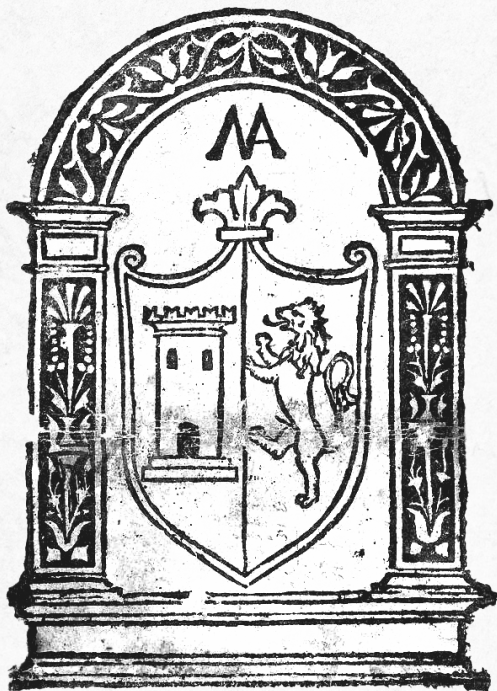


MUSIC IN THE PAVILION

AN EVENING OF ITALIAN MADRIGALS

PERFORMED BY BLUE HERON VOICE ENSEMBLE



March 22, 2024

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Music in the Pavilion

An Evening of Italian Madrigals

BLUE HERON VOICE ENSEMBLE

Kim Leeds, Sophie Michaux & Laura Pudwell, mezzo-sopranos

William Hite, Jason McStoots & Corey Shotwell, tenors

Daniel Fridley & Paul Guttry, basses

with

Jade Guerra, speaker (English)

Scott Metcalfe, artistic director

University of Pennsylvania student readers for II. The birds & the breeze:

Marcus Papandrea, Ph.D. student, FIGS-Italian Studies (Petrarca)

Luke Finkelstein C'25 (Tasso)

Musical Sources

Adrian Willaert

Musica quatuor vocum (1545)

Dulces exuvie

Cipriano de Rore

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mus. MS B (1559)

Dissimulare etiam sperasti

Giaches de Wert

Il primo libro de madrigali a quattro voci (1561)

Dolci spoglie, felice care tanto

Il settimo libro de madrigali a cinque voci (1581)

Giunto a la tomba ove al suo spiro vivo

L'ottavo libro de madrigali a cinque voci (1586)

Forsennata gridava: O tu che porte

Vezzosi augelli infra le verdi fronde

Il nono libro de madrigali a cinque et sei voci (1588)

Ha ninfe adorne e belle

Padre del ciel, dopo i perduti giorni

Quel rossignol, che si soave piagne

Luca Marenzio

Il primo libro de madrigali a sei voci (1581)

L'aura serena che fra verdi fronde

Libro primo de madrigali spirituali (1584)

Padre del cielo, hor ch'altra nube il calle

Madrigali a quattro voci ... libro primo (1585)

Vezzosi augelli infra le verdi fronde

Paolo Virchi

Il primo libro de madrigali a cinque voci (1584)

Non fonte o fiume od aura

Girolamo Belli

Il terzo libro de madrigali a sei voci (1593)

Chiaro sol, che rotando esci del Gange

Program

Torquato Tasso &
Giaches de Wert

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II. The birds & the breeze

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Vezzosi augelli infra le verdi fronde
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III. Dido

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 Virgil, *Aeneid* IV, 305-19
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 Aeneid IV, 651-58
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 After *Aeneid* IV, 651-58 & 663-65

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V. From the Ganges to the Po

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About the Ensemble

Blue Heron has been acclaimed by *The Boston Globe* as “one of the Boston music community’s indispensables” and hailed by Alex Ross in *The New Yorker* for its “expressive intensity.” The ensemble ranges over a wide repertoire from plainchant to new music, with particular specialities in 15th-century Franco-Flemish polyphony and early 16th-century English sacred music, and is committed to vivid live performance informed by the study of original source materials and historical performance practices.

Founded in 1999, Blue Heron presents a concert series in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and has appeared at the Boston Early Music Festival; in New York City at Music Before 1800, The Cloisters (Metropolitan Museum of Art), and the 92nd Street Y; at the Library of Congress, the National Gallery of Art, and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C.; at the Berkeley Early Music Festival; at Yale University, the University of Chicago, and the University of California, Davis; in Cleveland, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Montreal, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Providence, St. Louis, San Luis Obispo, Seattle, and Vancouver; and in England, Germany, and Belgium. Blue Heron has been in residence at the Center for Early Music Studies at Boston University and at Boston College and has enjoyed collaborations with A Far Cry, Dark Horse Consort, Les Délices, Parthenia, Piffaro, and Ensemble Plus Ultra.

