

CHACONNE

MONTEVERDI SERIES: 3



CHAN 0760

MONTEVERDI
Sweet Torment



I Fagiolini
Barokksolistene
Robert Hollingworth
director

CHANDOS early music



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Bust of Claudio Monteverdi by P. Foglia, Cremona, Italy



Claudio Monteverdi (1567 – 1643)

- 1 **Questi vaghi concenti** 7:06
from *Il quinto libro de madrigali* (1605)
Choir I: Julia Doyle, Clare Wilkinson, Richard Wyn Roberts,
Nicholas Mulroy, Charles Gibbs
Choir II: Anna Crookes, William Purefoy, Nicholas Hurndall Smith,
Eamonn Dougan
Strings: Barokksolistene
Continuo: Eligio Quinteiro (chitarrone), Joy Smith, Steven Devine
- 2 **T'amo, mia vita!** 2:53
from *Il quinto libro de madrigali* (1605)
Julia Doyle, Clare Wilkinson, Nicholas Mulroy, Eamonn Dougan,
Charles Gibbs
Continuo: Joy Smith, Eligio Quinteiro (chitarrone)
- 3 **Ohimè il bel viso** 4:51
from *Il sesto libro de madrigali* (1614)
Julia Doyle, Clare Wilkinson, Nicholas Mulroy, Eamonn Dougan,
Charles Gibbs

- 4 **Zefiro torna, e 'l bel tempo rimena** 3:29
from *Il sesto libro de madrigali* (1614)
Anna Crookes, Clare Wilkinson, Robert Hollingworth, Nicholas Mulroy,
Charles Gibbs
- 5 **Zefiro torna, e di soavi accenti** 6:13
from *Scherzi musicali cioè arie, & madrigali in stil
recitativo...* (1632)
Nicholas Mulroy, Nicholas Hurndall Smith
Continuo: Eligio Quinteiro (chitarrone), Joy Smith,
Catherine Pierron (harpsichord)
- 6 **Ohimè, dov'è il mio ben?** 4:44
from *Concerto. Settimo libro de madrigali* (1619)
Julia Doyle, Clare Wilkinson
Continuo: Joy Smith, Eligio Quinteiro (chitarrone)
- 7 **Si dolce è 'l tormento** 4:27
from Carlo Milanuzzi: *Quarto scherzo delle ariose
vaghezze...* (1624)
Nicholas Mulroy
Continuo: Eligio Quinteiro (chitarrone), Frances Kelly

8 **Or che 'l ciel e la terra** 7:25
from *Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi... Libro ottavo* (1638)
Anna Crookes, Clare Wilkinson, Nicholas Mulroy, Nicholas Hurndall Smith,
Eamonn Dougan, Charles Gibbs
Strings: Bjarte Eike, Peter Spissky
Continuo: Eligio Quinteiro (chitarrone), Joy Smith, Steven Devine

9 **Gira il nemico insidioso** 5:42
from *Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi... Libro ottavo* (1638)
Nicholas Mulroy, Eamonn Dougan, Charles Gibbs
Continuo: Eligio Quinteiro (chitarrone), Catherine Pierron (harpsichord)

10 **Ballo delle Ingrate** 32:04
from *Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi... Libro ottavo* (1638)
Julia Doyle (Amore), Clare Wilkinson (Venere), Jonathan Sells (Plutone),
Anna Crookes (Ingrata)
Strings: Barokksolistene
Continuo: Joy Smith, Eligio Quinteiro (chitarrone), Catherine Pierron (organ),
Terence Charlston
Timpani: Fiona Ritchie, David Sterling

TT 79:02

I Fagiolini
Barokksolistene
Robert Hollingworth director

I Fagiolini
Robert Hollingworth director

soprano
Julia Doyle
Anna Crookes

bass
Charles Gibbs
Jonathan Sells

mezzo-soprano
Clare Wilkinson

harp
Joy Smith
Frances Kelly

counter-tenor
William Purefoy
Richard Wyn Roberts
Robert Hollingworth

harpsichord
Steven Devine
Catherine Pierron
Terence Charlston

tenor
Nicholas Mulroy
Nicholas Hurndall Smith

organ
Catherine Pierron

baritone
Eamonn Dougan

chitarrone/chitarrino
Eligio Quinteiro

Barokksolistene

violin
Bjarte Eike
Peter Spissky

viola
Torbjörn Köhl
Fredrik From

bass violin
Thomas Pitt

<i>violin</i>	Bjarte Eike	by Willibrord Crijnen, Marseille 1998, copy of Nicolò Amati, Cremona 1666; bow by Pieter Affourtit, Venhuizen, copy after an early-seventeenth-century original
	Peter Spisky	by anonymous, c. 1750; bow by Peter Richtarik, copy after an early-seventeenth-century original
<i>viola</i>	Torbjörn Köhl	by Jan Pawlikowski, Krakow 1993, after Stradivarius/Domenico Montagnana; bow after Bavarian seventeenth-century model
	Fredrik From	by Jan Pawlikowski, Krakow 2001, after Amati; bow by Matthew Coltman, London
<i>bass violin</i>	Thomas Pitt	by Guust François, Amsterdam 1999, after large model by Amati, Cremona; bow by Pieter Affourtit, Venhuizen, after a seventeenth-century original
<i>chitarrone</i>	Eligio Quinteiro	sixteen-course by Klaus Jacobsen, London 2003, after Matteo Sellas, Venice c. 1630
<i>chitarrino</i>	Eligio Quinteiro	five-course by Alexander Batov, Lewes 2008, after Belchior Dias, Lisbon 1581

<i>harp</i>	Joy Smith	large Italianate triple harp by Simon Capp, Bruton, Somerset 2001, based on early-seventeenth-century evidence, including the Barberini Harp (Barberini Palace, Rome) and the painting <i>The Artist and His Family</i> by Carlo Francesco Nuvolone (1609 – 1662) (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan)
	Frances Kelly	Italian triple harp by Claus Henry Hüttel, Düren, Germany 2006
<i>harpsichord</i>	Steven Devine Catherine Pierron Terence Charlston	by Malcolm Greenhalgh, London 1989, after examples by Carlo Grimaldi, Messina
<i>organ</i>	Catherine Pierron	four-stop chamber organ by Robin Jennings, Dorset 2005
		Keyboards supplied, tuned and maintained by Malcolm Greenhalgh Pitch: A = 440 Hz Temperament: Sixth comma mean tone

Monteverdi: Sweet Torment

Listen!

‘Questi vaghi concenti...’ – a dawn chorus is beginning – ‘these sweet harmonies which the birds sing...’

‘...l’aria e l’acqua e la terra è d’amor piena...’ – Spring’s warmth is returning – ‘...the air and water and earth overflow with love...’

‘Voglio, penso, ardo, piango...’ – a lovesick suitor is bewailing his fate under a starry night sky – ‘I watch, brood, burn, weep...’

‘Ohimè, dov’è il mio ben? dov’è il mio core?’ – a poet, far from home, is lamenting his lost love – ‘Alas, where is my beloved? Where is my heart?’

Listen!

‘The zephyr returns, and with sweet accents makes the air pleasing and melts the frozen waters,

and murmuring through the green branches makes the flowers of the meadow dance to its beautiful sound...

Only I, abandoned and alone in the wood, sing or lament, as my fortune decrees, of the love of two fair eyes, and of my torment.’

* * * * *

The gentle touch of a warm breeze, the trickle of a stream, the flight of a bird, the visceral pulse of a dance, the rush of blood to the cheek, the beating of a heart: all movement is feeling, and all feeling music. Emotion – its root the Latin *emovere*, to stir up – is a movement within the soul, a stirring of the feelings, an excitement of the passions. For Petrarch, the movements of the natural world are emotion made visible – a psychological landscape in which to place his anguished, heart-ravished lovers – and poetry is the subtlest counterpoint of emotional states. For Monteverdi, the essence of the madrigalist’s art is to produce this *mozione degli affetti* in the motions of his music, to chart the poetry’s

course with the utmost sensitivity. His *vaghi concenti* must move to the happy, innocent song of the birds, the burning pains of desire, the thrill of amorous contest, the joy of consummation, the agony of separation – to all the sweet torments of love. In the third instalment of their Monteverdi conspectus, I Fagiolini once again demonstrate the astonishing range of the secular art of Monteverdi, leading us from the works of his early Mantuan maturity to the baroque glories of his Venetian years, before returning us to the wellspring of the *seconda pratica* in *Ballo delle Ingrate* (1608).

