

I madrigali a cinque voci

CIPRIANO DE RORE BLUE HERON



CANTVS
DI CIPRIANO RORE
I MADRIGALI A CINQVE VOCI,
NVOVAMENTE POSTI IN LVCE,



Venetijs apud Hieronymum Scotum.

1 5 4 2.

CD 1

[1]–[2] (1:04, 4:08)

1. Cantai mentre ch'arsi del mio foco
Giovanni Brevio (c.1480-c.1560)

[3]–[4] (1:09, 5:24)

2. Hor che 'l ciel et la terra e 'l vento tace
Francesco Petrarca (1304-74), *Canzoniere* 164

[5]–[6] (0:59, 4:53)

3. Poggiand'al ciel coll'ali del desio
anonymous

[7]–[8] (1:04, 5:32)

4. Quand'io son tutto volto in quella parte
Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 18

[9]–[10] (0:54, 5:36)

5. Solea lontana in sonno consolarne
Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 250

[11]–[12] (1:08, 4:23)

6. Altiero sasso lo cui gioco spira
Francesco Maria Molza (1489-1544)

[13]–[14] (1:02, 5:37)

7. Strane rupi, aspri monti, alte tremanti
Niccolò Amanio (c. 1468-before 1528)

[15]–[16] (0:53, 5:24)

8. La vita fuge, et non s'arresta una hora
Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 272

[17]–[18] (1:05, 5:27)

9. Tu piangi, e quella per chi fai tal pianto
Antonio Tebaldeo (1463-1537)

For each madrigal, [1] reading, [2] music, etc.

Total time 55:42 (CD 1), 65:07 (CD 2)

CD 2

[1]–[2] (0:57, 5:57)

10. Il mal mi preme, et mi spaventa il peggio
Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 244

[3]–[4] (1:03, 5:29)

11. Per mezz'i boschi inhospiti et selvaggi
Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 176

[5]–[6] (0:57, 5:58)

12. Quanto più m'avicino al giorno extremo
Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 32

[7]–[8] (0:52, 5:42)

13. Perseguendomi Amor al luogo usato
Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 110

[9]–[10] (0:57, 5:53)

14. Chi vol veder quantunque pò natura
Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 248

[11]–[12] (1:08, 4:52)

15. Quel sempre acerbo et honorato giorno
Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 157

[13]–[14] (1:00, 4:58)

16. Far potess'io vendetta di colei
Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 256

[15]–[16] (1:10, 5:49)

17. Amor, che vedi ogni pensiero aperto
Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 163

[17]–[18] (0:28, 2:52)

18. Ben si conviene a voi
anonymous

[19]–[20] (0:45, 3:43)

19. Hor che l'aria e la terra
anonymous

[21]–[22] (0:53, 3:44)

20. Da quei bei lumi ond'io sempre sospiro
Brevio

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Cipriano de Rore, *I madrigali a cinque voci* (1542)

1. **CD 1**
[1]-[2] Cantai mentre ch'î arsi del mio foco
La viva fiamma, ov'io morendo vissi,
Ben che quant'io cantai e quant'io scrissi
Di madonna e d'amor fu nulla o poco.

Ma se i begli occhi ond'îl mio cor s'accese
Del lor chiaro divin almo splendore
Non m'havessero a torto fatto indegno,
Col canto havrei l'interno e grave ardore
A gl'orecchi di tal fatto palese
Che pietà fora ov'alberga ira e sdegno.

A gli amorosi strali fermo segno
Sarei, pieno di dolce aspro martiro
Ov'hora in libertà piango e sospiro.
Ahi, pace in cor d'amanti non ha loco!

Giovanni Brevio

I sang while I burned from the living flame
of my fire, in which I, dying, lived,
although what I sang and what I wrote
of my lady and of love were nothing, or little.

But if the fair eyes whence my heart was ignited
had not wrongly found me unworthy
of their bright, divine, life-giving splendor,
with song I would have revealed
my inward grievous passion to her ears,
so that there might be pity where anger and disdain now dwell.

I would be a sure mark
for amorous arrows, full of sweet, bitter suffering
where now in freedom I weep and sigh.
Oh, peace has no place in the hearts of lovers!

2. **CD 1**
[3]-[4] Hor che 'l ciel et la terra e 'l vento tace,
Et le fere e gli aguelli il sono affrena,
Notte 'l carro stellato in giro mena,
Et nel suo letto il mar senz'onda giace,

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

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

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

Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 164

Now that the heavens and the earth and the wind are silent
and sleep reins in the beasts and the birds,
Night drives her starry car about,
and in his bed the sea lies without a wave,

I wake, I think, I burn, I weep; and she who destroys me
is always before me, to my sweet pain.
War is my state, full of wrath and suffering,
and only thinking of her do I have any peace.

Thus from one clear living fountain alone
springs the sweet and the bitter on which I feed:
one hand alone heals me and pierces me,

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

3. **CD 1**
[5]-[6] Poggiand'al ciel coll'ali del desio
Icaro il fol'ardir' menol'in parte
Dove si sfe la cera a parte a parte,
Che di pium'e d'orgolio il padre ordio.

Miser, ove ti mena il fatto rio,
Fuor del dritto camin ad infiammarto,
Fer sepultura a le tue membra sparte
Le belle nimphe Galatea e Spio.

Tal si trova dinanzi al lume vostro,
Donna gentil, ogni ardimento humano
Che d'honor et virtute si desvia;

Dinanzi a voi Amor lascivo et vano
Perd'ali e strali. O dov'è chi mi dia
Per honorar'v'assai ingegno e ingiostro?

anonymous

Soaring up to the heavens on wings of desire,
Icarus was led by mad daring to the place
where bit by bit the wax melted
that his father had woven with feathers and pride.

O wretch, where the wicked deed leads you,
leaving the straight path to be consumed in flames,
a sepulchre for your scattered limbs
was made by the fair nymphs Galatea and Speio.

Such is the lot, before your light,
noble lady, of every human audacity
that turns away from honor and virtue:

before you lascivious and vain Love
loses his wings and arrows. Oh, where is he who might give me
wit and ink to honor you enough?

Galatea and Speio Nereids who made a tomb for Icarus when
he fell into the sea.

4. **CD 1**
[7]-[8] Quand'io son tutto volto in quella parte,
Ove 'l bel viso di madonna luce,
Et m'è rimasa nel pensier la luce,
Che m'arde e strugge dentro a parte a parte,

I', che temo del cor che mi si parte,
Et veggio presso il fin de la mia luce,
Vomene in guisa d'orbo senza luce,
Che non sa ove si vada, et pur si parte.

Così davanti a i colpi de la morte
Fugo, ma non si ratto, che 'l desio
Meco non venga, come venir sole.

Tacito vo, che le parole morte
Farian pianger la gente: et i' desio
Che le lagrime mie si spargan sole.

Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 18

When I am all turned toward that place
where my lady's fair face shines,
and in my thoughts remains the light
that burns and melts me within, bit by bit,

I, since I fear for my heart, which is breaking,
and see at hand the end of my life,
take my leave like a blind man without sight,
who does not know where he goes, and yet departs.

And so before the blows of death
I flee, but not so quickly that desire
does not come with me, as it is used to.

Silent, I go; for my words of death
would make people weep, and I desire
that my tears be shed in solitude.

5. **CD 1**
[9]-[10] Solea lontana in sonno consolarme
Con quella dolce angelica sua vista
Madonna; hor mi spaventa et mi contrista,
Né di duol né di tema posso aitar-me:

Che spesso nel suo volto veder parme
Vera pietà con grave dolor mista,
Et udir cose onde 'l cor fede acquista
Che di gioia et di speme si disarmo.

"Non ti soven di quell' ultima sera,"
Dic'ella, "ch'ì lasciai li occhi tuoi molli
Et sforzata dal tempo me n'andai?"

I non tel potei dir all'hor, né volli;
hor tel dico per cosa experta et vera,
Non sperar di vedermi in terra mai."

Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 250

From afar, my lady used to console me in sleep
with her sweet angelic countenance;
now she terrifies me and makes me sorrowful,
nor can I defend myself against grief or fear:

for often in her face I seem to see
true pity mixed with grave pain,
and to hear things that persuade my heart
to disarm itself of joy and hope.

"Do you not remember that last evening,"
she says, "when I left your eyes moist
and, forced by time, I departed?"

"I could not tell you then, nor did I want to;
now I tell you as something tried and true:
Do not hope to see me on earth ever again."

Originally written to mark the pending departure of Vittoria
Farnese from Rome as part of the negotiations of her mar-
riage to François de Lorraine, Duke of Guise.

6. **CD 1**
[11]-[12] Altiero sasso lo cui gioco spira
Gli antichi honor del gran popul di Marte,
Fiume che fendì questa et quella parte,
Hor quieto et piano, hor pien di sdegno et ira;

Piaggie che 'l mondo ancor ama et sospira,
Consecrate da tante et da tai carte,
Memorie eterne et voi reliquie sparte
Ch'ogni bon alma con pietà rimira:

Parmi d'udir fugendo a voi d'intorno
Sospirar l'onde, e i rami e i fior e l'ora
Lagnarsi, et per dolor romper i sassi,

Che già del pianto s'avicina el giorno
Che 'l bel viso ch'italia tutta honora
Cinti d'horor al suo partir vi lassì.

Francesco Maria Molza

Proud rock whose peak breathes forth
the ancient rites of the great people of Mars;
river that breaks on this side and that,
now quiet and still, now full of rage and fury;

grounds that the world still loves and sighs for,
consecrated by so many and by such writings;
eternal memories, and you scattered relics
on which every good soul gazes with devotion:

I seem to hear fleeing around you
the waves sigh, and the branches and flowers and breeze
lament, and the stones break from grief,

for already the day of weeping draws near
when the beautiful face that all Italy honors
shall leave you wrapt in horror at her departure.

Originally written to mark the pending departure of Vittoria
Farnese from Rome as part of the negotiations of her mar-
riage to François de Lorraine, Duke of Guise.

7. **CD 1**
[13]-[14] Strane rupi, aspri monti, alte tremanti
Ruine e sassi al ciel nudi e scoperti,
Ove a gran pena pon salir tant'erti
Nuvoli in questo fosco aer fumanti;

Superbo horror, tacite selve e tanti
Negr'antr'herbosi in rotte pietre aperti,
Abbandonati, sterili deserti
Ove han paura andar le belve erranti:

A guisa d'hom che da soverchia pena
Il cor trist'ange, fuor di senn'uscito
Se n'va piangendo ove la furia il mena,

Vo piangend'io tra voi, e se partito
Non cangia il ciel, con voce assai più piena
Sarò di là tra le mest'ombre udito.

Niccolò Amanio

Strange cliffs, harsh mountains, high shaking
ruins, and rocks naked and exposed to Heaven,
where with great effort such steep clouds
of smoke rise in the gloomy, fuming air;

awesome horror, silent woods, and so many
black grass-grown caves opened into broken stones;
abandoned, barren deserts
where wandering beasts go in fear:

Like a man whose sad heart is torn
with excessive pain, out of his mind,
who goes weeping wherever madness leads him,

I go weeping among you: and if Heaven does not
take my side, with much fuller voice
will I be heard from among the sad shades.

8. **CD 1**
[15]-[16] La vita fuge, et non s'arresta un' hora,
Et la morte ven dietro a gran giornate,
Et le cose presenti, et le passate
Mi danno guerra, et le future anchora,

E 'l rimembrar et l'aspettar m'accora,
Hor quinci, hor quindi, sì che 'n veritate,
Se non ch'ì ho di me stesso pietate,
I sarei già di questi pensier fora.

Tornami avanti, s'alcun dolce mai
Hebbe 'l cor tristo; et poi da l'altra parte
Veggio al mio navigar turbati i venti;

Veggio fortuna in porto, et stanco homai
Il mio nochier, et rotte arbore et sarte,
E i lumi bei, che mirar soglio, spenti.

Petrarch, *Canzoniere* 272

Life is fleeting and does not pause for a moment,
and death follows after by great stages,
and present and past things
make war on me, and future things also,

and remembering and expecting weigh down my heart,
now on this side, now on that, so that in truth,
except that I take pity on myself,
I would already be beyond these thoughts.

If my sad heart ever knew any sweetness,
it reappears before me; and then on the other side
I see the winds turbulent for my voyage,

I see a storm in port, and my helmsman
wearing now, and masts and lines broken,
and the beautiful lights that I used to gaze at,
extinguished.

9. **CD 1**
17-18 Tu piangi, et quella per chi fai tal pianto
Ne ride, et ride 'l ciel che l'ha raccolta
Fra l'alme elette, libera e disciolta
Dal fral, cadueto et corruptibil manto.

Lei, tutta intenta al lume divo e santo,
Dolc'harmonia per ogni parte ascolta,
Poi volgendosi a se si dice, "O stolta,
Perché se'in terra dimorata tanto?"

Et quando gli occhi suoi qua giù declina,
Vedendo la pregion d'ond'è partita,
Si duol di tua miseria e trista sorte.

El viver nostr'è un fior colto da spina;
Però piange la tua, non la sua morte,
Che morte è quella che si chiama vita.

Antonio Tebaldeo

10. **CD 2**
11-12 Il mal mi preme, et mi spaventa il peggio,
Al qual veggio sì larga et piana via,
Ch'ì son intrato in simil frenesia,
Et con duro pensier teco vaneggio.

Né so se guerra o pace a Dio mi choggio,
Ché 'l danno è grave, et la vergogna è ria.
Ma perché più languir? Di noi pur fia
Quel ch'ordinato è già nel sommo seggio.

Ben ch'ì non sia di quel grande honor degno
Che tu mi fai, che te ne 'nganna amore,
Che spesso occhio ben san fa veder torto,

Pur d'alzar l'alma a quel celeste regno
È 'l mio consiglio, et di spronare il core,
Perché 'l camin è lungo, e 'l tempo è corto.

Petrarch, *Canzoniere* 244

You weep, and she for whom you weep
laughs, and heaven laughs, which has received her
among the elect souls, free and released
from her frail, impermanent, and corruptible mantle.

She, all intent on the divine and holy light,
hears sweet harmony on every side,
then, turning to herself, says: "O foolish one,
why did you linger so long on earth?"

And when she lowers her eyes down here,
seeing the prison from which she escaped
she grieves over your misery and sad fate.

Our life is a flower plucked from amongst thorns;
so weep for your death, not for hers,
for death is that which we call "life."

Ill oppresses me, and I am terrified by the worst,
toward which I see so broad and smooth a way
that I have entered into frenzy like yours
and with hard thoughts rave with you.

