

Pietro VINCI

QUATTORDECI SONETTI SPIRITUALI
DELLA ILLUSTRISSIMA
ET ECCELLENTISSIMA
DIVINA VITTORIA COLONNA

Nota Bene
Sarah Mead, director
with

Anney Barrett, soprano
Matthew Anderson, tenor
Jason McStoots, tenor
Michael Barrett, tenor
Steven Hrycelak, bass
and
Julie Jeffrey, bass viol

FIRST RECORDING

PIETRO VINCI *Quattordeci Sonetti Spirituali*

<i>[Padre nostro – Dal fermo stato]</i>	4:04
1 Padre nostro	2:28
2 Dal fermo stato	1:36
<i>Della Passione</i>	4:21
3 Le braccia aprendo	2:10
4 Viva di fiamma	1:43
<i>Della Passione</i>	4:21
5 Pende l'alto Signor	2:53
6 Viva di fiamma	1:43
<i>Del Venerdi Santo</i>	4:25
7 Gli angeli eletti	2:09
8 Asconde il sol	2:16
<i>Del Sacramento</i>	3:29
9 Qui non è il loco humil	1:30
10 So che quel vero	1:59
<i>Del Spirito Santo</i>	4:10
11 Divino spirito	2:06
12 Io per me sono	2:04
<i>Della Madonna</i>	5:03
13 Vergine pura	2:26
14 Immortal Dio	2:37
<i>Della Madonna</i>	4:48
15 Stella del nostro mar	2:39
16 Veggio il figliuol di Dio	2:09
<i>Della Natività della Madonna</i>	4:37
17 Rinasca in Te mio cor	2:17
18 Sò ch'ella prega	2:20

<i>Della Madonna</i>	3:13
¹⁹ Quando senza spezzar	1:35
²⁰ Ma la fede la tenne	1:38
<i>Di san Giovanni Evangelista</i>	4:50
²¹ Quando quell'empio	2:49
²² Ond'ei cadde	2:01
<i>Della Maddalena</i>	3:33
²³ La bella donna	1:53
²⁴ Ed agli uomini eletti	1:40
<i>De' Tre Maggi</i>	4:01
²⁵ Quanta gioia	1:40
²⁶ Il loco, gli animali	2:21
<i>Delli Innocenti</i>	4:37
²⁷ Puri innocent	2:23
²⁸ Tolti dal latte	2:14

Anney Barrett, soprano
Matthew Anderson, tenor
Jason McStoots, tenor
Michael Barrett, tenor
Steven Hrycelak, bass

TT 59:48

FIRST RECORDING

Nota Bene

Joanna Blendulf, treble and bass viols
Wendy Gillespie, bass viol
Sarah Mead, alto and great bass viols
Emily Walhout, alto, bass and great bass viols
with
Julie Jeffrey, bass viol

PIETRO VINCI AND HIS *SONETTI SPIRITUALI*

by Sarah Mead

The Italian madrigal of the sixteenth century arose as a musical form in response to a popular revival of Petrarch's poetry and the enormous outpouring of new verse inspired by his work. A printed edition of Petrarch's lyrics appeared in 1501, the same year that Ottaviano Petrucci published in Venice the first music printed from movable type. Italian composers, influenced by the work of the Flemish polyphonists who had lately taken Italy by storm, began to develop a new kind of vocal music to reflect the complexity of the poetry. Whereas other popular vocal forms were strophic – using the same music for multiple verses – the madrigal employed polyphonic techniques of imitation, countermelody, varied phrase-lengths and textural contrast to set each phrase of poetry as a dramatic statement. Rhetorical figures within the poetry were matched by musical rhetoric.

One of the poets who was deeply influenced by the Petrarchan revival was Vittoria Colonna, an Italian noblewoman who became the first published female poet in Italy. Born around 1490, she was entering her teens when Petrarch's works began to circulate widely in print. Her first book of poetry was published in 1538. Though most of her poetry was amorous in nature, in 1546 a collection of sonnets on religious subjects, entitled *Le rime spirituali*, was published. A generation later this collection was the source of the poems that Pietro Vinci set under the title *Sonetti Spirituali*.

The Composer

Pietro Vinci was born in Sicily around 1525 but spent much of his career in northern Italy. He became *maestro di capella* at S. Maria Maggiore in Bergamo in

1568, remaining there until 1580, the year when this set of madrigals was published. An influential patron in Milan (as well as his publisher in Venice) helped to establish Vinci's reputation as an important composer whose works reflect a deep respect for fine poetry. The theorist Pietro Cerone (1566–1625) included passages by Vinci – along with excerpts from Palestrina, Josquin, Lassus and Rore – in a major treatise¹ as exemplars of contrapuntal composition and called him one of the best madrigal composers of the time.

Bergamo is situated in Lombardy, only a day's ride from Brescia, where some of the finest stringed instruments in Europe were being produced in the studios of Zanetto Micheli and Gasparo da Salò. These artists were part of a long tradition of string-players and luthiers that spanned the sixteenth century, both shaping and reflecting Italian musical taste from the courts of Ferrara and Mantua to the great churches of Milan and Venice. Pietro Vinci was known to have resided for a period in the household of the Londonio family in Milan, generous patrons to whom he dedicated several books of madrigals. Among his publications of vocal music are a number of instrumental *ricercare*, suggesting that his books were intended for households where singing and playing were equally enjoyed. Isabella Londonio was renowned for her vocal skills, and the family had many musical connections. It is easy to imagine that evenings of singing and playing his latest compositions were a regular part of Vinci's visits to Milan, and that the sound of Brescian viols mingled with voices around the gracious table.

