

LUCA MARENZIO · MADRIGALI
MUSICA FICTA · BO HOLTEN

LUCA MARENZIO
DEI CONTI DI TAGLIANO
DIRETTORE DELLA CAPELLA
DEL VATICANO
N. 7553 7-1589



Chamber music is the term used to describe music for a few instruments, (winds or strings) playing in concord of some kind, often also with piano. But the term always refers to instruments. But purely vocal chamber music does indeed exist, and in music history there are certain periods where this is totally dominating. Most of the medieval music which has survived is purely vocal (in notation at least) and in the renaissance one genre of vocal chamber music (among several) reached its majestic apogee: the madrigal.

Flourishing roughly 1525-1625, principally in Italy, this genre not only proliferated copiously (there are ca 40.000 Italian madrigals, around 12.000 printed at the time), they also sold in very large numbers over most of Europe, and, not least, reached a degree of artistic importance and variety in chamber music that only the later string quartet can match.

Practically all Italian composers of any significance contributed to this enormous repertoire and a few others, notably a lot in England and a few in Germany also took part, but the madrigals (except in England) 'demanded' to be composed to Italian texts, so maybe surprisingly, there are hardly any Spanish, French, Flemish or Eastern European madrigals. On the contrary, though, there are lots of Italian madrigals by non-Italian composers, many of them working in Italy.

The fact that many of these pieces, from rather modest beginnings, developed over the years into highly sophisticated 5- and 6-part works at the end of the century, tells a story about the surprising competence of singing and music reading in many

private homes. From the enormous number of prints and reprints of this repertoire, we learn of the outright opulent popularity of the genre. Singing at home in this period must simply have been great fun, the level of musical erudition and vocal capacity being so high in so many homes keeping the music printing industry so busy. Serious money were being made on simple but also on really complex and intricate music.

Beginning as amateur music, by mid century groups of professional singers occurred, famously the 3 Dame di Ferrara and many others, often employed at courts that could afford them. This meant that the composers started writing works of greater ambition and virtuosity, at the same time still writing simpler for the amateurs with an eye for numbers of sold copies.

Composers from the upper drawer numbers several well known names (music quality increasing a lot over the century), among them principally Giaches de Wert (1535-1596), Carlo Gesualdo (1566-1613), Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) and, not least, Luca Marenzio (1553-1599) to whom the present CD is entirely devoted. In his rather short lifespan he managed to write about 500 madrigals between 1580 and 1599. In those 2 decades his music developed immensely reaching its climax in the last 10 years of his life. Though continuing to satisfy his great popular following with loads of small lighthearted songs, Marenzio excelled also in writing ambitious madrigal cycles of which 2 are recorded here: *Baci soavi e cari* (5 6-part madrigals describing several aspects of kissing) and maybe his *Magnum Opus*, *Capitolo - Se quel dolor* (10 6-part madrigals delving into one of the periods

favourite subjects: Melancholia.)

The remaining 5 madrigals here are wonderful examples of Marenzio's marvelous sense of flow and inventive harmony, and as a contemporary voice says 'Marenzio holds a special place for delicious air and sweet invention in madrigals, Luca Marenzio excelleth all other whatsoever.' Thus he excels in colourful chromaticism, shining white diatonicism, expressive sudden breaks and stops, outbursts of anger, and bouts of erotic love description, all clearly composed by an experienced singer and virtuoso lute player.

Madrigal texts, madrigal poetry, became a genre all by itself. Deeply inspired by Dante and Petrarca, who both were often set, madrigal poets like Guarini, Tansillo and Tasso wrote erotic verses, nature descriptions, renditions of lovely women, and first of all: melancholy due to broken relationships, love/anger, jealousy, languishing and the like.

In stead of going through each madrigal describing details I recommend that the texts are followed while listening to the music for even the minutest details are often rendered surprisingly explicit, often also with very refined profundity only disclosing itself by repeated listening through Marenzio's marvelous handling of the 'orchestration' of the six voices...., an orgy of contrasting sound colours with the six voices flowing effortlessly in service of expressing the often complicated meaning of the madrigal texts.