I do not know whether to ask God for war or peace,
for the danger is grave and the shame is cruel.
But why languish any more? It shall be with us
as is already ordained at the highest throne.

Although I am not worthy of that great honor
which you do me—for love deceives you
which oft makes a healthy eye see crooked—

still, my counsel is to lift your soul
to that heavenly kingdom, and spur your heart,
for the road is long and the time is short.

Response to a sonnet addressed to Petrarch by his friend and
doctor, Giovanni Dondi dall'Orologio.

11. **CD 2**
13-14 Per mezz'ì boschi inhospiti et selvaggi,
Onde vanno a gran rischio homini et arme,
Vo secur'io, che non pò spaventarme
Altri che 'l sol, ch'à d'amor vivo i raggi.

Et vo cantando (o pensier miei non saggi)
Lei che 'l ciel non poria lontana farme,
Ch'ì 'l ho negli occhi; et veder seco parme
Donne et donzelle, et sono abeti et faggi.

Parme d'udirla, udendo i rami et l'ore
Et le frondi et gli augei lagnarsi, et l'acque
Mormorando fuggir per l'erba verde.

Raro un silenzio, un solitario horror
D'ombrosa selva mai tanto mi piacque,
Se non che dal mio sol troppo si perde.

Petrarch, *Canzoniere* 176

Through the midst of hostile savage woods,
where armed men go at great risk,
I go without fear, for nothing can frighten me
except that sun which takes its rays from living Love.

And I go singing (oh my unwise thoughts!)
of her whom the heavens could not put far from me,
for I have her before my eyes; and with her I seem to see
ladies and damsels, and they are but firs and beeches.

I seem to hear her, hearing the branches and the breeze
and the leaves, and the birds lamenting, and the waters
fleeing with a murmur across the green grass.

Rarely has a silence, a solitary horror
of shady woods ever pleased me so much,
except that I lose too much of my sun.

12. **CD 2**
15-16 Quanto più m'avicino al giorno extremo
Che l'humana miseria suol far breve,
Più veggio il tempo andar veloce et leve,
E 'l mio di lui sperar fallace et scemo.

l' dico a' miei pensier, Non molto andremo
D'amor parlando homai, ché 'l duro et greve
Terreno incarco come fresca neve
Si va strugendo, onde noi pace havremo.

Perché con lui cadrà quella speranza,
Che ne fe' vaneggiar sì lungamente,
E 'l riso, e 'l pianto, et la paura, et l'ira.

Si vedrem chiaro poi come sovente
Per le cose dubbiose altri s'avanza,
Et come spesso indarno si sospira.

Petrarch, *Canzoniere* 32

The closer I approach that last day
that makes all human misery brief,
the more I see that Time rises swift and light
and that my hope of him is fallacious and empty.

I say to my thoughts, "We won't go on much further now
speaking of love, for this hard and heavy
earthly burden like fresh snow
is melting, and we shall have peace.

"For with it will fall that hope
that made us rave so long,
and the laughter and the tears and the fear and the rage.

"We shall see clearly then how often
people chase after uncertain things,
and how often they sigh in vain."

13. **CD 2**
71-81 Perseguendomi Amor al luogo usato,
Ristretto in guisa d'huom ch'aspetta guerra,
Che si prevede, e i passi intorno serra,
Di miei antichi pensier' mi stava armato.

Volsimi, et vidi un'ombra che da lato
Stampava il sole, et riconobbi in terra
Quella che, se 'l giudicio mio non erra,
Era piu degna d'immortale stato.

Io dicea fra mio cor: Perche paventi?
Ma non fu prima dentro il pensier giunto
Che i raggi, ov'io mi struggo, eran presenti.

Come col balenar tona in un punto,
Così fu' io de' begli occhi lucenti
Et d'un dolce saluto insieme aggiunto.

Petrarch, *Canzoniere* 110

Since Love was pursuing me to the usual place,
I, drawn up like a man who expects war,
who provisions himself and closes the passes all around,
was armed with my old thoughts.

I turned and saw a shadow to one side,
cast by the sun, and on the ground I recognized
her who, if my judgment does not err,
was more worthy of immortal state.

I was saying within my heart: "Why are you afraid?"
but the thought had no sooner entered within
than the rays that melt me were present;

as with lightning the thunder comes at the same instant,
so I was overtaken by those beautiful shining eyes
and a sweet greeting all at once.

14. **CD 2**
91-101 Chi vol veder quantunque pò natura
E 'l ciel tra noi, venga a mirar costei,
Ch'è sola un sol, non pur a gli occhi miei,
Ma 'l mondo cieco, che virtù non cura.

Et venga tosto, perché morte fura
Prima i migliori, et lascia star i rei.
Questa aspettata al regno de gli dei,
Cosa bella mortal passa et non dura.

Vedrà, s'arriva a tempo, ogni virtute,
Ogni bellezza, ogni real costume
Giunti in un corpo con mirabil tempre.

Allhor dirà che mie rime son mute,
L'ingegno offeso dal soverchio lume.
Ma se più tarda, avrà da pianger sempre.

Petrarch, *Canzoniere* 248

Whoever wishes to see all that Nature
and Heaven can do among us, let him come gaze on her,
for she alone is a sun, and not merely for my eyes
but for the blind world, which does not care for virtue;

and let him come soon, for death steals
the best first, and leaves behind the wicked.
Awaited in the kingdom of the gods,
this beautiful mortal thing passes and does not endure.

He will see, if he arrives in time, every virtue,
every beauty, every regal manner
joined in one body, marvelously tempered.

Then he will say that my rhymes are mute,
my wit overcome by excessive light.
But if he waits too long he shall have to weep
forever.

15. **CD 2**
111-121 Quel sempre acerbo et honorato giorno
Mandò sì al cor l'immagine sua viva
Ch'ingegno o stil non fia mai che 'l descriva,
Ma spesso a lui con la memoria torno.

L'atto d'ogni gentil pietate adorno,
E 'l dolce amaro lamentar ch'io udiva,
Facean dubbiar, se mortal donna o diva
Fosse, che 'l ciel rassereneva intorno.

La testa or fino, et calda neve il volto,
Hebena i cigli, et gli occhi eran due stelle,
Onde Amor l'arco non tendeva in fallo.

Perle et rose vermiglie, ove l'accolto
Dolor formava ardenti voci et belle,
Fiamma i sospir, le lagrime cristallo.

Petrarch, *Canzoniere* 157

That forever cruel and honored day
impressed upon my heart its image so alive
there is no wit or style that can ever describe it,
but often I return to it in memory.

Her gestures adorned with all noble pity
and the sweet bitter lamenting that I heard
made me wonder if it were mortal woman or goddess
who made the sky clear all around.

Her head fine gold, and her face warm snow,
ebony her eyebrows, and her eyes two stars,
whence Love never bent his bow in vain;

pearls and crimson roses, where the gathered
sorrow formed ardent and beautiful words;
flame her sighs, her tears crystal.

16. **CD 2**
131-141 Far potess'io vendetta di colei
Che guardando et parlando mi distrugge,
Et per più doglia poi s'asconde et fugge,
Celando gli occhi a me sì dolci et rei.

Così gli afflitti et stanchi pensier mei
A poco a poco consumando sugge,
E 'n sul cor quasi fero leon rugge
La notte all'hor quand'io posar dovrei.

L'alma, cui morte del suo albergo caccia,
Da me si parte, et di tal nodo sciolta
Vassene pur a lei che la minaccia.

Meravigliomi ben s'alcuna volta,
Mentre le parla, et piange, et poi l'abbraccia,
Non rompe 'l sonno suo, s'ella l'ascolta.

Petrarch, *Canzoniere* 256

Could I but take vengeance on her
who gazing and speaking destroys me
and then, for more pain, absconds and flees,
hiding from me her eyes so sweet and cruel!

Thus she saps my afflicted and tired thoughts,
consuming them little by little,
and above my heart like a fierce lion roars
at night, when I should be at rest.

My soul, which Death chases from its dwelling,
leaves me, and loosed from that knot
goes off straight to her who menaces it.

I marvel indeed if at some time,
while it speaks to her, and weeps, and then embraces her,
it does not break her sleep, if she is listening.

17. **CD 2**
[16]-[16] Amor, che vedi ogni pensiero aperto
E i duri passi, onde tu sol mi scorgi,
Nel fondo del mio cor gli occhi tuoi porgi
A te palese, a tutt'altri coverto.

Sai quel che per seguirte ho già sofferto,
Et tu pur via di poggio in poggio sorgi,
Di giorno in giorno, et di me non t'accorgi
Che sen si stanco, e l'sentier m'è troppoerto.

Ben veggio di lontano il dolce lume
Ove per aspre vie mi sproni et giri,
Ma non ho come tu da volar piume.

Assai contenti lassi i miei desiri,
Pur che ben desiando i' mi consume,
Né le dispiaccia che per lei sospiri.

Petrarch, *Canzoniere* 163

Love, you who see plainly my every thought
and the hard steps where you alone guide me,
pierce with your glance the depths of my heart,
which is revealed to you, but hidden from all others.

You know what I have suffered to follow you,
and still you climb from peak to peak,
day after day, and do not notice me,
that I am so weary, and the path is too steep for me.

I do see in the distance the sweet light
toward which you spur and turn me along bitter paths,
but unlike you I have no wings to fly.

You leave my desires enough satisfied
as long as I am consumed with desiring well
and it does not displease her that I sigh for her.

18. **CD 2**
[17]-[18] Ben si conviene a voi
Così bel nome, alma mia rosa, poi
Che con quella beltà che 'l mondo honora
Vincete i più bei fiori,
E i più soavi odori
D'odor vincete anchora.
Dhe, se 'l ciel ve s'aggiri adhora adhora,
Più ch'ad altra giamai cortese e pio,
Non sprezzate orgogliosa il servir mio.

anonymous

Well does such a lovely name
suit you, my life-giving Rose, since
with that beauty that the world honors
you surpass the most beautiful flowers,
and with your fragrance
you surpass the sweetest fragrance as well.
Ah, though the heavens now circle around you,
more courteous and pious than towards any other,
do not haughtily despise my service.

19. **CD 2**
[19]-[20] Hor che l'aria et la terra
Per natural destino e pioggia et gielo
Quanto più oltre puote
Et assale et percuote,
Tal che 'l calor si smorza sin al cielo,

Sol nel mio petto ogn'hor lasso si sera
Più vivo ardente lume,
Né per cangiar di ciel cangia costume,
Ma con sì aspra guerra
(Mercè d'una empia et fera) l'alma sface,
Che morte sol desio per trovar pace.

anonymous

20. **CD 2**
[21]-[22] Da quei bei lumi ond'io sempre sospiro,
Piove dentro al mio cor una tal fiamma,
Ch'io sento consumarmi a dramma a dramma,
Et l'amaro m'è dolce empio martiro.

Luci soavi ov'ha riposto amore
Ogni sua gioia et ogni mio diletto,
Caro de l'alma mia fidato albergo:
Se per soccorso del afflitto core
Al desiato loro almo ricetto
Gli occhi d'humiltà pieni volgo et ergo,
Non sia loro disdetto
Il lume di quel sol che 'l mondo honora,
Cagion ch'amando e ardeno i' viva et mora.

Giovanni Brevio

The readings of the 1542 print have been retained, including variants from standard texts of Petrarch and spellings and forms that differ from modern norms (e.g. *ingiostra*, *fuga*, *altiero*, *horor*, *camin*, etc.). Punctuation, however, which seems to have been applied haphazardly in the print, has been freely added and altered for sense.

Now that the air and the earth
in the natural order of things
are assailed and struck
by the full force of rain and frost,
so that warmth is extinguished all the way up to the heavens,

in my breast alone, alas, is forever enclosed
a most intensely burning light,
nor does it change with changing weather;
but, with harshest warfare,
at the mercy of a wicked and cruel lady, the soul is undone,
so that I desire only death in order to find peace.

From those fair eyes for which I am always sighing
there rains within my heart such a flame
that I feel myself consumed bit by bit,
and for me the bitterness is sweet, sinful suffering.

Gentle eyes, in which Love has stored
his every joy and my every delight,
trusted dwelling dear to my soul:
if to succor my afflicted heart
I turn and raise my eyes, full of humility,
to their desired divine refuge,
may the light of that sun
that the world honors not be denied them:
the reason that I, loving and burning, live and die.

Translations by Scott Metcalfe. Cf. translations by Robert Durling and Mark Musa (Petrarch), Martha Feldman (nos. 1, 6 & 7), Angela Lloyd (nos. 9 & 20), and Massimo Ossi (no. 19), from which I have sometimes borrowed. I have also consulted the commentary in Marco Santagata's edition of the *Canzoniere* (Milan, 1996). Many thanks to Courtney Quaintance and Jessie Ann Owens for corrections and suggestions.

First literary publication of poems by authors other than Petrarch:

Giovanni Brevio, *Rime et prose volgari* (Rome, 1545): nos. 1 & 20.

Francesco Maria Molza, in *Libro terzo delle rime di diversi nobilissimi et eccellentissimi autori* (Venice, 1550): no. 6.

Niccolò Amanio, in *Delle rime di diversi nobili huomini et eccellenti poeti. . . libro secondo* (Venice, 1547): no. 7.

Antonio Tebaldeo, *Opere* (Modena, 1498): no. 9.

UNCOVERING THE SECRETS OF THE 1542 *MADRIGALI A CINQUE VOCI*

JESSIE ANN OWENS (University of California, Davis)

In 1542, a Flemish immigrant to Italy burst onto the musical scene with a remarkable publication. Cupriaen De Rore, or Cipriano de Rore, as he signed his name in his letters, was twenty-seven years old, or possibly twenty-eight, and had never published any of his music when he brought out *Madrigali a cinque voci* with a leading Venetian music printer, Girolamo Scotto.



The title page of his 1542 publication tells us nothing about the composer beyond his name, Cipriano Rore. Thanks to research by Richard Agee and Bonnie Blackburn, we now think that he may have been working as a freelance composer and living in Brescia, some 180 kilometers west of Venice, when this book was published. Just a few years later, in 1546, he secured the most prestigious post in Italy, as chapelmaster for the Duke of Ferrara: perhaps the book advertised the composer's skills to potential employers. He later served as chapelmaster at the Farnese court in Parma and then at San Marco in Venice. He returned to Parma and died there in 1565, aged forty-nine or fifty. During the decades of the 1540s to mid-1560s he was arguably the most original and important composer of Italian madrigals. A portrait in a luxurious manuscript commissioned by Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria in 1559 and painted by court painter Hans Mielich shows him at the height of his fame as a composer.