Although Vinci was barely twenty when the author of this collection of poems died, Vittoria Colonna's reputation as a major poet had continued to grow over the course of the century. Her works had already inspired a number of composers by the time Vinci published his settings of fourteen of her spiritual sonnets in 1580. In a bid for the patronage of the poet's nephew, the Sicilian Viceroy Marc'Antonio Colonna, he dedicated this book of sacred madrigals to his daughter, 'Signora Vittoria Colonna,' writing:

¹ Born in Bergamo, Cerone lived in Spain from c. 1593 until c. 1604. His monumental *El melopeo y maestro: tractado de música theórica y práctica; en que se pone por extenso; lo que uno para hazerse perfecto musico ha menester saber*, though written in Spanish, was published in Naples in 1613. It occupied no fewer than 22 volumes, requiring 849 chapters and 1,160 pages. A facsimile can be found online at <http://bdh.bne.es/bnsearch/detalle/3512912>.

These sonnets [...] are the blessed works of the most excellent Lady Vittoria Colonna [...] of glorious and eternal memory, given to the world as a faithful witness not only to her piety and belief, but to the loftiness and felicity of her marvellous intellect [...] just as the evening star remains after the setting of her splendid sun.

This work apparently brought him the notice he sought, for he was back in Sicily in the viceroy's employ when he died in 1584.

Vinci's first publication was a book of motets issued in 1558, when he was in his early thirties and had not yet settled in northern Italy. His sacred music included seven books of motets and two collections of Masses, with works ranging from four to eight voices. He published twelve books of madrigals, of which over 260 individual pieces survive. Although he spent the majority of his career in the north, he maintained strong ties to Sicily, and influenced a generation of composers there, most prominently Antonio Il Verso, with whom he shared several of his later publications.

The Poet

As a member of the powerful Colonna family, Vittoria was raised in a world of wealth and influence. The Colonnas were one of the oldest noble families in Italy, tracing their ancestors to the rulers of ancient Rome; during the Middle Ages several were cardinals and a Colonna became pope in the fifteenth century. The poet Petrarch, who was such an influence on Vittoria, was a close friend of Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, and joined his household in 1326.

Vittoria Colonna was born outside of Rome around 1490 and died in that city in 1547, but spent much of her early adulthood on the island of Ischia, off the coast of Naples, where in 1509 she was married to Francesco Ferrante d'Ávalos, the Marquis of Pescara. Her husband died from wounds received in battle in 1525, after which she returned to Rome, where she stayed as a lay guest of the Convent of San Silvestro. Although prevented by her family from entering the cloistered life, she refused to remarry.

In spite of her profound intelligence and insight, Vittoria had spent the first half of her life in the shadow of men. Widowhood, though a blow, brought her a freedom she had not known, and the financial independence to maintain it. The life she chose

was both contemplative and stimulating, devoted to her faith, her writing and to her connections with some of the most noted thinkers of her time. Five books of her poetry were published during her lifetime. Many more poems circulated widely in manuscript. In addition, she left behind a rich correspondence with literary figures and theological writers of her time. She became friends with Michelangelo around 1538, and the older man considered her his closest friend and confidante. They spent many hours together, and shared an extended correspondence filled with poetry, art and religious commentary. Her death in 1547 devastated the artist, who wrote a memorial sonnet in her honour.

Colonna was drawn to the ideas emanating from the religious Reformation taking place in northern Europe, and she embraced the concept of a personal connection with the deity – the Catholic church, of course, insisted on the intercession of the priesthood between God and believer. Her associations with like-minded thinkers brought her writings to the attention of the Inquisition, which opened a posthumous investigation into her for heresy. Her passionate faith and feminine point of view, as well as her eye for imagery and her poet's ear, are stunningly expressed in the fourteen sonnets that Vinci chose for his collection of sacred madrigals.

The Petrarchan sonnet, Colonna's preferred form, consists of two parts: the first eight lines are divided into two quatrains, in which the premise of the poem is laid forth. The second six lines, bound together in two tercets, form a response in which the poet turns to look at what has been said and brings new insights to what has been laid forth. This form, popularised by Petrarch two hundred years before, saw a resurgence in sixteenth-century Italy. It was soon embraced by musicians, who found in it endless inspiration during the development of the Italian madrigal. The bipartite nature of these poems lent itself to madrigal-pairs, where the second half (both shorter and more emotionally revealing) serves as a response to and commentary on the first.

The Music

Vinci's *Sonetti Spirituali* was his fifth book of five-part madrigals, the work of a skilled and experienced composer who was already recognised for his contrapuntal prowess and his artful settings of sophisticated poetry. Though the fourteen sonnets of Colonna

that he chose for this collection were drawn from her religious poetry, these settings were intended for secular use. The fact that these pieces were not meant to be sung in church allowed the composer to apply the expressive gestures of madrigal-writing to ideas he had heretofore explored only within the narrower confines of the liturgical Latin motet. Colonna's passionate language and intricate nuances echoed Petrarchan love-poetry, but her themes were deeply religious. This rare combination of motivations had inspired a few of his contemporaries to set individual sonnets from Colonna's spiritual poems, but only Vinci undertook an entire publication devoted to these works of faith and feeling.

Each sonnet is divided into two parts and set as a pair of madrigals (*Prima parte* and *Seconda parte*). The order of the poems is Vinci's, as are the titles, in which he associates all but the first pair with an event or feast-day of the liturgical calendar. Colonna's poetry serves as an intimate and highly personal window into the meaning of those significant events in the Christian story, which Vinci underscores with musical gestures more often reserved for love-poetry.

Opening with the first words of the Lord's Prayer (or *Paternoster*), the first madrigal-pair sets the stage for what is to follow. The voices enter one at a time in prayerful procession [1], blooming outward from an initial single note in an illustration of the soul opening towards its creator. The second part [2] recounts the stages of belief, from simple loyalty to transcendent faith, each stage with its own musical character.

The next two madrigal-pairs focus on Jesus' Passion on the cross. The first [3] is addressed to Jesus himself, his arms spread wide, cleaving the heavens and the earth. Vinci's rhetorical treatment of the descriptive text paints a vivid picture of the cataclysmic rending of the temple veil.² In contrast, the sweetness of the kingdom of heaven revealed in the second half [4] inspires an ecstatic outpouring at the words 'oh desiata pace!' The stark ending of the *Prima parte*, evoking Old Testament scripture, gives way to the warmth and light of the new covenant of 'grazia, lume, amore!' in the final cadence.

