ft. Lauderdale. She was a participant in the first ACDA Choral Symposium in Vienna, Austria, and has benefited by participation in workshops with such conductors as Robert Shaw, Paul Salamunovich, Howard Swan, Roger Wagner, Robert Page, Charles Hirt, Frank Pooler and many others. Mrs. McNamara's choral groups earn consistent superior ratings and she is sought as an adjudicator.

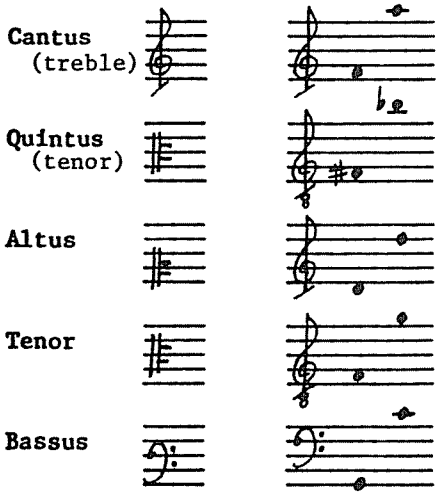
17. I Love, Alas, I Love Thee



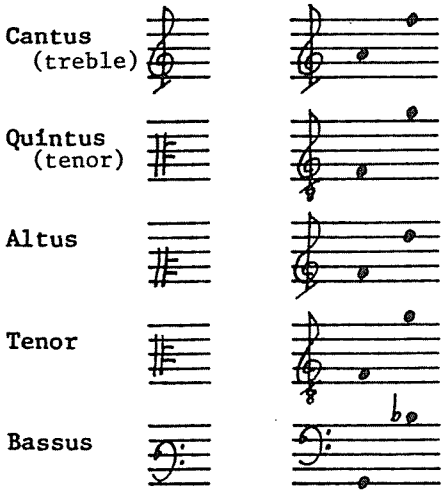
18. Lo, She Flies



19. Leave, Alas, This Tormenting



20. Why Weeps Alas



21. Phyllis, I Fain Would Die Now

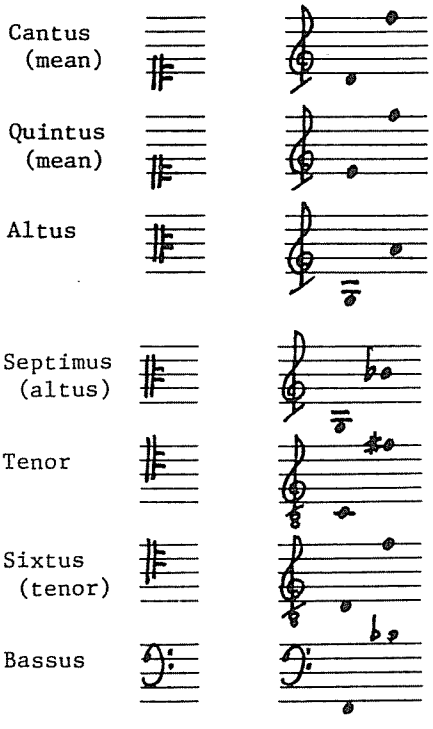


TABLE IV
Suggested Voicings and Part Adjustments For High School and College Choirs

Voicings suggested are for Morley's *Cantus, Quintus, Altus, Tenor,* and *Bassus* parts, in that order; e.g., SSATB suggests sopranos on *Cantus,* sopranos on *Quintus,* altos on *Altus,* tenors on *Tenor,* basses on *Bassus.* (N.B.: the Fellowes edition does not always present the parts in Morley's order, although it does provide his part names in small print.) The adjustments suggested will bring the parts, with minor exceptions, within the following ranges: soprano c'-a"; alto g-e"; tenor c-f#'; bass F#-d'. (Conductors should note that Cantus and Quintus parts originally for means — see Table III — can usually be sung, if desired, by middle-range female voices, often referred to as second sopranos or mezzo sopranos.)

No.	Title	Suggested	Suggested Minor Adjustments
1.	Dainty Fine Sweet Nymph	S S A T B	Exchange Altus and Tenor notes for the last two ♩ of the fourth bar from the end.
2.	Shoot, False Love, I Care Not	S S A T B	Transpose up a whole step. The Altus f at "So lightly I esteem thee" can be taken up an octave.
3.	Now Is the Month of Maying	S A A T B	Transpose up a whole step, and exchange Quintus and Tenor parts for the last nine ♩ of the piece.
4.	Sing We and Chant It	S S A T B	Can be transposed up a half or whole step if desired.
5.	Singing Alone	S A A T B	Can be transposed up a half or whole step if desired.
6.	No, No, Nigella	S S A T B	Can be transposed up a half or whole step if desired.
7.	My Bonny Lass, She Smileth	S A A T B	Have tenors sing Altus and altos Tenor for the first nine ♩ of the A section fa-las, and for all of the B section.