If the journey of Monteverdi’s art can be viewed as a constant search for new, more vivid, more ‘realistic’ expression of the affections, this was in truth a search that had preoccupied composers throughout the entire preceding history of the madrigal. The madrigal genre has its origins in the resurgence of interest in the poetry of Petrarch at the turn of the sixteenth century. Inspired by the proselytising theories of Cardinal Pietro Bembo, a legion of Petrarchists sprang up, concerned with emulating the forms, expressive intensity and style of Petrarch’s poetry, and in particular attaining what Bembo discerned as the highest skill, the creation of *varietà*

through the alternation of *piacevolezza* (sweetness) and *gravità* (heaviness), using the sounds and rhythms of words. The early madrigalists, turning to the high-art style of Flemish polyphony, found in the resources of harmony, rhythm and contrapuntal texture the ideal means to render such expressive qualities in their settings of Petrarchistic poetry, and so launched a century of experiment and discovery.

This was no academic exercise, however: for not only were music and poetry capable of representing the passions, but they must also stir them in their listeners. Humanist rereadings of Aristotle and Cicero emphasised the ability of oratory to arouse emotions; Plato’s description of music’s similar powers initiated a direct attempt at musical ‘oratory’ that would bear fruit in the *stile recitativo* and the creation of opera. By the time of Monteverdi’s Fifth and Sixth books, the madrigal, emerging from a period of expressive stagnation and mannerism, had acquired a new energy through the refreshed desire to move its listeners all the more strongly. Contemporary critics of Monteverdi concentrated on his novel harmonic practices, yet the real key to the new style lay in the way the music moved. If the arousal of passions involved physical changes or movements

in the human body, as was believed, then the persuasive power of music lay in the harnessing of its own motion: harmonic, rhythmic and textural. Flemish imitative polyphony, the foundation of madrigal style, became but one rhetorical device among many: nothing was ruled out in pursuit of the greater affective impact.

As we listen to a collection such as this, what most impresses and delights us (as it surely would Cardinal Bembo) is the sheer *varietà* of Monteverdi's expressive art. The two Petrarch settings from Book Six, for example, though relatively old-fashioned in their use of unaccompanied five-voice texture, show the most refined ear for the fluid emotional tenor of their texts. **Ohimè il bel viso** begins with a stark declamatory antiphony between a single soprano and a trio of lower voices, precisely marking the rhetorical crescendo of the poetry; then, after moving through a smoother passage of lamenting suspensions as the poet contemplates his death, the music draws itself up into a mood of dignified grief to address his beloved. Bolder is **Zefiro torna, e 'l bel tempo rimena**: noticing the clear juxtapositions of mood in the famous Petrarch sonnet – a classic alternation of *piacevolezza* and *gravità* – Monteverdi devises

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his own 'sweet' and 'heavy' motions, the one a triple-time bucolic dance, the other a slow and wildly dissonant evocation of the 'fere aspre e selvagge'. The two works from Book Five make a pleasing parallel with these two Petrarch settings: **T'amo, mia vita!** also makes play of a quasi-dramatic alternation between solo soprano and lower voices, and **Questi vaghi concetti**, likewise, pits the carefree joy of the natural world against the complaints of the lovesick poet.

Yet these two pieces from Book Five also contain the seed from which wholly new ways of moving the affections will grow: the independent *basso continuo* line. This innovation – providing the harmonic ground to allow the upper voices freer expressive rein, and also creating the opportunity of using accompanying instruments, such as the violins in *Questi vaghi concetti* – is a primary stimulus in the development of Monteverdi's later music. From here on, the varieties of musical motion tend more and more towards two opposing poles: on the one hand, the dance, and on the other, the motion of human speech – *stile recitativo*. Already visible in the works from Book Five and Book Six are the clear musical distinctions between different moods or passions, distinctions which steadily become more pronounced through

Monteverdi's later works as they approach the baroque codifications of the Doctrine of the Affections. Where it is still visible, the Petrarchan balance of *piacevolezza* and *gravità* is now played out on a larger scale: in the delightful **Zefiro torna, e di soavi accenti** the dancing ground bass continues for fully three-quarters of the piece before an abrupt halt brings a change of mood. (Indeed, Rinuccini's sonnet, a parody of Petrarch's, neatly points up the difference, its asymmetrical emotional structure so much more extreme than Petrarch's classical octave-sestet construction.) **Ohimè, dov'è il mio ben?**, from Book Seven, also uses a repeating bass-line structure – this time the *romanesca* – to prolong the expression of the lament, each of its four parts using essentially the same bass line. Its poet, Bernardo Tasso, was a diplomat whose career took him away from his wife; he may well have written *Ohimè, dov'è il mio ben?* after her death, bitterly ruing that his pursuit of ambition should have led him never to see her again. **Si dolce è 'l tormento**, a simple strophic song, shows another side to Monteverdi's genius: a deceptively guileless melody concealing exquisite art.

In the Eighth Book, *Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi*, the process of distinguishing and

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separating each successive *affetto* reaches a climax: even the collection's title points to a drawing of distinctions, a nascent typology. Yet somehow Monteverdi makes this most unrealistic and artful of methods pulse with life. **Gira il nemico insidioso** is a witty (and highly sophisticated) romp through a parade of military effects; **Or che 'l ciel e la terra** is a complex, unequivocal masterpiece. Returning to Petrarch, Monteverdi creates a string of self-contained musical images: a hushed choral recitative, a series of impassioned cries, a warlike burst of *stile concitato* ('excited style') – and so on, the piece culminating in an astounding phrase which spreads out from a unison to a distance of three-and-a-half octaves, like a slow-motion scream. Even though *Or che 'l ciel* is embedded among Monteverdi's most expressively stylised works, there is yet nothing which rings truer to life in the whole of Monteverdi's oeuvre than this one phrase.

Ballo delle Ingrate, published in the Eighth Book but written some thirty years previously, brings us full circle back to the Mantuan years and the birth of opera. Dating from 1608 (the year after *Orfeo*), it was written, along with the opera *Arianna*, now lost, to celebrate the wedding of the heir to the ducal throne to Margherita of Savoy.

The rather pointed humour of Rinuccini's text – the *Ingrate* being the ungrateful women of Mantua who refuse the advances of their suitors – was set by Monteverdi in the new, realistic *stile recitativo*, with two aria sections, one for Venus ('Udite, donne, udite!') and one for Pluto ('Dal tenebroso orror'). In between are the dances of the 'ballet de cour alla francese' in which the characters of the ballet

would descend to the floor of the auditorium and dance among the noble guests. Like *Orfeo*, *Ballo delle Ingrate* breathes an air of triumphant discovery, of fresh powers, of new worlds of expression opening up for the composer – worlds whose exploration would be his unique and ever-fascinating achievement.

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Doug McKenzie

Robert Hollingworth accepting the Ensemble prize from the Royal Philharmonic Society for I Fagiolini, May 2006

Director's note

The last madrigal or motet of a publication was always the occasion to show off compositional tail-feathers and usually meant writing for a larger number of voices than in the rest of the book. Monteverdi resisted this temptation in his first four books of madrigals, instead writing pieces that were 'simply' extraordinary (such as the slow-motion *Rimanti in pace* at the end of the third and the chromatically desolate *Piagn'e sospira* in the fourth – to be found on our first two recordings in this series, CHAN 0730 and CHAN 0749). With Book Five, though, he succumbed to the temptation, not only including for the last madrigal, *Questi vaghi concetti*, a sweet sinfonia for five-part strings (the comparison with the instrumental writing in *Orfeo* from two years later is strong) but also writing for not five but nine voices. Tim Carter has argued that this could have been to use the full complement of the Mantuan *concerto's* male voices: he links this with the first performances two years later of *Orfeo* which is performable by exactly those forces (plus the star tenor Francesco Rasi). Whatever the truth of it, it is a happy co-incidence that the piece also requires all nine singers of I Fagiolini, though we can't match the Duke's three castrati.

Despite the tortured harmony towards the middle of *Questi vaghi concetti*, the emotion it sets is light-hearted: the torment is indeed sweet. Yet Monteverdi's next and final book of five-voice madrigals (the Sixth Book) had a very different feel; all the *a cappella* pieces therein have a powerfully lamenting nature, and they include two Petrarch settings that seem to date from 1607, just two years after the Fifth Book, and the same year as *Orfeo*. Despite his huge popularity in the first forty years of the Italian madrigal (c. 1525 – 65), by the late sixteenth century Petrarch had gone out of vogue so it is fascinating to see Monteverdi and his great contemporaries Marenzio (who notably and rarely set Dante too) and De Wert also turning to the dark side of Petrarch's self-absorbed poetry right at the end of their madrigal composing lives – to say nothing of Monteverdi's colouristic and baroque tone poem *Or che 'l ciel e la terra* from thirty years later.