Bo Holten

Bo Holten is a conductor and composer.

He founded Ars Nova in 1979 and conducted the ensemble for seventeen years, until 1996. He then founded Musica Ficta, which will celebrate its thirtieth anniversary in 2026. From 1990 to 2006, Bo was Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Singers, and from 2006 to 2011 he conducted the Flemish Radio Choir in Brussels, the last three seasons as chief conductor. He has also guest conducted the Swedish Radio Choir, the Netherlands Chamber Choir, the National Choir of Ireland, and a number of other ensembles. Bo has been a driving force in the international early music movement for almost fifty years. His work with vocal polyphony has been groundbreaking in the Nordic countries, and he has performed many polyphonic masterpieces for the first time in modern history. In recent years, he has focused on vocal chamber music. As a composer, Bo has written ten operas, five solo concertos, four symphonies, various orchestral works and chamber music, as well as film music for Lars von Trier and Bille August, and approximately fifty works for choir.

The Vocal Ensemble Musica Ficta is an internationally renowned vocal ensemble based in Copenhagen and founded by conductor and composer Bo Holten. The ensemble specialises in early European vocal music. The ensemble harks back to a time when chamber music was primarily written for the human voice. The ensemble's hallmark is its flexible, virtuoso ensemble singing, and its in-depth work has made Musica Ficta a pioneer in early music. In Denmark, Musica Ficta is particularly renowned for its dedication to the Danish song repertoire, and since its inception in

1996, the ensemble has released around thirty albums of Danish songs. Every Musica Ficta concert is a journey into a time, era or artistic personality. The ensemble's conductor, Bo Holten, provides humour as an integral part of the concerts, conveying the cultural and musical historical context.



Recording Producer: Preben Iwan · Editing & mix: Preben Iwan · Mastering: Preben Iwan

Recorded in the DXD audio format (Digital eXtreme Definition, 352.8 kHz/32bit)

Main microphone array: Decca Tree with 3x DPA 4006-TL & 2x DPA 4015-TL & 4x DPA 4011 for Dolby Atmos.

Spot microphones: Neumann U89's

Pyramix DAW system with Horus pre-amps/converters.

Monitored on B&W 802D Nautilus Diamond speakers and Genelec 'The Ones'.

[1] Crudele, acerba

Crudele, acerba, inesorabil Morte,
Cagion mi dai di mai non esser lieto,
Ma di menar tutta mia vita in pianto,
E i giorni oscuri e le dogliose notti.
I miel gravi sospir non vanno in rime,
E 'l mio duro martir vince ogni stile.
—*Petrarca (Sestina stanza)*

CAPITOLO

[2] I. Se quel dolor, che va inanzi al morire
È tal, ch'agguagli il mio, ciascun mortale
Si doglia d'esser nato, e se n'adire,
Ma non cred'io che Morte, e quant'assale,
E quando de la vita il filo incide,
Porga dolor, ch'al mio sen vada eguale.

[3] II. Quando si more, il corpo sol s'uccide;
Ma quand'huom ch'ama, dal suo ben diparte,
L'anima ch'era integra, si divide.
Anzi la più perfetta, e maggior parte
Ne gl'occhi altrui riposta si rimane,
Ch'amor di propria man la tronca, e parte.

[4] III. Dunque da voi convien, che m'allontane,
O de l'anima mia parte più cara,
Per commetter la vita a l'ond'insane?
O dì, che mal per me Febo rischiara!
E qual sarà giungendo la partita.
S'aspettandola solo, ella è sì amara?

Cruel, bitter inexorable Death,
you give me reason never to be happy,
but to lead my entire life in tears,
in dark days and grief-filled nights.
My heavy sighs cannot be rhymed,
and my cruel suffering defeats any style.

If all the pain we suffer when we die
The equal were of mine, our birth would be
A sad event for all mankind, but I
Do not believe that Death, whenever he
Attacks, or when of life he cuts the thread,
Pain will inflict to match my misery.

