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GHIRLANDA DE MADRIGALI VITTORIA ALEOTTI

Hor che la vaga Aurora

≈≈≈

Baciami per aver vita
O quante volte in van cor mio ti chiamo

≈≈≈

“T’amo mia vita,”
“Io v’amo vita mia,”
Cor mio, perchè pur piangi

≈≈≈

Dicesti, anima mia
O dolce eterno Amore
Io, dal sofferto fuoco arido ancora

INTERMISSION

Al turbar dei bei lumi
Lasso, quand’io credei d’esser felice
Per voi, lasso, conviene

≈≈≈

Mentre l’ardite labbra
Ahi che s’avventi in me l’usato ardore
Amor mio, perchè piangi?

≈≈≈

Ch’io non t’ami, cor mio?
O dolce anima mia

≈≈≈

Se del tuo corpo

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Please turn off cell phones and electronics

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TRANSLATIONS

The Italian texts, the original, archaic qualities of which have been retained in the edition, are here modernized according to current Italian editorial practice. The English versions of the texts provide, insofar as possible, line-for-line renderings of the Italian; they are conceived not as poetry or for singing but merely for the convenience of readers and performers unfamiliar with Italian.

- Dr. C. Ann Carruthers

1.
Or che la vaga Aurora
Sopra un carro di fuoco
Appare in ogni luogo
Col figlio di Latona,
Che il suo dorato crine
All'Alpi e alle campagne
a noi vicine
Mostra, con dolci accenti
Questi la ben temprata lira suona,
Onde gli spiriti pellegrini intenti
Odonò l'armonia
Che l'alme nostre al ciel
erge ed invia.

2.
Baciami per aver vita,
Ch'ov'è bellezza è vita,
ed ebbi morte:
Ma morte sì gradita,
Che più bramata sorte
Vivendo non avrei:
Nè più bramar potrei
Da sì soave bocca in un bel volto.
Baciando, il cor mi fu rapito,
e tolto.
---G.B. Guarini

3.
O quante volte in van cor mio ti chiamo
Vaga di riveder gli amati lumi,
Cagion ch'io mi consumi
Sì dolcemente che morir ne bramo.
O dolce'esca, o dolce amo,
O dolce stral d'amore
Ch'in ogni parte mi piagasti il core.

4.
"T'amo mia vita," la mia cara vita
Dolcemente mi dice, e'n questa sola
Sì soave parola
Par mi trasformi lietamente il core.

1.
Now that lovely Dawn
riding a fiery chariot
appears everywhere
with Latona's son,
and shows her flaxen hair
to the Alps and to the
countryside near us,
with sweet tones
he plays his well-tuned lyre,
so that wandering spirits listen intently
to the harmony
that lifts and sends
our souls heavenward.

2.
I kissed in order to have life,
for where there is beauty there is life,
and found death:
but such a welcome death,
that a more coveted fate
I could not have had while living:
nor could I desire more
from so tender a mouth in a lovely face.
Kissing, my heart was ravished
and taken away.

3.
My heart, how often I call to you in vain,
wishing to see again your beloved eyes,
by which I am consumed
so sweetly that I long for death.
O sweet bait, sweet hook,
o love's sweet dart,
you pierced my heart through and
through.

4.
"I love you, my life," my dear life
tenderly tells me, and in this one
sweet word,
she seems happily to transform my heart.

O voce di dolcezza, e di diletto,
Prendila tosto Amore;
Stampala nel mio petto;
Spiri dunque per lei l'anima mia:
T'amo mia vita la mia vita sia.

--G.B. Guarini

5.

"Io v'amo vita mia,"
Volli sovente dire, ed ardo, ah! lasso.
Chiuse la voce entro le labbra Amore
E vergogna e timore,
E mi cambiar d'uom vivo
in muto sasso.
Amor, ma se tu vuoi che I miei martiri
Io pur taccia e sospiri,
Tu dilli a lei che mi consuma
e sface
E le riscalda il sen con la tua face.

---Annibale Pocaterra

6a.

Cor mio, perchè pur piangi,
A che ti struggi,
Se alla tua pena inusitata e nuova
Rimedio non si trova?

6b.

Io piango che il mio pianto
Non è sì duro, sì pungente e forte
Che mentre io piango tanto
Non faccia ai miei martir pietosa
morte.

Poco sarà la doglia
Se ad ogni suo desire
L'uom potesse morire
Ma ve'l sostiene in vita e in questa
spoglia
Acciò più lungo sia nostro languire.

7.

Dicesti, anima mia,
Che ardi per me d'amore
Sol con le labbra, o col profondo
cuore?
Ah, non sia mai ch'io il creda
Fin che del amor tuo segno non veda.
Vuoi che sicuro io sia?
Che siano I detti tuoi fidi e veraci,
Sian testimoni e giuramenti i baci.