² A thick veil separated that part of the Jerusalem temple when men were permitted to assemble from the Holy of Holies, where the spirit of God had its earthly dwelling-place; even the high priest was permitted to pass through the veil only once a year. The rending of the veil in an earthquake at the moment of Christ's death (reported in Matthew 27:50-51a) indicated that He was now the bridge between man and God.

In 'Pende l'alto Signor' [5] the poet paints an image of the crucifixion with the visual gestures of an artist, evoking the drawing of this scene that her friend Michelangelo had made for her (it now resides in the British Museum). Vinci responds with painterly gestures, illustrating the heavy weight of the hanging body, the hardness of the wooden cross. The high pitch of the second half of this madrigal [6] imbues the music with the same intense desire. Like a self-flagellating penitent, the poet begs to be cleansed with fire and pierced with hot shafts in order to earn the eternal life promised by His sacrifice.

In assigning his title, *Del venerdì santo*, to the next pair of madrigals, Vinci seems to be making a distinction between the glorious result of the Passion and the agony of death signified by the events of Good Friday. The cries of Eve, wailing her remorse for our banishment from Paradise, are set as sobbing half-step descents [7]. The sun hides its face in bare wisps of sound in the second half [8], the earth shakes and splits in octave leaps, and the weeping spirits echo Eve's wails. The weight of our own sorrow is laid bare in the stark final cadence.

Having reached the depths, the listener finds redemption through the sacrament of the Eucharist in the next pair of madrigals. Likening the intimate presence of Christ in the act of communion to the quiet miracle of His birth, Vinci wraps his listeners in the joyous comfort of the Lydian mode so often associated with the Nativity [9]. The text lists all the things that the Eucharist is not (not the stable, the manger, the shepherds, the gifts) to arrive at the happy confirmation of His presence at 'ma ci sei Tu'. The low, rich range of the second half [10] has a lulling effect, so that the abrupt shift to an A major trio comes as a shock, with its sense of the narrator's raw misery at not having been present at her Saviour's birth.

The holy day of Pentecost celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the followers of Christ 50 days after the Resurrection [11], described in the Bible as being 'like tongues of fire'. The imagery of ardour, gentle heat and light, coupled with the poet's description of Christ as her 'dearest lover', gave Vinci full licence to borrow from the musical language of love. The intimate nature of this outpouring is emphasised in the naked opening of the second part [12], where the poet speaks directly of herself, the unworthy shadow

of His light. The final line – ‘rendimi ognor più accesa, ognor più umile’ – contrasts the ardent desire to be ever more inflamed with the sincere wish to be rendered more humble.

The seventh to the tenth madrigal-pairs are devoted to the Virgin Mary, who serves as intercessor and link between the human and divine in the Catholic faith.

Vergine pura [13] explores the great mystery of God made man: the infant Christ known and nourished by the ideal image of womanhood, loved more purely than by any other mortal. The composer alternates between imitative writing and striking instances of homophony to call attention to the immediacy of God’s presence in Mary’s life. After listing Mary’s many connections to the deity – as worshipper, mother, spouse and child – Vinci focuses on the poet’s prayer [14], invoking the Queen of Heaven in bright and unified rhythms before breaking into a tender appeal to her universal motherhood.

Now the poet invokes the eighth-century Marian hymn ‘Ave maris stella’ in her description of the Virgin. Vinci inflects the opening motive [15] like an ancient chant, building the melismatic swirls of Mary’s mortal cloak to a climactic ten-note scale in the bass as he paints the virginal veil that hid the pure light of the deity from human eyes. The second half [16] opens intimately on the image of virgin and child, building quickly to a grand vision of their heavenly stature. The effect of this revelation is illustrated in an incantatory trio of high voices, expanding into the joyous cadence.

The story of Mary’s birth gave rise to the annual autumn feast day of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. Mary’s own conception was traditionally described as ‘immaculate’; her own birth to a virgin was thought to foretell her divine motherhood [17]. This dual feminine mystery appealed to Colonna, who for much of her life sought to live beyond the influence of men. The second part of the poem [18] borders on heresy, as she asks God not only to receive the Virgin’s prayers but in turn to pray to Mary to fill the poet with the divine spirit. Vinci illustrates the speaker’s certainty (‘So’ – ‘I know’) at the opening of this section with a series of single, long notes; the unblinking clarity of the open fifth is tempered with humility in the soft minor third that enters last. The wide-ranging bass line ranges from the highest note at the outset of the second part to the lowest, a twelfth below, on the final invocation of God.

The final madrigal for the Madonna is by far the most opaque in meaning, though the most crystalline in imagery – an ecstatic vision of the Annunciation [19]. In rarified terms it confronts the quandary of bashful chastity in a fecund state. The glory of the holy light within is likened to that of the sun god illuminating the world. Vinci's response is brief and brilliant, filled with darting *passaggi* and flashes of soaring tenor notes [20].

From the brilliance of the Annunciation, Vinci deliberately now moves to the dark shadows of Jesus' last days. As in the previous poem, the listener is thrust immediately into the narrative with the opening word [21]. The Last Supper is in progress, and Jesus has revealed to John, His dearest disciple, the terrible future that awaits Him. In pity Jesus offers His friend the oblivion of sleep; there He reveals a vision of God's plan that transforms John's pain to ecstasy. Colonna's invocation of the eagle (St John's heraldic symbol) is echoed by Vinci in his use of a higher range in the upper voices [22]; in contrast, the bass descends to a low E as sleep closes the disciple's eyes. The spare instrumentation we have used in our recording emphasises the intimacy of this poignant encounter.

The next pair of madrigals could be considered the most feminist of the set. Colonna depicts the courage of the lone Magdalen entering the tomb in the dark of night, sustained by her faith and love; she contrasts this fearless trust with the timorousness of the powerful men who dare not approach [23]. Vinci illustrates the woman's solitude with the barest texture at 'Di notte, sola,' growing to fullness at 'viva ardente speme.' In fear, the men perceive not a living flame but the shadow it casts. That shadow, set apart in a hushed B major chord ('ed ombra'), is banished by the flourish of running notes that celebrate women's steadfast hearts [24].