Blue Heron’s first CD, featuring music by Guillaume Du Fay, was released in 2007. Between 2010 and 2017 the ensemble issued a 5-CD series of *Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks* (available as a set entitled *The Lost Music of Canterbury*), including many world premiere recordings of works copied around 1540 for Canterbury Cathedral and restored by Nick Sandon; the fifth CD in the series was awarded the 2018 Gramophone Classical Music Award for Early Music. Jessie Ann Owens and Blue Heron won the 2015 Noah Greenberg Award from the American Musicological Society to support the world premiere recording of Cipriano de Rore’s *I madrigali a cinque voci*, released in 2019. In 2015 Blue Heron inaugurated *Ockeghem@600*, a multi-season project to commemorate the circa-600th birthday of Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1420-1497) by performing his complete works, finishing up in 2023. A parallel project to record all of Ockeghem’s songs bore its first fruits in 2019 with the release of *Johannes Ockeghem: Complete Songs, Volume 1*, which was named to the *Bestenliste* of the *Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik*; Volume 2 will follow this spring. Blue Heron’s recordings also include a CD accompanying Thomas Forrest Kelly’s book *Capturing Music: The Story of Notation*, the live recording *Christmas in Medieval England*, a compilation of medieval songs entitled *A 14th-Century Salmagundi*, and (in collaboration with Les Délices) a live recording of a concert production of Guillaume de Machaut’s *Remede de Fortune*.



Daniel Fridley

Daniel Fridley, bass, moved to Boston after receiving his Doctorate of Musical Arts in 2021 from the Case Western Reserve University Historical Performance Practice program, where he studied with Ellen Hargis and Jesse Blumberg. He graduated in 2017 from the Cleveland Institute of Music with a Masters of Music in Vocal Performance. His “spotless, resonant bass” (Cleveland Classical) lends itself well to both early music and opera. Performance credits from recent seasons include bass soloist in Monteverdi’s *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (Upper Valley Baroque), bass soloist in Handel’s *Messiah* (Bourbon Baroque), Basilio in Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Teatro Nuovo), Pretore in Rossini’s *La gazza ladra* (Teatro Nuovo), bass soloist in J.S. Bach’s *Coffee Cantata* (Wyoming Baroque), Dottore Grenvil in Verdi’s *La Traviata* (The Cleveland Opera), Jesus in J.S. Bach’s *St. John Passion* (Atlanta Baroque), and Polyphemus in Handel’s *Acis and Galatea* (CWRU). Fridley sings regularly with Boston Baroque, Culomba, the Newberry Consort, and other ensembles.



Jade Guerra

Jade Guerra is a Boston-based actor and educator. She is a member of Theatre Espresso, an educational company that tours around New England, bringing history to life for children and adults, and a resident company member of Actors Shakespeare Project (ASP). Her recent credits include a reading of *The Taming of the Shrew* on Zoom (ASP), *Miracle on 34th Street* (Greater Boston Stage Co.), *King Lear* (ASP), and a reading of *Young Nerds of Color* (Central Square Theatre).



Paul Guttry

Bass-baritone **Paul Guttry** has performed throughout the USA and internationally with Sequentia, Chanticleer, the Boston Camerata, and New York’s Ensemble for Early Music. A founding member of Blue Heron, he has also appeared in and around Boston as soloist with Emmanuel Music, the Handel & Haydn Society, the Boston Early Music Festival, the Tanglewood Music Center; Cantata Singers, Boston Cecilia, Prism Opera, Boston Revels, Collage, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and Intermezzo. Paul can be heard on Blue Heron’s recordings and on discs of medieval music by Sequentia.



William Hite

Tenor **William Hite's** reputation as an expressive and engaging artist has led to appearances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, Odyssey Opera, Charlotte Symphony, and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. He has performed and recorded extensively with many leading early music ensembles including Sequentia and the Boston Camerata. As a soloist he has appeared with the Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, Tafelmusik, Philharmonia Baroque, and the Newberry Consort. His long tenure with the Boston Early Music Festival included the role of Bogda in Mattheson's *Boris Goudenow* about which *Opera News* said "... comic relief never felt so good. Hite simply stole the show." Recent and upcoming engagements include Johann Theile's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Arcadia Chamber Players, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with Boston's Cantata Singers, and Bach cantatas with Viva Bach Peterborough. His discography of over 40 recordings includes Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (Aston Magna), Handel's *Acis and Galatea* (Musica Angelica), and *Messiah* (The Apollo Chorus). He is Professor of Voice at UMass Amherst, coordinator of the Voice Area, and coproducer of the UMass Bach Festival and Symposium.