Cipriano's book has an unusual title, simply *I madrigali a cinque voci*, "the madrigals for five voices." Most prints that contain madrigals were part of a series, with titles such as "the first book of madrigals for four voices" or "the second book." Calling it simply *I madrigali a cinque voci* suggests that this would be his only book of madrigals, but he would instead go on to publish five books of madrigals for five voices and two books for four voices. The title continues with the conventional "nuovamente posti in luce," newly published (literally, "placed in light"), and information about the publication: the printer's mark, the printer, place and year of publication.

The print has been slow to reveal critical features. It lacks a privilege, a form of copyright protection granted by the Venetian government typically printed on the title page ("cum gratia et privilegio"). In 1545, Cipriano obtained a privilege for his book of five-voice motets. Perhaps when he published his madrigals in 1542 he did not understand the value of a privilege for protecting his intellectual property and creative work, or perhaps he lacked the means for filing an application. The 1542 book became a best-seller, and four different printers brought out nearly a dozen editions of it over the course of the century.

Also striking is the absence of a dedication, the customary way of thanking a patron for the financial support that enabled publication. The verso of the title page, where a dedication would typically be placed, has been left blank. Does this mean that Cipriano paid for the first edition of the book himself? Or was there a patron who preferred to remain unnamed? Unlike composers who parlayed a dedication into a subvention, Cipriano never dedicated any of his prints to patron.

At the very end of the 1542 *I madrigali a cinque voci* is the table of contents, a simple list of its contents in alphabetical order, most with the notation "con la seconda parte" (with the second part). Although nothing draws attention to the special character of the contents, this print marked a significant change in the kinds of Italian texts composers were setting, away from lighter and shorter texts to more serious texts, drawn above all from the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* or *Canzoniere*, the collection of 366 lyric poems by Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374). Sixteen of the twenty madrigals in the 1542 book are sonnets, the first time the sonnet would so dominate a madrigal book, and twelve of them are by Petrarch. The 1542 *I madrigali a cinque voci* marked a decisive turn toward the unparalleled popularity of Petrarch among composers in the middle decades of the sixteenth century.

It was only in 1963 that one of the path-breaking features of *I madrigali* was discovered. Bernhard Meier, editor of the De Rore *opera omnia* and author of a number of important studies of mode in sixteenth-century music, realized that Cipriano had organized the print in modal order from mode 1 to mode 8, as shown in the table; only the final three pieces in the book do not adhere to this scheme. It is the earliest print to employ mode as the organizing principle.

No.	First line	Poet	Form	Mode	Tonal type (signature, clefs & final)
1.	Cantai mentre ch'arsi del mio foco	Giovanni Brevio	14-line ballata	1 transposed	♭ g2c2c3c3F3 G
2.	Hor che 'l ciel et la terra e 'l vento tace	Petrarch 164	sonnet	1 transposed	♭ g2c2c3c3F3 G
3.	Poggiand'al ciel coll'ali del desio	anonymous	sonnet	1 transposed	♭ g2c2c3c3F3 G
4.	Quando' son tutto volto in quella parte	Petrarch 18	sonnet	2 transposed	♭ c1c3c4c4F4 GG
5.	Solea lontana in sonno consolarme	Petrarch 250	sonnet	2 transposed	♭ c1c3c4c4F4 GG
6.	Altiero sasso, lo cui gioco spira	Francesco Maria Molza	sonnet	3	– c1c3c4c4F4 E
7.	Strane rupi, aspri monti, alte tremanti	Niccolò Amanio	sonnet	3	– c1c3c4c4F4 E
8.	La vita fuge et non s'arresta un' hora	Petrarch 272	sonnet	3	– c1c3c4c4F4 E
9.	Tu piangi et quella per chi fai tal pianto	Antonio Tebaldeo	sonnet	4	– c2c4c4F3F4 EE
10.	Il mal mi preme et mi spaventa il peggior	Petrarch 244	sonnet	5	♭ g2c2c3c3F3 F
11.	Per mezz' i boschi inhospiti et selvaggi	Petrarch 176	sonnet	5	♭ g2c2c3c3F3 F
12.	Quanto più m'avicino al giorno estremo	Petrarch 32	sonnet	6	♭ c1c3c4c4F4 FF
13.	Persequendomi Amor al luogo usato	Petrarch 110	sonnet	6	♭ c1c3c4c4F4 FF
14.	Chi vol veder quantunque pò natura	Petrarch 248	sonnet	7	– g2c2c3c3F3 G
15.	Quel sempre acerbo et honorato giorno	Petrarch 157	sonnet	7	– g2c2c3c3F3 G
16.	Far potess'io vendetta di colei	Petrarch 256	sonnet	8	– c1c3c4c4F4 GG
17.	Amor, che vedi ogni pensiero aperto	Petrarch 163	sonnet	8	– c1c3c4c4F4 GG
18.	Ben si conviene a voi	anonymous	9-line madrigal	[1]	♭ g2c2c3c3F3 D
19.	Hor che l'aria et la terra	anonymous	11-line madrigal	[2 tr.]	♭ c1c3c4c4F4 GG
20.	Da quei bei lumi ond'io sempre sospiro	Brevio	13-line ballata	[3]	– c1c3c4c4F4 E

Cipriano seems to have been among the first composers to understand how to adapt the concepts associated with modality, devised originally for monophonic chant, for polyphonic music. He distinguished between the authentic (high) and plagal (low) form of the modes through the ambitus or range of the voices, and the octave of the lowest note of the final sonority; the contrast between authentic and plagal is shown by the choice of clefs, high (g2 ... F3) versus low (c1 ... F4). In the case of the E modes, which sit low in the Renaissance gamut or tonal system, the distinction is between low clefs (c1 ... F4) and even lower clefs (c2c4c4F3F4). And he used characteristic melodic gestures and cadences both to establish, and then to deviate from the mode to express the meaning of the words. The model that he established in this print was followed by composers such as Palestrina and Lasso for the rest of the century.

Massimo Ossi recently noticed that none of the many subsequent editions of the 1542 book retained the precise contents and ordering of pieces or the modal organization of the first edition, and he questioned whether the printer, Girolamo Scotto, could have been responsible for the ordering of 1542, rather than Cipriano. A close examination of the later editions from the perspective of printing house practices shows that the printers altered the contents in accordance with their typical practice. Antonio Gardano, for example, rearranged the order in his 1544 edition, keeping features such as organization by system (*durus* versus *mollis*, that is, no flat versus flat signature), cleffing and final, but also changing the order so that he could use space more efficiently and add one more madrigal. Scotto made even more significant changes in his 1544 edition, omitting some of De Rore's madrigals, adding compositions by other composers, and increasing the number of pages. In contrast to these more commercial productions, financed by the printers, the 1542 edition stands out not only for its organization but also for the spacious layout of the music on the page, no doubt possible because the composer (or the composer and his undisclosed patron) assumed the financial risk. In short, the evidence of the printing history suggests that mode mattered to Cipriano but not to the Venetian printers who brought out the later editions.

But why? What work was mode doing? In 1990 Claude Palisca investigated the print from the perspective of modal ethos or affect. Examining the classical, medieval and Renaissance theoretical traditions, he assessed the appropriateness of De Rore's choices by considering the affect of each text in the context of theoretical traditions. His results were not convincing because theorists often contradict themselves and borrow from one another. Furthermore, the traditions themselves are discontinuous. But in one way Palisca was right: De Rore did care about the ways particular modes could express particular texts. For that, however, he relied on his deep understanding of the poetry and his knowledge of the Italian language, and not on the theorists.

My own work on *I madrigali* began by asking why Cipriano set no. 11, *Per mezz'i boschi*, a text that Martha Feldman reads as full of savage Dantean imagery, as a high-clef F piece (mode 5), with its cheerful, major-mode affect. Without disagreeing at all with her interpretation, my attention was drawn instead to the positive elements of the text: the poet-narrator can wander in the hostile woods without fear, singing of his beloved, who is with him now only as a memory; instead of being afraid, he is pleased by the silence of the woods. Mode 5, a predecessor of the later F major, expresses the poet's pleasure at this new-found connection to his lost beloved. A starker contrast to the mournful *Tu piangi* (no. 9), set in a mode traditionally used for laments, cannot be imagined.

From this observation emerged the realization that the texts were carefully ordered and the modes carefully chosen. De Rore was not simply putting a random assortment of madrigals he had ready to hand into modal order. Nor was his decision about the mode for a given text made in isolation. Instead, he seems to have composed the individual settings of the poems and selected the mode according to a large-scale plan for the book.

The opening piece, a *ballata*, *Cantai mentre ch'arsi*, functions as a proem to introduce a group of sixteen sonnets. Together these seventeen poems and their musical settings constitute a previously unrecognized poetic and musical cycle. In a time when most compositions, with the exception of settings of the mass ordinary, were short, rarely more than a few minutes in duration, this cycle was unprecedented for its length, well over 100 minutes in performance.

The musical organization of the cycle uses mode to express affect. There are four groups, each with the authentic and plagal versions of the mode. Nos. 2-5 are in modes 1 and 2, nos. 6-9 are in modes 3 and 4, nos. 10-14 are in modes 5 and 6, and nos. 15-17 are in modes 7 and 8. Imagine the sounds of four different scale types, ranging from the very dark Phrygian sounds of the E mode (modes 3 and 4), the somewhat less dark Dorian (in this print transposed to G with a flat in the signature (modes 1 and 2), to the lighter sound of Mixolydian (G, with no signature, modes 7 and 8), to the lightest sound of the F mode, with a flat signature (modes 5 and 6). In modern terms we might hear these groups, respectively, as two forms of minor and two forms of major.

Seen in this way, it becomes clear that the first half of the cycle—the minor half—can be read as the pain of love: the tormented and suffering poet engages with his beloved, “she who destroys me is always before me” (no. 2). The second half, in the major modes, describes the poet's resignation at her loss and his attempts to keep her present even after her death. *Tu piangi* (no. 9) functions as the pivot between these two worlds, the key to understanding the cycle: its opening sorrow (“You weep, and she for whom you weep laughs”) yields to the understanding of the closing (“Our life is a flower plucked from amongst thorns; so weep for your death, not for hers, for death is that which we call life”).

For mode to do its work, Cipriano needed an ordered set of poems that could present an overarching narrative. It is hard to imagine a composer assembling these poems without the help of a collaborator, who was in all likelihood a poet. For one thing, nearly a third of the texts were circulating only in manuscript: *I madrigali a cinque voci* is the earliest appearance in print for seven of the poems, and the only appearance for three. How did Cipriano come to have these texts?

The opening *ballata*, *Cantai mentre chi' arsi*, may offer a clue. From the 1545 publication *Rime et prose volgari di M. Giovanni Brevio* we learn that the poet was Giovanni Brevio (c. 1480-c. 1560), a Venetian priest, poet and author of *prose novelle*. He also wrote the *ballata* that closes the book, *Da quei bei lumi*. His presence in the most prominent positions in *I madrigali* could well function as a poetic signature, signalling his contribution to the endeavor.

We know little about Brevio's life: nephew (by adoption) of a bishop, he spent time during the 1510s in Rome and again in the 1540s, and held ecclesiastical benefices in the Veneto. He lived in Padua and Venice and was friends with many of Italy's leading writers. Although no portrait has survived, we do have his coat of arms, showing crossed lion's paws.



Brevio can be connected, directly or indirectly, to all of the poets whose texts make up the 1542 print (excluding the three anonymous poems, nos. 3, 18 and 19). Pride of place, of course, goes to Petrarch. Brevio is known to have owned two early sixteenth-century prints of Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, one of which survives today in Florence. It is a heavily annotated copy in which he added marginal notes identifying Petrarch's quotations and allusions. Brevio knew his Petrarch inside and out. He also shared with his friend Pietro Bembo (1470-1547), cardinal, poet and influential literary critic, a fascination with fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts of the *tre corone*—Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch—and he owned a now-lost manuscript copy of the *Raccolta Bartoliana*, a collection of medieval lyric poetry.

Antonio Tebaldeo (1463-1537), the author of *Tu piangi*, was a well-known poet and courtier, associated with the courts in Mantua and Ferrara. He then moved to Rome, and as a member of the circle around Pope Leo X could well have known Brevio. Brevio copied and annotated Tebaldeo's poetry in a manuscript anthology preserved today in Venice. Tebaldeo's sonnet is the oldest poem in the 1542 collection, apart from Petrarch's, first published in 1498 and many times thereafter.

Niccolò Amanio (ca. 1468-ca. 1528), a lawyer and administrator as well as a poet, died without publishing his *rime*. They circulated in manuscript and then, from 1545, began to appear in printed anthologies published by the Venetian printer Gabriel Giolito di Ferrari. Brevio knew Giolito and could have been involved in that venture, which also included some of his own poems. Amanio's *Strane rupi*, which used to be attributed to Luigi Tansillo, was first published in 1547.

Perhaps the best documented connection is between Brevio and the poet and *bon vivant* Francesco Maria Molza (1489-1544). Not only did they overlap in Rome, where Molza lived for most of his life in the entourage of Medici prelates (Pope Leo X, Pope Clement VII, Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici), but they certainly knew one another. A wonderful letter from the Florentine historian and *letterato* Benedetto Varchi to Molza describes his visit to Catajo in 1536, the villa south of Padua where the Italian noblewoman Beatrice Pia degli Obizzi held her literary salon. Varchi had a *canzone* by Molza that he recited by heart to Bembo and then brought with him in written form to Catajo. Beatrice was not there but Brevio was. Varchi writes:

La mattina seguente, vedete che particolari io conto perché vostra signoria intenda ogni cosa, andando presso ad Arquà per visitare la Cavagliera de gli Obizzi [Beatrice Pia degli Obizzi], gliela presentai scritta, sendovi solamente monsignor Brevio, ed egli or forte, e or piano, e or cantando, la lesse tutta più di vinti volte sempre lodandola; all'ultimo mi disse alcune cose di non molta importanza, come vedrà vostra signoria, e io, dubitando di non tenerle a mente e per non errare, gliela riportai a casa, perché egli umanissimamente, presa la penna, scrisse di sua mano quello che vedrà vostra signoria. Quelli segni o fregghi sono dove sua signoria vorrebbe si mutasse, né allora gli sovveniva come; né m'accade dire altro circa la canzone, salvo che ringraziar vostra signoria da sua parte d'aver mandato a mostrargliela, che certo intende e parla di vostra signoria come ella merita e mostra amarla cordialissimamente... (ed. Bramanti 2008)

The following morning—you see the details that I recount so that Your Lordship will understand everything—going to Arquà to visit Lady degli Obizzi, I presented it [the canzone] in writing—Monsignor Brevio was the only one present, and he read the whole poem more than twenty times, now loudly, now softly, and now singing it, always praising it. At the end he told me some things that were not important, as Your Lordship will see, and I, doubting my ability to remember them and not make mistakes, carried it back to his house so that he, most kindly, taking a pen, could write in his own hand that which Your Lordship will see. Those signs or arrows are where he would want things to be changed, though he did not know how. There is no need for me to say anything else about the canzone, except to thank Your Lordship on his behalf for having sent it to show him, who certainly appreciates and speaks of Your Lordship as you deserve and shows that he loves you most cordially.