The body perish when we are dead.
If one who loves must from his love depart
His single soul divides in two instead,
Of which the better and the greater part
Remains in his beloved's eyes to dwell,
Where Love truncated it and split apart.

What force obliges me, what fates compel
The dearest part of me leave behind,
Risking my life on the wild ocean's swell?
The dawn for me that day will be unkind;
And how then my departure will I bear,
Which bitter to anticipate I find?

[5] IV. Dammi pietosa Morte e tempo aita;
Se mi sia del mio ben la via precisa,
Prima che parta il piè, parta la vita.
Meglio è lasciando qui la carne uccisa
Rimanersi con voi quest'alma intera,
Che lontana da voi girsene divisa.

[6] V. O Fortuna volubile, e leggera!
Appena vidi il Sol, che ne fui privo;
Al comminciar del dì, giunse la sera.
Lunge da voi, se da voi lunge io vivo,
La lagrime, il pensiero, e la speranza
Saranno il cibo mio, d'ogn'altro schivo.
E sì dal lungo pianto, ora m'avanza,
Il sonno in braccio per pietà mi prenda,
La bella, cara, angelica sembianza.

[7] VI. Ma quest', oimè, temo, che 'n van s'attenda;
Come il sonno amator de le fredd'ombre
Portar può cosa, che tant'arda, e splenda?
Né sia, c'human pensier dipinga, et ombre
Celeste lume, ond'è 'l bel viso adorno,
Sì che dal tristo cor le nebbie sgombre;
Né perch'io vada là, 've nasce il giorno,
Havrà mai raggio il Sol così lucente,
Chè mi levi le tenebre d'intorno.

[8] VII. Altra Aurora bisogna, altro Oriente
A gl'occhi miei, per cui senza voi sono
Il ciel oscuro, e le sue luci spente.
Miserò, chè pensando a quel, c'io sono,
Et a quel ch'io sarò, preso il viaggio,
Quasi m'offende del bel guard'il dono.

Merciful Death, some remedy prepare:
Let life, before my journey start, be done.
To my delivery this way is clear,
For, leaving here my lifeless flesh and bone,
My soul with you will ever stay, complete,
Not wandering divided and alone.

O Fortune changeable and ever fleet,
As soon as I had glimpsed the sun, straightaway
The night had overcome and darkened it!
If I must live without you far away,
Tears, thoughts and hopes will be my only food;
Odious all else will be in every way.
As on my couch I lie in tearful mood,
May sleep in pity the illusion grant
Of my beloved and angelic good.

In vain, I fear, this dream my thoughts will haunt.
Sleep is a lover of cold, spectral shades,
Not radiant visions which the soul enchant.
Nor can the human mind which gloom pervades
Evoke the splendor which adorns her face,
And so from my sad heart mist never fades
Whatever the morn, whatever paths I trace,
No sun I'll find so powerful and bright
As will the encircling shadows put to chase.

Another Dawn and East I need to light
My Way. Without you, and I know not how,
The sky is dark, the stars concealed from sight.
When I consider what my life is now
And will be when my journey I begin.
Abhorrent is the gift of sight, I vow.

[9] VIII. Un temp', io mi credea, c'havend' il raggio
De begl'occhi presente, e Cielo, e Terra
Non havesse bastato a farmi oltraggio;
Hor ciò che vedo, lasso, mi fa guerra,
Ma'l be guardo divin, per cui m'alzai
Fin sopra'l Cielo, è quel che più m'atterra.
Mirando de'bei lumi i dolci rai
Voce par ch'oda, ch'ivi dentro gridi:
"Questi son gl'occhi, ove tu lunge andrai."

[10] IX. Occhi de' miei desiri, e d'Amor nidi,
Vorrei chiedervi in don qualche mercede
Pria che l'aura mi tolga i cari lidi.
Me 'l vostro duro orgoglio, che non crede
L'ardor, che tanto in picciol tempo crebbe,
Ch'osi sperar mercè, non mi dà fede.