8.	I Saw My Lovely Phyllis	(S A A T B)	(This voicing solves all the range problems except for one Quintus alto note at f, one bass note at F, and several tenor notes at g'.)
9.	What Saith My Dainty Darling	S S A T B	Transpose down one half step.
10.	Thus Saith My Galatea	S A A T B	Exchange Quintus and Tenor parts for the last phrase ("thus saith my Galatea") of the introduction, and for all of the fa-las.
11.	About the Maypole New	----------	(Cannot be brought within the ranges specified: requires two Tenor parts with a range of d-a'.)
12.	My Lovely Wanton Jewel	(S A A T B)	(Crossing the Quintus and Tenor parts for the last 21 ♩ solves all the range problems except one tenor phrase which rises for one ♩ to a'.)
13.	You That Wont To My Pipes' Sound	S S A T B	No adjustment is needed.
14.	Fire, Fire	(S S A T B)	(Transposition up a half step solves all range problems except two ♩ at f for the alto.)
15.	Those Dainty Daffadillies	S A A T B	Transpose up a whole step.
16.	Lady, Those Cherries Plenty	----------	(Cannot be brought within the ranges specified: requires two Altus parts with a range of d-a'.)
17.	I Love, Alas, I Love Thee	S A A T B	Can be transposed up a whole step.
18.	Lo, She Flies	(S S A T B)	(This voicing solves all the range problems except for two tenor ♩ at g'.)
19.	Leave Alas This Tormenting	S A A T B	Exchange the alto and tenor parts for the text "Live in love and languish" at the end.
20.	Why Weeps Alas	(S A A T B)	(The Quintus and Tenor parts both have ranges of f-g': try mixing altos and tenors on both parts).
21.	Phyllis, I Fain Would Die Now	S S A A T T B	No adjustments are needed.

TABLE V
Piece Lengths in Tactus

Tactus lengths indicated are inclusive of all repeats and all verses. If the conductor will select a tempo as discussed in the section of performance practice, a simple calculation will indicate the approximate length of time needed for performance of a given piece. (E.g., at a tempo of ♩ = MM. 72, No. 1, "Dainty Fine Sweet Nymph," which has a length of 106 tactus, will last for approximately three minutes: one tactus = 𝅗𝅥 = MM. 36, and at 36 tactus per minute, 106 tactus divided by 36 = 2.9+ minutes.) Final notes have been counted at a value of one tactus.

1.	106	2.	120	3.	99	4.	46	5.	164	6.	136
7.	86	8.	218	9.	98	10.	84	11.	190	12.	172
13.	54	14.	180	15.	86	16.	69	17.	57	18.	72
19.	87	20.	60	21.	142						

FOOTNOTES

[1]This collection, which contains most of Morley's ballett compositions, will be referred to throughout this article as the *Balletts*. The Elizabethan spelling of the word ballett (with double "l" and double "t") will also be used throughout, since it is not only historically appropriate but also serves to distinguish this type of sixteenth century secular music from the dance art known as ballet.

[2]Jerome Roche, *The Madrigal* (London: Hutchinson, 1972), 124.

[3]Joseph Kerman, *The Elizabethan Madrigal: A Comparative Study* (New York: American Musicological Society, distributed by Galaxy, 1962), 131.

[4]For further consideration of the stylistic character of the English madrigal as contrasted with its Italian model, see Gustave Reese, *Music in the Renaissance*, rev. ed. (New York: Norton, 1954), 819-826; Roche, *op. cit.*, 120-125; and Kerman's *The Elizabethan Madrigal* throughout.

[5]Kerman, *op. cit.* Kerman was also the first modern scholar to distinguish the native English

tradition of secular song composition, exemplified in the works of Byrd and Orlando Gibbons, from the Italian-inspired madrigal, canzonet, and ballett.

[6]*Ibid.*, 173.

[7]*Ibid.*, 145.

[8]Thomas Morley, *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music,* ed. R. Alec Harman, foreward by Thurston Dart (New York: Norton, 1952, 1956), 295.

[9]Kerman, 136.

[10]Alfred Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal,* 3 vols., trans. by Alexander H. Krappe, Roger H. Sessions, and Oliver Strunk (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1949), 602-606. The *Lustgarten neuer teutscher Gesaäg,* published in 1601 by Hans Leo Hassler, is a similar German imitation of Gastoldi's *balletto* style; it is interesting to compare the three collections.

[11]Denis Arnold, "Gastoldi and the English Ballett," *Monthly Musical Record* LXXXVI (1956), 45-46.

[12]Einstein, II, 605.

[13]See Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi, *Balletti a cinque voci con li suoi versi per cantare, sonare, e ballare,* ed. H.C. Schmidt (New York, 1970).

[14]Kerman was the first to point this out: see Kerman, 138 ff.

[15]For information on the probable textual sources of the seven balletts not directly based on Gastoldi *balletti,* the dialogue, and the other five non-ballett pieces in Morley's *Balletts,* see Kerman, 140.

[16]Kerman, 142.

[17]Conductors using the Fellowes edition found in Vol. IV of his *English Madrigal School* (London: Stainer and Bell, 1921) should note that Fellowes unaccountably omits printing the second stanza with the music of No. 9, "What Saith My Dainty Darling," although he does provide it with the poems printed separately at the front of the volume.