As usual, before recording the disc I had a clear idea of the order the pieces would have on it. Afterwards, a different and unusually chronological pattern emerged, based initially on the transition from light to dark, and closing with the more baroque works from the 'Madrigals of War and Love'. The exception is the two-voice setting of Rinuccini's poem

Zefiro torna, an *hommage* to the famous Petrarch original which Monteverdi also set (for five voices). We think this is the first time that both settings have been brought together on disc.

These two works have wildly dissonant endings, which in the duet is brought out more or less, depending on your realisation of the accompanying harmony. What accompanying players (harpsichord, theorbo, harp) work from in the music of the early seventeenth century is a simple melodic bass line, which they then 'realise' with chords to make complete harmony. Unlike composers of a later generation, Monteverdi leaves almost no figures to imply what these chords should be. For many years, fashion has been to play the chord implied by the written notes of the singers, but looking at the harmonic processes of Monteverdi's five-voice madrigals (in which a complete harmony is provided by the voices), one sees that the process is rather that of a simple chordal harmony in the lower parts against which the more dissonant top voices sway and swoon, creating passing dissonance (there is a great similarity to Purcell here).

If one plays safe, automatically incorporating the notes of the vocal line into the accompaniment, such dissonance disappears (imagine a woman in a flowery dress standing in front of those flowers); play

bold and almost ignore the vocal line ('let the chord howl', as Emmanuelle Haïm puts it) and you have wonderful moments such as at 'piango' (weep) in the two-voice *Zefiro torna* (4'45" or 5'18"), and in *Ohimè, dov'è il mio ben?* (1'37"–2'17"). This latter work is four variations on a flexible ground bass (the same basic device as the prologue to *Orfeo*). Realising the same harmony for each of the strophes (and not 'giving way' to the vocal line) brings out some wonderful word-colouring on provocative phrases such as 'dar mi fera cagion di tante doglie' ([give] me cruel cause for so much pain) which was surely Monteverdi's whole point (the vocal writing, different in each variation, producing different dissonances against the unvaried instrumental realisation of the bass line). Incidentally, the two-voice *Zefiro* is usually sung as if Monteverdi meant G major but forgot to notate it. This unlikely but almost universal reading obliterates delicious moments of quite deliberate sweet dissonance to enhance words such as 'soavi' (gentle) at 1'25".

Monteverdi's *Ballo delle Ingrate*, originally written in 1608 for the wedding of Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua to Margherita of Savoy, only survives in the version published in the *Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi* in 1638. A number of textual changes were clearly

made to shift the focus from the Mantuan-specific setting of the 1608 composition to Vienna, the home town of the published volume's dedicatee, Emperor Ferdinand III. The question whether any of the music was also changed has no answer, though Tim Carter feels that the virtuosic writing for bass more likely belongs to the 1620s and Venice. The original text was published not only by the librettist, Rinuccini, in 1608, but also by the Mantuan court official Federico Follino, who included detailed descriptions of the performance as well as of all the other wedding festivities; the work was originally known as the *Mascherata delle Ingrate*. While we necessarily perform the only extant version of the music, from 1638, we have chosen to sing the 1608 libretto as published by Follino, with its more Mantuan references suitable to the marriage in question. We have also published his complete description of that 1608 performance in Mantua. Brackets are used to mark the few extra lines of Rinuccini's text that Monteverdi either never set or omitted from the 1638 version.

Lastly, although we know little of his sense of humour, Monteverdi must surely have enjoyed writing the melodramatic romp *Gira il nemico insidioso*, and smiled at his little joke in the five-voice *Zefiro torna* where, to paint

the return of the spring 'weather', he writes a particularly tricky time change ('tempo' means 'time' as well as 'weather'). A small thing but his own.

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Under the artistic directorship of Bjarte Eike, Norway's leading baroque violinist, **Barokksolistene** are an early music ensemble of flexible format, established in 2005, which serves as a vehicle for instrumentalists of soloistic standard – all of them among the foremost performers on their instrument in Europe – to develop as artists and chamber musicians; they are able to perform in formations such as chamber orchestra, pub band, freely improvising group, cross-over ensemble, or quite small and intimate chamber groups. By means of Eike's dedicated, deliberately personal and innovative programming and the musicians' infectious and virtuosic playing, the ensemble communicates baroque music with perfect naturalness to a wide audience, its concerts frequently being described as playful and path-breaking. During the period 2006 – 08 Barokksolistene served as resident ensemble at Larvik Barokk, a division of the Vestfold Festival in Norway, and in 2008 performed at the Bergen International Festival,

Rikskonsertene, Maijazz in Stavanger and the BBC Proms, among others. The ensemble tours internationally and recently, with the mezzo-soprano Tuva Semmingsen, recorded the soundtrack for Lars von Trier's film *Antichrist*, premiered at Cannes in 2009.

Having studied violin at the Grieg Academy in Bergen and baroque violin with Richard Gwilt in London, Bjarte Eike appears regularly as a soloist and leader with ensembles such as Concerto Copenhagen, Concerto Palatino, Dunedin Consort, Caecilia-Concert, Arte dei Suonatori, Alta Punta and Bergen Barokk. As artist in residence at the Bergen International Festival in 2008 he gave ten concerts, including one with I Fagiolini. He teaches baroque violin at the Grieg Academy and is a visiting professor at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen. www.barokksolistene.no

I Fagiolini gave its first concert in 1986 while its members were students at Oxford University. It has earned a reputation as one of Europe's most inventive vocal ensembles and in 2006 was awarded the Ensemble prize by the Royal Philharmonic Society, the first time the prize has been given to any early music group.

I Fagiolini is grounded in the classics of Renaissance and twentieth-century vocal

repertoire. In recent years its name has become synonymous with innovative staged productions of Renaissance music-theatre works. *L'Amfiparnaso* by Orazio Vecchi, issued on DVD by Chaconne in 2004, was the group's first permanent record of such a production. In the same year, it began *The Full Monteverdi*, a dramatised account by John La Bouchardière of the composer's Fourth Book of Madrigals (1603), which caused a sensation wherever it went. It has since been turned into a film now available on DVD. Other productions include masked performances of Handel, semi-opera by Purcell with puppets, *The Birds*, a new opera for vocal ensemble by Ed Hughes, with The Opera Group, and in 2009 'Tallis in Wonderland', an aural fantasy with six live singers and 100 speakers.

I Fagiolini also gives regular recitals and has recorded nine other CDs for Chandos, focussing on neglected English and north Italian Renaissance repertoire. Its busy diary of live performances has taken it to the BBC Proms and prestigious festivals across western Europe, to Lincoln Center, New York, the Far East and both ends of Africa.

Collaborations with other musicians have included works by Byrd and Gibbons

with Concordia and Fretwork, solo-voice performances of Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers with The English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble, and, most unusually, *Simunye*, part-improvised repertoire with the SDASA Chorale of Soweto. In 2008, with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the group performed and filmed Berio's Sinfonia for the first time. www.ifagiolini.com

Robert Hollingworth founded I Fagiolini in 1986. Directing this group has taken up most of his time since but he has conducted other ensembles, most recently the Academy of Ancient Music, BBC Singers, Norddeutscher Rundfunk Chor, Nederlands Kamerkoor and National Chamber Choir of Ireland. In 2004 he co-created *Faust*, a groundbreaking new music-theatre project

with Henk Schut, acclaimed by the Dutch press and set in startling venues such as a vast ship-building yard in Amsterdam, a disused railway station and Bremen Cathedral. He directed Opera Zuid's underground production of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* with Rufus Müller in the title role, and conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra in a project with Anne Dudley, the Academy-Award-winning composer behind *The Full Monty* (no relation). He founded the spectacular Islington Winter Music Festival, writes and presents programmes for BBC Radio, and has worked on a number of films, including *Quills*. Robert Hollingworth is an Artistic Advisor to the York Early Music Festival and the Trigonale Festival in Austria, and claims Monteverdi and Monty Python as equal influences.

1 **Questi vaghi concenti**

Questi vaghi concenti
che gli augelletti intorno
vanno temprando a l'apparir del giorno,
sono, cred'io, d'amor desiri ardenti.
Sono pene e tormenti,
e pur fanno le selve e 'l ciel gioire
al lor dolce languire.
Deh, se potessi anch'io
così dolce dolermi
per questi poggi solitari ed ermi,
che quella a cui piacer sola desio
gradisse il pianger mio!
Io bramerei, sol per piacer a lei,
eterni i pianti miei.

testo di anonimo

2 **T'amo, mia vita!**

"T'amo, mia vita!" la mia cara vita
dolcemente mi dice, e in questa sola
sì soave parola
par che trasformi lietamente il core,
per farmene signore.
Oh, voce di dolcezza e di diletto!
Prendila tosto, Amore;
stampala nel mio petto.
Spiri solo per lei l'anima mia;
"T'amo, mia vita!" la mia vita sia.