[11] X. Una pur chiederò che mi si debbe,
Et ella è tal, che benché d'odio accesi
L'un nemico tal'hor, da l'altro l'hebbe.
Occhi, s'io moro, e sia che vel palesi,
Perché voi vivi habbiate lode, et io,
Già spento, qualch'honor, siate cortesi
D'una lagrima vostra al cener mio
-Luigi Tansillo (Terza rima)

[12] Interdette speranze

Interdette speranze, e van desio,
Pensier fallaci, ingorde e cierce voglie,
Lagrima triste, e voi, sospiri e doglie,
Date homai pace al lasso viver mio.
-Jacopo Sannazaro (Madrigal)

When once those radiant eyes of hers I'd seen
Not Heaven and Earth could harm me, so I thought.
Alas, how much mistaken I have been!
Between her gaze and me war is now fought.
Once raised to heaven by its radiance,
Now by that same to lowest depths I'm brought.
And as I still encounter that sweet glance,
I seem to hear a voice within me say:
"Take your last look," in solemn utterance.

Eyes which I long for, nests where cupids play,
I have one favor to request of you
Before the sea-breeze carries me away.
But your harsh pride may give no credence to
A love which in so short a space of time
From one small spark to ardent passion grew.

Yet I will dare to set it in my rhyme.
Not even enemies this boon would spurn,
Nor count it a disloyalty or crime:
If I should die and of my death you learn,
Remembering the days beyond recall,
Add to your lustre and upon my urn
To honor me in death, a tear let fall.

Forbidden hopes and longings all in vain,
Deceptive thoughts, blind, and lustful eagerness,
Tears, sighs and all ye tokens of distress,
Grant peace at last to my sad life of pain.

[13] Dura legge d'Amor;

Dura legge d'Amor! me benché obliqua,
Servar conviensi, però ch'ella aggiunge
Di cielo in terra, universale, antiqua.
Hor so come da sé il cor disgiunge,
E come sa far pace, guerra, e tregua,
E coprir suo dolor, quand'altri il punge;

E so come in un punto so dilegua
E poi si sparge per le guancia il sangue,
Se paura o vergogna avien che 'l segua;
So come sta tra' fiori ascoso l'Angue,
Come sempre tra due si vegghia e dorme,
Come senza languir si more a languie.

–*Petrarca (Capitolo)*

CANZONE

[14] I. Baci soavi e caro,
Cibi de la mia vita,
C'hor m'involat'hor mi rendete il core,
Per voi convien ch'impari
Com'un'alma rapita,
Non sent'il duol di morte e pur si more,
Quant'ha di dolc'Amore,
Perché sempre io vi baci,
O dolcissime rose
In voi tutto ripose;
E s'io potessi ai vostri dolci baci
La mia vita finire,
I che dolce morire!

Harsh law of Love! But although unjust,
one must observe it, since it comes from heaven
to earth, universal and age-old.
Now I know how the heart breaks,
and how it knows how to make peace, war and truce,
and cover its grief when the loved one wounds it.

And I know how suddenly blood disappears
and then spreads on the cheeks,
if fear or shame should follow.
I know how the snake hides amongst flowers,
as in conflict one wakes and sleeps,
as without pining one dies and pines away.

Sweet kisses, fond and dear,
Food of my life are ye
Which steal my heart at first and then restore.
From ye I feign would hear
How it could prove to be
My sould has died and yet no anguish bore.
Love, from his sweetest store,
Embellishing each kiss,
On lips as fair as roses
Eternal lustre poses.
Oh, would that I, enraptured by your kiss,
Might draw my final breath!
Ah, what delicious death!

[15] II. Baci amorosi e belli,
Mentre che voi m'aprite
Di rubini e di perle alti tesori,
E tra questi a tra quelli
Aure dolci a gradite
Spirino di vitali Arabi odori.
L'alme de i nostri cori
Parton da la radice,
E su le labra estreme
L'un'e l'altra si preme
E bacia e stringe, e sospirando dice:
"Amor, ch'unisce l'alme,
Unirà ancor le salme."