O voice of tenderness and pleasure,
grasp it quickly, Love,
imprint it upon my heart;
let my soul therefore breathe for her
[only]:

Let "I love you, my life" be my life.

5.

"I love you, my life,"
often I wanted to say, and I burn, alas.
Love, shame, and shyness
shut my voice within my lips,
and changed me from living man
to mute stone.
But, Love, if you want me to sigh
and not speak my sufferings,
tell them to her who consumes
and destroys me,
and warm her breast with your torch.

6a.

My heart, why do you weep,
why do you suffer,
when there is no remedy
for your unaccustomed and novel pain?

6b.

I weep because my anguish
is not so hard, piercing, and violent
that while I weep so,
death may not be moved to pity
by my torments.

There would be little pain
if at his merest wish
a man could die.
But one is kept alive
and breathing
so that our suffering may last longer.

7.

Did you say, my soul,
that you burn with love for me
just with your lips, or from the depths
of your heart?
Ah, I shall not believe
until I see signs of your love.
Do you want me to be reassured?
Let your words be true and trustworthy,
let your kisses be both witness and oath.

8.
O dolce eterno Amore,
Ferito m'hai soavemente il cuore
Onde languisco per dolcezza e muoio.
Se fatta son tua ancella,
Non ti sarò rubella,
Ma ben la notte e il giorno
Farò, dolce Signor, a te ritorno.
9.

Io, dal sofferto fuoco arido ancora,
Era atto a patir fiamma più potente,
E I miei bramosi spiriti d'or'in ora
Desiavane ardor nuovo più cocente.
Però al primo apparir di voi, aurora
Ch'or m'illustrate e scaldate la mente,
E al primo colpo del Ciprigno arciero
Arsi d'amor via più fervido e
altero.

10.
Al turbar dei bei lumi
Stavasi d'or'in ora
L'anima per uscir del petto fuora,
Quando dolce spirar d'aura cortese

8.
O sweet eternal Love,
you have tenderly pierced my heart,
so that I languish in sweetness and die.
If I am called to be your handmaiden,
I shall not rebel,
but night and day
I shall return, sweet Lord, to you.
9.

Still parched from my fiery affliction,
I was susceptible to still fiercer flames,
and my lustful spirit every hour
yearned for new and more burning passion.
But at the first sight of you, dawn,
who now light and warm my mind,
and at the first wound from the Cyprian archer,
I burned with love ever more fervent and proud.

10.
Troubled by those lovely eyes,
my soul was about
to leave my breast,
when the sweet breath of a gentle breeze

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Dolce pace al cuor rese,
Che mentre il mio bel Sol mia destra
strinse

D'immortal nodo l'alma
a vit'avvinse.

11.

Lasso, quand'io credei d'esser felice
In una selva tenebrosa e oscura
Mi ritrovai per me troppo infelice,
Che così piacque a mia stella noiosa.
E meno ancor mia vita aspra e penosa,
E quasi ho svelt' il cuor da la radice,
E quella a cui serv'io m'è ogn'or ritrosa,
Nè il gridar vale, e favellar non lice.

12.

Per voi, lasso, conviene
Ch'io viva e ch'io respire.
Vostre son le mie pene
Le lagrime e I sospiri,
Vostra è la vita ancor ch'acerba e ria,
E vostra al fin pur converrà che sia
Anche la morte mia.

13a.

Mentre l'ardite labbra,
Sospinte da un famelico desire,
Cercar tregua al morire,
Amor invidioso
Del mio dolce riposo
Perfido oprò di sorte,
Ch'altri venne à turbar mia lieta
sorte.

brought tender peace to my heart.

For as my lovely Sun took my
right hand,
with an immortal knot it bound my life
and soul together.

11.

Alas, when I thought myself happy,
I found myself in a dark, shadowy wood,
much too unhappy for me,
for so it pleased my burdensome star;
and I still lead my painful hard life,
and my heart is nearly torn from its roots,
and she whom I serve is always against me;
and crying out is useless, and speech forbidden.

12.

It is for you, alas,
that I must live and breathe.
Yours are my sufferings,
my tears and sighs;
yours is my life, however bitter and wicked,
and in the end so should be
my death.

13a.

While my bold lips,
urged on by hungry desire,
sought relief from death,
treacherous Love,
envious of my sweet comfort,
arranged fate
so that another came to disturb my happy
fortune.

13b.

Ahi, che per altro tu no'l festi all'ora
Se non perchè tu ancora
Ne porti acceso fieramente il petto,
E prendendo diletto
Di conserver intatto à tua fierezza
Quel divin paragon d'ogni dolcezza,
Al misero mio core
Quando gioia attendea deste dolore.
14.