Giovanni Battista Guarini (1538 – 1612),
Rime, madrigale 70

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These lovely songs

These lovely songs,
that the birds all around
tune at the break of the day,
methinks are burning desires of love.
They are sorrows and torments,
though they make the woods and heaven rejoice
at their languishing sweetness.
Oh, that I was made able
to lament so sweetly
in these lonely and deserted hills,
so that she, the only one I wish would love me,
accepted my weeping!
I'd be willing, just to have her love me,
to weep for ever.

text author unknown

I love you, my life

'I love you, my life', my dear life
sweetly says to me, and in this single
so sweet a word
seems to transform the heart with joy
to make me its lord.
Ah, voice of sweetness and pleasure!
Take it quickly, O Love,
imprint it in my breast.
May my soul breathe only for her.
'I love you, my life', may this be my life!

3 **Ohimè il bel viso**

Ohimè il bel viso, ohimè il soave sguardo,
ohimè il leggiadro portamento altero;
ohimè il parlar ch'ogni aspro ingegno e fero
facevi humile, ed ogni huom vil gagliardo.

E ohimè il dolce riso, onde uscìo 'l dardo
di che morte, altro bene già mai non spero:
alma real, dignissima d'impero,
se non fossi fra noi scesa sì tardo.

Per voi convien ch'io arda e 'n voi respire,
ch'io pur fui vostro; e se di voi son privo,
via men d'ogni sventura altra mi duole.

Di speranza m'empieste e di desire,
quand'io parti dal sommo piacer vivo;
ma 'l vento ne portava le parole.

Francesco Petrarca (1304 – 1374),
Canzoniere, 267

4 **Zefiro torna, e 'l bel tempo rimena**

Zefiro¹ torna, e 'l bel tempo rimena,
e i fiori e l'erbe, sua dolce famiglia,
e garrir Progne e pianger Philomena,²
e primavera candida e vermiglia.

¹ vento primaverile proveniente da ovest.

² due sorelle che secondo la mitologia furono trasformate dagli dei in uccelli: rondine ed usignolo.

21

Alas the lovely face

Alas the lovely face, oh the tender glance,
oh the graceful and proud stance,
oh the speech which made humble
every coarse and savage mind, and every base
man valiant.

And oh the sweet laughter, whence came the dart
from which I no longer await any good but death:
regal spirit, worthy of an empire,
if only you had not come to us so late.

For you must I consume myself; in you must I breathe,
for I was yours; and if I am deprived of you
no other disgrace hurts me more.

You had filled me with hope, and with desire,
when I flew from the greatest living pleasure;
but the wind carried off the words.

Zephyrus returns and brings back the fine weather

Zephyrus¹ returns and brings back the fine
weather,
and the flowers and the grass, his sweet family,
and chattering Progne and lamenting Philomena²
and spring, white and vermilion.

¹ west wind

² two mythological characters who were transformed into birds by the gods: swallow and nightingale

Ridono i prati, e 'l ciel si rasserenà;
Giove s'allegra di mirar sua figlia;
l'aria e l'acqua e la terra è d'amor piena;
ogni animal d'amar si riconsiglia.

Ma per me, lasso, tornano i più gravi
sospiri, che del cor profondo tragge
quella ch'al ciel se ne portò le chiavi;

e cantar augelletti, e fiorir piagge,
e 'n belle donne honeste atti soavi
sono un deserto, e fere aspre e selvagge.

Francesco Petrarca,
Canzoniere, 310

5 Zefiro torna, e di soavi accenti

Zefiro torna, e di soavi accenti
l'aer fa grato e 'l piè discioglie a l'onde
e mormorando tra le verdi fronde
fa danzar al bel suon su 'l prato i fiori.

Inghirlandato il crin Fillide e Clori
note temprando amor care e gioconde
e da monti e da valli ime e profonde
raddoppian l'armonia gli antri canori.

The meadows laugh and the sky becomes clear.
Jove rejoices to gaze on his daughter.
Air, water and earth are full of love
and every creature resolves again to love.

But for me, alas, heavier sighs return,
which she draws from deep within my heart –
she who carried its keys to heaven with her.

And the little birds' song and the flowering of
the fields
and the virtuous and sweet gestures of the
beautiful ladies
are a desert and like cruel, wild beasts.

Zephyrus returns and with gentle sounds

Zephyrus returns and with gentle sounds
sweetens the air and makes the frozen waters
melt and dance
and, murmuring through the green branches,
makes the flowers dance in the meadow to its
beautiful sound.

Phyllis and Cloris dance, their hair garlanded,
their notes dear and joyful tuned by love,
and from mountains and deepest valleys
the resounding caves redouble the harmony.

Sorge più vaga in ciel l'aurora, e 'l sole
sparge più luci d'or; più puro argento
fregia di Teti³ il bel ceruleo manto.

Sol io, per selve abbandonate e sole,
l'ardor di due begli occhi e 'l mio tormento
come vuol mia ventura or piango, or canto.

Ottavio Rinuccini (1562 – 1621)

6 Ohimè, dov'è il mio ben?

Ohimè, dov'è il mio ben? dov'è il mio core?
Chi m'asconde il mio ben, e chi me 'l toglie?

Dunque, ha potuto sol desio d'onore
darmi fera cagion di tante doglie?

Dunque, han potuto in me più che 'l mio amore
ambiziose e troppo lievi voglie?

Ahi, sciocco mondo, e cieco! Ahi, cruda sorte,
che ministro mi fai della mia morte!

Bernardo Tasso (1493 – 1569),
Rime, Libro IV, 15, vv. 33 – 40

Dawn breaks more beautiful in the sky, and the sun
scatters more golden light; purer silver
braids Thetys's³ deep blue mantle.

Only I, in lonely and forlorn woods,
now weep and now sing of the flame of two fair
eyes
and of my torment, as my fate decrees.

Alas, where is my love?

Alas, where is my love? – where is my heart?
Who hides my love, who takes it away from me?

So, has my desire for honour only
given me cruel cause for so much pain?

So, have ambitious and too whimsical wishes
been more powerful in me than my love?

Oh silly world and blind! Oh cruel fate
that makes me minister of my death!

³ Teti – dea del mare.

³ Thetys – sea goddess

7 Si dolce è 'l tormento

Si dolce è 'l tormento
che in seno mi sta
ch'io vivo contento
per cruda beltà.
Nel ciel di bellezza
s'accreschi fierezza
e manchi pietà:
che sempre qual scoglio
all'onda d'orgoglio
mia fede sarà.

La speme fallace
rivolgam' il piè,
diletto nè pace
non scendano a me.
E l'empia ch'adoro
mi nieghi ristoro
di buona mercè:
tra doglia infinita,
tra speme tradita
vivrà la mia fè.

Per foco e per gelo
riposo non ho;
nel porto del Cielo
riposo averò.
Se colpo mortale
con rigido strale
il cor m'impiegò,
cangiando mia sorte
col dardo di morte
il cor sanerò.

So sweet is the torment

So sweet is the torment
which I feel in my breast
that I live happy
for her cruel beauty.
In beauty's heaven,
let haughtiness increase,
let pity be absent;
for my steadfastness shall be
always like a rock
against the wave of pride.

Let deceitful hope
walk towards me;
let neither pleasure nor peace
come to me.
And let the faithless woman I adore
deny me the pleasure
of fair reward;
my faith shall live
in infinite grief,
in betrayed hope.

Through fire and ice
have I no rest;
only in heaven's harbour
I shall have rest.
If a deadly strike
by an unbending arrow
has pierced my heart,
then altering my fate
I shall heal my heart
with the dart of death.

Se fiamma d'amore
già mai non senti
quel rigido core
ch'il cor mi rapì;
se nega pietate
la cruda beltate
che l'alma invaghì:
ben fia che dolente
pentita e languente
sospirimi un dì.

testo di anonimo

8 Or che 'l ciel e la terra

Or che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace
E le fere e gli augelli il sonno affrena,
Notte il carro stellato in giro mena
E nel suo letto il mar senz'onda giace,

Voglio, penso, ardo, piango; e chi mi sface
Sempre m'è inanzi per mia dolce pena;
Guerra è 'l mio stato, d'ira e di duol piena,
E sol di lei pensando ho qualche pace.

Così sol d'una chiara fonte viva,
Move 'l dolce e l'amaro ond'io mi pasco;
Una man sola mi risana e punge;

If the flame of love
was never felt
by that unbending heart
that stole my heart;
if pity was denied me
by that cruel beauty
who charmed my soul;
yet some day, grieving,
repentant, and languishing,
may she sigh for me.

text author unknown

Now that the sky and the earth

Now that the sky and the earth and the wind
are silent
and sleep holds the beasts and the birds,
night drives its starry chariot around
and in its bed the sea lies without a wave;

I am awake, I think, I burn, I weep: and she who
destroys me
is always in my mind, to my sweet pain:
warlike is my state, full of anger and sorrow,
and only by thinking of her do I get any peace.