Kim Leeds

Praised for her "rich, smooth mezzo soprano" (*St. Louis Post*), **Kim Leeds** has appeared as a soloist with Apollo's Fire, Bach Akademie Charlotte, Back Bay Chorale, Les Délices, Handel Society of Dartmouth, Cantata Collective, Artek, Ad Astra Musical Festival, True Concord, Bach Society of St. Louis, Tafelmusik, and the Oregon Bach Festival. As a choral artist, Ms. Leeds has performed with the Weimar Bach Academy, the Junges Stuttgart Bach Ensemble, the Handel & Haydn Society, the Grammy-nominated ensembles Clarion Society and Seraphic Fire, and Grammy-award winning ensemble The Crossing. Ms. Leeds has garnered multiple accolades, including winning the Tafelmusik Vocal Competition in 2016, being selected as a Virginia Best Adams Fellow at the 2017 Carmel Bach Festival, working with Philippe Herreweghe as a Britten-Pears Young Artist in 2019, and being a semi-finalist in the New York Oratorio Competition in 2022. Last year Ms. Leeds co-founded Filigree, a New England-based early music ensemble. She can be heard on the 2017 Boston Modern Orchestra Project recording of Jeremy Gill's *Before the Wrestling Tides* and on Blue Heron's *Johannes Ockeghem: Complete Songs*, vol. 1.



Jason McStoots

Reviewers have praised **Jason McStoots** as having an “alluring tenor voice” (*ArtsFuse*) and as “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 their recording of works by Charpentier. His recent stage appearances in period-style baroque opera with BEMF include *Le Jeu* in *Les plaisirs de Versailles* by Charpentier, Apollo in Monteverdi’s *Orfeo*, and Eumete and Giove in Monteverdi’s *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*. Other recent solo performances include Pedrillo in Mozart’s *Abduction from the Seraglio*, Bach’s Christmas Oratorio and St. Mark Passion with Emmanuel Music, and Monteverdi’s *Vespers of 1610* with the Green Mountain Project. He has appeared with Boston Lyric Opera, Pacific MusicWorks, Boston Camerata, TENET, San Juan Symphony, The Bach Ensemble, Pablo Casals Festival, Early Music Guild of Seattle, Tragicomedia, and the Tanglewood Music Center. He is a core member of Blue Heron and can be heard on all their recordings. With BEMF, he appears on recordings of Lully’s *Psyché* (nominated for a Grammy), Handel’s *Acis and Galatea* (as Damon), John Blow’s *Venus and Adonis* (soloist), and Charpentier’s *Actéon* (as Orphée).



Scott Metcalfe

Scott Metcalfe is widely recognized as one of North America’s leading specialists in music from the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries and beyond. Musical and artistic director of Blue Heron since its founding in 1999, he was music director of New York City’s Green Mountain Project from 2010-19 and has been guest director of TENET (New York), the Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), Emmanuel Music (Boston), the Toronto Consort, The Tudor Choir and Seattle Baroque, Pacific Baroque Orchestra (Vancouver, BC), Quire Cleveland, and the Dryden Ensemble (Princeton, NJ), in music ranging from Machaut to Bach and Handel. He also enjoys a career as a baroque violinist, playing with Les Délices (dir. Debra Nagy), L’Harmonie des Saisons (dir. Eric Milnes), and other ensembles. Metcalfe’s scholarly work, centered on the historical performance practice of medieval and Renaissance vocal music, has been published in numerous program and recording notes, and he is the author of two essays in a long-forthcoming book on the Peterhouse partbooks and two articles (one published in 2022 and another forthcoming) in the *Journal of the Alamire Foundation*. He has edited music by Francisco de Peñalosa for Antico Edition (UK) and songs from the Leuven chansonnier for the Alamire Foundation (Belgium); other editions are in the works, including a new edition of the songs of Gilles Binchois (c. 1400-1460). He has taught at Boston University and Harvard University, served as director of the baroque orchestra at Oberlin Conservatory, and been a visiting member of the faculty of Music History at the New England Conservatory. He received a bachelor’s degree from Brown University (1985), where he majored in biology, and a master’s degree in historical performance practice from Harvard (2005).



