

# Early Music • Alte Musik



# MUSIC OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

for Voice, Lutes, Viola da mano, Cittern and Renaissance Guitar

**Shirley Rumsey** 

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"But above all, singing poetry accompanied by the viola (da mano) seems especially pleasurable, for the instrument gives the words a really marvellous charm and effectiveness."

(Baldesar Castiglione, 'The Book of the Courtier', 1528)

During the first part of the 15th century, music in Italy had been completely dominated by Flemish composers, but in the 1470's a blossoming of native composers occurred. A new style of song was developed in the courts of Mantua and Ferrara called the 'frottola'. The term 'frottola' was derived from the medieval Latin 'frocta', meaning a conglomeration of random thoughts and was used to cover a wide variety of compositions. Many of these songs were composed by singer-lutenists, like Marchetto Cara and Bartolomeo Tromboncino, but this popular style was imitated by many composers including Josquin Despres.

The singer-lutenist occupied a central role in court life, not only did they play and sing for the entertainment of their own partrons, but they also performed for noble visitors at court, accompanied their lords on journeys, and were loaned to other courts. They performed both indoors and outdoors, at banquets, in dramatic presentations and for the dance. Documents from Mantua and other courts indicate that lutenists played a wide spectrum of instruments. Lutes were of course their principal instruments, and these were built, even in the late 15th century, in a variety of sizes. Different sizes were used in order to match a song to the particular range of the singer.

With the accession of Francesco Gonzaga as Marchese of Mantua in 1484 and, more particularly, with the arrival of his wife, Isabella d'Este from Ferrara in 1490, the size of the Mantuan musical establishment was increased and a

greater emphasis was put on vocalists and native Italian musicians. Isabella's taste in music was sophisticated, she played the lute and the viola da mano, and according to contemporary descriptions she possessed a fine voice.

"When she sings, especially to the lute, I believe that Orpheus and Amphion, who knew how to bring inanimate objects to life with their song would be stupefied with wonder on hearing her, and I do not doubt that neither of them would have known how to do as well as she does in keeping the harmony most diligently so that the rhythm never falters, but rather measures the song, now rising, now falling and keeps the harmony on the lute and at once according her tongue and both hands with the inflections of the song."

This describes Isabella at a time when she was said to be 'not much (older) than twenty-three', in Giangiorgio Trissino's 'I ritratti' published in 1524.

Isabella did much to foster the new style of music and performance by commissioning poems and then having them set to music by various composers. Two of the foremost composers of 'frottole' were the singer-lutenists, Marchetto Cara and Bartolomeo Tromboncino. They were working within a tradition of performance style that went back to the middle decades of the 15th century. Self-accompanying singers such as Leonardo del Chitarino, Nicolo Tedesco and the famous Ferrarese 'cantor al liuto', Pietrobono, were certainly early models for Cara and Tromboncino. Cara became the 'maestro di cappella' in Mantua and was clearly a versatile musician as well as a persuasive performer. Baldesar Castiglione in his 'Libro del cortegiano', describes how evocative his singing must have been when he says,

"in a manner serene and full of plaintive sweetness, he touches our souls, gently impressing a delightful sentiment upon them."

The contrast between the lives of Cara and Tromboncino could not be more striking. While both were very important to Mantuan music and music making, Cara seems to have been an integral part of music there, while Tromboncino

was constantly on the move and never far from trouble. He is perhaps most well-known for killing his wife;

"with great cruelty for having found her at home alone in a room with Zoanmaria de Triomfo"

Further north in Venice, Adrian Willaert, the 'maestro di cappella' there from 1527 to 1562 was at the centre of a closely knit circle of composers, printers and theorists. Willaert's sphere of influence attracted the patronage of various nobles for whom he organised brilliant musical evenings which acquired great fame and had a lasting effect on the private musical life of the city. Willaert was a teacher and friend of relatively unknown or young composers from Italy and his native Flanders whose works he introduced and promoted in his publications. As interest in the 'frottole' declined, northern Italian composers found a source of inspiration in the unique form of 'musica popolaresca' imported from Naples, where it had been developed by Gian Domenico da Nola. Nola's songs were well-received by Willaert and his disciples, who even arranged some of them in a madrigalesque style to suit the taste of the prosperous Venetian society.