Thus from only one, clear, living fountain
come the sweet and the bitter on which I feed:
one sole hand heals me and pierces me;

E perché 'l mio martir non giunga a riva,
Mille volte il dì moro e mille nasco,
Tanto da la salute⁴ mia son lunge.

Francesco Petrarca,
Canzoniere, 164

9 Gira il nemico insidioso

Gira il nemico insidioso, Amore,
La rocca del mio core:
Sù presto, ch'egli è qui poco lontano,
Armi alla mano!

Nol lasciamo accostar, ch'egli non saglia
Sulla fiacca muraglia;
Ma facciam fuor una sortita bella:
Butta la sella!

Armi false non son, ch'ei s'avvicina
Col grosso alla cortina:
Sù presto, ch'egli è qui poco discosto:
Tutti al suo posto!

Vuol degli occhi attaccar il baluardo
Con impeto gagliardo;
Sù presto, ch'egli è qui senz'alcun fallo:
Tutti a cavallo!

⁴ "Salute" implica anche il significato di salvezza.

and so that my suffering may not reach an end,
a thousand times a day I die and a thousand am
born,
so far am I from my sanity.⁴

The insidious enemy, Love, circles

The insidious enemy, Love, circles
the fortress of my heart.
Hurry, for he is not far away!
Arm yourselves!

We must not let him approach, he must not scale
our feeble defences.
Let us make a brave sortie:
saddle the horses!

Those are not fake weapons; he is approaching
our defences with his forces.
Hurry for he is close:
every man to his post!

He wants to attack the stronghold of my eyes
with a daring assault.
Hurry, for he is here without doubt:
everyone to his horse!

⁴ Salvation is also implied here.

Non è più tempo, ohimè! – ch'egli ad un tratto
Del cor padron s'è fatto:
A gambe, a salvo chi si può salvare:
All'andare!

Cor mio, non val fuggir, sei morto;
E servo d'un tiranno protervo
Che 'l vincitor, ch'è già dentro alla piazza,
Grida foco, ammazza.

Giulio Strozzi (1583 – 1652)

10 Ballo delle Ingrate

Text and descriptions reproduced from Follino's
version published in 1608 (see Director's note)

*Prima rappresentazione alle nozze di Francesco
Gonzaga, erede del trono ducale di Mantova con
Margherita, infante di Savoia, 1608, a Mantova
Aveva il Duca stabilito di rappresentar quella
sera del mercoledì [4 giugno 1608] nel Teatro della
Comedia, un balletto di molto bella invenzione,
opera del Signor Ottavio Rinuccini, nel quale
interveniva il Duca e il Principe sposo con sei altri
cavalieri e con otto dame delle principali della città
così in nobiltà come in bellezza ed in leggiadria di
ballare, talché in tutto adempivano il numero di
sedici. Perloché ragunatisi colà dentro i principi,
le principesse, gli ambasciatori e le dame, e quella
nobiltà che poté capire il luogo, si collocarono ne'
gradi che, formando un mezzo cerchio dalla parte
del teatro opposta al fianco, s'ergevano dal basso*

There is no more time, alas; for in an instant
he has become the master of my heart.
Run away, every man for himself:
flee!

My heart, in vain you flee, you are dead
and a slave of the cruel tyrant,
because the victor, already in the main square,
is crying, 'fire, slaughter!'

Dance of the Ingrates

*First performed at the wedding of Francesco
Gonzaga, heir to the duchy of Mantua, with
Margherita, infanta of Savoy, in 1608 at Mantua
The Duke had decided, that evening,
Wednesday [4 June 1608], in the theatre, a ballet
would be performed, ingeniously written by Signor
Ottavio Rinuccini, in which the Duke and the
princely bridegroom with six knights and eight
ladies, among the most renowned in the town for
nobility and beauty, and grace in dancing, took
part, so that in total they were sixteen. So, when the
princes, the princesses, the ambassadors, the ladies
and all the nobles which could be accommodated,
were assembled in place, they sat in the steps that,
forming a half circle from the part of the theatre
opposite to the side, went from the bottom to the*

fino alla sommità di esso, lasciando vuoto quel piano di mezzo, ch'è tra la scena e detti gradi, per il facimento del balletto.

In quella parte di muro, che dalla destra parte del teatro è fra il confin de' gradi e la scena, era un gran palco dove furono collocati i gentiluomini degli ambasciatori, e dirimpetto a quello se ne vedeva un altro di forma eguale, in cui stava un gran numero di musici con istromenti diversi da corda e da fiato.

Or poiché furono colà dentro tutti agiatamente accomodati, dato il segno con uno strepito spaventoso sotto il palco di tamburi discordati, s'alzò la tela con quella velocità mirabile con cui alzossi nella Comedia, e nel mezzo del palco si vide una gran bocca di un'ampia e profondissima caverna, la quale, stendendosi oltre i confini della prospettiva, pareva che andasse tanto in là che non potesse giunger umana vista per iscoprirne il fine.

Era quella caverna circondata dentro e d'intorno d'ardente fuoco, e nel più cupo di essa, in parte assai profonda e lontana dalla sua bocca, si vedeva una gran voragine, dentro alla quale ruotavano globi d'ardentissime fiamme, e per entro ad essa innumerabil mostri d'Inferno, tanto orribili e spaventosi, che molti non ardirono di fissar colà dentro il guardo. Parve cosa orrenda e mostruosa il veder quella infernal voragine piena di tanto fuoco e d'immagini così mostruose; ma ben fece maravigliar più le genti il veder dinanzi a quella infocata bocca dalla parte di fuori, dove risplendeva una certa poca luce caliginosa e mesta, la bella Venere, ch'aveva per mano il suo bel figlio

top; leaving the area in the middle from the stage to the steps as an empty space to perform the ballet.

In that part of the wall, that on the right of the theatre is between the steps and the stage, there was a big platform where the gentlemen of the embassies were; and opposite there was another of the same shape, where a great number of musicians with several string and wind instruments were.

When all were suitably in place, at the given sign, with a horrible noise of untuned drums under the platform, the curtain was raised with amazing speed as it is in the play, and in the middle of the stage the huge mouth of a wide and deep cave, extending beyond the borders of the perspective, appeared to be so far away that human sight could not see its end.

The cave was surrounded inside and out by a burning fire, and in its darkest, deepest and remotest place (farthest from the cave's mouth), one could see a huge abyss, and in it rolling spheres of burning flames and many bellish monsters so horrible and dreadful that many in the audience did not dare to look in that direction. It seemed a horrid and monstrous thing to see such a bellish pit so full of fire and monstrous images; but even more wondrous for the audience was to see beautiful Venus in front of that flaming mouth just in front, where shone a certain little light, misty and sad. Venus held the hand of her fair son Cupid and sang with a very sweet voice the following verses in a dialogue with Cupid, at the sound of sweetest instruments, which were placed behind the stage.

Amore, la quale al suono di dolcissimi stromenti ch'erano dietro alla scena, cantò con voce molto soave gl'infrascritti versi in dialogo con Amore.

Amore

De l'implacabil dio
Eccone giunt' al regno:
Seconda, o bella madre, il pregar mio.

Venere

Non tacerà mia voce
Dolci lusinghe e prieghi,
Finché l'alma feroce
Del re severo al tuo voler non pieghi.

Amore

Ferma, Madre, il bel piè; non por le piante
Nel tenebroso impero,
Ché l'aer grave e nero
Non macchiass' il candor del bel sembiante:
Io sol n'andrò per la magione oscura,
E pregand' il gran re trarrotti avanti.

Venere

Va' pur come t'aggrada. Io qui t'aspetto,
Discreto pargoletto.
Finite ch'ebbe Venere queste ultime parole, Amore se n'entrò tutto ardito entro quella profonda voragine, passando tra fuochi e fiamme senza patir alcuna offesa; e intanto Venere, volgendosi agli spettatori e riguardando le dame che gli erano a fronte, cantò di questa maniera:

Love (Cupid)

Here we have reached the dark kingdom
of the implacable God.
Support, oh fair Mother, my plea.

Venus

My voice will not abstain
from either sweet praises or prayers,
until the ferocious soul
of the severe king succumbs to your desire.

Cupid

Stay your beautiful foot, Mother: do not trespass
into the dark empire,
do not let the pitch black air
stain the candour of your fair face;
I alone will enter the gloomy mansion,
And will beg the great King to come to you.