The penultimate madrigal bursts out 'Quanta gioia!' in an outpouring of veneration for the brilliant star which guided the magnificent kings from the East [25]. Vinci delights in illustrating the lowliness of the newborn King ('quanto più basso') with a low D in the bass, from which the tenors leap up on 'il Re!' The second half begins [26] with an awe-filled description of the humble stable, the numbing cold, the hard bed, each detail limned by the composer to help us experience the reality of the story. With the final tercet, one can feel the welling joy of the Magi with an increase in range and tempo, returning to the mood of the opening.

Vinci's choice for the final madrigal-pair may seem perplexing. Why, after celebrating Epiphany's glory, would the composer choose to end [27] with the dreadful story of Herod's slaughter of innocent babies? The answer may be that Colonna's response to the Biblical narrative seemed the most ecstatic of all her spiritual sonnets. The childless poet depicts the massacre solely from the point of view of the infants; except for their breasts, there is no mention of the mothers. Instead Colonna depicts an army of innocents uncorrupted by the world, serving as a shield for their infant King. Herod, symbolising the worst impulses of Man, has been foiled; for at the moment of their death, the tiny victims are transformed into winged cherubs, gaining immortal life after the briefest of mortal sojourns [28]. Vinci, like many visual artists of his day, makes the most of both the violent terrestrial imagery and the glorious heavenly flight. You can almost hear the wingbeats.

The Instruments

Nota Bene performs here on a set of Renaissance viols modelled on those built in Brescia during the time when Pietro Vinci was working there. The set includes three bass viols that are copies of an original instrument built around 1580 by the Brescian maker Zanetto Micheli that now resides in the Brussels Conservatoire Museum. All of them feature a cornerless, guitar-shaped body and soundholes in the characteristic Brescian 'f' pattern. In addition, we have a large bass viol tuned a fourth lower, built in the style of the Brescian maker Gasparo da Salò (very similar to the Zanetto instruments), and a smaller alto instrument in the same style, tuned a fifth higher than the three basses. All of these instruments were built by the Canadian luthier Ray Nurse in the 1980s, based on his own examination and measurement of a large number of surviving sixteenth-century Italian viols.

The set of five Brescian viols by Ray Nurse is augmented by a treble viol by Brazilian luthier Fernando Ferreira, based on the instrument by Giovanni Maria da Brescia which survives in the Ashmolean Museum.

The instruments are strung completely in gut and are played with a matched set of Renaissance bows built by Coen Engelhard.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze for the beautiful set of digitised copies of the original partbooks which served as the basis for our performing edition. I was also fortunate to have the opportunity to spend time with another complete set of these partbooks at the Sibley Music Library at the Eastman School of Music. My attention was first drawn to these madrigals by Ramie Targoff, whose *Renaissance Woman: The Life of Vittoria Colonna*³ is a wonderful and engaging source of information on the first woman poet to be published in Italy.

Nine of these sonnets exist in a manuscript that Colonna prepared personally for Michelangelo, though some differences exist between that copy and the source that Vinci used for his madrigals. When such differences occur, we have chosen to keep the text as Vinci set it. Nearly four decades had intervened between the time when the poet copied them out as a gift to her confidante and when they came to the attention of the composer. Vinci's attention to details of phrasing and word-painting suggests that the texts should be reproduced here as he set them. The translations for these nine sonnets are drawn from Abigail Brundin's *Sonnets for Michelangelo: A Bilingual Edition*,⁴ with slight changes to accommodate the differences noted above. I am grateful to Paola Servino for proofing my translations of the other five.

This project was funded in part by a grant from the Theodore and Jane Norman Fund.

The four members of the viol consort **Nota Bene** have been drawn together by their love of polyphony, with its demands and rewards – both musical and social. Polyphony requires musicians to pay attention, to take note of what each voice is saying, to remark on it, enhance it, and give it back to the ensemble as part of an ongoing dialogue. Violists feel fortunate to play a family of instruments that allow them to sing and converse on so many strata. Nota Bene is devoted to the rich repertoire of vocal and instrumental polyphony that arose on the European

³ Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2018.

⁴ Vittoria Colonna, *Sonnets for Michelangelo: A Bilingual Edition*, transl. Abigail Brundin, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005.

continent and in England, aided in large part by the advent of the printing press. At a time when people were questioning their place in society, in the expansion of the known world, in the decisions of government, in their personal faith, and in the cosmos itself, polyphony reflected the human struggle to be both individual and interconnected. Since the founding of their ensemble in 2012, the members of Nota Bene have been exploring what their instruments can teach them about the artistic ideals of the society that gave rise to those ideals, and how the words and music that survive can help musicians form a bond with people they cannot otherwise know.

Joanna Blendulf, Baroque cellist and violist, has performed and recorded with leading period-instrument ensembles throughout the United States and abroad. She is currently co-principal cellist and principal viola da gamba player of the Portland Baroque Orchestra and has performed as principal cellist of Pacific MusicWorks, Pacific Baroque Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, Indianapolis Baroque Orchestra, Apollo's Fire Baroque Orchestra and the New York Collegium. She is an avid chamber musician, performing regularly with the Catacoustic Consort, Ensemble Electra, Ensemble Mirable, Music of the Spheres, Nota Bene and Wildcat Viols. She is also sought after as a teacher and chamber-music coach and has served as a classroom and private instructor at the University of Oregon and the Berwick Academy. She is Associate Professor of Music in Baroque cello/viola da gamba at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.



Wendy Gillespie started playing the viola da gamba a long time ago. Her name can be found on more than 100 commercially released recordings, and she has performed on five continents, mostly as a founding member of the viol consort Fretwork and long-time member of the viol ensemble Phantasm. In 2017, after 32 years at Indiana University, she graduated to Professor Emerita at the Jacobs School of Music. She is Past President of the Viola da Gamba Society of America (not to mention past many other things), but continues to enjoy performing and teaching.