A similar circulation of poetry in handwritten copies among friends and acquaintances may explain the inclusion of Molza's enigmatic sonnet *Altiero sasso* (no. 6) in the 1542 print:

*Altiero sasso lo cui gioco spira
Gli antichi honor del gran popul di Marte,
Fiume che fendì questa et quella parte,
Hor quieto et piano, hor pien di sdegno et ira;

Piagghe che 'l mondo ancor ama et sospira,
Consecrate da tante et da tai carte,
Memorie eterne et voi reliquie sparte
Ch'ogni bon alma con pieta rimira:*

Proud rock whose peak breathes forth
the ancient rites of the great people of Mars;
river that breaks on this side and that,
now quiet and still, now full of rage and fury;

grounds that the world still loves and sighs for,
consecrated by so many and by such writings;
eternal memories, and you scattered relics
on which every good soul gazes with devotion:

*Parmi d'udir fugendo a voi d'intorno
Sospirar l'onde, e i rami e i fior e l'ora
Lagnarsi, et per dolor romper i sassi,

Che già del pianto s'avvicina el giorno
Che 'l bel viso ch'Italia tutta honora
Cinti d'horor al suo partir vi lassì.*

I seem to hear fleeing around you
the waves sigh, and the branches and flowers and breeze
lament, and the stones break from grief,

for already the day of weeping draws near
when the beautiful face that all Italy honors
shall leave you wrapt in horror at her departure.

It opens with references to Rome, the Capitoline, the Tiber, the scattered relics. The natural world laments “because the day of weeping draws near when the beautiful face that all of Italy honors will leave you,” i. e., Rome. Who is this “bel viso,” the lady whose departure all of Italy mourns? Franco Pignatti has recently identified the context: the sonnet was written to mark the pending departure of Vittoria Farnese, granddaughter of Pope Paul III (Farnese) for France as part of the negotiations for her marriage to François de Lorraine, duc de Guise. Vittoria Farnese, shown in a portrait by Jacopino del Conte, was a very valuable commodity in the marriage diplomacy that was a constant in European politics. Her trip to France was being planned as late as January 1541, but then the negotiations failed; François would go on to marry Anna d'Este, and Vittoria would marry Guidubaldo della Rovere. *Altiero sasso* thus was written no later than January 1541, after which it lost its original purpose and was in effect useless, except perhaps to Giovanni Brevio, who could imagine putting it into the group of sad texts that De Rore could set in the mournful Phrygian mode. We have to imagine the sonnet circulating in manuscript, directly or indirectly between Molza and Brevio. Tellingly, given what we know of Brevio's willingness to revise other people's poems, the version in Molza's autograph has a slightly different reading (“honor del figliol di Marte” instead of “honor del gran popul di Marte”); it certainly seems plausible that Brevio could have provided the revised version of the text to Cipriano.

The poem thus found a new life in the 1542 sonnet cycle, between *Solea lontana* (no. 5), in which Petrarch has a vision of Laura telling him that he will not see her again, and *Strane rupi* (no. 7), a text that portrays a natural world of shaking ruins and barren deserts, and the weeping poet. The presence of Molza's and Amanio's poems suggests a conscious decision to build a cycle not only from poems drawn from the *Canzoniere* but also from well-known (and often reprinted) texts such as Tebaldeo's *Tu piangi* and from poems circulating only in manuscript.

It is not hard to find connections between pairs of texts, or to find recurring themes. The E group, for example, has repeated references to sadness—the sad heart (twice), the sad fate—and no fewer than six references to weeping. Another recurring image is the poet's “pensieri,” thoughts,



Jacopino del Conte, portrait of Vittoria Farnese (1550-60). Galleria Borghese, Rome

found in nine of the seventeen poems: “and only thinking of her do I have any peace” (no. 2); “and in my thoughts remains the light that burns and melts me within, bit by bit” (no. 4); he is almost beside himself, “di questi pensier fora” (no. 8). In no. 10 he raves with hard thoughts, and in no. 11, as he goes singing of her whom the heavens could not put far from him, he calls his thoughts unwise. He speaks to his thoughts in no. 12, and in no. 13 arms himself with his “antichi pensier.” In no. 16 his beloved consumes his tired and afflicted thoughts, and in no. 17, Amor (Cupid) sees his every thought.

That these sorts of images were critical for creating a larger-scale organization, and indeed were part of the deliberate conception of the cycle, is shown by a remarkable alteration of Petrarch’s text in no. 16, *Far potess’io*. The second part as set by De Rore begins “Così gli afflitti et stanchi pensier mei / A poco a poco consumando fugge.” This reading differs from the standard text in two places: “pensier” replaces “spirti,” and “fugge” replaces “sugge.” (Two of the voices in the 1542 edition (altus and tenor) read “spirti” instead of “pensier,” but all the rest of the editions published during Cipriano’s lifetime have “pensier”; only one of the voices in the 1542 edition (tenor) has “sugge,” while the rest, and all subsequent editions, have “fugge.”) Given the importance of “pensier” in the cycle as a whole, I would argue that both changes were intentional, and most likely the work of Brevio.

But the task of ordering the texts so that the large-scale narrative could be expressed musically through the modes must have been a true collaboration between poet and composer. A telling detail is that within the groups of four madrigals the texts are arranged to reflect the contrast between the authentic or high form of the mode and the plagal or low form. For example, in the first group, the first two pieces include “ciel,” heaven, in the first line—*Hor che l’ciel et la terra* and *Poggiand’al ciel coll’ali del desio*—and both set in the authentic mode 1 (transposed). In the third group, *Il mal mi preme, et mi spaventa il peggio* (no. 10), the poet exhorts his friend to lift up his soul to the heavenly kingdom; the next piece, no. 11, *Per mezz’i boschi inhospiti et selvaggi*, refers to heaven, and to the sun and the sun’s rays. Both are set in the authentic F mode. The first two pieces in the final group also have references to “ciel,” “sol” and “regno de gli dei.”

We do not know for certain that Brevio and De Rore knew one another, much less collaborated, and there is no dearth of other candidates who might be considered potential collaborators. Brevio certainly knew Cipriano’s presumed patron, the Brescian nobleman Count Fortunato Martinengo. As we learn from two recent studies by Bonnie Blackburn, Martinengo was passionate about music, though not himself a performer, and he supported musicians and music-making, including a 1539 visit by Pietro Aron, who would dedicate his 1545 treatise on mode to Martinengo.

Martinengo was also the likely author of a travelogue that described a twelve-day boat trip on Lake Garda with a group of friends, probably in 1540 or 1541. There were daily performances of instrumental and vocal music, recitations of poetry, and learned discussions that included disquisitions on mode. In those same years Martinengo visited Padua, where he had been a student, to take part in the activities of the *Accademia degli Infiammati* (Academy of the Burning Ones). A letter from 1540 indicates that Brevio was going to be invited to join; he was living in Padua, just down the street from Sperone Speroni, a principal force in the academy and from 1541 its *principe*, and not far from his friend Pietro Bembo. These circles of erudite intellectuals, many of them poets, interested in classical notions of the power of music, passionate consumers of Petrarch and Petrarchan verse, constitute a likely context for *I madrigali a cinque voci*. But we could also look to Venice and to the circles around Domenico Venier, so ably elucidated by Martha Feldman.

I madrigali a cinque voci has long been recognized as a landmark in music history, but the music, which demands uncommon virtuosity and meticulous attention to every aspect of the text, is unknown, rarely performed or recorded. For me Blue Heron's performances are a revelation that has caused me to rethink the specific stylistic features of the music. This is not the transparent homophony of Cipriano's late style, much less the simple chanson-derived style of the early madrigal. It employs a distinctive kind of imitative polyphony or *fuga* that John Milsom describes as "flexed," varied from statement to statement in both pitch and rhythm. Paradoxically, the individual musical segments are compact and dense while the composition as a whole is of unprecedented length. Together these features enable both the musical depiction of striking words and phrases, and the large-scale portrayal of affect. The new "black note" rhythmic convention, with its smaller note values, adds another possibility for text expression.

The revelation of Cipriano's 1542 publication—the novelty that must have come as a shock to listeners accustomed to simple settings of amorous texts—is the power of music to portray human emotion. These madrigals, each one a world unto itself, when taken together tell a story about the pain of love. With this print De Rore established the madrigal as a genre that celebrates the fusion of music and poetry. The tight connection between text and music at every level—from the musical depiction of salient features in the poetry to the musical expression of the overall affect of each poem, and even to the large-scale narrative represented through the colors of the modal system—make this collaboration between composer and poet a remarkable achievement with far-reaching implications for the ensuing generations.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Title page, *Di Cipriano Rore i madrigali a cinque voci* (Venice, 1542), Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, SA.77.D.5/1 (used by permission).

Portrait of Cipriano de Rore by Hans Mielich (1559): Munich, Bavarian State Library, Mus. ms. B, f. 149 (p. 304). Used by permission. Creative Commons Attribution–NonCommercial–ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>).

Giovanni Brevio, coat of arms, Arquà Petrarca. Photo: J.A. Owens.

Jacopino del Conte, portrait of Vittoria Farnese (1550–1560). Galleria Borghese, Roma (http://library.artstor.org/asset/AZERIIG_10312611818, accessed July 2, 2018).

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PERFORMING *I MADRIGALI A CINQUE VOCI*

SCOTT METCALFE

When Cipriano de Rore published *I madrigali a cinque voci* in 1542 with the Venetian printer Girolamo Scotto, he seems to have been earning a living as what we would now call a freelance musician. His first documented employment did not begin until May 1546, when he took up the post of *maestro di cappella* at the court of Duke Ercole II d'Este in Ferrara. Before that he appears to have resided in Brescia (ruled by the Republic of Venice since 1428, but lying 180 kilometers to the west) and may have moved in the circle of the Brescian Count Fortunato Martinengo, a poet and melomane who was the dedicatee of Pietro Aaron's treatise *Lucidario in musica* (1545),¹ but there is no ensemble or musical institution to which the composer may be directly linked at the time the madrigals were issued. A handful of letters to Ruberto Strozzi, a prominent and wealthy member of an exiled Florentine family, reveal that Cipriano made a trip to Venice at some date in the early 1540s, and that on several occasions through 1546 he was paid by Strozzi, and by his close associate and fellow Florentine Neri Capponi, for madrigals for their private use.² But the 1542 print of *I madrigali* lacks any sort of dedication or prefatory text that might suggest a destination for these extraordinary works, nor does it offer any information whatsoever about the sort of ensemble the composer may have envisioned performing his music, aside from its scoring for five voices of four types: Cantus, Altus, two Tenors (one labelled Quintus, the fifth part), and Bassus. Furthermore, we have neither a description nor even a record of any performances of Cipriano's *Madrigali a cinque voci* during the composer's lifetime or indeed at any time before our era, despite the fact that the music was reprinted in nearly a dozen editions during the sixteenth century.

Nevertheless, the situation is far from bleak for those who would like to know how these madrigals might have been sung in the 1540s. Cipriano's documented connections to Ruberto Strozzi and Neri Capponi place him within a luminous galaxy of musicians, poets, musical and literary theorists, teachers, patrons, and bon vivants of all kinds in and around Venice, including the composer Adrian Willaert, the celebrated singers Polissena Pecorina and Perissone Cambio, the instrumentalist Silvestro Ganassi, poets and men of letters like Giovanni Brevio, Benedetto Varchi, and Francesco Molza, the theorists Nicolo Vicentino and Gioseffo Zarlino, the rather eccentric

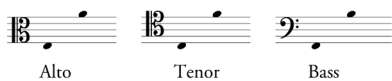
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² Richard J. Agee, "Ruberto Strozzi and the early madrigal," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 36 (1983), pp. 1–17. For revised datings of one letter from 1541 to 1542, see Agee's "Filippo Strozzi and the early madrigal," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 38 (1985), pp. 227–37, at p. 236 n. 35; Bonnie Blackburn has proposed a reading of 1540: see "Cipriano de Rore's early Italian years," p. 32.

writer and sometime academician Antonfrancesco Doni, the publisher and composer Scotto,³ and many others who were involved with creating, nurturing, and disseminating the madrigal, the leading form of secular music in cinquecento Italy. Pursuing this network of connections will allow us to imagine in some detail how Cipriano's music might have been realised—what sorts of voices might have sung it and at what pitch, and what sort of musical and esthetic priorities might have informed a performance by the most esteemed musicians of the age.

Voice types & scoring: Polissena or Perissone?

There is little question about what sort of voice would have sung the lower four parts of Cipriano's *Madrigali a cinque voci*. Bassus, Tenor and its partner Quintus, and Altus were all adult men, with voices lying naturally lower to higher. The alto (abbreviated from *contratenor altus*) was, as the name implies, a high tenor. The ranges of these voices were best expressed by the clefs that bear the same names, written on a five-line staff without the use of ledger lines:



The top part, called Cantus, Superius, or soprano, was written in soprano clef, or sometimes, depending on the mode of the piece, in mezzo-soprano clef:



The Cantus might be sung by a woman, a man singing in falsetto, a castrato, or a boy. The first two options seem to have been those common in madrigal circles. The choice might be framed as between Polissena and Perissone.

The most famous madrigal singer in Venice at mid-century was Polissena Pecorina, a soprano for whom Willaert seems to have composed much of his epochal *Musica nova*—published in 1559 but circulating in manuscript and being performed as much as two decades earlier in Venetian academies or salons like that of Neri Capponi.

³ Scotto published, among many other works, Doni's *Dialogo* (1544), Aaron's *Lucidario* (1545), and Pietro Bembo's *Prose... della volgar lingua* (1563), and was himself the composer of over sixty settings of texts by Petrarch. See Massimo Ossi, "Petrarchan discourses and corporate authorship in Cipriano de Rore's 'First Book' of five-voice madrigals (Venice, 1542-44)," in *Cipriano de Rore*, ed. Owens and Schiltz, pp. 153-90, especially 182-90.