Venice, like every major city in Italy, had its renowned and accomplished courtesans whose homes were often the scene of those brilliant literary and musical events. For the talented courtesan, musical performance could be a widely recognised artistic achievement. One of the most famous of all courtesans was the remarkable Polissena Pecorina, who was always a welcome guest at these Venetian soirées. She is described by Antonfrancesco Doni, an amateur musician and writer as:

"so clever and cultivated that I cannot find words to praise her. One evening I heard a concert of viols and voices at which she sang and played with other outstanding personalities; the perfect master of this music was Adriano Willaert."

Willaert dedicated the first edition of his 'Musica Nova' to this outstanding interpreter of his music, La Pecorina. However, despite the popularity of these 'Napolitana' they were repeatedly condemned by moralists who argued that they were lascivious and demoralising songs sung to stimulate unhealthy passions. The Venetian libertine, Pietro Aretino certainly understood this, he felt that:

"the sounds, songs, and literature which women know are the keys which open the door to their modesty."

Most of the earliest surviving Italian lute music also comes from Venice. It was there that the right to print lute music was first given by the Doge to Marco dall Aquila in 1505. However, he does not seem to have taken advantage of this privilege and the first two publications of lute music by Francesco Spinacino were printed in 1507 by Ottavio Petrucci. Spinacino's books primarily contain arrangements of well-known vocal pieces and each concludes with a selection of recercars. In contrast, Joan Ambrosio Dalza's book of the following year is nearly all dance music, but it also includes a few arrangements of 'frottole' and some recercars as well as a few improvisatory 'tastar de cordes', which roughly translates as 'touching the strings'. As well as these important printed sources there are a number of early manuscript lute books, again originating from Venice. The 'Calata', comes from a manuscript which seems to be the collection of a professional lutenist, it contains solos as well as a large number of song accompaniments. The 'Calata' may be the name of a piece derived from the Italian word, 'calle', meaning a path or small street, and it is quite possible that the calata was used as a 'repriesa', music that alternated with a dance or a song. The 'Balletto', by the Brescian nobleman and lutenist, Vincenzo Capirola, comes from a manuscript that was compiled by one of his pupils, Vitale between 1515 and 1520. The manuscript is richly illuminated because Vitale understood that if the book was beautiful to look at it was more likely that it would survive, and of course he was right.

Although Marco dall Aquila, does not have a book entirely devoted to his compositions, he does share Casteliono's 1536 publication, 'Intabolatura de Liuto' with Francesco da Milano and Pietro Paulo Borrono. After Petrucci's books of the first decade of the 16th century this was the next printed book of lute music to appear in Italy. Stylistically and chronologically Marco dall Aquila stands slightly before Francesco da Milano; his music is always very idiomatic for the lute, the 'Recercar' is in a quasi-improvisatory style and his arrangement of the dance, 'Cara cossa' has some daring dissonances. The mature examples of Marco's work incorporated point-of-imitation and dialogue style that Francesco da Milano brought to a 'classic' phase of lute composition. Francesco was the first Italian musician of the Renaissance to achieve an international reputation. Francesco de Salinas considered him 'easily the prince among lutenists' and his contemporaries called him 'Il divino', a sobriquet which he shared with the painter and sculptor, Michelangelo Buonarotti.

Notes by Christopher Wilson and Shirley Rumsey

#### 1 La pastorella mia (Jacques Arcadelt)

La pastorella mia Senza altra compagnia Solett'al suo giardino Per coalier petrosino Se n'andava La non parlava Mi si sforzava Di mostrarmi con la mano Fuor de la villa o bel villano Ch'io me ne vado poco lontano

Venirai pian pian O bel villan' o bel villano.

N'andava contignosa E mesta e vergognosa Cantand'una canzona. Tu porti la corona E poi rideva lo la sentiva Quel che diceva Sotto voce piano piano. Fuor de la villa o bel villano Ch'io me ne vado poco lontano Venirai pian pian O bel villan' o bel villano.

lo poi la seguitava Tanto ch'io l'arrivava Vicina al suo boschetto Giungendo petto a petto La basciava Lei che m'amaya La sospirava Pur dicendo piano piano: lo t'ho purgionto amor mio charo My little shepherdess All alone Would go out into her garden To gather flowers She didn't speak But tried to tell me With her hands:

'Go outside the house, O handsome youth, For I am going out, but not very far. You will come very quietly,

O handsome youth.'

She would go very seriously. Sadly and modestly, Singing a song: 'You wear the crown' And then she laughed: I heard What she was saving Very softly under her breath:

'Go outside the house, O handsome youth, For I am going out, but not very far, You will come very quietly,

O handsome youth.'

