

Flora Sings

Concert presentation in response to the exhibition of botanical art

Flora Old & New

Irma Stern Museum, Cecil Road Rosebank, Friday, 30 September 19h30

Flowery songs & praises
framed by musicological and botanical reflections on aesthetics in art and nature

performed & presented by

Antoinette Blyth – soprano, virginal
Mbulelo Peter – praise singing, percussion
Hans Huyssen – Baroque cello, musicological reflection
Adam Harrower – botanical presentation

Mbulelo Peter	Opening Praise Poem
Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759)	Ombra mai fu (from <i>Xerxes</i>)
Allesandro Scarlatti (1660-1725)	Le Violette (from <i>Pirro e Demetrio</i>)
Adam Harrower	The tale of two <i>Lachenalias</i>
Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)	Ecco di dolce raga (from <i>Scherzi musicali</i>)
Antoinette Blyth	The myth of <i>Amaryllis</i>
Guilio Caccini (1551-1618)	Amarilli, mia bella (from <i>Le Nuove Musiche</i>)
Adam Harrower	The tale of two <i>Mimetes</i>
Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)	Preludio & Corrente (from <i>Cello Sonata in Bb, RV 46</i>)
Louis Marchand (1669-1732)	Charming <i>Chloris</i> (from <i>Calliope</i>)
John Wilbye (1574-1638)	Flora gave me charming flowers (from <i>The first set of madrigals</i>)
Hans Huyssen	Aesthetics of art and Aesthetics of nature
Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643)	Se l'aura spira (from <i>Arie musicali per cantarsi</i>)
Mbulelo Peter	Closing Praise Poem

Texts & Translations

Frondi tenere e belle

Del mio Platano amato,
Per voi risplenda il Fato
Tuoni, Lampi, e Procelle
Non vi oltraggino mai la cara pace,
Nè giunga a profanarvi Austro rapace.

Ombra mai fù

Di vegetabile,
Care ed amabile
Soave più.

Rugiadose odorose Violette graziose,

Voi vi state vergognose,
Mezzo ascose Fra le foglie,
E sgridate Le mie voglie,
Che son troppo ambiziose.

Ecco di dolci raggi il Sol armato
del verno saettar la stagion florida;
di dolcissim'amor inebriato
dorme tacito 'l vento in sen di Clorida.
Talor però lascivo ed odorato
ondeggiar, tremolar fa l'erba florida.
L'aria, la terra, il ciel spiran amore:
arda dunque d'amor, arda ogni core.

Io ch'armato sinor d'un duro gelo,
deg'assalti d'Amor potei difendermi
né l'infocato suo pungente telo
puote l'alma passar o 'l petto offendermi.
Or ch'il tutto si cangia al novo cielo,
a due begl'occh'ancor non dovea arrendermi?
Sì, si disarm'il solito rigore:
arda dunque d'amor, arda il mio core

Amarilli, mia bella,

Non credi, o del mio cor dolce desio,
D'esser tu l'amor mio?
Credilo pur: e se timor t'assale,
Prendi questo mio strale.
Aprimi il petto e vedrai scritto in core:
Amarilli, Amarilli, Amarailli è il mio amore

Flora gave me fairest flowers

None so fair in Flora's treasure.
These I placed on Phyllis' bowers,
She was pleased and she my pleasure.
Smiling meadows seem to say:
Come ye wantons, here to play.

Se l'aura spira tutta vezzosa

La fresca rosa ridente sta,
La siepe ombrosa di bei smeraldi
D'estivi caldi timor non ha.

A'balli, a'balli liete venite,
Ninfe gradite, fior di belta,
Or che si chiaro il vago fonte
Dall'alto monte al mar sen va.
Suoi dolci versi spiega l'augello,
E l'arbuscello fiorito sta.

Un volto bello all'ombra accanto
Sol si dia vanto d'aver pieta.
Al canto, Ninfe ridenti,
Scacciate i venti di crudelta.

Tender and beautiful crown
Of my beloved plane tree,
Let Fate smile upon you.
May thunder, lightning, and storms
Never bother your dear peace,
Nor may you be profaned by blowing winds.

Never was the shade
Of a plant
Held dearer, more loving,
Or more gentle.

Dewy scented pretty violets,
You are standing Shy,
Half hidden among the leaves,
And you scold my desires,
That are too ambitious.

Behold, the sun armed with sweet rays,
fires arrows at the flowering season of Spring.
Drunk with sweetest love,
the wind sleeps silently in the bosom of Chloris.
Sometimes, however, wanton and scented,
the wind makes the flowering grass wave and tremble.
The air, the earth, the heavens all breathe love:
each heart should burn, therefore, burn with love.

Until now I, armed with hard ice,
was able to defend myself against the assaults of Cupid,
nor could his fiery, piercing arrow
penetrate my soul or attack my breast.
Now that all has changed to the new season,
will I have again to surrender myself to two beautiful eyes?
Yes, my customary hardness will be disarmed:
my heart must burn, therefore, burn with love.

Amaryllis, my lovely one,
Do you not believe, o my heart's sweet desire,
That you are my love?
Believe it thus: and if fear assails you,
Take this arrow,
Open my breast and see written on my heart:
Amaryllis, Amaryllis, Amaryllis, is my beloved.

Chloris in native purple bright

The Violet of beauty springs
She spreads her opening sweets to sight
and ravishes the warbling strings.
Fair charmer of our Eyes and Ears
Cecilia sure has heav'n forsook
She brings soft musick from ye spheres
And bears an Angel in her Look.

When the graceful breeze blows,
The fresh rose laughs
And the shady hedge of emerald green
Has no fear of the summer heat.

Come delight in the dance,
Nature's fair maidens, flowers of beauty,
While the clear stream
Flows from the mountain to the sea.
Such sweet verses spread from bird to bird
Bringing the sappling to flower.

A beautiful face in the nearby shade
Alone exalts in displaying compassion.
With your song, sweet maidens,
Drive away the winds of cruelty.