Venus

Go then as you please. I will wait here,
discrete boy.
When Venus finished her words, Cupid boldly
entered that deep pit, passing undamaged through
fires and flames; while Venus, turning to the
audience and looking at the ladies in front of her,
sang in this way:

Udite, donne, udite! I saggi detti
Di celeste parlar nel cor serbate:
Chi, nemica d' Amor, nei crudi affetti
Armerà il cor nella fiorita etate,

Sentirà come poscia arda e saetti
Quando più non avrà grazia e beltate,
E in vano ricorrerà, tardi pentita,
Di lisci e d'acque alla fallace aita.

*Sul fine del suo bel canto, si vide uscir dalla parte
destra di quella orribile caverna Plutone, in vista
formidabile e tremenda, con abiti quali gli sono
attribuiti da' poeti, ma però carichi d'oro e di gioie;
il quale, venendone con Amore dinanzi a Venere,
parlò cantando in questa guisa, rispondendosi e
replicandosi l'un l'altro come segue:*

Plutone

Bella madre d' Amor, che col bel ciglio
Splender l'inferno fai sereno e puro,
Qual destin, qual consiglio
Dal ciel t'ha scorto in quest'abisso oscuro?

Venere

O della morte innumerabil gente
Tremendo re, dal luminoso cielo
Traggemi a quest'orror materno zelo:
Sappi che a mano a mano
L'unico figlio mio di strali e d'arco
Arma, sprezzato arcier, gli omer' invano.

Listen, ladies, listen, and keep the wise words
of this divine speech in your hearts:
she, enemy of Love, who with cruel feelings
arms her heart in an age of flourishing youth,

will feel the heat of his arrows
when she no longer has her grace and beauty
and in vain she will resort, repentant too late,
to the false aid of ointments and beauty waters.

*At the end of her beautiful singing, Pluto was seen
coming out at the right side of that horrible cave,
a portentous and horrific sight, wearing clothes as
described by the poets, but full of gold and jewels;
he, arriving with Cupid in front of Venus, spoke
in song as follows, they answering and replying to
each other thus:*

Pluto

Beautiful Mother of Love, who with your fair brow
make Hell shine serene and pure,
what destiny, what will
took you from heaven into this dark abyss?

Venus

Oh great King of the innumerable crowd
of the dead, maternal love brought me
from the luminous sky to this horrible place:
Know that little by little
my only son, despised archer, in vain
arms his shoulders with arrows and bow.

Plutone

Chi spogliò di valore l'auree saette
Che tante volte e tante
Giunsero al cor de l'immortal Tonante?

Venere

Donne, che di beltate e di valore
Tolgono a l'Alba in ciel la gloria e'l vanto,
Là, ne la nobil Mantua
Di cotanto rigor se'n vann' armate,
Che di quadrell'aurate
E di sua face il foco
Recansi a scherzo e gioco.

Plutone

Mal si sprezza d' Amor la face e'l telo.
Sallo la terra e'l mar, l'inferno e'l cielo.

Venere

Non de' più fidi amanti
Odon le voci e i pianti.
Amor, Costanza, e Fede
Non pur ombra trovar può di mercede.
Questa gli altrui martiri
Narra ridendo. E quella
Sol gode d'esser bella
Quando tragge d'un cor pianti e sospiri.
Invan gentil guerriero
[Di piume adorno e d'armi]
Move in campo d'onor, leggiadro e fiero.

Pluto

Who would take away the power of the golden
arrows
that so many times
reached the heart of the immortal Jove?

Venus

Certain ladies, who steal the pride and
reputation of beauty and courage
from the Dawn in the sky,
there, in noble Mantua,
are so armed with such great harshness
that at his golden darts
and at the fire of his torch
they laugh and joke.

Pluto

You cannot despise the torch and dart of Love.
Earth and sea, hell and heaven know this well.

Venus

They do not hear the voices and complaints
of the most faithful lovers.
Love, Constancy, Faithfulness
cannot find any sign of mercy.
This one laughingly
describes the torments of others. That one
only delights in her beauty
when she wrests tears and sighs from a heart.
In vain the noble warrior
[attired in feathery helm and armour]
moves in the field of honour, handsome and
proud.

Indarno ingegno altero
Fregia d'eterni carmi
Beltà che non l'ascolta e non l'apprezza.
Oh barbara fierezza!
[Una io ne vidi, e potrei dirne il nome,
Per non far lieto altrui di sua bellezza
Tutto il volto velar, non pur le chiome.
Senti, senti' l'rigore,]
Oh cor di tigre e d'angue!
Mirar senza dolore
Fido amante versar lagrime e sangue!
E per sua gloria, e per altrui vendetta
Ritrova in sua faretra Amor saetta!

Plutone
S'invan su l'arco tendi
I poderosi strali,
Amor, che spera, e che soccorso attendi?

Amore
Fuor de l'atra caverna
Ove piangono invan, di speme ignude,
Scorgi, Signor, quell'empie e crude!
Vegga su'l Mincio ogni anima superba
A qual martir cruda beltà si serba!

Plutone
Deh! Che ricerchi, Amore?
Amor, non sai che dal carcer profondo
Calle non è che ne rimeni al mondo?

In vain the ingenious mind
adorns with eternal songs
a beauty who does not listen to or appreciate him.
Oh barbarous pride!
[I even saw one of them – I might say her name –
to cover with a veil all her face, not only her hair,
to refuse others the joy of seeing her beauty.
Consider her cruelty!]
Oh, heart of a tiger and a serpent!
To see without pain
that a faithful lover sheds tears and blood!
So, to his glory and to the revenge of others
may Love again find arrows in his quiver!

Pluto
If in vain you draw on your bow
your powerful darts,
Cupid, what is your hope, what help do you seek?

Cupid
Out of the dark cavern
where they cry in vain, deprived of all hope,
see, Lord, those pitiless and cruel ladies!
Let every proud soul on the Mincio see
what punishment awaits such cruel beauty!

Pluto
Ah! Cupid, what do you seek?
Cupid, do you not know that from this deep prison
there is no path that leads back to the world?

Amore
So che da'l regno Inferno
Per far ritorno al ciel serrato è il varco.
Ma chi contrast'a'l tuo poter eterno?

Plutone
Saggio signor se di sua possa è parco.

Venere
Dunque non ti rammenti
Che Proserpina bella a coglier fiori
Guidai sul monte degli eterni ardori?
Deh! Per quegli almi contenti,
Deh! Per quei dolci amori,
Fa' nel mondo veder l'ombre dolenti!

Plutone
Troppo, troppo possenti
Bella madre d' Amore,
Giungon del tuo pregar gli strali al core!
Udite, udite, o dell'infernal corte
Fere ministre, udite!

Al chiamar di Plutone, uscirono di quella caverna molte Ombre orribili e mostruose, che versavano fiamme da varie parti con molto terrore altrui; e presentateglisi avanti con voce orrenda, ma però armoniosa, dissero:

Ombre d'Inferno
Che vuoi? Ch'imperi?

E Plutone soggiunse:

Cupid
I know that from deep Hell
the path back to heaven is closed.
But who could defy your eternal power?

Pluto
Wise is the monarch who is sparing with his power.

Venus
So do you not recall
that I guided the beautiful Proserpine to gather
flowers
on the mountain of eternal desires?
Oh, for the sake of those happy joys,
oh, for those sweet loves,
let the world see those sorrowful shadows.

Pluto
Far too powerfully,
fair Mother of Love,
do the darts of your pleas reach my heart!
Listen, listen, you harsh ministers
of the infernal court, listen!

At Pluto's call, many and horrible and monstrous shades exited the cave, spreading flames from several places, causing great terror; and once arrived in front of him, they said with horrendous but harmonious voice:

Shadows of Hell
What's thy will? What is your command?

And Pluto continued:

Plutone

Aprite
Le tenebrose porte
Della prigion caliginosa e nera!
E de l'anime ingrater
Traete qui la condannata schiera!

Mentre quell'Ombre crudeli andarono ad eseguir la mente di Plutone ed a condur fuori la condannata schiera delle Donne Ingrate che doveva fare il balletto, Venere, rivolta inverso Plutone, cantò i seguenti versi:

Venere

Non senz'altro diletto
Di magnanimi regi
Il piè porrai ne l'ammirabil tetto!
Ivi, di fabbri egregi
Incredibil lavoro,
O quanto ammirerai marmorei fregi!
D'ostro lucent' e d'oro
Splendon pompose le superbe mura!
E per dedalea⁵ cura,
Scorger potrai tra l'indorate travi,
Palme e trionfi d'innumerabil avi.
Né minor meraviglia
Ti graverà le ciglia,
Folti teatri rimirando e scene,
Scorno del Tebro e de la dotta Atene!