Then I would follow her Until I caught up with her Near her little grove: Arriving close to her breast I would kiss her: She who loved me would sigh, Saying very softly: 'I have joined you, my dear love.

Ch'io me ne venni pocco lontano Tornerai pian pian O bel villan'o bel villano. For I didn't go very far away; You will go back very quietly now, O handsome youth.

### 2 Ti partir cor mio caro (Filippo Azzaiolo)

Ti partir cor mio caro Mi lassi piant'amaro E senz alcun riparo L'anima senza te Non ti partir da me Deh cor mio caro Per la tua fe

E pur se vuol andare Ricordati tornare Mia vita non puo stare Un hora senza te Non ti partir.....

Giamai ti lasciaria Per altra donna bella Tu sei la chiara stella Piu ch'altra donna sia Non ti partir..... To leave you my dear heart Leaves me with bitter tears And my soul without you Cannot be healed Do not leave me Oh my dear heart For your Faith

If you want to leave me Remember to return I cannot remain alive One hour without you Do not leave me.....

I would never leave you
For another beautiful woman
You are a star which shines
More brightly than any other woman
Do not leave me.....

### 4 Mal un muta per effecto (Marchetto Cara)

Mal un muta per effecto El suo proprio naturale; Ben far no, ben si pò male Ad ogn'un al suo dispecto.

Mal un muta per effecto El suo proprio naturale.

Ogni cosa sua natura Seguitar e di mestiero; You cannot disguise Your true nature.

Good you cannot do, ill you can do well To each his own afflictions.

You cannot disguise your true nature Good you cannot do, ill you can do well

Everything follows its own course of necessity

Non è arte nè misura
Che mai faci el falso vero;
Non è biancho quel ch'è nero,
Come chiar vede la vista;
Non si pente un alma trista
Cangie el tempo per suo aspecto.
Mal un muta......

Orna ben di sella e freno Lassi nel misero e vile, Chè per questo non è apieno Un caval acto e gentile; Sta el porcho nel porcile, Glie convien che gli è el suo loco; Sempre da calore el focho Cangie el tempo per suo aspecto. Mal un muta.....

#### 5 Perla mya cara (Anonymous)

Perla mia cara O dolce amore Tu sei più bella donna A ce che dir no sai Sola regina del mio core.

Tu sei madonna La menta mia Car è le gran tempo Dolce, par la mia bella. Per te languisco He languire.

lo sono un servo The servitore Nè tu sei madonna Neither by art nor by design can you make a truth from a falsehood; What is white cannot be black, as is plain to see; A sinning soul cannot repent despite Time's changing face.
You cannot disquise.....

A richly jewelled saddle and bridle are only mean and cruel shackles
To curb the freedom of a noble horse
A pig lives in a pigsty and that is its proper place
Fire always gives its' heat despite time's changing face
You cannot disquise.....

My dear pearl, O sweet love, You are a more beautiful lady Than I can say; You alone are queen of my heart.

You are a madonna, My guiding spirit, It seems, my beautiful one, that these sweet times are precious. For you I languish, Oh I languish.

I am a slave In your service. You are a madonna; D'altro mio parere De altro grande regno E grando seignore. You seem to me to belong To another great kingdom And great Lord.

#### 8 Quella bella e biancha mano (Antonio Caprioli)

Quella bella e biancha mano Che m'accora e po sanarmi. Che per me non trovo altre armi Che le bella e biancha mano: Quella bella e biancha mano Che m'accora e po sanarmi.

Se'l mio foco ch'e sepolto E mia fe non te palesa. Guarda el biancho e nero volto. Che vedrai la fiamma accesa. Non chiamo altro a mia diffesa Che la bella e biancha mano: Quella bella...

Ma da poi che Amor m'a gionto Con suoi inganni a un si bel nodo. Benedico l'ora e il ponto Che mi spinse ove mi godo. E se io mor morendo io lodo Che la bella e biancha mano. Quella bella..... That fair, white hand Which pierces my heart and can heal me. So that I find no other defence Than the fair, white hand:

That fair, white hand

Which pierces my heart and can heal me.

If my fire which is buried deep, And my faith I do not reveal. Look at the white and black face, For you will see flame alight: I do not call to my defence Other than the fair white hand: That fair.....

But since Love has joined me With his wiles in such a fair knot I bless the hour and the minute Which drove me to my rejoicing. And if I die, dying I will praise That fair white hand: That fair.....

# 10 Vecchie letrose non valete niente (Adrian Willaert)

Vecchie letrose non valete niente Se non a far l'aguaito per la chiazza.