Ahi che s'avventi in me l'usato
ardore,
Mentre fra rosa e rosa
Tu spiri, aura amorosa.
Ma spiri, aura gradita,
Struggi pur questa core,
Spegni pur questa vita,
Che farà il mio spirar soave e grato,
Dolce l'incendio e il cener mio beato.
15.

Amor mio, perchè piangi?
Perchè fai tu con sì duri lamenti
Più gravi I miei tormenti?
desia,
Ma che colpa è la mia
Se Fortuna ti toglie il don d'Amore?
Deh, se tu sei il mio cuore,
Come malgrado di Fortuna sei,
Dovresti pur sentir gli affetti miei.
16.

Ch'io non t'ami, cor mio?
Ch'io non sia la tua vita e tu la mia?
Che per nuovo desire
E per nuova speranza, io t'abbandoni?
Prima che questo sia,
Morte non mi perdoni,
Che se tu sei quel cuore onde la vita
M'è sì dolce e gradita,
Fonte d'ogni mio ben, d'ogni desire,
Come posso lasciarti, e non morire?

--G.B. Guarini

17.

O dolce anima mia, dunqu'è pur vero,
Che cambiando pensiero,
Per altrui m'abbandoni?
Se cerchi, un cuor, che più t'adori,

13b.

Alas, your only reason then
was that your breast still
burns for another,
and taking pleasure
in keeping untouched for your pride
that divine paragon of sweetness,
to my suffering heart,
when it was expecting joy, you gave pain.
14.

Alas, that the accustomed blaze should flare
within me
while you waft among the roses,
amorous breeze.
But blow, welcome breeze,
consume this heart,
blow out this life,
that will make my death sweet and welcome,
sweet the fire, and blessed my ashes.
15.

My love, why do you weep,
why do you worsen
my sufferings with such harsh laments?
My heart wishes for what your heart desires.
But what fault is it of mine
if Fortune robs you of the gift of Love?
Pray, if you are my heart,
as despite Fortune you are,
then you should also feel my emotions.
16.

Should I not love you, my heart?
Should I not be your life, and you mine?
For new desire
and new hope, should I abandon you?
Before this happens,
let death punish me.
If you are the heart that makes my
life so sweet and welcome,
the source of my happiness, of every desire,
how can I leave you, and not die?

17.

O my sweet soul, is it then true
that, changing your mind,
you leave me for someone else?
If you seek a heart that would worship

ed ami,
Ingiustamente brami.
Se cerchi lealtà, mira che fede,
Amar quando altrui doni
La mia cara mercede
E la sperata tua dolce pietà.
Ma se cerchi beltà,
Non mirar me, cor mio, mira te
stessa
In questo volto, in questo cuore impressa.
--G.B. Guarini

18a.
Se del tuo corpo oggi la stampa orrenda
Miro, e penso al tormento empio ed
atroce
che sofferto hai per me pendendo
in croce,
Perchè io dal tuo martir salute
prenda,
Com'è che il freddo cuor non si raccenda,
Che d'amor vano or viva fiamma coce?
Ma, lassa, quel che giova e quel che noce
Esser non può che cieco alma comprenda.
18b.
Però Signor, che vedi quanto
errore
La mente ingombri e'l suo vedere ap-
panni,
Alluma ormai le mie tenebre oscure,
Che se scorta sarò dal tuo splendore,
Spero, pentita de' miei mal spesi anni,
A te ridurmi e in te poner mie
cure.

and love you more,
you seek unjustly;
if you seek loyalty, look upon my faith:
I love while you give to another
my dear prize
and your hoped-for mercy.
But if you seek beauty,
do not look upon me, my heart, look at
yourself,
etched upon this face and heart.

18a.
If today I look upon your body's terrible
image, and think about the wicked and cruel
torment
that you have borne for me hanging
on the cross,
so that I may draw salvation from your
sufferings,
why is it that my cold heart is not rekindled,
while now it burns with vain love's flame?
But, alas, a blind soul cannot understand
what helps and harms it.
18b.
But you, Lord, who see how encumbered
with error
my mind is, and how dim its vision,
shed light onto my dark shadows,
and if your brightness will guide me,
I hope, repentant of my ill-spent years,
to return unto you,
and unto you deliver my
cares.