⁵ nella mitologia greca, l'artista ed inventore che ideò il labirinto a Creta e preparò ali per sé ed il figlio Icaro.

Pluto

Open
the dark gates
of the black and gloomy prison!
And bring forth the condemned throng
of the Ingrate souls!

While those cruel shades went to fulfil the wish of Pluto and drive outside the damned throng of the Ingrate Women, who were going to perform the dance, Venus turned to Pluto and sang the following lines:

Venus

You will not set foot in this admirable dwelling
of magnanimous princes
without many delights.
How you will admire the marble friezes there,
the incredible work
of distinguished craftsmen!
In bright purple and gold
the superb walls shine gloriously.
And thanks to care worthy of a Daedalus,⁵
you will see between the golden ceiling beams
the palms and triumphs of innumerable ancestors.
And no smaller amazement
will overload your eyes
when you see, on contemplation, those scenes
and that crowded Theatre,
envy of the Tiber (Rome) and illustrious Athens.

⁵ in Greek mythology, the skilled craftsman who made the labyrinth on Crete and wings for himself and his son, Icarus

Appena ebbe Venere fornite queste parole, ch' Amore scorse per entro quella caverna comparir quelle infelici, onde rivolgendosi alla madre, quasi che si turbasse di quella miserabile vista, gliele additò, affrettandola alla partita col canto delle seguenti parole:

Amore e Venere

Ecco ver' noi l'addolorate squadre
Di quell' alme infelici; [non ritardar
Pluton, vezzosa madre.]

Alle parole dell' Amore, Venere si rivolse inverso l'ardente caverna, e vedute quelle meschine in atto così miserabile, con pietosa voce riprese il canto:

Oh miserelle!
Ahi vista troppo oscura!
Felici voi, se vi vedeva il mondo
Men fere e crude, o men leggiadre e belle!

Onde Plutone, veduti Venere e Cupido così turbati, esortò loro a partirsi di là, affrettando di poi i passi di quelle misere con voce sonora e minacciosa:

Plutone

Tornate al bel seren, celesti numi!
Movete meco, voi d' Amor ribelle!

Mentre Plutone così disse, Venere, preso per la mano Amore, partì da quelle lagrimose piagge. E la condannata schiera, camminando per quella voragine tra le fiamme e il fuoco, uscì dalla

As soon as Venus spoke thus, Cupid saw those unhappy souls appear inside that cave; and so, turning to his mother, as if perturbed by that miserable sight, pointed them out to her, singing these words to encourage her to leave:

Cupid and Venus

Here come to us the sorrowful throngs
of these unhappy souls. [Fair Mother,
do not delay Pluto.]

At Cupid's words, Venus turned to the burning cave and, seeing those wretched souls in such misery, with pity in her voice again sang:

Oh unfortunate ladies!
Oh too dark a sight!
Happy you would have been, if the world had
made you
less cruel and fierce, or less fair and beautiful!

Therefore Pluto, seeing Venus and Cupid so upset, encouraged them to leave; then with resounding and menacing voice he made those wretched souls hasten their steps:

Pluto

Go back to serene heaven, celestial gods!
Come with me, you enemies of Cupid!

While Pluto spoke such words, Venus, taking Cupid's hand, left so sorrowful a place. And the damned throng, walking in that deep abyss between flames and fire, came out of the cave,

spelonca, rimirando con molto cordoglio e con atti degni di gran compassione l'aere e la luce.

Erano quelle anime condannate vestite con abiti di foggia molto stravagante e bella che si stendevano infino a terra, composti di un ricco drappo che fu tessuto apposta per tale effetto. Egli era di color berettino, misto di sottilissime fila d'argento e d'oro con tanto artificio, che a riguardarlo pareva cenere mischiata con ardenti faville; e si vedevano così le vesti come i manti (che in maniera molto bizzarra pendevano loro dalle spalle) ricamati di spesse fiamme conteste di seta e d'oro, tanto ben disposte che ciascheduno stimava che ardessero; e tra dette fiamme si potevano veder con bellissimo ordine consparsi carbonchi, rubini e altre gemme che rassomigliavano l'accese braci.

Di queste gioie si vedevano intrecciati ancora i lor capelli che, parte accorciati e parte sparsi con mirabil arte, parevano distrutti e abbruciati, e benché fossero tutti coperti di cenere, nondimeno mostravano tra la cenere e il fumo un certo splendore, dal qual si poteva molto ben conoscere che per altro tempo furono come fila d'oro biondissimi; e le loro facce, mostrando alcuni segni di già passata bellezza, erano in guisa trasformate e pallide che apportavano terrore e compassione insieme a riguardarle.

Calarono queste, ma però con gran dolore significato per gesti, a due a due per una piacevole discesa dal palco, accompagnando i passi col suono di una gran quantità di strumenti che suonavano un'aria da ballo malinconiosa e flebile; e giunte in sul piano del teatro, fecero un balletto così

looking at the sky and the light with deep sadness and pitiful gestures.

The damned souls wore dresses of extraordinary and beautiful style, long and made of a rich fabric specially woven for this effect. The material was grey and with such ability interwoven with tiny silver and golden threads that it looked like ash mixed with burning sparks; dresses and cloaks (which in a very bizarre way hung from their shoulders) seemed embroidered with powerful flames made of silk and gold, so cleverly set that everyone thought them burning; and among such flames, bright stones, rubies and other gems seemed to be burning coals.

Similarly also the ladies' heads were adorned with jewels and their hair, partly shortened and partly artfully arranged, seemed ruined and burnt; though covered with ashes, their hair still showed through ash and smoke a certain splendour, which clearly echoed their previous golden fairness; their faces, showing some signs of past beauty, were transformed and made pale in such a way, as to inspire both terror and pity in the beholders.

These souls walked down with gestures full of sorrow, in pairs with a pleasant descent from the platform, their steps accompanied by the sounds of many instruments playing a melancholy and soft dance tune; when they arrived on the stage, they performed such a beautiful and elegant dance with steps, movements and actions expressing now sorrow, now despair, and motions now of compassion and now of anger; sometimes embracing as they had soft tears in their eyes, sometimes pounding themselves, full of rage and

bello e così vago, con passi, con moti e con atti ora di dolore e ora di disperazione, e quando con gesti di misericordia e quando di sdegno, talor abbracciandosi come se avessero le lagrime per tenerezza sugli occhi, talor percuotendosi gonfie di rabbia e furore. Vedevansi ad ora ad ora abborrir i loro aspetti e fuggirsi l'un l'altra con timorose maniere, e seguirsi da poi con minaccioso sembiante, azzuffarsi insieme, dimandarsi perdono e mille altri moti rappresentati con tale affetto e con tanta naturalezza, che ne restarono in modo impressi i cuori de' riguardanti, che non fu alcuno in quel teatro ch'alla mutazione delle passioni loro non sentisse muoversi e conturbarsi in mille guise il cuore.

Poi ch'ebbero queste Ingrate danzato tanto, che intrecciandosi in vari modi si ritrovarono occupar tutto lo spazio di quel piano, si posero ad un cenno di Plutone, ch'era fermo dinanzi al palco, in ischiera lung'h'esso, otto per parte, ed egli muovendosi pel mezzo di loro con molta gravità verso le principesse ch'erano in prospettiva dirimpetto il palco, poiché si fu lor fatto vicino, pieno d'orrida maestà, prese a cantare, accompagnato dal suono, con modo assai cortese i seguenti versi:

Plutone

Dal tenebroso orror del mio gran regno
Fugga, donne, il timor dal molle seno,
Arso di nova fiamma al ciel sereno
Donna o donzella per rapir non vegno.

fury. Sometimes these souls were seen expressing hate for their own appearance and shunning each other in fear, and then chasing each other with menacing face, fighting, asking for forgiveness and many other gestures expressed with such emotions and such sincerity, that the hearts of the spectators were impressed, and no one in the theatre could watch these changes of emotions and passions without being similarly moved.

These Ingrates danced long enough to occupy all the area of the stage, while Pluto stood in front of the platform; then, at Pluto's signal, they lined up along the platform, eight for each side. And Pluto advanced among them with much dignity towards the princesses, who were placed in perspective opposite the platform, and when he was nearby, full of great and impressive majesty, he started singing very courteously as follows, accompanied by instruments:

Pluto

From the shady horror of my great Kingdom,
Ladies, cast fear from your tender hearts!
Burning with a new flame, I come not
to abduct any lady or maiden to the serene sky.

E quando pur da' vostri rai nel petto
Languisce immortalmnte il cor ferito,
Non fora disturbar Plutone ardito
Di cotanta regina il lieto aspetto.

