Modern Madrigals

for SATB

Book Two

by

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Modern Madrigals

The typical English madrigal might concern itself with the activities of a chap called Amyntas and a shepherdess called Phyllis. They tend their flocks, they kiss, she runs away, they are re-united.

Amyntas may be a sighing poet: his mistress has a dart that pierces him to the heart. He lays his heart at her feet, but she is cruel. He languishes, and is like to die.

In fact - as Molesworth would say - he is uterly wet and a weed. How on earth would these people get on, I wondered, if they were transported into the 21st century? The first madrigal in this group suggests a likely outcome.

The idea of updating the form for modern times took hold of me: if the madrigal is to have new life, it needs texts that reflect truly contemporary concerns. The following five madrigals reflect on various aspects of life in our century.

As we all know, the general listener in modern times has an attention span no longer than some thirty seconds, so to be thoroughly modern, the pieces are short: the set of six can be performed in about five minutes.

1: Amyntas and his love

Amyntas told me of his love And how fair Phyllis faithless proves

So I to treat with Phyllis hied And she, fair temptress, made reply:

"Ah! Bollocks to Amyntas! He never took me to The Ivy. Bollocks to Amyntas! He never bought me diamonds Geoffrey has a BMW, A Rolex Oyster And a penthouse flat."

2: The Barman

A woman goes into a bar And asks for a double entendre So the barman gives her one.

3: Capitalism

Peter bought a three-bed semi for four-one and sold it a year later for five-two. Carol and Andy spent seven-five on their barn conversion, added a conservatory and sold it for nine-one.

John paid four-five-seven for his Chelsea flat; he's just had it valued at half as much again. Whereas I bought a home for my family - and we lived in it.

4: Dumb Animals

Who's a lovely doggie? Who's a lovely doggie?

Isn't he a lovely doggie? Aren't you a lovely doggie?

Don't you love your Mummy? Don't you? Don't you? Who's a lovely boy then? Who's a lovely doggie then?

Who's a clever doggie?
Who's a clever doggie?
Isn't he a clever doggie?
Aren't you a clever doggie?
Brighter than your Mummy?
Aren't you? Aren't you?
Brighter than your Mummy?
Though that isn't saying much.

5: Estuarial

We wen' aht last Friday an' 'ad a few larfs I saw my mate Tracey, and she was like, "There's a new bar opened in West Street. How cool is that? Are you coming there later?" And I was like, "Yeah, right!" That is SO not gonna happen. It's just same old same old, innit?

6. Footie

Why do we support this crew? The manager's a dozy prat, We should be playing 4-4-2 With Cole out wide and Smith up front.

Now we're dropping way too deep One nil up and twenty minutes more The effing referee's gone to sleep They've missed - oh no! - he's bound to... aarrgghh!

Modern Madrigals - Book Two

I had no idea where *Modern Madrigals Book Two* was going to come from - if there should ever be one. But after a particularly good performance of Book One by the Occasional Choir at Tudeley, I woke up in the middle of the night and wrote down the words for letters G to L.

Where Book One dealt with the voice of everyman, Book Two examines our interactions (and irritations) with organisations - the next step in a kind of Maslowian Hierarchy of Niggles. As with the first six, the texts are ephemeral: just as the madrigals of the 16th & 17th centuries had short sell-by dates, so have these. They will perhaps be very *vieux chapeau* in a year or two - and this is as it should be.

F L Dunkin Wedd

Tonbridge, January 2007

Gates

This application has performed an illegal operation. Click OK to reboot your computer and lose all your work since 1987.

Helpline

Thank you for calling our helpline. All our agents are currently busy. Choose from the following options: To hear more options that aren't what you want, press one. To lose your place in the queue, press two. For service, please go elsewhere. To hear Vivaldi's Four Seasons, stay on the line.

Your call is important to us. But not so important that we're going to answer it.