...se la S.V. udisse la divinità, ch'io ho gustato con l'orecchia dell'intelligenza qui in Vinegia stupirebbe. *Ecce una gentil donna polisena Pecorina (consorte d'un cittadino della mia patria) tanto virtuosa & gentile, che non trove lode sì alte, che la commendino. Io ho udito una sera un concerto di violoni & di voci, dove ella sonava, e cantava in compagnia di altri spiriti eccellenti. il maestro perfetto della qual musica era Adriano Villaert di quella sua diligente invenzione non più usata dai musici, sì unita, sì dolce, sì giusta, sì mirabilmente acconcie le parole, ch'io confessai non avere saputa che cosa sia stata armonia ne' miei giorni, salvo in quella sera. L'infervorato di questa musica, e l'innamorato di tanta divina composizione è un gentil'uomo, uno spirito eccellentissimo pur fiorentino, detto M. Neri Capponi... Questo M. Neri dispensa l'anno le centinaia de ducati in tal virtù: e la conserva appresso di sé; né se fosse suo padre darebbe fuori un canto.*

Antonfrancesco Doni, *Dialogo della musica*, dedication in tenor partbook, dated April 7, 1544.⁴

Silvestro Ganassi, in his letter dedicating his *Lettonne seconda* to Neri Capponi, hailed Capponi as "a Parnassus, a Helicon, and a haven for virtuosi"; he described Capponi's *accademia* as a "sacred and divine collegio" presided over by "messer Adriano, who cannot be praised too highly, a new Prometheus of heavenly Harmony."⁵

Polissena's singing and playing evoked rapturous praise from musicians, poets, and patrons alike. In a letter dated March 27, 1534, Ruberto Strozzi wrote to his tutor, the Florentine historian Benedetto Varchi. Besides mentioning his hope to gratify Varchi's desire that one of his epigrams be set to music by Willaert, Strozzi asks that Varchi compose a madrigal (the poetic form is meant) in Polissena's honor.

⁴ Antonfrancesco Doni, *Dialogo della musica*, ed. G. Francesco Malipiero and Virginia Fagotto, *Collana di musiche veneziane inedite e rare* no. 7 (Vienna, 1965), p. 5. Cf. translations in Alfred Einstein, *The Italian madrigal* (Princeton, 1949), pp. 198-9, and Martha Feldman, *City culture and the madrigal at Venice* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1995), p. 32.

⁵ Silvestro Ganassi dal Fontego, *Lettonne seconda pur della pratica di sonare il violone d'arco da tasti* (Venice, 1543), dedicatory epistle. The first part of Ganassi's viol treatise, the *Regola Rubertina* of 1542, is dedicated to Ruberto Strozzi. Both Strozzi and Capponi studied with Ganassi.

...if Your Lordship could hear the divine things which with the ears of understanding I have enjoyed here in Venice, you would be amazed. Here there is a gentlewoman, POLISENA Pecorina (wife of a citizen of my native town), so talented and refined that I cannot find words high enough to praise her. One evening I heard a concert of viols and voices in which she played and sang together with other excellent musicians. The perfect master of that music was Adriano Willaert, whose studious style, never before practiced by musicians, is so unified, so sweet, so right, so miraculously suited to the words that I confess to never having known what harmony was in all my days, save on that evening. The devotee of this music and lover of such divine composition is a gentleman, a most excellent spirit, Florentine as well, called Messer Neri Capponi... This Messer Neri spends hundreds of ducats every year on such art, and keeps it to himself; not even for his own father would he let forth one song.

Adi xxvii di Marzo 1534. M. Benedetto mio honorando: io mi truovo la vostra delli x. et con essa e otto sonetti, et due epigrammi, che per mia fe non mi potevi fare al mondo il maggior servizio, et vi prego che continuate in mandarmi qual ch'altra cosa, quando ne fate, che certo ne ho piacere assai: Voi vorresti che io vi facessi fare sur uno di quelli epigrammi la musica à Adriano, di che farò ogni opera; ma non ve lo prometto al certo; perche e un rinegare la patientia al farli fare cosa alcuna; pure faro il mio sforzo, et se l'aro ve lo manderò: lo come vi dissi ricevei e mandriali, che voi me mandaste, et piaquero assai; ma essendo stato ricerco di farne uno altro in laude della detta M.a Pulisena, non havendo a chi ricorrere, m'è forza venire a Voi. . . fate che sia in laude di detta Pulisena, quale canta sul liuto benissimo, et in su libri, et mettevi su il nome suo, et fate che li ultimi duoi versi rimino, et sieno tutti a dua di xi sillabi, et detto suo nome vorrebbe fussi da mezo del mandriali in giù.

Roberto Strozzi to Benedetto Varchi, Venice, March 27, 1534⁶

Varchi appears to have fulfilled Strozzi's request with this madrigal, later set to music by Jacques Arcadelt.

Quando col dolce suono
s'accordan le dolcissime parole
ch'escon fra bianche perle bei rubini,
maravigliando dico: hor come sono
venuto in ciel, che si dappresso il sole
rimiro ed odo accenti alt'e divini.
O spirti pellegrini,
s'udeste Pulisena
direste ben ch'udir doppia serena.
Io che veduta l'ho vi giuro ch'ella
è più che'l sol assai lucente e bella.

On the 27th day of March 1534. My esteemed messenger Benedetto: I have received yours of the 10th and with it the eight sonnets and two epigrams, and in faith you could not do me a greater service in the world, and I ask you to continue to send other such things when you do them, as they certainly give me a great deal of pleasure. You would like me to have one of those epigrams set to music by Adriano; I'll do everything I can, but I won't promise you for certain, because it is a game of patience to get him to do anything; still, I will try with all my power, and if I get it, I'll send it to you. As I told you, I received the madrigals that you sent me, and they were very pleasing. But having been asked to have another one made in praise of the lady Pulisena, and having no one else to turn to, I must come to you. . . Make it in praise of the said Pulisena (who sings very well both to the lute and from partbooks), put her name in it, make the two final verses rhyme, and make them eleven syllables each, and she would like her name to be mentioned somewhere after the middle of the madrigal.

When to sweet sound
are tuned the sweetest words
issuing from between white pearls and lovely rubies,
I marvel, saying: now it is as if I have
arrived in heaven, so near at hand do I behold
the sun and hear bright and divine notes.
O wandering spirits,
if you heard Pulisena
you would say that you heard a siren's double.
I who have seen her swear to you that she
is yet more resplendent and beautiful than the sun.

Not only does this poem fit precisely the requirements set down in Strozzi's letter, it weaves the lady's praises into a web of Petrarchan quotation and allusion. Its second verse quotes the sonnet *Come l'candido pie' per l'erba fresca*,⁷ and the image of teeth as pearls is a common one in Petrarch, featuring in *Quel sempre acerbo et honorato giorno* (no. 157 in the *Canzoniere*, no. 15 in Cipriano's 1542 *Madrigali*) and elsewhere.⁸

Williaert, too, set a madrigal, this one anonymous, glorifying Polissena in Petrarchan terms.

Qual dolcezza giamai
di canto di Sirena
involò i sensi e l'alma a chi l'udiro,
che di quella non sia minor assai
che con la voce angelica e divina
desta nei cor' la bella Pecorina.

A la dolce armonia si fa serena
l'aria, s'acqueta il mar, tacciono i venti,
e si rallegra il ciel di gir in giro.
I santi angeli intenti
chinando in questa parte il vago viso,
s'obblan ogni piacer del paradiso.
Et ella in tanto honore
dice con lieto suon: qui regna Amore.

As much as the sweetness
of the Siren's song ever
rapt the senses and soul of the listener,
no less does the beautiful Pecorina
with a voice angelic and divine
stir the heart.

At the sweet harmony the air
becomes serene, the sea calms, the winds fall silent,
and the heavens rejoice from sphere to sphere.
The holy angels, intent,
bowing their lovely faces this way,
forget every pleasure of Paradise.
And she, so honored,
says with happy sound: "Here reigns Love."

As Martha Feldman notes, verses 7-9 gloss Petrarch's *Hor che l'ciel et la terra tace* (*Canzoniere* 164, no. 2 in Cipriano's *Madrigali*) and verse 14 quotes the last line of the fourth stanza of the canzone *Chiare fresche dolci acque* (*Canzoniere* 126, v. 52), describing a rain of flowers swirling about Laura: "girando pareo dir: Qui regna Amore."⁹

So closely was Polissena Pecorina associated with the manuscript of the *Musica nova* that it became known as *Le pecorine* or *La pecorina di Ms. Adrian*. Polissena eventually owned the collection outright (presumably after Capponi) and Prince Alfonso d'Este was obliged to purchase it from her in 1554 in order to return it to its creator to prepare it for publication.¹⁰

⁷ *Canzoniere* no. 165, v. 10: according to Santagata the unique occurrence of the superlative *dolcissime* in Petrarch. Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, ed. Marco Santagata (Milan, 1996), p. 752.

⁸ For *perle = denti*, cf. *Canzoniere* 157, 12-13; 200, 10-11; 220, 5-6; in Petrarch the image is often associated with roses for lips, rather than Varchi's rubies. Arcadelt's madrigal appears in *Il Primo libro di madrigali d'Arcadelt à quattro* (1539); see discussion in Agee 1983, pp. 11-12; Einstein, *The Italian madrigal*, pp. 164-5; Feldman 1995, pp. 31, 34-5; and James Haar, *Essays on Italian poetry and music in the Renaissance, 1350-1600* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1986), pp. 72-3.

⁹ Feldman, *City culture and the madrigal*, pp. 34-5.

¹⁰ See Feldman *City culture and the madrigal*, pp. 32-6, including n. 41 and n. 48.

⁶ Agee, "Roberto Strozzi," pp. 1-2, translation modified; see also Feldman, *City culture and the madrigal at Venice*, p. 31.

Perissone Cambio, like Cipriano de Rore and Adrian Willaert a transplanted Fleming, studied with Willaert and was connected to Cipriano as well, for three of Cipriano's pieces appear in Perissone's *Primo libro a quattro voci* (1547) and one of Perissone's was printed in each of Cipriano's second and third books of five-voice madrigals; Perissone also wrote the dedicatory letter for Gardane's 1548 edition of Cipriano's third book. Francesco Sansovino, a Florentine who immigrated to Venice at age six with his father, the sculptor Jacopo Sansovino, described Perissone as "a soprano without equal who's been sought out by many princes but wouldn't exchange Venice for any other city."¹¹ Feldman imagines him "among the impressive performers Doni witnessed in Neri Caponi's salon."¹² According to a sonnet written by Domenico Venier after Perissone's early death:

*Fermò l'onde nel mar, ne l'aria i venti,
Arse il gel, mosse i monti, e 'l ciel turbato
Serenò 'l suon de' suoi soavi accenti.*

The sound of his sweet tones stopped
The waves in the sea, the wind in the air,
Burned ice, moved mountains, and made
serene the clouded sky.¹³

Perissone features in the second part of Doni's *Dialogo*, a lighthearted evocation of an evening at a musical academy in Venice. Besides Perissone, the eight participants who converse and sing madrigals include the composers Claudio Veggio and Girolamo Parabosco (another student of Willaert's) and a woman called Selvaggia.¹⁴ Perissone sang soprano parts as an adult, but was not a castrato, so presumably used some kind of falsetto technique. A man called Michele also takes the top part in the madrigals sung in Part I of the *Dialogo*. Here the setting is Piacenza, the gathering possibly modelled on the short-lived Accademia degli Ortolani (Academy of the Gardeners) which Doni served as secretary for a brief time in 1543 prior to his move to Venice.¹⁵

To return to our choice between Polissena and Perissone: Cipriano may have expected either a woman or an adult man to sing the top parts of his music. Absent any information as to his preferences, we have opted for variety, employing a female soprano for ten of the madrigals, and a male for the other ten.

¹¹ Francesco Sansovino, *Delle cose notabili che sono in Venetia* (Venice, 1656), f. 33; trans. Feldman 1995, pp. 341.

¹² Feldman, p. 343.

¹³ Feldman, p. 40. Venier, "the most prominent literary patron at midcentury, a Venetian patrician ... lived from 1517 to 1582 and presided for virtually all of his adult life over the most renowned literary academy in Venice" (p. 83); he was a devotee of Pietro Bembo (p. 87 ff.).

¹⁴ Probably Isabetta Guasca from Piacenza, according to Einstein, p. 197.

¹⁵ On Doni and the *Dialogo*, see Einstein, pp. 193-201, Feldman, pp. 19-21, and James Haar, "Notes on the *Dialogo della musica* di Antonfrancesco Doni," *Music & Letters* 47 (1966), pp. 198-224.

Performing pitch

The question of the performing pitch of vocal music before the early seventeenth century resists easy answers, due on the one hand to the near-complete absence of surviving instruments whose pitch might be measured, and on the other to the fact that much polyphonic music was sung by voices alone. It is sometimes asserted off-handedly that all-vocal ensembles simply chose any convenient pitch out of the air and that the result was a complete absence of a vocal pitch standard across Europe. Besides the lack of any evidence in support of this view, there are serious objections to its plausibility. Not the least of these is the fact that when evidence does begin to emerge for pitch standards of specific frequencies, from the later sixteenth century onwards, whether in Italy, Germany, France, or England, those pitches fall into a pattern. The most common pitch on the continent in the seventeenth century is around A466 Hz (a semitone above the modern standard of A440); the next most common, around A415 (a whole tone below A466); a third, less common pitch occurs yet another semitone down at about A392. That is to say, the most common pitches are a higher one (A466) and a lower one (A415) separated by a whole tone, with a third pitch (A392) a minor third lower than the higher and more common of the first two. As Bruce Haynes realised and documented in his landmark study of 2002, these pitches are related to each other on a "grid" of integral intervals (not less than a semitone) which allowed players of instruments tuned in meantone, such as organs and most winds, to transpose between them if necessary.¹⁶

In the absence of a reason to alter it, performing pitch is unlikely to change. As Haynes observes, "it is in everyone's interest that it remain stable."¹⁷ At most times and in most places there will have been many reasons to conserve pitch standards and the pitch grid (while allowing for variations in taste between regions and individual musicians), enabling music to cross distances in space and time and saving a lot of money which would otherwise have to be spent on purchasing or refitting instruments; and indeed, the pitch grid endured for centuries. It is therefore pretty safe to assume that we can extrapolate backwards from the patterns in place around 1600.