Donna, al cui nobil crin non bassi fregi
Sol pon del cielo ordir gli eterni lumi,
Di cui l'alma virtù, gli aurei costumi
Farsi specchio dovrian monarchi e regi.

Scese pur dianzi Amor nel regno oscuro.
Preghi mi fè ch'io vi scorgessi avanti
Queste infelici, ch'in perpetui pianti
Dolgonsi invan che non ben sagge furo.

Antro è la giù, di luce e d'aer privo,
Ove torbido fumo ogni or s'aggira:
Ivi del folle error tardi sospira
Alma ch'ingrata ebbe ogni amante a schivo.

Indi le traggio e ve l'addito e mostro,
Pallido il volto e lagrimoso il ciglio,
Perché, cangiando omai voglie e consiglio,
Non piangeste ancor voi nel negro chiostro.

Vaglia timor di sempiterni affanni,
Se forza in voi non han sospiri e prieghi!
Ma qual cieca ragion vol che si nieghi
Quel che malgrado alfin vi tolgon gli anni?

And even if struck in his breast through your eyes,
his wounded heart will languish immortally;
Pluto will not dare rashly to disturb
the happiness on the noble face of this great queen.

A Lady, whose noble hair only the eternal lights
of heaven
may adorn and interlace with suitable honour,
who has a virtuous soul and golden virtues
monarchs and kings should imitate you!

Love descended on purpose to the dark kingdom.
He pleaded me to show you
these unhappy souls, who with eternal laments
regret in vain that they were not wise.

A pit is there below, deprived of light and air,
where thick smoke swirls continuously:
here in vain too late she regrets her past mistake,
the ungrateful soul who rejected every lover.

From there I take them out to display and show you
their pale faces and tearful eyes,
that you may change your mind and will,
and thus avoid weeping too in that black cloister.

May at least the fear of eternal torments succeed
if sighs and prayers do not prevail on you!
Yet, what blind reason wishes you to deny
what the years unavoidably steal away from you?

Frutto non è da riserbarsi al fine.
Trovì fede al mio dir, mortal beltate.
Ma qui star più non lice, anime ingrante.
Tornate a lagrimar nel regno inferno!

*In sul fine di queste parole, ripigliando gli
stromenti una nuov'aria da ballo più flebile
dell'altra, ricominciarono quelle Ingrate un altro
balletto con atti pieni di maggior disperazione e
di maggior cordoglio, e con mille intrecciamenti e
mille variazioni d'affetti si vennero avvicinando
a poco a poco al palco, e salendo sopra di esso con lo
stess'ordine col quale n'erano discese, poiché furono
tutte colà di sopra, Plutone con voce d'orrore e di
spavento disse cantando:*

Tornate al negro chiostro,
Anime sventurate,
Tornate ove vi sforza il fallir vostro!

*Appena ebbe così detto Plutone, ch'una delle
Ingrate, ch'era rimasta sul palco quando le altre
discesero a ballare, proruppe in così lagrimosi
accenti accompagnati da sospiri e da singulti, che
non fu cuor di donna così fiero in quel teatro che
non versasse per gli occhi qualche lagrima pietosa.
Le parole ch'ella disse nel suo bel pianto furono le
seguenti:*

Una delle Ingrate
Ahi troppo, ah troppo è duro!
Crudel sentenza, e vie più cruda pena!
Tornar a lagrimar nell'antro oscuro!
Aer sereno e puro,

This fruit cannot be kept until the end.
Believe what I say, mortal beauty.
But you cannot stay here any longer, ingrate souls.
Go back and cry in the Kingdom of Hades!

*When these words were finished, while the
instruments started playing a new and softer dance-
tune, the Ingrates began a new dance with actions
full of even more despair and grief; then in many
patterns and changes of emotions little by little they
moved near the platform and ascended it in the
same order as when they descended before. When
they were all there, Pluto with terrifying and
menacing voice said in song:*

Go back to the gloomy cloister,
unfortunate souls,
go back to where your mistakes have forced you!

*As soon as Pluto said these words, one of the Ingrate
souls, who had stayed on the platform while the
others descended to dance, started such mournful
cries, sighs and laments, that in that theatre the
heart of no woman was so hard as not to be moved
to tears of pity. The words she said in her beautiful
lament were as follows:*

One of the Ingrates
Alas it is too much, it is too hard!
Cruel sentence, and even more cruel punishment –
To go back and cry in the dark pit!
Serene and pure air,

Addio per sempre! Addio per sempre,
Addio o cielo, o sole! Addio lucide stelle!
Apprendete pietà, donne e donzelle!

Quattro Ingrate
Apprendete pietà, donne e donzelle!

Una delle Ingrate
Al fumo, a' gridi, a' pianti,
A sempiterno affanno!
Ahi! Dove son le pompe, ove gli amanti?
Dove, dove sen vanno
Donne che si pregiate al mondo furo?
Aer sereno e puro,
Addio per sempre! Addio per sempre,
Addio o cielo, o sole! Addio lucide stelle!
Apprendete pietà, donne e donzelle!

Quattro Ingrate
Apprendete pietà, donne e donzelle!

*Nel fine di così bel pianto, se n'entraron di nuovo,
ma però in modo che vi parevano spinte da viva
forza, nell'ardente caverna; né prima furono
trangugiate da quella che, chiudendosi la sua
gran bocca, restò la scena con una bella e diletta
prospettiva.*

Ottavio Rinuccini

forever farewell!
Farewell oh Heaven, oh sun, farewell bright stars!
Learn pity, Ladies and Maidens!

Four Ingrates
Learn pity, Ladies and Maidens!

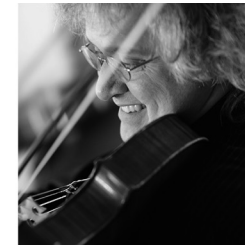
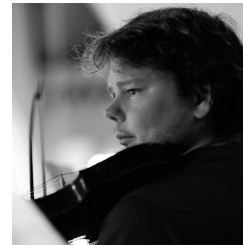
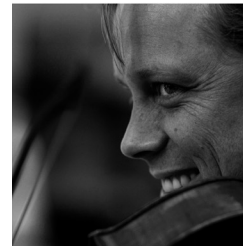
One of the Ingrates
To the smoke, to the screams, to the laments,
to the everlasting torment!
Where are the riches, where are the lovers!
Where are they going,
those Ladies once so esteemed in the world?
Serene and pure air,
farewell forever! Farewell forever,
oh Heaven, oh sun, farewell bright stars!
Learn pity, Ladies and Maidens!

Four Ingrates
Learn pity, Ladies and Maidens!

*At the end of such a beautiful lament, again they
entered the burning cave, as if pushed violently.
And when they were all swallowed by the cave, its
huge mouth closed and the scene was left empty
with a beautiful and delightful view.*

Translation: Silvia Reseghetti
with Robert Hollingworth

Barokksolistene



Per Buhre

Bjarte Eike, Peter Spissky, Fredrik From, Torbjörn Köhl and Thomas Pitt

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Claudio MONTEVERDI (1567–1643)

- | | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 1 | Questi vaghi concenti
from <i>Il quinto libro de madrigali</i> (1605) | 7:06 |
| 2 | T'amo, mia vita!
from <i>Il quinto libro de madrigali</i> (1605) | 2:53 |
| 3 | Ohimè il bel viso
from <i>Il sesto libro de madrigali</i> (1614) | 4:51 |
| 4 | Zefiro torna, e 'l bel tempo rimena
from <i>Il sesto libro de madrigali</i> (1614) | 3:29 |
| 5 | Zefiro torna, e di soavi accenti
from <i>Scherzi musicali cioè arie, & madrigali in stil recitativo...</i> (1632) | 6:13 |
| 6 | Ohimè, dov'è il mio ben?
from <i>Concerto. Settimo libro de madrigali</i> (1619) | 4:44 |
| 7 | Si dolce è 'l tormento
from Carlo Milanuzzi: <i>Quarto scherzo delle ariose vaghezze...</i> (1624) | 4:27 |
| 8 | Or che 'l ciel e la terra
from <i>Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi... Libro ottavo</i> (1638) | 7:25 |
| 9 | Gira il nemico insidioso
from <i>Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi... Libro ottavo</i> (1638) | 5:42 |
| 10 | Ballo delle Ingrate
from <i>Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi... Libro ottavo</i> (1638) | 32:04 |

TT 79:02

I Fagiolini
Barokksolistene
Robert Hollingworth *director*

The third in **I Fagiolini's Monteverdi series** features the magnificent *Ballo delle Ingrate*, in which **Venus descends to the gates of Hell** looking for revenge. **The fiery virtuosity of the music** for her and Pluto is matched with dances for strings. Other works include both settings of *Zefiro torna* (a first on CD) and other masterpieces from the Fifth to Eighth books of madrigals.