Sarah Mead is a sought-after teacher of viol and Renaissance performance practice who has performed in consort and as a lute-viol soloist around the USA, and overseas in places as far apart as New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Brazil and the UK. She served for seven years as Music Director of the annual Conclave of the Viola da Gamba Society of America and edits a quarterly selection of music and commentary on both recent and historical works for viols for the Society. Her performing editions of historical and original works for viols are published by PRB Productions. In 2007 she received the Thomas Binkley Award from Early Music America for her work with the Early Music Ensemble at Brandeis University, where she is a Professor of the Practice of Music and has chaired the program in Medieval and Renaissance Studies. She is a founding member and the musical director of Nota Bene.



Emily Walhout grew up playing cello and piano, but it was not until college that she discovered her love for Baroque bass lines. At Oberlin Conservatory she took up Baroque cello and viola da gamba, thus launching a lively career in early music. Especially captivated by the music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, she found her calling in the chamber ensembles The King's Noyse, La Luna and Les Délices, among others. As an orchestral player she has played principal cello, bass violin, viola da gamba or lirone throughout the US. Her solo playing has been described as 'soulful and expressive' by *The New York Times*. Recently she has embarked upon a new career path – as a therapeutic musician she plays bass viol one-on-one at the bedside of the sick and dying. The viol duo Heart's Ease, her collaboration with colleague Sarah Mead, was formed with the same intent – to bring healing music to those in healthcare settings.



Guest instrumentalist

A viol specialist since 1976, **Julie Jeffrey** has performed throughout the USA, in Canada, Mexico, Europe and Australia. She is a founding member of Sex Chordae Consort of Viols, Wildcat Viols, Antic Faces and The Barefoot All-Stars, and she embodies half of the viol duo Hallifax & Jeffrey. She is co-founder and co-director of Barefoot Chamber Concerts, and has served on the board of directors of The Viola da Gamba Society of America, The Pacifica Viola da Gamba Society and The San Francisco Early Music Society.



Guest vocalists

Anney Barrett, soprano, earned Master's degrees from the Longy School of Music in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy and from Lesley University in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. She has performed with ensembles including Cambridge Concentus, Labyrinth Choir, Schola Cantorum of Boston, Convivium Musicum, The Handel & Haydn Society and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. She also teaches private voice lessons, co-manages a multi-purpose arts studio near Boston, and works as a psychotherapist specialising in perinatal mental health. Anney studied Great Books at the University of Notre Dame with a focus on poetry.



Matthew Anderson has been praised for the warm tenor voice and polished musicality he brings to oratorio, opera and music theatre. An accomplished interpreter of the music of Bach, he sings regularly as a soloist in the renowned Emmanuel Music Bach Cantata Series in Boston. He has received particular acclaim for his portrayals of the Evangelists in Bach's Passions, which he has performed throughout the United States. He was twice a prize-winner in the American Bach Society Competition and winner of the second prize in the Oratorio Society of New York Solo Competition. He has appeared as soloist with ensembles such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Pops, the Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, the Mark Morris Dance Group and the Handel Choir of Baltimore.



Reviewers describe **Jason McStoots** as having an ‘alluring tenor voice’ (*ArtsFuse*) and as being ‘the consummate artist, wielding not just a sweet tone but also incredible technique and impeccable pronunciation’ (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*). In 2015 he won a Grammy award in Opera with the Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF) for a recording of music by Charpentier. He is a respected interpreter of mediaeval, Renaissance and Baroque music, and has recently appeared as Le Jeu in *Les plaisirs de Versailles* by Charpentier, Apollo in *Orfeo*, Eumete and Giove in *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*, both by Monteverdi (BEMF), the Evangelist in Bach’s *St Mark Passion* (with Emmanuel Music), the Evangelist and soloist in Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio*, tenor soloist in Purcell’s *King Arthur* (Bach Collegium San Diego) and soloist in Monteverdi’s *Vespers of 1610* (Green Mountain Project NYC). He is a core member of the ensemble Blue Heron and can be heard on all their recordings.



Michael Barrett, tenor, is a Boston-based conductor, singer, multi-instrumentalist and teacher. He has performed with many professional early-music ensembles, including Blue Heron, the Boston Camerata, the Huelgas Ensemble, Vox Luminis, the Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, Nederlandse Bachvereniging (Netherlands Bach Society), L’Académie, Seven Times Salt, Schola Cantorum of Boston and Exsultemus. He can be heard on the Harmonia Mundi, Blue Heron and Coro record labels. Since 2007 he has served as music director of Convivium Musicum, a chamber choir for Renaissance music. He also directs the Meridian Singers, a vocal ensemble based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Mass. He is currently an Assistant Professor at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he teaches undergraduate courses in conducting and European music history.



Steven Hrycelak, bass, lives mostly in the worlds of quite early and quite new music, as a soloist and ensemble performer. He is a member of Blue Heron, whose recording of the Peterhouse partbooks was awarded a *Gramophone* Classical Music Award in 2018, making it the first ensemble outside of Europe to win in the early-music category. Other early-music appearances include Portland Bach Experience, Pegasus, NYS Baroque, Publick Musick, Meridionalis and the Green Mountain Project. He is a member of the Choir of Trinity Wall Street and regularly performs with the Antioch Chamber Ensemble. He is an original member of the new-music vocal ensemble Ekmeles, and has appeared in The Mile-Long Opera, the MATA Festival, the Baryshnikov Arts Center, Ostrava Days and with Toby Twining Music, as well as in Matt Marks' opera *Mata Hari* for the Prototype Festival. He appeared in both New York and Buenos Aires in Claude Vivier's *Kopernikus* with the Americas Society.



Texts and Translations

The Petrarchan sonnet consists of an octave of two quatrains, which presents a proposition, followed by a sestet of two tercets, which proposes a resolution (the Prima parte and Seconda parte of Vinci's madrigal-pairs). Since the English translation is less compact than Colonna's original Italian, the layout here unfortunately has to do some violence to the integrity of the texts.