Sophie Michaux

Praised for her “warm, colorful mezzo” by *Opera News*, **Sophie Michaux** has become one of North- America’s most versatile and compelling vocalists. Born in London and raised in the French Alps, Sophie’s unique background informs her artistic identity, making her feel at home in an eclectic span of repertoire ranging from grand opera to French cabaret songs. Recent solo engagements include the role of Alcina in Caccini’s *La Liberation di Ruggiero dall’Isola d’Alcina* (Haymarket

Opera), Olofernes in Scarlatti’s *La Giuditta* (Haymarket Opera), a tour of Hawai’i with Les Délices, the alto solos in the *Handel’s Dixit Domino* (Upper Valley Baroque), and De Falla’s *El Amor Brujo* (Lowell Chamber Orchestra). She is thrilled to collaborate with Blue Heron, The Lorelei Ensemble, Les Délices, the Boston Early Music Festival, Roomful of Teeth, Bach Collegium San Diego, Palaver Strings, and others. Last season, she took part in Lorelei Ensemble’s US tour, premiering *Her Story* by Julia Wolfe with the Boston, Chicago, Nashville, and San Francisco Symphony Orchestras.



Laura Pudwell

Grammy-nominated mezzo-soprano **Laura Pudwell** has established a superb reputation through her performances in London, Paris, Salzburg, Houston, Vienna, and Boston. Ms. Pudwell sings a vast repertoire ranging from early music to contemporary works, and has received international acclaim for her recordings. She is best known in Boston for her appearances in operas presented by the Boston Early Music Festival. A frequent guest of many national and international presenters,

she has had the privilege of working with many outstanding conductors, including Hans Graf, Hervé Niquet, Andrew Parrott, Ivars Taurins, David Fallis, Brian Jackson, John Sinclair, Bernard Labadie, Lydia Adams, Howard Dyck and Robert Cooper. On the opera stage, Ms. Pudwell has performed across Canada with such companies as Opera Atelier, the Calgary Opera, Vancouver Early Music, and Festival Vancouver, as well as with the Houston Grand Opera and the Cleveland Opera. Her many roles include Cornelia (*Giulio Cesare*), Marcelina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Nerone and Arnalta (*L’Incoronazione di Poppea*), Mrs. Quickly (*Falstaff*), and Dido/ Sorceress (*Dido and Aeneas*), which also was an award-winning recording performed by Ms. Pudwell in Paris. She is a regular participant in many festivals, including Festival Vancouver, the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, the Banff Summer Festival, the Elora Festival, the Boston Early Music Festival, the Grand River Baroque Festival, and the WinterPark Bach Festival in Orlando. Ms. Pudwell appears regularly with the Toronto Consort, and is a frequent guest soloist with Tafelmusik, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, the Toronto Chamber Choir, Symphony Nova Scotia, the St. Lawrence Choir, Le Concert Spirituel, Chorus Niagara, and the Menno Singers. Ms. Pudwell lives in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, with her husband and two children.



Corey Shotwell

Corey Shotwell is a tenor specializing in the performance of music from the 14th through the 18th centuries, both as a soloist and ensemble member, with a particular passion for the music of the 17th and 18th centuries. His performances as the Evangelist in Bach's St. John Passion have received high acclaim for his "dramatic involvement and seeming ease"; his "involvement in the text and its declamation was total" (*ClevelandClassical.com*). Recent season highlights include performances with the Oregon Bach Festival, San Diego Bach Collegium, Bach Akademie Charlotte, Apollo's Fire, Boston Early Music Festival, Carmel Bach Festival, The Newberry Consort, and Alkemie Medieval Music Ensemble. Corey recently earned his M.M.A. in Early Music, Oratorio, and Chamber Ensemble from the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University. He also holds degrees from Western Michigan University and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Originally from West Michigan, Corey now resides in New Haven, Connecticut, and serves as an adjunct voice instructor at Mt. Holyoke College in Massachusetts.

Program Notes

by Scott Metcalfe

Tasso and Wert

and Petrarch and Virgil and Marenzio and Laura and Anna and Livia
and Dido and Armida and Tancredi and Clorinda ...

The initial inspiration behind this program was twofold, and seemed straightforward. I had worked on a few pieces by Giaches de Wert, most notably his *Mia benigna fortuna*, an astonishing setting of a pair of stanzas from a double sestina by Francesco Petrarca, and I wanted to explore his music further. I was also acquainted with a few marvellous lines of poetry by Torquato Tasso, including the sequence from his epic *Gerusalemme liberata* that tells the story of the battle between Tancredi and Clorinda, famous from Claudio Monteverdi's *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*. Wert also set a later part of that story, when Tancredi visits Clorinda's tomb, in *Giunto a la tomba*. Blue Heron had spent a lot of time with Petrarch settings from the first part of the fifteenth century and had made a complete recording of Cipriano de Rore's first book of madrigals from 1542, featuring a lot of Petrarch sonnets. I wanted to explore the changes that mark the madrigals of the century's later decades, the turn away from Petrarch as the poet most frequently set by madrigal composers, and the emergence of new, increasingly dramatic styles of composition and performance that flowed into the invention of opera, and I thought we'd start with a program focussed on Tasso and Wert.