Furthermore, the normal *written* range of unaccompanied vocal polyphony is far from arbitrary, but rather is tied to *sounding* pitch and grew from a profound understanding of the ranges of human voices. This knowledge is embedded in and manifested firstly by the Gamut or normative musical space of medieval and Renaissance music and its range of twenty notes from bass G

¹⁶ Bruce Haynes, *A history of performing pitch* (2002), Introduction, section 0-3; ch. 2; *et passim*.

¹⁷ Haynes, p. 96.

(called Gamma ut, from which the word gamut is derived) to treble e', encompassing the composite range or compass of male singers from the low notes of the average bass to the high notes of the average male falsettist or boy; next, by the five-line staff, which allows an individual voice range of an octave and a fourth to be notated without the use of ledger lines; and finally, by the standard clefs of vocal music (bass, tenor, alto, and soprano), which on a five-line staff imply an ordinary range of F to b for a bass, c to f' for a tenor, e to a' for an alto, and b to e" for a soprano. (See p. 28.) At a pitch somewhere around A415 to 466, these ranges correspond to the comfortable ordinary ranges of human males, within which they can sing "naturally" and deliver text clearly and persuasively, qualities valued by Renaissance writers.

A466 appears to be the most common pitch of the later sixteenth century in Venice and the Veneto, and was presumably that at mid-century as well. As it also suits our ensemble of individual voices very well, we have adopted it as our pitch standard for this recording.

Clefs & transposition

Sixteenth-century polyphony was also notated in other clefs besides the standard soprano, alto, tenor, and bass clefs, for which we might use the shorthand c1 / c3 / c4 / F4, for the note indicated by the clef and the line of the staff it is placed on. The most frequent alternative set of clefs is high, g2 / c2 / c3 / c4 or F3, with treble clef on the top and tenor or baritone clef on the bottom; low clef sets were also used. Writing in such clefs allowed the composer to write music in certain modes without having to resort to ledger lines, while preserving the traditional ranges, finals, and signatures. In the seventeen madrigals that compose the modally ordered cycle in his 1542 book (nos. 1-17, Brevio's proem followed by the sixteen sonnets), Cipriano used standard clefs for pieces in modes 2, 3, 6, and 8 and high clefs for pieces in modes 1, 5, 7; all have the same basic scoring of SATTB.¹⁸ The sole piece in mode 4, *Tu piangi*, is notated in a unique set of clefs, c2 / c4 / c4 / F3 / F5, with the second and third highest parts paired rather than the third and fourth.

When singers read from high clefs, they simply transposed the music down to a normal, comfortable pitch. As Praetorius writes, "Each composition written in high clefs, that is, when the bass is

¹⁸ Note that the madrigals in modes 1 and 2 are notated with a final of G and a signature of one flat rather than the normative D final with no flat. This was common practice, as Zarlino observes, "In mensural music the second mode is rarely found in its proper notes but most of the time is found transposed up by a fourth ... for this mode can be transposed, as can the first mode, with the help of the note Bb." Gioseffo Zarlino, *Le Istitutioni harmoniche* (1558), Part IV, ch. 19, p. 323. Translation modified from *On the modes*, trans. Vered Cohen (New Haven and London, 1983), p. 61.

written in a C-clef on the second or third line from the top or in an F-clef on the third line, must naturally be transposed ... If it is in a transposed mode [b mol], it must be taken down a fourth, and B♭ [durum] applied; if, however, it is untransposed [f dur], it must be taken down a fifth, and B♭ [mol] used."¹⁹ Numerous instances of high and low clef notation exist dating back at least as far as the mid-fifteenth century and the generation of Johannes Ockeghem, and the practice of transposition is amply and unambiguously documented from the later sixteenth century onwards. Proving the general application of transposition to vocal music before 1600 is somewhat less straightforward, due to the absence of explicit instructions, such as Praetorius's cited above, from contemporary theoretical or practical treatises. Nevertheless, a few pieces of evidence, from both written texts and notated music, may be brought to bear on the topic as it relates to Cipriano's 1542 madrigals in particular.²⁰

The first witness is Gioseffo Zarlino, who moved to Venice in 1541, studied with Willaert, and succeeded Cipriano (who was himself Willaert's successor) as *maestro di cappella* of San Marco in 1565. Zarlino considers the question of vocal ranges in Part IV, chapter 31 of his *Istitutioni harmoniche* of 1558. The entire chapter is worth reading closely for its discussion of the relative ranges of soprano, alto, tenor, and bass parts; I excerpt the most directly relevant passages here.

¹⁹ Praetorius, Michael. *Syntagma musicum III* (1619), pp. 80-1; translated and edited by Jeffery T. Kite-Powell (Oxford, 2004), p. 93.

²⁰ See Andrew Parrott, "Transposition in Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610," *Early music* 12 (1984), 490-516; "Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 revisited," *Performing practice in Monteverdi's music: proceedings of the International Congress, Goldsmith's College, University of London, December 1993*, ed. R. Monterosso (1995), 163-74; "Monteverdi: onwards and downwards," *Early music* 32 (2004), 303-317; and "High clefs and down-to-earth transposition: a brief defence of Monteverdi," *Early music* 40 (2012), 81-5; Patrizio Barbieri, "Chiavette and modal transposition in Italian practice (c. 1500-1837)," *Recercare* 3 (1991), 5-79; Jeffrey Kurtzman, "Tones, modes, clefs and pitch in Roman cyclic Magnificats of the 16th century," *Early music* 22 (1994), 641-64; and *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610* (1999), ch. 17; Andrew Johnstone, "High clefs in composition and performance," *Early music* 34 (2006), 29-53; Anne Smith, "Über Modus und Transposition um 1600," *Basler Jahrbuch für historisches Musikpraxis* vi (1982), 9-43.

Parrott's exhaustive treatment of the topic in four articles now appears as chapters 5-8 of his *Composers' intentions? Lost traditions of musical performance* (Woodbridge, 2015). For a discussion of high and low clefs and the practice of transposition in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, see my notes to our 5-CD set of music from the Peterhouse partbooks, *The Lost Music of Canterbury* (BHCD1008) and Scott Metcalfe, "Performance practice in Peterhouse's chapel: scoring, voice types, number of singers, and pitch," in Scott Mandelbrote (ed.), *Music, politics, and religion in early seventeenth-century Cambridge: the Peterhouse partbooks in context* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, forthcoming).

Del modo, che si hà da tenere, nell'accommodar le parti della cantilena; & delle estremità loro; & quanto le chorde estreme acute di ciascuna quelle, che sono poste nell'acuto, possono esser lontane dalla estrema chorda posta nel grave del concento. Cap. 31. . . .

Sarebbe bene il dovere, che ciascuno di esse [parti] non passasse più di otto chorde, & stesse raccolta nelle chorde della sua Diapason: ma perche si passa più oltra, & torna alle volte commodo grandemente alli Compositori; però questo attribuireno più presto ad una certa licenza, ce si pigliano, che alla perfezione della cosa. . . .

Et benchè (come hò detto) tal parti si possono estendere alle volte per una chorda nel grave, & anche nell'acuto; & per due anco, & più se fusse dibisogno, oltra le loro Diapason; tuttavia si debbe cercare, che le parti cantino commodamente; & che non trappassino la Decima, ovvero la Undecima chorda ne i loro estremi: essendo che verrebbero ad esser sforzate, faticose, & difficili da cantarsi per la loro ascesa, & discesa. Si debbe oltra di ciò avvertire, che 'l Basso non si estenda molto fuori delle chorde della sua Diapason continenti il Modo nel grave; ne il Soprano mesimamente nell'acuto: percioche questo sarebbe cagione di fare, che la cantilena si sarebbe estrema; la onde ne seguitarebbe discommodo grande alli cantanti.

CHAPTER 31. The parts of a vocal composition: how they should be arranged, their range, and how far the highest note of the composition may be from the lowest note.

...

It would be good if each of the parts did not exceed eight notes and remained confined within the notes of its octave. But parts do exceed eight notes, and it sometimes turns out to be of great convenience to the composer, and thus we shall ascribe this practice to a certain license and not to the perfection of the thing. . . .

And although (as I said earlier) parts can at times be extended up or down by one step, and even, if necessary, by two or more steps beyond their diapason, nevertheless one should take care that the parts can be sung comfortably, and that they not exceed in their extremes the tenth or eleventh note, for then they would become forced, tiring, and difficult to sing, because of their ascent and descent. In addition to this, one should note that the bass ought not to extend much below the notes of the octave which contains its mode, nor ought the soprano to do the same above, for this would make the composition extreme, causing great inconvenience for the singers.

Debbe adunque fare il Compositore, che computando la estrema chorda grave del Basso della cantilena con la estrema acuta del Soprano, non trappassì la Decimanona chorda, ancora che non sarebbe molto incommodo, quando si arivasse alla Ventesima; ma non più oltra: percioche osservando si questo, le parti resteranno ne i loro termini, & saranno cantabili senza fatica alcuna.

Et perche alle volte so suole comporre senza il Soprano, & tal maniera di comporre si chiama Comporre a voci mutate; ovvero componendo solamente più Tenori, & il Basso, lo chiamono Comporre a voci pari; però voglio, che si sappia; che nelle prime compositioni si piglia il Contralto in luogo del Soprano, & l'altra parte viene ad essere contenuta tra le stesse chorde del Contralto, ovvero nelle chorde del Tenore; di maniera che tal cantilena viene ad esser composta con due Contralti, ovvero con tre Tenori.

È ben vero, che si hà rispetto alla parte, che si piglia per il Soprano: percioche è alquanto più acuta sempre di quella, che si piglia per l'Alto: percioche questa procede in una maniera alquanto più rimessa; Ma sia come si voglia, bisogna compor le parti della cantilena in tal guisa, che i loro estremi non passino oltra la Quintadecima chorda; connumerando la estrema grave, & la estrema acuta.

L'altre parti, che si aggiungessero oltra le quattro nominate, non si potrebbero aggiungere in altra maniera, se non raddoppiando l'una di esse: & si chiamarebbe Tenore secondo, o Secondo Basso; & così dico delle altre. . .

Thus in computing the lowest note of the bass in a composition and the highest note of the soprano, a composer should take care not to exceed the nineteenth note, although it would not be very inconvenient if he reached the twentieth note, but not beyond that. When this is observed, the parts will remain within their limits and will be singable without any effort.

And sometimes one composes without the soprano, and this manner of composing is called by practitioners "composing for altered voices," or, if it is only for tenor and bass, "composing for equal voices." In the former compositions the contralto takes the place of the soprano, and the next highest voice becomes contained within the notes of the contralto, or within the notes of the tenor, so that such a composition will be written with two contraltos or three tenors.

To be sure, particular attention should be paid to the part that takes the place of the soprano, because it is always somewhat higher than the one that takes the place of the alto, the latter proceeding in a somewhat more restrained manner. But be that as it may, the parts of a composition should be arranged in such a way that the extremes do not exceed fifteen notes, including the lowest and the highest notes.

Other parts besides the four mentioned above cannot be added except by doubling one of the four, and such a part would be called a second tenor or second bass, and so with the others. . .

To summarize: The normal range of a vocal part is an octave, plus one, two, or occasionally three notes—that is, up to an eleventh, or what can be notated on a five-line staff without using ledger lines. The total compass of a piece should be confined to nineteen or twenty notes—i.e. the compass of the Gamut. A piece without a soprano part should have a compass of fifteen notes or two octaves. Finally, one cannot write a part in a range other than the normal four, whether above a soprano or below a bass—that is, there are no voices that sing above the soprano, nor below the bass.

Added together, Zarlino's instructions point to only one possible interpretation: that polyphonic vocal music had a total possible written compass of nineteen or twenty notes (compounded from four parts with different ranges of eight to eleven notes each), and, crucially, that this written compass corresponded to a *general sounding range* no matter what the written range might be. If this were not the case—if, for example, the apparent high range of high clefs, or low range of low clefs, was intended to sound as written at a normative pitch somewhere around A415-466—then one could compose music for five or six voice types, adding a “high soprano” or “low bass” to the usual four. Such a scoring could utilize an extended compass of twenty-three notes (adding a “high soprano”) from bass F (one note below the lowest line of the staff in F4 clef) to treble g (one note above the highest line of the staff in g2), or even twenty-five (adding a “low bass” as well), starting from the bass D one can write without ledger lines in the low F5 clef. But Zarlino is perfectly clear: “in computing the lowest note of the bass in a composition and the highest note of the soprano, a composer should take care not to exceed the nineteenth . . . [or] twentieth note” and “Other parts besides the four mentioned above cannot be added except by doubling one of the four.” The only logical reading of these stipulations is that a polyphonic piece, no matter what set of clefs it is notated in, was transposed to approximately the same sounding compass, presumably that of the standard clefs—exactly as Praetorius and a host of other later writers say explicitly.

In another chapter, Zarlino confirms that the practice of transposition by a fourth or fifth (“by placing the note ♭ in the location of ♯,” he puts it, just as Praetorius does, i.e. by changing the scale or octave species), “in order to match the sound of their instruments to the voices, which sometimes cannot ascend or descend as far as the proper locations of the modes require when played on the said instruments,” is the standard practice among modern musicians just as it was among “ancient” musicians of the generations of Ockeghem and Josquin.

Se è possibile adunque . . . che per la mutatione di una chorda nell'altra, cioè per il porre la chorda ♭ in luogo della ♯; ovvero per dir meglio, per la trasportatione del Semituono, si possa variare un Modo nell'altro. . . non è dubbio, che qualunque Modo, sia Primo, Secondo, Terzo, Quarto, ovvero alcuno de gli altri, col favore di alcuna chorda, che muti una Diapason nell'altra, potremo trasportare qualunque Modo verremo verso l'acuto, o verso il grave, a nostro bel piacere. Il che quanto alle volte possa tornar commodo, lassarò giudicare a ciascuno, che habbia giuditio: percioche tali Trasportationi sono utili, & sommarmente necessarie anco ad ogni perito Organista, che serve alle Musiche choriste; & ad altri Sonatori similmente, che suonano altre sorti di istrumenti, per accomodare il suono di quelli alle Voci, le quali alle volte non possono ascendere, o discendere tanto, quanto ricercano i luoghi propij delli Modi, accomodati sopra i detti istrumenti. Et tali Trasportationi sono hora in uso appresso i Musici moderni; come furono anche appresso gli Antichi, Ockeghen, & il suo discepolo Josquino, & infiniti altri; come nelle loro compositioni si può vedere.

Le Istituzioni harmoniche, Part IV, ch. 17 (“Della Trasportatione delli Modi”), p. 319; trans. modified from Cohen, pp. 52.