[1] Padre nostro del Ciel, con quanto amore,
con quanta grazia e in quanti vari modi
dal mondo e da se stesso l'uomo snodi
acciò libero a Te rivolga il core!
Rivolto, poi di puro interno ardore
l'accendi, e legghi con possenti nodi;
indi lo fermi con sì saldi chiodi
ch'ogni aspra morte li par dolce onore.

[2] Dal fermo stato poi nasce la fede,
da la fe' lume, e dal lume la speme,
e dal vero sperar fuochi più vivi,
perché non più rubello il senso crede
a lo spirto, onde al Ciel volano insieme
d'ogni cura mortal ritrosi e schivi.

Della Passione

[3] Le braccia prendo in croce, e l'alme e
pure
piaghe, largo, Signor, apristi il Cielo,
il Limbo, i sassi, i monumenti, e'l velo
del tempio antico, e l'ombre, e le figure.
Le menti umane infin allora oscure
illuminasti, e dileguando il gielo
le riempiesti d'un ardente zelo
ch'aperse poi le sacre Tue scritture.

O heavenly Father, with what love,
grace, light, sweetness and in how many ways do you
untie man from the world and his desires,
so that he may turn his heart freely towards you.
Once he has turned, with a pure internal flame
you set him alight, and you tether him with far
stronger bonds;
then you fix him with such secure nails
that even a cruel death seems to him a high honour.
From loyal thoughts faith then grows,
from that faith light, and from the light hope,
then from true hope yet brighter fires,
for our desires no longer rebel but cede
to the spirit, and together they fly up to the heavens
rejecting and disdaining all mortal cares.

Opening wide your arms upon the cross and
your blessed
and pure wounds, O Lord, you opened the heavens
and limbo, rent the rocks, monuments, and the veil.
that cloaked our eyes, the shadows and figures.
All human minds, until then immersed in
darkness,
you enlightened, and melting the ice
you filled them with a burning fervour,
revealing the meaning of your sacred texts.

[4] Mostrossi il dolce imperio e la bontade
che parve ascosa in quei tanti precetti
de l'aspra e giusta legge del timore;
oh desiata pace! oh benedetti
giorni felici! oh liberal pietade
che ne scoperse grazia, lume, amore!

Della Passione

[5] Pende l'alto Signor sul duro legno
per le nostre empie colpe, e'l tristo core
non prende tal virtù da quel valore,
che pender sol da Lui diventi degno.
Con divine parole il bel disegno
fece Ei del viver vero, e poi colore
gli die' col sangue, e che de l'opra amore
fosse cagion ne dà Se stesso in pegno.

[6] Viva di fiamma l'alma, e l'intelletto
di luce appaghi, e con questa e con quella
erga e rinforzi il purgato desire;
vengano a mille in me calde quadrella
da l'aspre piaghe, ond'io con vero effetto
prenda vita immortal dal Suo morire.

You showed them your sweet kingdom and
your
kindness, which seemed to be hidden by the
many rules
dictated by the harsh but just law of fear.
O welcome peace, O blessed and
happy days, O bountiful pity,
which conferred upon us grace, light and love!

The lofty Lord hangs upon the hard wood
for our wicked crimes, and yet a sorrowful heart
cannot draw virtue from such valour;
would that His hanging could make us worthy.
With heavenly words He fashioned the
beautiful design
of true life, and then gave it colour
with His blood; and love was the means by
which
he created his works, for which He gave
himself as pledge.
Set my soul alight with his flame, and satisfy
my mind with his light, and with the one and
the other
raise up and fortify my cleansed desire.
Let a thousand hot shafts pierce me
with harsh wounds, so that I may truly
receive eternal life from His death.*

Del Venerdì Santo

[7] Gli angeli eletti al gran bene infinito
braman oggi soffrir penosa morte
acciò nella celeste empirea corte
non sia più il servo che'l Signor gradito.
Piange l'antica madre il gusto ardito
ch'a' figli suoi del Ciel chiuse le porte,
e le due man piagate or sono scorte
da ridurne al camin per lei smarrito.

[8] Asconde il sol la sua lucida chioma,
spezzansi i sassi vivi, apronsi i monti,
trema la terra e'l ciel, turbansi l'acque,
piangon gli spirti al nostro mal sì pronti
de le catene lor l'aggiunta soma;
non piange l'uom, che pur piangendo nacque.

Del Sacramento

[9] Qui non è il loco umil, né le pietose
braccia della gran Madre, né i pastori,
né del pietoso vecchio i dolci amori,
né l'angeliche voci alte e gioiose,
né dei re sapienti le pompose
offerte, fatte con soavi ardori,
ma ci sei Tu, che Te medesimo onori,
Signor, cagion di tutte l'altre cose.

The chosen angels in endless bliss
long today to suffer painful death,
lest the shining heavenly palace
be more welcoming to the servant than to its
Lord.

Our ancient mother [Eve] weeps that her bold
tasting
shut the doors of Paradise to her children;
now these two wounded hands are the guides
to return us to the path from which she led us
astray.

The sun hides its shining tresses,
the living rock splits apart, mountains burst
open,
the earth and heavens shake, the waters roil;
the wailing spirits, ever ready to harm us,
moan at the added weight of their chains;
man alone does not cry, for he is born
weeping.*

This is not the humble dwelling, nor these the
loving
arms of the holy mother, nor the shepherds,
nor the sweet affection of that pious old man,
nor the high and joyful angelic voices,
nor the magnificent gifts of the wise
kings offered with grateful fervour;
yet you are here, you who bring honour upon
yourself,
My Lord, creator of all things.

[10] So che quel vero che nascesti Dio
sei qui, né invidia altrui, ma ben pietade
ho sol di me, non ch'io giungessi tardo;
non è il tempo infelice, ma son io
misera, che per fede ancor non ardo
come essi per veder Ti in quella etade.

Del Spirito Santo

[11] Divino spirto, il cui soave ardore
ne infiamma, e col gran Padre in dolce
modo,
per mezzo del Signor nostro, ad un nodo
lega l'alme ben nate in vero amore,
tante grazie e non più pò darti il core
quanto lume riceve, e quel sol lodo
che, tua mercede, intendo, e mentre godo
del foco sacro tuo ti rendo onore.