Torquato Tasso

The most famous and influential poet of late sixteenth-century Italy, Torquato Tasso was born March 11, 1544, in Sorrento, on the southern shore of the Bay of Naples. His father was the poet and courtier Bernardo Tasso from Bergamo; his mother, Porzi de' Rossi, a member of an aristocratic family from Pistoia, died in 1556, after which Torquato moved with his father around the Italian peninsula, with sojourns in Salerno, Rome, Urbino, and Venice. A poet from a young age, Torquato as a teenager had already begun to draft an epic on the subject of

the First Crusade, and he published his first work, *Rinaldo*, in 1562. He studied first law, then philosophy and rhetoric, at the University of Padua, transferring in 1563 to the University of Bologna. He continued to travel, but in 1571 joined the court of Alfonso II d'Este in Ferrara. By the mid-1570s he was experiencing more and more symptoms of the psychological troubles that would eventually lead to his confinement in the Ospedale Sant'Anna, where he was held prisoner from 1579 until 1586. Finally released at the behest of Vincenzo Gonzaga, prince of Mantua, Tasso resumed his wanderings, in late 1594 ending up in Rome, where he was granted a papal pension and was to receive a poetic coronation when he fell into a last illness, dying on April 2, 1595.

Despite the difficult circumstances of Tasso's life, he wrote prolifically, producing around 1600 poems—the *Rime*—as well as the pastoral “favola boschereccia” *Aminta*, the epic *Gerusalemme liberata*, and more, and he revised obsessively, returning again and again to refine and reimagine his creations. The first editions of *Gerusalemme* appeared in 1581, while Tasso remained confined in Sant'Anna, followed by publication of his *Rime e prose*. His poetry was greatly favored by composers, who have left us nearly 800 settings, especially favoring the lyrics of the *Rime*, with less than a third as many settings of octaves from *Gerusalemme*. Wert is exceptional in this regard, for of his twelve settings of Tasso's verses, seven are from *Gerusalemme*, the rest being occasional pieces like the encomium to the Este country estate Mesola with which we close our program.

Giaches de Wert

Born in 1535 in Flanders, Giaches de Wert was taken to Italy as a boy. He had entered the service of members of the Gonzaga family by around 1550, and spent the early 1550s in Novellara (a small town lying about 25 miles south of Mantua), Mantua, and Ferrara, in the latter city meeting the slightly older, brilliant Cipriano de Rore. After a period as *maestro di cappella* in Milan, in 1565 he was appointed *maestro di cappella* at the ducal chapel of Santa Barbara in Mantua, where he would spend the rest of his life. In the 1570s he had increasing contact with the Este court in Ferrara, meeting Tasso, writing madrigals for the Ferrarese *concerto delle dame* (about which more below), and for five years carrying on a secret affair with the celebrated musician and poet Tarquinia Molza which, when exposed in 1589, led to her banishment from Ferrara, a relationship between a noble woman and a commoner like Wert being considered improper. In Ferrara, too, he seems to have met the younger composer Luca Marenzio, sometime between late 1580 and mid-1581, the two composers both setting *Giunto a la tomba* and *Vezzosi augelli* from Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*. (We perform both men's *Vezzosi augelli* today, as well as Wert's *Giunto a la tomba*; Marenzio's *Giunto a la tomba* will appear on a future program.) Wert's health began to fail in the 1580s, apparently due to malaria, which was endemic to the low-lying wetlands of the Po Valley in which Mantua lay, and he died of it on May 6, 1596.

Although Wert wrote a great deal of sacred music, most of it was destined specifically for the liturgy of Mantua's Santa Barbara and remained unpublished, its use restricted to the private use of the ducal chapel. In his lifetime, as today, he was known principally as a composer of madrigals, one of the most important of the second half of the sixteenth century. As noted above, he left us twelve settings of Tasso, most of which were published in madrigal collections associated with Ferrara.

As these biographical sketches suggest, an artist's life in sixteenth-century Italy was in some ways narrow—constrained by the needs and demands of noble patrons—and in others broad and free, rich in connections between cities and courts and between practitioners of various disciplines. Madrigals, in particular, flourished in a secular space in which women and men were able to work together as artistic equals, unlike the rigidly sex-segregated domain of the church, and nobles and commoners might sing in an ensemble. Poets, composers, and performers all contributed to the stylistic changes of the latter decades of the century. A classic eyewitness account of music's evolution between the 1570s and the early seventeenth century is provided by the *Discorso sopra la musica* (c. 1627) by Vincenzo Giustiniani (1564-1637).

... nella mia fanciullezza mio padre b.m. mi mandò alla scuola di musica, et osservai ch'erano in uso le composizioni dell'Archadelt, di Orlando Lassus, dello Striggio, Cipriano de Rores e di Filippo di Monte, stimate per le migliori di quei tempi, come in effetto erano. ...