If it is possible therefore . . . that by changing one note into another, that is, by placing the note ♭ in the location of ♯, or, better said, by transposing the semitone, one can change one mode into another . . . there is no doubt that any mode, be it First, Second, Third, Fourth, or any of the others, with the help of any note that changes one octave into another, any mode that we may see we can transpose higher or lower, as it pleases us. How much this may at times be useful, I leave to judge to those who have judgement; because such transpositions are useful and highly necessary both to every skilled organist involved with choral music and similarly to other players who play other sorts of instruments, in order to match the sound of their instruments to the voices, which sometimes cannot ascend or descend as far as the proper locations of the modes require when played on the said instruments. And such transpositions are now in use among modern musicians, as they were also among the ancients, Ockeghem and his disciple Josquin, and an infinite number of others, as one may see in their compositions.

Figure 1 and 2, presenting in two formats the ranges and compasses of the seventeen madrigals that make up the modal cycle of *I madrigali*, show that Cipriano's practice anticipates Zarlino's precepts in every detail.²¹ No matter what the notated range or the clefs used, the total compass of each madrigal is nineteen notes, with the exception of one note in one piece. (One single bass note in no. 15, *Quel sempre acerbo et honorato giorno*, extends the compass of that piece ever so briefly from nineteen to twenty.) Not one madrigal combines a high g2 clef in the Cantus with a standard F4 clef in the Bassus to make available a compass of twenty-three notes.

²¹ I have focussed on the seventeen madrigals of the modal cycle as exemplary of Cipriano's understanding of modality; the remaining madrigals (nos. 18-20) present the same pattern of ranges and compasses.

Fig. 1. Notated ranges & compasses in *I madrigali a cinque voci* (1542)

original clefs
C A T Q B

compass

modes 1, 5, 7

modes 2, 3, 6, 8

mode 4
(*Tu piangi*)

The limits Cipriano imposed on the ranges and compasses employed in this collection are in no way exceptional. The same pattern may be observed, for example, in Willaert's *Musica nova*. In its 27 motets and 25 madrigals for four to seven voices, although Willaert deploys a wide variety of scorings and clef combinations, nine in all, there is not one single instance in which he combines g2 in the top part with a clef lower than F3—not even, as one might imagine he would, in the most splendid scorings for six or seven voices.²²

Nor is Zarlino in any way alone in discussing standard transpositions of a fourth or a fifth: the practice has been extensively documented for the sixteenth century, in both practical and theoretical sources.²³ To turn, for example, to another witness from the circles of Cipriano, Willaert, Polissena Pecorina, Strozzi, and Capponi, Silvestro Ganassi shows how to transpose down a fifth on viols by imagining a different clef and signature in chapter XXII of his *Letione seconda* of 1543 (dedicated to Capponi). In the *Regola Rubertina* (dedicated to Strozzi) he notes that a lower pitch is generally preferable for singers:

²² See the tables in Feldman, pp. 225-6. The same phenomenon may be observed in collection upon collection of music, for example in the 72 works in the Peterhouse partbooks, copied c. 1540 for Canterbury Cathedral, or the 46 works that survive complete in the Eton choirbook, compiled c. 1500: see my notes to *The Lost Music of Canterbury* (BHCD1008).

²³ See the works cited in fn. 19.

Fig. 2. Ranges & compasses in *I madrigali a cinque voci* (1542), modern clefs

1. Cantai 2. Hor che'l ciel 3. Poggiando al ciel

4. Quand'io 5. Solca

6. Alïero sasso 7. Strane rupi 8. La vita fuge

9. Tu piangi

10. Il mal 11. Per meza' i boschi

12. Quanto più 13. Perseguidomi

14. Chi vol veder 15. Quel sempre

16. Far potess'io 17. Amor che vedi

notated compass & final

transposed compass & final

mode 1 19 notes 19 notes 19 notes 19 notes 19 notes

mode 2 19 notes 19 notes

mode 3 19 notes 19 notes 19 notes

mode 4 19 notes

mode 5 19 notes 19 notes

mode 6 19 notes 19 notes

mode 7 19 notes 20 notes n.b. the lowest bass note occurs once only 19-20 notes 19-20 notes

mode 8 19 notes 19 notes

...si deve avvertir a dar la intonazione con ragione...perche potrai dar tal intonazione che feria vn tuono piu alto del suo dovere, diro manco vn semitono, che per buone voci, che fossero non potria far di manco di far patir, & piu presto el si debbe intonar alquanto piu basso, che troppo alto...

...piu tosto peccar ad incordarle vn tono piu basso che vno semitono piu alto si come osserua il vero maestro di capella detto GOMBERTO, & questo per mantener la voce, & ne gli stromenti mantiens le corde che non crepano & piu durano, ancora fa l'armonia piu dolce...

Silvestro Ganassi, *Regola Rubertina* (Venice, 1542), ch. XI

...one must take care to give the pitch correctly...for you could give a pitch a tone higher than it should be, or at least a semitone, which could not fail to make even the best of voices suffer. It is better to pitch things somewhat too low, than too high...

...better to sin by tuning a tone too low than a semitone too high, as the great *maestro di capella* Gombert does, in order to preserve the voices, and to save the strings of the instruments, that they not break and last longer, as well as to make the harmony sweeter...

In Part I of Doni's *Dialogo della musica*, four singers, all men—Oste, canto; Michele, alto; Bargo, tenor; and Grullone, basso—sing pieces that alternate between regular clefs (e.g. the first, *Donna per acquetar vostro desire* by Claudio Veggio, c1 / c2 / c4 / F4, final A, one flat, compass G-d") and high clefs (the second, *Ma di chi debbo lamentarmi* by Vincenzo Ruffo, g2 / c2 / c3 / c4, final D, no flat, compass d-g").²⁴ No comment is made about the fact that everyone's notated range in the second madrigal is a fourth or fifth higher than it was in the first. The third madrigal returns to regular clefs (*Lassatemi morire* by Pre Maria Riccio Padovano, c1 / c3 / c4 / F4, final G, one flat, compass F-d") and now Grullone complains: "This piece changes clef, a thing that happens more often than I can tell you. Could one not once in the world find a pair of books all in the same mode and clef? Clefs be damned, and these fantastical brains too!" Michele replies, "Buck up, now, and let's sing; and when we've finished, we'll show you what a clef is, since you curse it so."²⁵ After singing the piece they pursue the topic of *chiavi* (i.e. "keys") at length in a playfully philosophical tone without, however, actually addressing the purpose of musical clefs. Then they sing a pair of madrigals by Arcadelt, *S'amante fu già mai* and *Il bianco e dolce cigno*, the first in high clefs, the second in regular.

²⁴ The notated music is interspersed into the dialogue in the Canto partbook; the other three partbooks contain only the music for their respective parts.

²⁵ "Questo canto muta chiave, che venga poco meno ch'io non vo' dire. Può fare il mondo che non si trovi una volta un paio de libri che sien tutti d'un tuono e d'una chiave medesima? Che sia maledetta la chiave e questi cervelli fantastichi." Orsù, cantiamo; e come abbiamo fornito, vi vo' far vedere ciò ch'è la chiave, poichè costui tanto la maledice." Doni, *Dialogo*, ed. Malipiero, p. 24; cf. translation of the first passage in Haar 1966, p. 217.

As James Haar comments, "that Doni was talking about *chiave* in the sense of clef, in part in the sense of transposition by clef, is clear from [this] passage ..."²⁶ And note that Grullone (supposedly a musician, but clearly not a very well trained one) doesn't complain that the range of his part is suddenly a fourth or fifth higher, but about the fact that he has to cope with a new clef and, therefore, a different location of tones and semitones on the staff.

Transposing high-clef music down to a normal range enables the singers to sing naturally, sweetly, and with ease, pronouncing the words accurately and expressing the sentiment of the text without having to execute technical heroics of purely athletic interest; and, as Nicola Vicentino observes:

la musica fatta sopra parole, non è fatta per altro se non per esprimere, il concetto & le passioni & gli effetti di quelle con l'armonia...

music written to words is written for no other purpose than to express the sense, the passions, and the affections of the words through harmony...

Nicola Vicentino, *L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica* (Rome, 1555), Book IV, Cap. XXIX (f. 86); trans. Einstein, p. 414.

For this recording, therefore, we have followed the conventional practice of the sixteenth century, singing Cipriano's high-clef music down a fourth or fifth, depending on the signature, from its notated pitch, and bringing its compass into line with that of the music notated in ordinary clefs.²⁷ (See Figure 2.) The one outlier is *Tu piangi*, with its unusual clefs and scoring. Although the Bassus's F5 clef might suggest that this is a low-clef piece, meant to be transposed up, its Cantus's c2 clef and Tenor's c4 are standard; the range of its Cantus is comparable to that of no. 6, *Altiero sasso*, the range of its Tenor is identical to that of nos. 4-7 and 17, and the low E of its Bassus is also touched, albeit once only, in no. 15 (after that piece is transposed down according to the principles given above). The Hypophrygian mode and MTTBarB scoring of *Tu piangi*, both unique within the book, seem to point to a truly different sound world, subtly darker and more sombre, most appropriate for its pivotal place at the lowest moment in the poetic and modal cycle.

With questions of scoring, pitch, and transposition settled, I turn to the more subjective and perhaps more diverting issues of style. How should we best perform this dense, challenging, impeccably crafted, and profoundly serious poetry and music?

²⁶ Haar 1966, p. 217.

²⁷ For a nice confirmation of the practice for these very pieces, see *Novum pratum musicum* by Emanuel Adriaenssen (Antwerp, 1592), ff. 15v-16. On one page Adriaenssen prints the soprano and bass parts of *Cantai mentre chi' arsi* (*I madrigali*, no. 1) in their original g2 and F3 clefs, with a signature of one flat and final G; on the facing page he intabulates the madrigal for lute, down a fourth with no flat and final D.

Performance style

Martha Feldman in her indispensable study *City culture and the madrigal at Venice* marvellously evokes the esthetic world to which the madrigals of Cipriano's first book belong—the intensely private and rigorously attentive settings of the Venetian academies, the emphasis on decorum and propriety, the scrupulous focus on the smallest detail of sound and meaning, the virtuosity of creators and performers alike, and the orientation to the poetry of Francesco Petrarca, especially as interpreted by his sixteenth-century editor, the literary theorist (and eventual cardinal) Pietro Bembo. All these strains of Venetian culture in the 1540s seem to converge and find expression in the Petrarch settings of a twenty-seven-year-old Flemish immigrant. The particular qualities of Cipriano's music, as well as its relationship to and difference from that of Willaert's *Musica nova*, are very well conveyed in this account by James Haar.

Willaert's closely woven texture sets the poetry by its syntactical structure rather than by the poetic line. . . Its intended effect in the madrigal is surely to force upon performer and listener alike a close reading of the text, close to the point of resembling, in a necessarily figurative sense, a silent reading as opposed to a conventional reading aloud of the poem. This approach to text setting is intensified by Willaert's choice of material; there is little that is melodically striking . . . and very little exact melodic correspondence among the voices. The musical ideas are chiefly rhythmic, each phrase of text receiving an undemonstrative but precise setting emphasizing both sound and meaning in the words. Each voice retains the rhythmic shape allotted a particular textual phrase, but the lines pass in and out of melodic resemblance to one another in a free flow of musical consciousness. They combine into a single reading of the poem, but one marked by a collective pondering of its meaning and of its verbal music. That Willaert's great skills in counterpoint and vocal orchestration combine to form a tonally unified, darkly sonorous musical fabric of great distinction is not, certainly, beside the point, but the main purpose of it all is in how the text is read. Instead of intensifying rhetorical drama or declamatory parlando, Willaert has chosen to intensify the seriousness of purpose with which the words are set—in an almost literal sense set deeply—into the music.

The madrigals of Cipriano de Rore show virtuoso command of all the elements seen in Willaert's *Musica nova*. To these Rore adds an element of melodic grace and individuality . . . Rore effectively uses distinctive melodic gestures to begin pieces, providing elements of a rhetorical exordium meant not merely to get attention but to aid in forcing an attitude of serious concentration on both performers and listeners.

James Haar, *Essays on Italian poetry and music in the Renaissance, 1350-1600* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1986), pp. 119-20.

At first acquaintance, however, these madrigals of 1542 may seem so extremely reserved as to express little. The melodies, while indeed graceful, are seldom particularly memorable, nor are they often imitated exactly; they are shaped by the rhythm and pitch of the words rather than by purely melodic impulse, and subtly varied from voice to voice. There are very few of the dramatic, pictorial gestures found in later madrigals—the few we hear are all the more powerful for being so rare—and, as Feldman notes, in this collection "Rore's language evinced virtually none of the harmonic experiments of overt text painting that were to invite" Monteverdi to call him the father of the *seconda prattica*. "How his earliest settings managed to construe text so vividly is a question that must be searched out in other domains—in the way his rhetoric simultaneously shapes verbal syntax and meaning."²⁸ And the way the text is construed, its "reading," is even more complicated than suggested by Haar's account of "a single reading of the poem, but one marked by a collective pondering of its meaning and of its verbal music." For Cipriano's is a polyphonic reading, in which five voices read the poem together, not, however, simultaneously or coordinated into homophony, but each pursuing its own reading: a five-layered representation of a single line of poetry. Added to this are all the non-verbal, emotional meanings conveyed by melody, harmony, and counterpoint, which may operate completely independently of the text. Such a density of literal and non-literal meaning is, perhaps, a unique property of polyphonic music. And you don't have to take the word of a mere musician on this subject:

Trattato 32

Conclusione del poeta, pittore e musico

Tal differenza è in quanto all figurazione delle cose corporee dal pittore e poeta, quanto dalli corpi smembrati a li uniti, perchè il poeta nel descrivere la bellezza o' bruttezza di qualonche corpo te lo dimostro a membro a membro et in diversi tempi, et il pittore tel fa vedere tutto in un tempo. el poeta non può porre con le parole la vera figura delle membra di che si compone un tutto, com el pittore, il quale tel pone innanti con quella verità, ch'è possibile in natura; et al poeta accade il medesimo, come al musico, che canta sol' un canto composto di quattro

Conclusion of the poet, painter and musician

As for the representation of corporeal things, there is the same difference between the painter and the poet as between dismembered and united bodies, because when the poet describes the beauty or ugliness of a body, he shows it to you part by part and at different times, while the painter lets you see it all in one moment. The poet cannot create with words the real shape of the parts which make up a whole, as does the painter, who can set them before you with the same truth as is possible in nature; and the same thing happens to the poet as would to the musician, if the latter would sing by himself a song

²⁸ Feldman, p. 268.

cantori, e canta prima il canto, poi il tenore, e così seguita il contr' alto e poi il basso; e di costui non risulta la gratia della proportionalità armonica, la quale si rinchiude in tempi armonici, e fa esso poeta a similitudine d'un bel volto, il quale ti mostra a membro a membro, che così facendo, non remarresti mai soddisfatto dalla sua bellezza, la quale solo consiste nella divina proportionalità delle predette membra insieme composte, le quali solo in un tempo compongono essa divina armonia d'esso congiunto di membra, che spesso tolgono la libertà posseduta a chi le vede.