[16] III. Baci affamati e 'ngordi,
Ai cui misti dilette
Né mai si satia Amore né mai respira,
Tu, dente, avido mordi,
E tu, lingua, saetti,
In tant'il guardo mira,
E d'intorno t'aggira,
E mentre ogn'un pur vuole
Mordere e sospirare
E vedere a baciare.
Baci, morsi, sospir, sguardi, parole
Fan sì dolce contento,
Che vi sta 'l cielo intento.

[17] IV. Baci cortesi e grati,
E voi, labbr'amorosi,
Che tanto date altrui quanto togliete,
Chi v'há cosii infiammati
Di miei, che sì bramosi
Vi fa di quell'onde sì ricchi sete?
Rose d'Amor, c'havete
D'ogni dolcezza il vanto,
Ben riconosco il dono

Sweet kisses, amorously
Rich treasure ye display
Of pearls and rubies, exquisite and rare,
Whence issue, may it be,
As when soft breezes play,
Arabian fragrance which perfumes the air.
Their roots our spirits tear
From out our hearts, and fly
Till to our lips they reach.
Then, pressing each to each,
Embrace and kiss and utter as they sigh:
"Love who our souls entwines
Our bodies too combines."

Kisses insatiate,
Whose varied joys
Leave Love unsatisfied and ever will,
Sharp teeth which violate,
Tongue which explores and toys,
Bold eyes which look their fill,
Their longing to fulfill,
All these demand their right
To kiss, to touch, to sigh,
To bite, to speak, to eye.
Kisses, bites, sighs, glances and words unite
In harmony so sweet
The heavens lend ear to it.

Sweet kisses, courteous
And lips which lovingly
Return in equal measure what they take,
How did so amorous
Your nature come to be?
Whence this rich store of passion? For whose sake?
Love's roses, which partake
Of beauty's every boon,
A gift I recognize

Per voi sì dolce sono;
Baciate questi pur che da voi quanto
In me sicura e prezza,
Tutto è vostra dolcezza.

[18] V. Baci, ohimè, non mirate,
Che mentr'io parlo oblio
Come l'hore se 'n van fugaci e lieve.
Baciate, ohimè, baciate,
Lung'é 'l nostro desio,
Ma la speranz'è frale, il temp'è breve.
Taccia chi gioir deve,
Baci, non siate lenti,
Venite a mille a mille,
Quante son le faville
Del mio bel foco è quanti i raggi ardenti
Mia luc'han gl'occhi vostri
Sian tanti i baci nostri.
Baci di tante gioie una sol resta,
Che tutte l'altr'avanza
Sola del cor speranza
–*Battista Guarini (Canzone)*

[19] Fiere silvestre

Fiere silvestre, che per lati campi
Vagando errate, e per acuti sassi,
Udiste mai sì dolorose rime?
Ditel, vi prego. Udiste in alcun giorno
O pur in questra over in altra valle
Con si caldi sospir sì lungo pianto?
–*Jacopo Sannazaro (Sestina stanza)*

And for your sweet sake prize.
Yet kiss my lips; your love I do not own,
But cherish and revere,
Holding your sweetness dear.

Sweet kisses, marvel not
If I forget, ah me!
That as I speak the hours are fleeting past.
Uncertain is our lot.
Kiss me, as I kiss thee,
For time is short, e'en though our love will last.
Let us on joy repast,
Not words; let kisses flow,
Swift, and as many are
The myriad sparks that flare
In me, and as the ardent rays that glow
In thy sweet eyes; and thus
Long may it be with us.
Kisses, of all these joys but one remains:
The sweetest and the best,
Which sets the heart at rest.

Wild woodland creatures, that through open fields
wander stray, and among jagged rocks
heard you at any time such doleful rhymes?
Tell me, I beg. Heard you on any day
either in this or any other vale
such long lamenting with such burning sighs?