In poco progresso di tempo s'alterò il gusto della musica e comparver le composizioni di Luca Marenzio e di Ruggero Giovanelli, con invenzioni di nuovo diletto, tanto quelle da cantarsi a piu voci quanto ad una sola sopra alcuno stromento, l'ecceellenza delle quali consisteva in una nuova aria et grata all'orecchie, con alcune fughe facili e senza straordinario artificio ...

L'anno santo del 1575 o poco dopo si cominciò un modo di cantare molto diverso da quello di primo, e cosi per alcuni anni sequenti, massime nel modo di cantare con una voce sola sopra un istromento, con l'esempio d'un Gio. Andrea napoletano, e del sig. Giulio Cesare Brancaccio e d'Alessandro Merlo romano, che cantavano un basso nella larghezza dello spazio di 22 voci, con varietà di passaggi nuovi e grati all'orecchie di tutti. I quali svegliarono i compositori a far opere tanto da cantare a più voci come ad una sola sopra un istromento ...

... così anche ciascun autore, a fin che le sue composizioni riuscessero di gusto in generale, procurò d'avanzarsi nel modo di componere a più voci, e particolarmente Giaches Wert in Mantova, ed il Luzzasco in Ferrara. Quali erano soprintendenti de tutte le musiche di quei Duchi, che se ne dilettevano sommamente, massime in fare che molte dame et signori principali apparessero di sonare e cantare per

... in my youth my father (of blessed memory) sent me to the music school, and I observed that the compositions in use were those by Arcadelt, Orlando Lassus, Striggio, Cipriano de Rore, and Filippo di Monte, regarded as the best of that time, as indeed they were. ...

In a short space of time the style of music changed and the compositions of Luca Marenzio and Ruggero Giovanelli appeared, with delightful new inventions, both those to be sung with several voices and those for a solo voice accompanied by some instrument, the excellence of which consisted in a new melodiousness, pleasing to the ear, with some simple imitation and without extraordinary artifice ...

In the holy year of 1575 or shortly thereafter, a style of singing appeared that was very different from that before. It continued for some years, especially in pieces sung by one voice with accompaniment, as exemplified by one Giovanni Andrea of Naples, Signor Giulio Cesare Brancaccio, and Alessandro Merlo of Rome, who all sang bass with a range of 22 notes and a variety of passaggi new and pleasing to the ears of all. These inspired composers to write works both to be sung by several voices and for a single one with an instrument ...

... so also every composer, in order that his compositions should satisfy the general taste, took care to advance in the manner of composition for several voices, particularly Giaches Wert in Mantua and Luzzasco [Luzzaschi] in Ferrara. They were the superintendants of all music for those Dukes, who took the greatest delight in the art, especially in having many noble ladies and gentlemen learn to sing and play excellently well, so that they spent

eccellenza; a segno tale che dimoravano talvolta i giorni interi in alcuni camerini nobilmente ornati di quadri e fabricati a questo solo effeto, et era gran competenza fra quelle dame di Mantova et di Ferrara, che facevano a gara non solo quanto al metallo et alla disposizione delle voci, ma nell'ornamento di esquisiti passaggi tirati in opportuna congiuntura e non soverchi
...

e di più col moderare e crescere la voce forte o piano, assottigliandola o ingrossandola, che secondo che veniva a' tagli, ora con strascinarla, ora smezzarla, con l'accompagnamento d'un soave interrotto sospiro, ora tirando passaggi lunghi, seguiti bene, spiccati, ora gruppi, ora a salti, ora con trilli lunghi, ora con brevi, et or con passaggi soavi e cantati piano, dalli quali tel volta all'improvviso si sentiva echi rispondere, e principalmente con azione del viso, e dei sguardi e de' gesti che accompagnavo appropriatamente la musica e li concetti, e sopra tutto senza moto della persona e della bocca e delle mani sconcioso, che non fusse indirizzato al fine per il quale si cantava, e con far spicar bene le parole in guisa tale che si sentisse anche l'ultima sillaba di ciascuna parola, la quale dalli passaggi et altri ornamenti non fusse interotta o soppressa, e con molti altri particolari artifici et osservazioni che saranno a notizia di persone piu sperimentate di me.