E la musica ancora fa nel suo tempo armonico le soavi melodie composte delle sue varie voci, delle quali il poeta è privato della loro discrezione armonica, e ben che la poesia entri nel senso dell' auditio alla sedia del giudizio, sicome la musica, esso poeta non può descrivere l'armonia della musica, perchè non ha potestà in un medesimo tempo di dire diverse cose, come la proportionalità armonica della pittura composta di diverse membra in un medesimo tempo, la dolcezza delle quali sono giudicate in un medesimo tempo, così in comune, come in particolare; in comune, inquanto allo intento del composto, in particolare, inquanto allo intento de' componenti, di che si compone esso tutto; e per questo il poeta resta, inquanto alla figurazione delle cose corporee, molto indietro al puttore, e delle cose invisibili rimane indietro al musico.

From the *Paragone* of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the first part of the *Trattato della pittura*. Transcription and translation (modified) from "The *Paragone*: the role of music in the comparison of the arts," ch. 12 in Emanuel Winternitz, *Leonardo da Vinci as a musician* (Yale: New Haven, 1982), pp. 217-8.

composed for four singers, by singing first the soprano, then the tenor, and then following with the contralto and finally the bass; such a performance does not result in the grace of harmonic proportionality, which is contained within harmonic measures—yet this is precisely what the poet does to the likeness of a beautiful face when he describes it feature by feature. You would never be satisfied by such a representation of its beauty, which alone consists in the divine proportionality of these features taken all together since it is only at the very same moment that they create this divine harmony of the union of all features which often deprives the beholder of his liberty.

Music, on the other hand, within its harmonious time, produces the sweet melodies generated by its various voices, while the poet is deprived of their specific harmonic action, and although poetry reaches the seat of judgment through the sense of hearing, like music, it cannot describe musical harmony, because the poet is not able to say different things at the same time, as is achieved in painting by the harmonious proportionality created by the various parts at the same time, so that their sweetness can be perceived at the same time, as a whole and in its parts, as a whole with regard to the composition, in particular with regard to the component parts. For these reasons the poet remains, in the representation of corporeal things, far behind the painter and, in the representation of invisible things, he remains behind the musician.

In approaching these madrigals we have first heeded advice offered by Zarlino:

Quelle cose, che appartengono al Cantore sono queste: Primieramente dee con ogni diligenza provvedere nel suo cantare, di proferire la modulatione in quel modo, che è stata composta dal Compositore; & non fare come fanno alcuni poco aveduti, i quali per fari tenere più valenti, & più savi de gli altri, fanno alle volte di suo capo alcune diminutioni tanto salvatiche (diro così) & tanto fuori di ogni proposito, che non solo fanno fastidio a chi loro ascolta; ma commettono etiando nel cantare mille errori . . .

Debbono adunque li Cantori avvertire, di cantar correttamente quelle cose, che sono scritte secondo la mente del Compositore; intonando bene le voci, ponendole a i loro luoghi; cercando di accomodarle alla consonanza, & cantare secondo la natura delle parole contenute nella compositione in tal maniera, che quando le parole contengono materie allegre, debbono cantare allegramente, & con gagliardi movimenti; & quando le parole contengono materie meste, mutar proposito. Ma sopra il tutto (accioche le parole della cantilena siano intese) debbono guardarsi da uno errore, che si ritrova appresso molti, cioè di non mutar le Lettere vocali delle parole . . . Ma debbono proferirle secondo la loro vera pronuntia. . .

Ma lassando cotesta cosa da un canto, dico, che se'l Compositore, & li Cantori insieme osserveranno quelle cose, che appartengono al loro officio, non è dubbio, che ogni cantilena sarà dilettevole, dolce, soave, & piena di buona armonia, & apporterà a gli Uditori grato, & dolce piacere.

Matters for the singer to observe are these: First of all he must aim diligently to perform what the composer has written. He must not be like those who, wishing to be thought worthier and wiser than their colleagues, indulge in certain divisions that are so savage and so inappropriate that they not only annoy the hearer but are ridden with thousands of errors. . . .

Singers should aim to render faithfully what is written to express the composer's intent, intoning the correct steps in the right places. They should seek to adjust to the consonances and to sing in accord with the nature of the words of the composition; happy words should be sung happily and at a lively pace, whereas sad texts call for the opposite. Above all, in order that the words may be understood, they should take care not to fall into the common error of changing the vowel sounds . . . they should form each vowel in accord with its true pronunciation. . . .

But leaving these matters, I shall conclude by saying that if the composer and singers observe those things that pertain to their respective offices, there is no doubt that every composition will be sweet, soft, and full of good harmony, and bring the listeners gratitude and sweet pleasure.

Le Istituzioni harmoniche, part III, ch. 45, p. 204; translation modified from *The art of counterpoint: part three of Le Istituzioni harmoniche*, 1558, trans. Guy A. Marco and Claude V. Palisca (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 111

Guided by a native Italian musician and linguistic coach, the marvellous Alessandro Quarta, we have sought most diligently to pronounce the words correctly and to give the verses their proper rhetorical shape and force. We have, furthermore, adopted Zarlino's suggestion of changing the mood and tempo in accordance with the nature of the words, a tactic earlier recommended by Vicentino, who likens a musical performance to an oration.

Regola da concertare cantando ogni sorte di compositione. Cap. XXXXII.

Differenti sono le compositioni, secondo che sono i soggetti, sopra che sono fatte, & alcuni cantanti molte volte non avverticano, cantando sopra che sia fatta la compositione, & cantano senza alcuna considerazione, & sempre à un certo suo modo, secondo la sua natura & il suo uso, & le compositione che sono fatte sopra varij soggetti, & varie fantasie; portano seco differenti maniere di comporre, & così il cantante dè considerare la mente del Poeta Musico, et così del Poeta volgare, ò Latino, & imitare con la voce la compositione, & usare diversi modi di cantare, come sono diverse le maniere delle compositioni, & quando usera tali modi, sarà giudicato da gli oditori huomo di giuditio, & di havere molte maniere di cantare, & dimostrerà esser abbondante, & ricco di molti modi di cantare...

Rule for singing any sort of composition in performance. Chapter XXXXII.

Compositions differ according to the subjects on which they are made. All too frequently, however, certain singers pay no attention to this in their singing. They sing unheedingly and, depending on their nature and custom, using their own specific technique. But compositions made on various subjects and various ideas demand different styles of composing. The singer, therefore, must consider the intention of the musical poet and likewise that of the poet writing in the vernacular or in Latin, and must imitate the composition with his voice by using as many diverse techniques of singing as there are diverse styles of composition, and when he employs such methods, he will be judged a man of good judgement, with many styles of singing, and will demonstrate that he has an abundant and rich store of ways of singing...

& ogni cantante avvertirà quando canterà, lamentationi, ò altre compositioni meste di non fare alcuna diminutione, perche le compositioni meste, pareranno allegre; & poi per l'opposito non si dè cantare mesto, nelle cose allegre così Volgari, come Latine, & s'avvertirà che nel concertare le cose volgare a voler fare che gl'oditori restino satisfatti, si dè cantare le parole conformi all'opinione del Compositore; & con la voce esprimere, quelle intonationi accompagnate dalle parole, con quelle passioni. Hora allegre, hora meste, & quando soavi, & quando crudeli & con gli accenti adherire all'pronuntia delle parole & delle note,

& qualche volta si usa un certo ordine di procedere, nelle compositioni, che non si può scrivere, come sono, il dir piano, & forte, & il dir presto, & tardo, & secondo le parole, muovere la Misura, per dimostrare gli affetti delle passioni delle parole, & dell' armonia, ad alcuno non li parrà cosa strana tal modo di mutar misura, tutti à un tratto cantando mentre che nel concerto s'intendono, ove si habbi da mutar misura che non sarà errore alcuno, & la compositione cantata, con la mutatione della misura è molto gratiata, con quelle varietà, che senza variare, & seguire al fine, & l'esperienza di tal modo sarà certo ognuno, però nelle cose volgari si ritroverà che tal procedere piacerà più à gl'oditori, che la misura continua sempre à un modo, & il moto della misura si dè muovere, secondo le parole, più tardo, & più presto...

Every singer should take care not to make any diminutions when singing lamentations or other mournful compositions, for then these sad works will seem joyful. Conversely, one should not sing joyful works sadly, be they in the vernacular or in Latin. And one should take care when performing works in the vernacular to satisfy the listeners; thus one should sing the words in a way matching the intention of the Composer, and with one's voice express the melodic lines, matching the words to their passions—now joyful, now sad, now gentle, and now cruel—and adhere to the accents and pronunciation of the words and the notes.

Sometimes a composition is performed according to a certain method that cannot be written down, such as singing softly and loudly or fast and slow, or changing the measure [i.e. tempo] according to the words, so as to show the effects of the passions and the harmony. This technique of having all the singers at once change the measure will not seem strange, provided the ensemble agrees on when the measure is to be changed, thus avoiding any errors. A composition sung with changes of measure is pleasing because of the variety, more so than one that continues on to the end without any variation of tempo. Experience with this technique will make everyone secure in it. You will find that in vernacular works the procedure gratifies listeners more than a persistent changeless measure. The measure should change according to the words, now slower and now faster...

*la esperienza, dell'Oratore l'insegna,
che si vede il modo che tiene nell'Oratione,
che hora dice forte, & hora piano,
& più tardo, & più presto, e con questo
muove assai gl'oditori, & questo modo di
muovere la misura fà effetto assai nell'
animo, & per tal ragione si canterà la
Musica alla mente per imitar gli accenti,
& effetti delle parti dell' oratione, & che
effetto faria l'Oratore che recitasse una
bella oratione senza l'ordine de i suoi
accenti, & pronuntie, & moti veloci,
& tardi, & con il dir piano, & forte quello
non muoveria gl'oditori.*

*Il simile dè essere nella Musica. perche se
l'Oratore muove gli oditori con gl'ordini
sopradetti, quanto maggiormente la
Musica recitata con i medesimi ordini
accompagnati dall'Armonia, ben unita,
farà molto piu effetto...*

Nicola Vicentino, *L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica* (Rome, 1555), Book IV, Ch. 42 (ff. 94-94v). Cf. translations in Maria Rika Maniates, *Ancient music adapted to modern practice* (1996), pp. 299-302, and Carol MacClintock in *Readings in the history of music in performance* (1979), pp. 76-9.

The experience of the orator can be instructive, if you observe the technique he follows in his oration. For he speaks now loud and now soft, now slow and now fast, thus greatly moving his listeners. This technique of changing the tempo has a powerful effect on the soul. For this reason music is sung from memory, so as to imitate the accents and effects of the parts of an oration. What effect would an orator have if he were to recite a fine oration without organizing accents, pronunciations, fast and slow rates of motion, and soft or loud levels of speaking? He would not move the audience.

The same is true of music. If the orator moves listeners with the devices described above, how much greater and more powerful will be the effect of well-coordinated music recited with the same devices, but now accompanied by harmony.

Preparing, performing, and recording these pieces, we have learned from the artistic creations of Cipriano de Rore and Francesco Petrarca, both generous souls and inspiring spirits, and have thereby gained a deeper understanding of music, poetry, and performance. We are most grateful to Jessie Ann Owens for inviting us on the journey in the first place; to the American Musicological Society for awarding Professor Owens and Blue Heron the Noah Greenberg Award which gave an initial impetus to the project; to Alessandro Quarta for being a Virgil to us as we made our way through the dense woods of Petrarchan verse; and to all our latter day Strozzi and Capponi, the generous patrons who have supported the endeavor.

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ABOUT BLUE HERON

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.” Committed to vivid live performance informed by the study of original source materials and historical performance practices, 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.

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; in Chicago, Cleveland, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Montreal, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Providence, St. Louis, San Luis Obispo, Seattle, and Vancouver; and in Cambridge and London, England. 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. In 2015 the ensemble embarked on *Ockeghem@600*, a multi-season project to perform the complete works of Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1420-1497) and record all of his songs and motets; volume I of the songs (BHCD 1010) was released in 2019. The project will wind up around 2021, in time to commemorate the composer’s circa-600th birthday.

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*, including many world premiere recordings of works copied c. 1540 for Canterbury Cathedral and restored by Nick Sandon. The fifth CD was awarded the 2018 Gramophone Classical Music Award for Early Music and the five discs are now available as a boxed set entitled *The Lost Music of Canterbury*. Blue Heron’s recordings also include a CD of plainchant and polyphony to accompany Thomas Forrest Kelly’s book *Capturing Music: The Story of Notation* and the live recording *Christmas in Medieval England*. In 2015, Professor Jessie Ann Owens and Blue Heron won the Noah Greenberg Award from the American Musicological Society, providing the initial stimulus for the project to record Cipriano de Rore’s *I madrigali a cinque voci*.

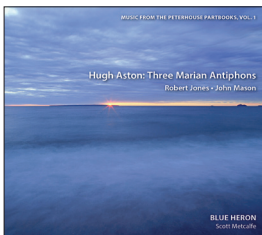


BLUE HERON. L to R: Paul Guttry, Jason McStoots, Martin Near, Margot Rood, Sumner Thompson, Scott Metcalfe, Owen McIntosh

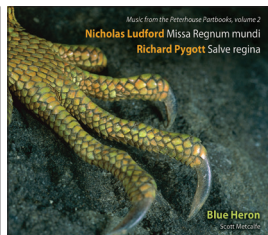
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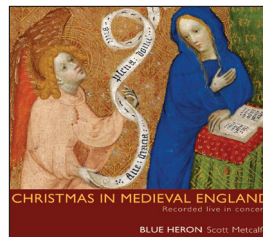
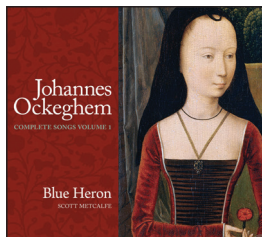
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