Interview

- So, Minister, what did you have for breakfast this morning?
- Well, let me be absolutely clear on this. The government is fully committed to increased choice in morning comestibles.
- But what did you have for breakfast?
- Well, if you'll let me finish, I'm coming to that. The previous government left us a legacy of dimished breakfast uptake, and not enough boiled eggs to go round.
- Did you have toast this morning?
- Well, I'm not ruling toast out, but I'm not ruling it in either. But let's talk about jam. The previous government's record on jam was appalling.
- Did you have coffee?
- Look, what's important here is not whether or not I had coffee for breakfast. What matters is that under this government we've had a record growth in cereals, historically high kippers, and more kedgeree than ever before.

Junk

Dear Mr Collins,

You have been specially selected to enter our prize draw . Imagine the rejoicing at number 3 Brook Street when you hear which exciting prize you have won! Will it be the free holiday? The brand new car? The microwave oven? To find out which exciting prize you have won, just call our helpline...

Kit

Assembly. Extend flaps A & B. Fold tab C over sprocket D. Locate and cement cross bearers into slots in the stringer splice plates making sure they are well seated in position.

Holding the main assembly in your left hand, and the rotating arm in your right hand, use your other hand to insert the mounting pins. If you have any difficulties, call our helpline...

Link

And now on TV, a choice of viewing. On channel one, one hundred best TV moments. On channel six, celebrity snooker. On channel three, reruns of Only Fools and Horses. On channel four, a bunch of misfits locked in a house with nothing to do. On channel five, paint drying.

Have you thought of reading a book?

Modern Madrigals Book 2

1: Gates

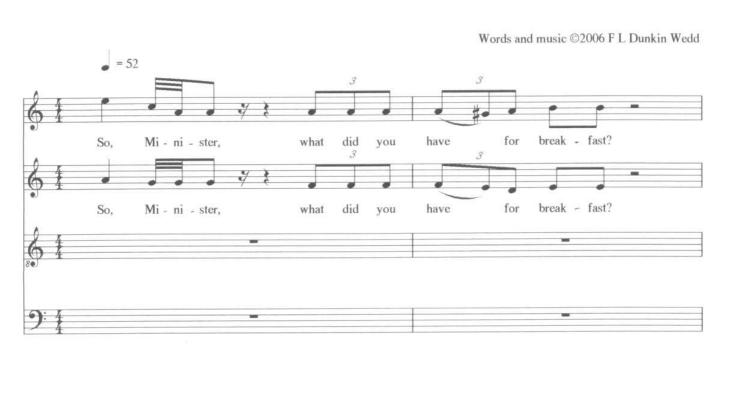


2: Helpline



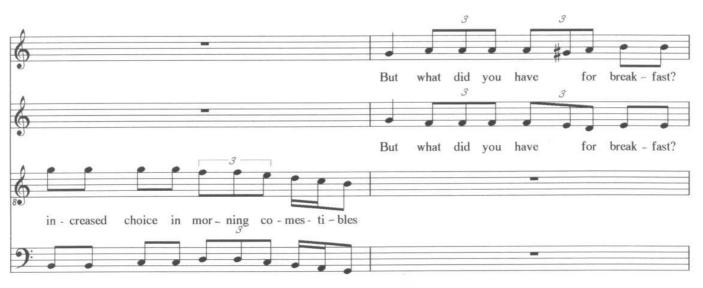


3: Interview

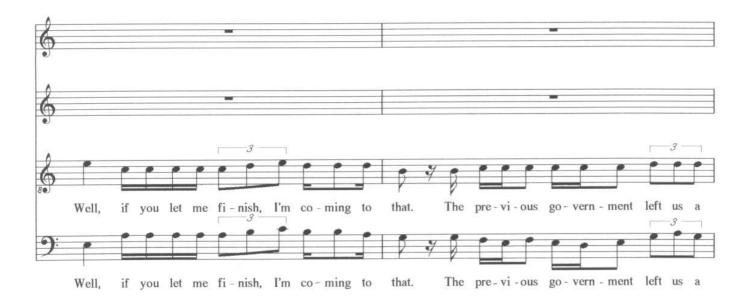




eggs



in - creased choice in mor - ning co - mes - ti - bles





le - ga - cy of di - mi - nished break - fast up - take,





4: Junk