Many of the individuals mentioned by Giustiniani figure in today's program: the composers Cipriano de Rore, Marenzio, and Wert, obviously, to whom we add Adrian Willaert, a towering figure of the generation before Cipriano (as Cipriano in turn stood before Wert, and Wert before Marenzio)—but also several notable singers: the Neapolitan noble Giulio Cesare Brancaccio (1515-86), a courtier, cavalier, writer, and bass who was renowned for his agility in ornamentation, and “the ladies of Mantua and Ferrara,” especially Tarquinia Molza (1542-1617), famous as a solo singer from at least the early 1570s, accompanying herself on the lute or viol, and the three members of the Ferrarese *concerto delle dame*, Laura Peverara, Anna Guarini, and Livia d'Arco, the first two born in 1563, Livia d'Arco a year or two later:

In the 1570s, Ferrara already hosted a widely-renowned ensemble of female singers who gave private performances for the court, but shortly after Duke Alfonso, a man in his mid-forties, married his third wife, Margherita Gonzaga (b. May 27, 1564) in February 1579—perhaps stimulated by his young bride's passion for music and dance to reinvigorate and enrich his court's cultural life—he drew to Ferrara the three young women whose vivid performances and dazzling technique would inspire compositions by Wert and Marenzio and poetry by Tasso, among others. After arriving in Ferrara, the three worked intensively with the duke's music master, Luzzasco Luzzaschi, and the lutenist Ippolito Fiorini, honing their skills both vocal

entire days in some rooms designed especially for this purpose and beautifully decorated with paintings. The ladies of Mantua and Ferrara were highly competent in this, and vied with each other not only in regard to the timbre and skill [disposizione: throat articulation] of their voices but also in the design of exquisite diminutions delivered at opportune moments and not in excess
...

furthermore they moderated or increased their voices, loud or soft, heavy or light, according to the demands of the piece they were singing; now slow, breaking off with sometimes a gentle sigh, now singing long diminutions legato or detached, now gruppi, now leaps, now with long trills, now with short, and again with sweet running diminutions sung softly, to which sometimes one heard echos answer unexpectedly. They accompanied the music and the sentiment with appropriate facial expressions, glances and gestures, with no awkward movements of the mouth or hands or body which did not express the feeling of the song, and they made the words clear in such a way that one could hear even the last syllable of every word, which was never interrupted or obscured by diminutions or other embellishment, and they used many other special artifices and practices which will be known to persons more experienced than I.

and instrumental (Laura Peverara also played harp, Anna Guarini lute, and Livia d'Arco viol) and rehearsing intensively. Although known to be excellent readers of written music, they also committed much of their repertoire to memory, including the elaborate diminutions with which they ornamented madrigals. In 1586, Wert dedicated his Eighth Book of Madrigals for Five Voices to Duke Alfonso, lavishing particular praise on Duchess Margherita's ensemble of ladies.

Havrei commesso notabilissimo errore se dovend' io dar in luce questi miei componimenti di Musica fatti per la maggior parte in Ferrara ad altro personaggio indirizzati gli havessi che à V.A. Percioche à cui piu degnamente dedicare gli potev'io? Prencipe tanto grande, tanto amico delle virtù, tanto fautore de virtuosi, & delle cose mie protettore tanto benigno. Et essi in qual parte del mondo potrebbon esser meglio cantanti che nella Corte di V.A.? dove io non mi sò ben risolvere qual sia maggiore ò la maestria di chi canta ò'l giudicio di chi l'ascolta.... à cui non sono hoggimai note le meraviglie & d'arte, & di natura, la voce, la gratia, la dispositione, la memoria, & l'altre tante & si rare qualità delle tre nobilissime giovani Dame della Serenissima Signora Duchessa di Ferrara? Il qual rispetto per se solo bastar dovrebbe à indurre tutti i compositori del mondo, che le loro opere indirizzassero à V.A. perche da si divine voci, & da si nobil concerto riceversero il vero, & naturale spirito della Musica.

I would have committed a most egregious error if, in issuing these musical compositions of mine made for the most part in Ferrara, I had directed them to any person other than Your Highness. For to whom ought I to dedicate them more worthily, than to you?—a Prince so great, such a friend to virtue, favorer of virtuosi, and kind protector of my works. And in what part of the world could those works been better sung than in Your Highness's court? of which I do not know how to decide which is greater, whether the mastery of those who sing or the judgment of those who listen.... To whom nowadays is not known the marvels of art, nature, voice, grace, articulation, memory, and the many other most rare qualities of the three most noble young ladies of the Most Serene Duchess of Ferrara?—respect for which by itself should suffice to induce all the composers in the world to dedicate their works to Your Highness, that from such divine voices and such noble performance they might receive the true and natural spirit of Music.