Tira alla mazza Vecchie letrose scannaros'e pazze. Sullen old hags are good for nothing But setting traps for lovers in the public square

Go ahead and club them, Those scabrous, crazy old cut-throats.

#### 12 A la guerra a la guerra (Bartolomeo Tromboncino)

A la guerra a la guerra Ch'amor non vol più pace Ma sempre è più tenace.

Questa guerra è mortale Per uno ardente strale Cagion d'ogni mio male Per farme sempre guerra. A la guerra.....

lo non trovo arma forte Che vetar possa morte In van batto a le porte Non di pace ma di guerra. A la guerra.....

Una a chi servo fede Che'l mio dolor non crede Al fin per mia mercede Mi fa con morte guerra. A la guerra.....

Ma non voler che in bando Stia el tuo servo quando Tu el vedi lachrymando Per la continua guerra. A la guerra.....

# 15 El grillo (Josquin Despres)

El grillo è buon cantore, Che tiene longo verso, Dale beve grillo canta El grillo è buon cantore.

Ma non fa com'egli altri uccelli, Com'eli han cantato un poco, To war, to war, Love wants no more peace It is always the stronger.

This is a fight to the death
The reason for my distress
Is a burning arrow
Which continually strikes me
To war.....

I cannot find a strong enough weapon To shield me from death In vain I beat at the gates Not of peace but of war. To war.....

A certain lady who I faithfully serve Who does not believe my suffering Finally makes me fight To the death for my reward. To war.....

But don't let your servant Be banished When you see him in tears Because of his unending battle. To war......

The cricket is a good singer, Who sings a long note, The cricket sings of drinking, The cricket is a good singer.

But he does not do like other birds, When they have sung a little, Van de fatto in altro loco: Sempre el grillo sta pur saldo, Quando l'a maggior el caldo, Alhor canta sol per amore.

El grillo è buon cantore, Che tiene longo verso, Dale beve grillo canta, El grillo è buon cantore. Off they go elsewhere: The cricket stands firm, When it is hotter weather, Then he sings for the love of it.

The cricket is a good singer, Who sings a long note, The cricket sings of drinking, The cricket is a good singer.

# 17 O mia cieca e dura sorte (Marchetto Cara)

O mia cieca e dura sorte Di dolor sempre nutrita. O miseria di mia vita Tristo anuncio a la mia morte.

Più dolente e più infelice Son che alcun che viva in terra. L'arbor son che il vento atterra Perché più non à radice. Vero è ben quel che se dice Ché mal va chi à mala sorte. O mia cieca e dura sorte.

Perché un viver duro e grave Grave e dur morir conviene. Finir voglio in pianti e pene Come in scoglio fa la nave Ch'al fin rompe ogni suo trave Poi che un tempo è stata forte. O mia cieca e dura sorte.....

Piglia exempio ognun che vede Scritto in la mia tomba obscura Se ben son for di natura Morto son per troppo fede Per mi mai non fu mercede O my blind and cruel Fate. Ever nourished by my grief. O wretchedness that is my life, Sad presage of my death.

I suffer more and am more wretched
Than any living creature upon this earth.
I am the tree the wind casts down
Because it has no roots,
Truly as the saying goes.
It goes ill for him upon whom Fortune frowns.
O my blind and cruel Fate.....

As my life is hard and bitter
Such will be my death,
And I must end in tears and torment
As a ship that is wrecked upon a rock
When every beam is broken
Because it will not yield.
O my blind and cruel Fate.....

Take heed all you who read These words upon my gloomy tomb. For I have left the world And died for love. For me there was no pity,

Pietà m'ha chiuse le porte.

O mia cieca e dura sorte.....

Mercy closed her doors to me.
O my blind and cruel Fate.....

#### 20 Scaramella (Josquin Despres)

Scaramella va alla guerra, Colla lancia et la rotella, La zombero, borombetta, La zombero, borombò!

Scaramella fa la gala, Colla scharpa et la stivala, La zombero, borombetta, La zombero, borombò! Scaramella goes to war,
With his lance and shield,
The swashbuckler, boromböt,
The swashbuckler, borombö!
Scaramella holds festival,
With his boot and shoe,
The swashbuckler, boromböt,
The swashbuckler, boromböt.

# 23 Fontana che dai acqua (Gian Domenico da Nola)

Fontana che dai acqua a dui valluni, Correnti non ponn'esser tutti dui Cru, cru, cru, cru, canta la gruia, Alza no pede e po ne mostra dui, E po, e po, e po ne mostra dui.