[12] Io per me sono un'ombra indegna e vile,
sol per virtù de l'alme piaghe sante
del mio Signor, non per mio merto viva;
Egli giusta mi rende, sciolta e priva
del vecchio Adamo, e tu, mio caro amante,
rendimi ognor più accesa, ognor più umile.

I know that the truth that you were born a God
is here, and I do not envy others, but I do feel
pity
for myself, not because I arrived too late
or because it is our age that is unhappy, but I
am wretched because I do not yet burn with
faith
as they do who saw you in that first state.

Holy spirit, whose gentle heat
sets us aflame, and with the mildness of the
Father
by means of our Lord, with a knot
binds well-born souls in true love;
my heart can only begin to thank you for how
much
light it has received, and can only praise
that which, by your grace, I understand, and
– rejoicing
in this holy flame – render You honour.
As for myself, I am a vile, unworthy shadow;
only through the power of the blessed wounds
of my Lord, not by my own deserving, do I
live;
He renders me righteous, absolved and
released
from the Old Adam, and you, my dearest
lover,
render me ever more enflamed, ever more
humble.*

Della Madonna

[13] Vergine pura, che dai raggi ardenti
Del vero sol ti godi eterno giorno,
Il cui bel lume in questo vil soggiorno
Tenne i begli occhi tuoi paghi e contenti;
Uomo il vedesti, e Dio, quando i lucenti
Suoi spirti fer l'albergo umil adorno
Di chiari lumi, e timidi d'intorno
I tuoi ministri al grand'ufficio intenti.

[14] Immortal Dio nascosto in mortal velo
L'adorasti Signor, figlio il nudristi,
L'amasti sposo et l'onorasti padre;
Prega lui dunque ch'i miei giorni tristi
Ritorni in lieti, e tu, donna del cielo,
Vogli in questo desio mostrarti madre.

Della Madonna

[15] Stella del nostro mar, chiara e sicura,
che'l Sol del Paradiso in terra ornasti
del mortal sacro manto, anzi adombrasti
col vel virgineo tuo Sua luce pura,
chi guarda al gran miracol più non cura
del mondo vile, e i vani empî contrasti
sdegna de l'oste antico, poi ch'armasti
d'invitta alta virtù nostra natura.

Pure Virgin, you who in the burning rays
of the true sun bask in eternal day,
whose beautiful light, during your toilsome
earthly life,
kept your lovely eyes serene and contented;
you beheld him, both man and God,
when his bright spirits adorned his humble
dwelling
with a great light, and your ministers timidly
gathered round intent on their great office.
Immortal God hidden in a mortal veil,
you worshipped him as Lord, nurtured him as
son,
loved him as husband, and honoured him as
father;
therefore pray to him now that my sad days
may be transformed to joy, and may you, lady
of heaven,
act as a mother to me in this my desire.

Clear and sure star of our sea,
you who adorned the heavenly sun here on
earth
with a sacred mortal mantle and even tempered
its strong pure light with your virginal veil,
he who beholds this great miracle no longer
heeds the vile world and scorns the many
ungodly
assaults of our ancient enemy, since you arm
our nature with courage and noble virtue.

[16] Veggio il Figliuol di Dio nudrirsi al seno
d'una vergine madre, ed ora insieme
risplender con la veste umana in Cielo;
onde là su nel sempre bel sereno
al beato s'accende il vivo zelo,
al fedel servo qui la cara speme.

Nativita della Madonna

[17] Rinasca in Te il mio cor quest'almo
giorno
che nacque a noi colei di cui nascesti;
l'animo excelso Tuo l'ali ne presti
per gir volando al vero alto soggiorno.
Di molte rai da pria consperso intorno
era'l suo mortal velo, e mille desti
sempre al ben far pensieri alti ed onesti;
poi dentro il fer di maggior lume adorno.

[18] So ch'ella prega Te per noi, ma, o pio
Signor, prega Tu lei che preghi in modo
ch'io senta oprar in me sua vital forza,
ond'io sciogliendo, anzi spezzando'l nodo
che qui mi lega, questa umana scorza
serva a lo spirto, e sol lo spirto a Dio.

I see the son of God nourish himself at the
breast
of a virgin mother, and now I see
their mortal forms shine above us together in
heaven,
so that in paradise, in heavenly peace,
the blessed one is filled with great zeal,
.and here on earth, his faithful servant with
joyous hope.

Let my heart be reborn in you on this glorious
day
on which she who bore you was herself born,
and may your divine being lend my heart wings
to fly up to its true lofty resting place.
Her mortal body was from the beginning
surrounded
by a multitude of rays of light, and you gave her
a thousand noble and honest inspirations to do
good,
which made that body shine with yet a greater
light within.

I know that she prays to you on our behalf, but,
Holy Father, pray to her that through her prayers
her vital energy may fill my being,
so that I may untie or even break apart the knots
that bind me to this place, and this mortal shell
will serve my spirit alone, and my spirit only
God.

Della Madonna

[19] Quando senza spezzar né aprir la porta
del bel cristallo, ov'era chiuso intorno,
volse uscir fuor per far al mondo giorno
quel Sol, che sempre gli è fidata scorta,
la castità, benché si fosse accorta
che l'era onor e non vergogna o scorno
il Suo venir, pur timida al ritorno
le si fe' incontro pallidetta e smorta;
[20] ma la fede la tenne, e disse ch'ella
guardasse Apollo, il cui raggio lucente
rende col suo passar ciascuna stella,
e che questo più chiaro e più possente
mentre toccherà lei sempre più bella
risplender la farà di gente in gente.