Although the diminutions were devised in advance and committed to memory, very little specific about the ladies' ornaments has been preserved, in great measure because they were considered a component of Alfonso's *musica secreta* or private music and as such were not permitted to leave the court of Ferrara, whether as manuscript copies or in a printed publication. We know from a letter of Wert's, sent from Mantua to the countess of Novellara in July 1580, that he himself composed diminutions for his own madrigals, but these too have disappeared. We may, however, get a sense of the style from treatises, examples provided by other composers, and the written-out ornamentation found in later musical publications by Luzzaschi, Giulio Caccini, and others, and even in Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, which had its premiere in Mantua in 1607. The latter masterpiece, though sometimes regarded nowadays as if its virtuosity, style, and drama emerged virtually whole and unbegotten from Monteverdi's genius, without parent or precedent, in fact has roots deep in the sixteenth century: Giustiniani's description of the performances of the Ferrarese *concerto delle dame* of the 1580s, quoted above, could be applied without change to Monteverdi's "favola in musica." Not every madrigal benefits from diminution treatment—and note Giustiniani's comment that the ladies' diminutions were "delivered at opportune moments and not in excess"—but some, such as Wert's *Quel rossignol*, seem to welcome it. In the first phrase the top two voices are given written-out ornaments on the word "piagne," as if setting an example (the figure used is a *grosso*, a measured and accelerating variety of trill); no diminutions are provided

a few phrases later for the words “con tante note,” “with many notes,” but the words and their musical setting on sustained, slowly changing harmonies could hardly provide a clearer invitation to ornamentation.

Roots of the *seconda prattica*

In 1607, Claudio Monteverdi’s brother Giulio Cesare published an extended explanation of a compositional method which Claudio labelled the “second practice,” a modern way of composing that “considers harmony commanded, not commanding, and makes the words the mistress of the harmony.” According to Monteverdi, the new practice had been discovered by none other than Cipriano de Rore, who died in 1565, two years before Monteverdi’s birth, and “was followed and amplified . . . by Ingegneri, Marenzio, Giaches de Wert, Luzzasco, and likewise by Jacopi Peri, Giulio Caccini, and finally by loftier spirits with a better understanding of true art.” Monteverdi’s definition of the Second Practice is aimed primarily at the treatment of dissonance, but the impetus behind the new practice, to place harmony and melody in the service of the dramatic expression of text, underlay all sorts of sixteenth-century experimentation. How, for example, could a dramatic monologue, the speech of a single person—Virgil’s Dido, Tasso’s Armida—be given voice in harmony? Here, too, Cipriano was a pioneer. His three-section *Dissimulare etiam sperasti*, in which Dido rebukes Aeneas in a vain attempt to prevent him from leaving Carthage, sets Dido’s increasingly desperate pleas in near-homophony for five, six, and then seven voices. One might imagine a performance by a single singer like Laura Peverara or Tarquinia Molza accompanying herself on the harp or lute, the instrument supplying the harmonies of the lower parts, although that would nullify the effect of a voice being added for each new section and the shift to choppy cross-rhythms at the words “Troia per undosum peteretur classibus aequor;” depicting the stormy seas of the Mediterranean. (Decades later, Monteverdi would demonstrate the process in reverse, transforming the monodic “Lamento d’Arianna” from his opera *Arianna* into a five-voice madrigal.)

While Cipriano’s is the only setting of *Dissimulare*, another passage from the *Aeneid*, Dido’s last words, beginning “Dulces exuvie;” attracted a handful of composers in the sixteenth century, beginning with a cluster of pieces associated with the Habsburg-Burgundian court circa 1505. Willaert’s setting, published in the mid-1540s, is particularly noble and moving; we pair it with Wert’s madrigal whose text recasts Virgil’s Latin as an Italian sonnet, before performing two of Wert’s later *Gerusalemme* settings—Armida’s cries to her departing lover, Rinaldo (*Forsennata gridava*), and the lament of the stricken warrior Tancredi before the marble tomb of his beloved Clorinda, whom he has unknowingly killed, her identity disguised by her armor, in single combat outside the walls of Jerusalem.

Many thanks to Emiliano Ricciardi, Professor of Music at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and director of the Tasso in Music Project, for his many contributions to this program. Those interested in learning more about musical settings of Tasso will find a trove of information at the Tasso in Music Project, www.tassomusic.org. For more on the Ferrarese madrigal of the later sixteenth century and the *concerto delle dame*, the indispensable work is Anthony Newcomb's *The Madrigal at Ferrara, 1579-1597*. Jessie Ann Owens has published stimulating studies of *Dissimulare etiam sperasti* ("The representation of the female voice in Cipriano de Rore's *Dissimulare etiam sperasti*," in *Cipriano de Rore: New perspectives on his life and music*, ed. Jessie Ann Owens and Katelijne Schiltz) and of Wert and Marenzio's settings of *Vezzosi augelli* and *Giunto a la tomba* ("Marenzio and Wert read Tasso: a study in contrasting aesthetics," in *Early music*, November 1999).

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