Na donna che vol bene a dui gagliuni Non le po far contenti tutti dui Cru, Cru, .....

De ogn'erba fati fascio a l'enzallate, Et tutti siamo scontenti e gabbati; Cru, Cru, .....

Non ne ponno servire a dui signori, Et tu ne sievi cento e vinti dui;

Cru, Cru, .....

If a spring supplies two watercourses, They cannot both flow strongly: Cru, Cru, Cries the crane, Stands up and shows both feet.

A woman who loves two suitors Cannot content them both: Cru. cru.....

Make a bundle of all herbs for the salads, And we are all unhappy and deceived, Cru. cru......

They cannot serve two masters, And you yourself are one hundred & twenty-two: Cru, cru,...

#### 25 Se mai per maraveglia (Anonymous)

Se mai per maraveglia alzandol viso Al chiaro ciel pensate, o cieca gente. A quel vero signor dil paradiso

Volgeti gli occhi in qua, che ve presente Non quella forma (ahimè), non quel dolore Che contemplaron gli occhi de la mente.

Piangete il grave universal dolore Piangeti l'aspra morte e 'l crudo affanno Se spirto di pietà vi punge il core

Per liberarci da l'antico inganno Pende come vedete al duro legno E per salvarci dal perpetuo danno

Già la ferrate e inexpugnabil porte De l'infernal reame ha rotte e prese Per far il mondo più costante e forte Et aspetarci con le braccia tese. If ever in wonder you should raise your face To the clear heavens, O blind people. Think of the true Lord of Paradise.

Turn your eyes this way that I may show you Not that body, alas, not that grief, But that which you may contemplate with your mind's eye.

Weep for the great sorrow of the world, Weep for the bitter death and cruel suffering If ever pity pierced your heart.

To free us from original sin And to save us from eternal damnation He hangs, as you see, upon the hard wood.

Already the locked and indestructable gates
Of the infernal realms have been broken and conquered
To make the world more constant and strong.
And he awaits us with outstretched arms.

# Shirley Rumsey

Shirley Rumsey studied lute and singing at The Royal College of Music in London where she became interested in the enormous repertoire for lute and voice and began to combine the two. She now gives recitals, singing and accompanying herself on the lute, vihuela, viola da mano, renaissance and baroque guitar; selecting music from the solo lute and lute song repertoire of renaissance Europe. She has performed extensively throughout Europe and Scandinavia, taken part in numerous festivals, appeared a number of times on television, made frequent recordings for BBC Radio 3 and broadcast on many European networks.

#### Instruments Used

Lute in 'A' by Paul Thomson (1979)

- Tracks Nos. 3, 6, 7, 9 & 24

Lute in 'G' by Paul Thomson (1980)

- Tracks Nos. 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21 & 22

Lute in 'E' by Paul Thomson (1983)

- Tracks Nos. 8 & 25

Viola da mano in 'F' by Thomas Neitzert (1989)

- Tracks Nos. 5, 12 & 23

Guitar in 'A' by Neil Morrison (1980)

- Tracks Nos. 1, 4, 15, 17 & 20

Cittern by Thomas Neitzert (1984)

- Tracks Nos. 2 & 10

# Early Music on Naxos / Alte Musik auf Naxos

BYRD	
Masses for Four and Five Voices / Infelix ego	8.550574
Music for Viols, Voices and Keyboard	8.550604
CARDOSO / D. LOBO	
Requiem Masses	8.550682
Da MILANO	
Lute Music (Fantasias, Ricercars and Duets)	8.550774
GESUALDO	
Complete Sacred Music for Five Voices	8.550742
<u>JENKINS</u>	
All in a Garden Green (Fantasias, Ayres, etc.)	8.550687
LASSUS	
Masses for Five Voices / Infelix ego	8.550842
Missa Bell' Amfitrit' altera (+ PALESTRINA)	8.550836
PALESTRINA	
Missa Hodie Christus natus est / Stabat Mater (+ LASSUS) Missa Papae Marcelli / Missa Aeterna Christi Munera	8.550836 8.550573
Subsection parallel (1997) and the state of	0.550573
A. LOBO Versa est in luctum (+ VICTORIA)	8.550575
VICTORIA	
Masses / Ave Maria (+ A. LOBO)	8.550575
TALLIS	
Mass for Four Voices / Motets	8.550576
Music of the Spanish Renaissance	8.550614