Di san Giovanni Evangelista

[21] Quando quell'empio tradimento aperse
Gesù contra Sé ordito al caro amato
discepol, ch'in sembiante sì turbato,
tacendo, quasi agli altri il discoversi,
per me' celarlo il bel grembo gli offerse;
ma, pria che fosse il duol oltra passato
dal core, e'l viso avesse anco bagnato,
il sonno chiuse gli occhi e'l duol coverse,

When, without breaking or opening the door
of fair crystal which closed him within,
that Sun which had always been her trusted guide
desired to go out to bring light to the world,
Chastity, although she realised that His coming
was an honour and no shame or scorn to her,
quite bashful, upon His return
met Him wan and pale;
but Faith sustained her, and told her to
observe Apollo, whose ray makes
every star shine with its passage,
and that this one, yet more radiant and powerful,
when it touches her, will make her shine even
more
brilliantly to all who see her.*

When Jesus revealed to his dearly beloved
disciple the enormous betrayal that would be
committed
against him, in silence his ravaged
features almost revealed his suffering to the
other men,
but the good master offered him his breast;
and before the pain had left
his heart, and the tears dried upon his face,
sleep closed his eyes and numbed his torment,

[22] ond'ei cadde nel dolce letto, e volo
non fece augel già mai tant'alto quanto
volò, cadendo alor, l'Aquila altera.
Alzata al Ciel, ivi di sfera in sfera
le stelle tutte e l'uno e l'altro polo
vide. Oh riposo glorioso e santo!

Della Maddalena

[23] La bella donna, a cui dolente preme
quel gran desio che sgombra ogni paura,
di notte, sola, inerme, umile e pura,
armata sol di viva ardente speme,
entra dentro'l sepolcro, e piange e geme;
gli angeli lascia e più di sé non cura,
ma a' piedi del Signor cade sicura,
ch'èl cor, ch'arde d'amor, di nulla teme.

[24] Ed agli uomini, eletti a grazie tante,
forti, insieme rinchiusi, il Lume vero
per timor parve nudo spirito ed ombra;
onde, se'l ver dal falso non s'adombra,
convien dar a le donne il preggio intero
d'aver il cor più acceso e più costante.

and thus he fell upon a soft bed,
and no eagle ever flew as high
as the divine eagle in that moment of his falling.
Having risen to the heavens, where he saw from
one sphere
to the other all of the stars and both of the
poles.
O what a glorious and blessed rest!

The beautiful lady, her sorrow outweighed by
that great longing which dispels all fear,
by night, alone, unprotected, meek and pure,
armed only with the living flame of hope,
enters into the tomb, weeps and moans;
she ignores the angels, and gives no thought to
herself,
but at the feet of the Lord falls trustingly down:
for the heart which burns with love fears nothing.
Moreover, to the men – elected to such grace,
strong, withdrawn together – the true Light
seems, in their fearfulness, a mere ghost, a
shade;
thus, if truth is not obscured by falsehood,
it behooves us to give women the greatest
honour
for having the most ardent and most steadfast
hearts.*

De' Tre Maggi

[25] Quanta gioia, tu segno e stella ardente,
alor che i vivi bei raggi fermaste
sul tugurio felice, al cor mandaste
dei saggi re del bel ricco oriente!
E voi, quanto più basso il Re possente,
fasciato, picciolin, pover trovaste,
più grande, alto, Il vedeste, e più L'amaste,
ch'al Ciel tanta umiltà v'alzò la mente!

[26] Il loco, gli animali, il freddo e'l fieno
davano, e i panni vili, e'l duro letto
de l'alta Sua bontà sicuro segno;
e per la stella e per lo chiaro aspetto
de la possanza, avendo in mano il pegno,
L'adoraste col cor di gioia pieno.

Delli Innocenti

[27] Puri Innocenti, il vostro invito e forte
Duca parte, e vi lascia soli inermi,
e vuol che i vostri petti siano schermi
a le Sue spalle. Oh benedetta sorte!
Erode con le voglie inique e torte
incide e spezza i bei teneri germi,
ed Ei ne rende a voi gli eterni e fermi
frutti, e vita immortal per breve morte.

How much joy you brought to the hearts
of the wise kings from the magnificent East,
O sign and burning star, when you fixed your
beautiful
living rays upon that happy lowly hut.
And you kings, how much more did you love
your own great king,
how much higher and more powerful did you
consider him,
the more lowly you found him then, swaddled,
tiny and poor,
and his great humility lifted your souls to heaven.
The stable, the animals, the cold, and the hay,
and his poor rags, and his hard bed,
all were a sure sign of his celestial grace;
then, your hearts filled with joy, you worshipped
that star and the sweet countenance
of our Lord, holding your gifts before you.

Pure innocent ones, your fearless and brave
Leader
is departing, leaving you alone and unprotected,
and he wishes you to use your breasts as shields
behind him. O blessed fortune!
Herod's iniquitous and twisted desires
cut down and smash these tender young shoots,
and he confers upon you the eternal and sure
fruits of eternal life through a swift death.

[28] Tolti dal latte, deste il pianto solo
per parole ai martiri, ed Egli ornati
v'ha di celesti palme e santi allori;
a pena eran sugli omer vostri nati
i vanni, o cari e pargoletti amori,
ch'alzaste infin al Cielo il primo volo.

Snatched from the breast, you raise your cries
as your only reply to this torment, and Christ
has adorned you
with celestial palms and sacred laurel crowns;
the wings had hardly sprouted upon your
shoulders, O sweet tiny cherubs,
than your very first flight raised you to the
heavens.

*Translations by Abigail Brundin, from Vittoria Colonna,
Sonnets for Michelangelo: A Bilingual Edition,
transl. Abigail Brundin, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005,
and * by Sarah Mead*



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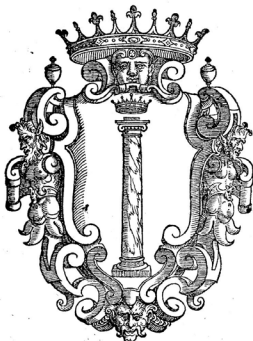
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Recorded on 2–4 July 2019 in Harlan Chapel, Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass.
Producer, engineer and editor: Brad Michel (www.bradmichel.com)

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Cover design: David Baker (david@notneverknow.com)

Typesetting and layout: Kerrypress, St Albans

Executive Producer: Martin Anderson

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