[20] Parto da voi

Parto da voi, mio sole,
Senz'alma e senza core,
E ciò consent' Amore.
Ahi che partend'io moro,
Ma se 'l ciel così vuole,
Che poss'io far? Oh! ché grave martire!
Pur mi convien partire.
Addio, mio bel tesoro
Ahimè, ch'io parto e moro.
–Anon. (*Madrigal*)

[21] Cantiam la bella Clori

Cantiam la bella Clori
Che da i celesti cori
Portò l'altiero e non più visto essemplio
Di beltà, di valor degna di tempio,
E d'immortali honori:
Cantiam la bella Clori!
Cantiamo la leggiadra e vaga Ninfa,
Nostro ben, nostra gloria e nostra duce,
In cui tanta dal Cielo e sì divina
Gratia splende e riluce,
Ch'infiamma i nostri cori:
Viva la bella Clori!
–Anon. (*Madrigal*)

From you, my life, I go,
Of heart, of soul bereft.
From Love no help is left.
Ah, Leaving you I die.
If heaven wills it so
What can I do? How grievous is the smart!
And yet I must depart.
My treasured one, good bye.
Ah! as I go I die.

Let us sing of fair Chloris,
who from the celestial choirs
brought the lofty and unsurpassed example of beauty
worthy of temples and
immortal honors:
let us sing of fair Chloris!
Let us sing of the fair and lovely Nymph,
our blessing, our glory and our guide,
in whom so much heavenly and divine
grace shines and radiates
that it inflames our hearts:
long live fair Chloris!



MUSICA FICTA

**ANN-CHRISTIN
WESSER INGELS**
soprano

**CHRISTINE
NONBO ANDERSEN**
soprano

**EVA
WÖLLINGER-BENGTSON**
alto

**DANIEL
CARLSSON**
counter tenor

**JOSEF
HAMBER**
tenor

**NILS
GREENHOW**
tenor

**LAURITZ JAKOB
THOMSEN**
bass

**RASMUS KURE
THOMSEN**
bass

**BO
HOLTEN**
conductor



DACOCD 935

Total playing time:
75:41

Recorded at
Koncertkirken
Blågårds Plads
Copenhagen
DENMARK
January 6-9, 2025

Producer and
sound engineer
Preben Iwan

Photo:
Hanne Leth Andersen

www.danacord.com
©2025

LC 07075



LUCA MARENZIO

1553 – 1599

[1] CRUDEL ACERBA 4:01 (*libr.9, 5v. pr.1599*)CAPITOLO I – X 32:44 (*libr.6, 6v. pr.1595*)

- [2] I. Se quel dolor 3:17
 [3] II. Quando si more 3:05
 [4] III. Dunque da voi convien 2:26
 [5] IV. Dammi pietosa Morte 2:39
 [6] V. O Fortuna volubile 3:32
 [7] VI. Ma quest, ohimè 3:03
 [8] VII. Altra Aurora bisogna 3:13
 [9] VIII. Un temp'io me credea 3:30
 [10] IX. Occhi de' miei desiri 3:12
 [11] X. Una pur chiederò 4:42

[12] INTERDETTE SPERANZE 3:17
(*libr.1, 4,5,6v. pr.1588*)[13] DURA LEGGE D'AMOR 7:21 (*libr.9, 5v. pr.1591*)BACI SOAVI I – V 17:51 (*libr.5, 6v. pr.1591*)

- [14] I. Baci soavi e cari 2:55
 [15] II. Baci amorosi e belli 3:32
 [16] III. Baci affamati e ngordi 4:00
 [17] IV. Baci cortesi e grati 3:05
 [18] V. Baci, ohimè, non mirate 4:17

[19] FIERE SILVESTRE 4:01 (*libr.1, 4,5,6v. pr.1588*)[20] PARTO DA VOI 3:56 (*libr.3, 6v. pr.1585*)[21] CANTIAM LA BELLA CLORI 2:25
(*libr.6, 5v. pr.1594*)

MUSICA FICTA

BO HOLTEN