[18]See Fellowes, IV, xxi, xv.

[19]See John Earle Uhler, *Morley's Canzonets for Three Voices* (Barton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), 4-7.

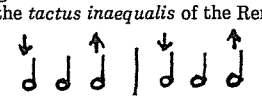
[20]Arnold, 48.

[21]For further consideration of this subject the reader is referred to Joannes Antonius Bank, *Tactus, Tempo and Notation in Mensural Music from the Thirteenth to the Seventeenth Century* (Amsterdam: Annie Bank, 1972), Newman W. Powell, "The Function of the Tactus in Renaissance Music," *Musical Heritage of the Church* VI (1963), 64-84, and Curt Sachs, *Rhythm and Tempo* (New York, 1953).

[22]No. 10, "Thus Saith My Galatea," opens with a sort of prologue on the text of the title which is outside the strophic structure of the ballett proper, and this prologue is governed by sesquialtera proportion (three *semibreves* in the time of two), indicated both by the mensural sign C3 and the use of *minor color* in the original print. The first strophe proper, however, beginning at the words "Love long hath been deluded," is in *tactus alla semibreve,* indicated by the sign C. Fellowes does not indicate the original *minor color,* and he interpolates an opening quarter rest: the original print should be consulted concerning this passage.

[23]The eight are Nos. 1, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 19, and 21. In Nos. 1, 7, 8, and 10 Morley employs *sesquialtera* proportion for musical elaboration of one or both of the fa-la refrains. In No. 11 the reverse is true: the verses are in C3 and the fa-la refrains in C. No. 6 is in C3 throughout the ballett proper, with only the short coda to the second strophe in C. (As cited earlier, No. 10 opens with a C3 prologue.) Nos. 19 and 21 are through-composed canzonets, and use the proportion for sectional contrast or textual highlighting.

[24]This is the *tactus inaequalis* of the Renaissance,



, which lengthens the down stroke and shortens the up stroke so as to align them with two *minimas* and one *minima* respectively, for convenience sake, rather than placing the up stroke halfway through the second minima: the basic relationship of three *minimas* to one *tactus* (i.e., three *semibreves* to two *tactus*) is unchanged by this procedure.

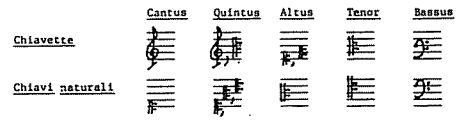
[25]The Fellowes edition is preferable to other modern editions now available, since it provides original mensuration signs and complete texts, does not reduce note values, and includes the entire collection.

[26]Peter LeHuray, *Music and the Reformation in England, 1549-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 219.

[27]*Ibid.*, 120-121.

[28]David Wulstan, "The Problem of Pitch in Sixteenth Century English Vocal Music," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association,* XCIII (1966-67), 97-122, and LeHuray, *loc. cit.*

[29]Morley, *op. cit.*, 274 ff. The two clef combinations are as follows:



[30]Although in much sixteenth-century vocal music the use of *chiavette* clefs frequently indicates transposition down a fourth or fifth, it seems likely that Morley did not intend his use of *chiavette* scoring in the *Balletts* to signal such a transposition. The range of the *Bassus* part in the *Balletts* pieces scored in *chiavette* clefs is virtually identical to that in the pieces scored in *chiavi naturali;* the *Bassus* part extends downward to G, F#, or F in all the pieces in the collection. Arthur Mendel, Fellowes, LeHuray, Wulstan, and other scholars agree that English secular vocal music of the late Renaissance and early Baroque was virtually unique at the time in that the pitch at which it was performed was approximately our modern pitch, with a' being roughly equivalent to 440 cps. (English sacred music and most Continental vocal music of the time was performed at pitch levels between a minor second and a major third higher than the notated pitch would indicate to us.) Since, therefore, no upward transposition is called for in the *Balletts* to compensate for a pitch standard different from our modern one, transposition down a fourth or fifth would take the parts so far below the ranges employed in most Renaissance vocal music and specifically prescribed by Morley in the *Plain and Easy Introduction* as to virtually rule out Morley's having intended such a transposition in these pieces. For more on the performance practice implications of *chiavette,* see Raymond Sprague, *Chiavette, Its Implications, and the Choral Conductor: A Practical Solution* (Unpublished D.M.A. dissertation project, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1979), and Siegfried Hermelink, "Chiavette," *The New Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 20 vols., ed. by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), IV, 221-223.

[31]Morley, 274-275.

[32]Fine examples of the sort of female sound appropriate for performance of Renaissance music can be heard in the recordings of The Clerkes of Oxenford, directed by David Wulstan.

[33]Kerman, 145.

[34]Nos. 1-15 in the collection are balletts (the eight modelled on Gastoldi are listed in Table I). Nos. 16, 17, 18, and 20 are canzonets; No. 19 is a madrigal; and No. 21 is the dialogue. The five balletts in canzonet style are Nos. 5, 8, 12, 14, and 15.

[35]Wulstan, *loc. cit.*

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