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PROGRAM NOTES

Vittoria / Raffaella Aleotti

In 1593 the following two publications appeared: *Ghirlanda de madrigali a quattro voci, di Vittoria Aleotti* [Venetia, Giacomo Vincenti, M.D.XCIII.] and *Sacrae cantiones quinque, septem, octo & decem vocibus decantande, Liber Primus, A. R. S. Raphaela Aleotta Ferrariansi in Monasterio Rever, Monialium S. Vito Monaca* [Venetiis, Apud Riciardum Amadinum, M.D.XCIII]. What was the relationship between Vittoria and Raphaela (or Raffaella) Alleotti? In his *Quellen Lexikon* (1901-1904), Robert Eitner assumed, in his entry for the *Sacrae cantiones*, that Raphaela was the name adopted by Vittoria upon taking the vows as a nun at the San Vito Monastery in Ferrara. But the view was challenged by Jane Bowers in her article "The emergence of Women Composers in Italy, 1566-1700" in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1100-1950* [University of Illinois Press, 1986], in which she claims Raffaella to be the older sister of Vittoria.

The father, Giovanni Battista Aleotti, was architect and engineer for the Ducal Court at Ferrara under Alfonso d'Este II. In his letter of dedication to Vittoria's book of madrigals he states that the the eldest of his five daughters (not named) who had a natural inclination to His Divine Majesty, was placed under the tutelage of Alessandro Milleville in music, and later under Ercole Pasquini, who was also a pupil of Milleville. While she was learning, his second daughter called Vittoria (a girl of four going on

five) was always present, and, after a year, nature has so loosened her hands that she began to play the harpsichord to the astonishment of her parents, and also the teacher himself. He, the good old man, then began to teach her and after two years suggested to have her brought up at the Convent of San Vito known for their perfection and excellence in music. At the age of fourteen, Vittoria decided to take vows as a nun at San Vito. On seeing the progress she was making in music theory, the father obtained some madrigal texts of the court poet Giovanni Battista Guarini for Vittoria to set to music. When Count del Zaffo of Venice visited during Holy week of 1593, he was shown some of the madrigals, and decided to have them published. When Vittoria was approached, she said she no longer cared about worldly things and left it her father to follow through as he saw fit.

In the will of G. B. Aleotti (1631), the following heirs are named: Beatrice, widow of Orazio Nigrelli, Cinthia married to Cesare Bini, Orsolina and Ginerva Ballarini, children of his deceased daughter Armanda, and R. Suor Raffaella, a nun at San Vito. Luigi Napolitana Cittadella, in the preface to his 1847 edition of G. B. Aleotti's tract *Dell'interimento del Po di Ferrara*, writes concerning his family. The only son, Giambattista, died at age 4. The five daughters were Beatrice, Raffaella, Cinthia, Armanda, and Valeria. Beatrice, the oldest daughter became a nun at San Vito at the age of fourteen in May 1588, but left to become the wife of the physician Orazio Nigrelli. Cinthia was married twice, first to Cesare Filippo

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Bini and later Agostino Diani. She died in 1657. Armanda was also married twice, first to Camillio Ballarini and second to Alessandro Caprilli. She pre-deceased her father. Raffaella and Valeria became nuns, the latter died in 1625. The source for Valeria is a document (Antolini 56) preserved at the Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea in Ferrara, listing both Raffaella and Valeria Aleotti.

In preparing the modern edition of Aleotti, it was decided that more research in the various archives in Ferrara was needed before it could be issued. Fortunately, the musicologist Massimo Ossi was available and willing to carry out this responsibility. He located the following baptismal records of G. B. Aleotti's daughters were located in the Register of the Santa Maria

in Vado, Ferrara:

30 Jan. 1574: Beatrix Lucretia

22 Sept. 1575: Victoria Elisabeth

3 Aug. 1577: Cinthia Lodovico

8 Nov. 1578: Ca(____)a Camilla

For Armanda, Ossi was unable to locate an entry, but in the introduction to Giuliana Gialdoni's edition of Vittoria Aleotti: *Cinque Madrigali a 4 voce miste* (1986), she gives the baptismal year as 1580.

In searching through the *Libro delli Offizi* at San Vito regarding both Raffaella and Valeria Alleotti, the earliest entry for Valeria Aleotti, complete with her surname, is in 1592, and from the last entry we can place the date of her death between 29 May 1625 and 29 May 1627. It is interesting to note the G. B.

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Aleotti's daughter, Camilla, who was not mentioned in the will would have been 14 in 1592, the same year Valeria Aleotti's name first appears in the above record. Since fourteen was the age that the other daughters took their vows, it seems quite plausible that Camilla also became a nun and adopted the name of Valeria.

Given the circumstantial evidence, we may assume that Vittoria Aleotti, the second daughter of Giovanni Battista Aleotti, took vows as a nun in 1589 at the age of fourteen at which time she adopted the name Raffaella. In her studies with Ercole Pasquini, she composed a number of madrigals possibly prior to her decision to become a nun, and between 1589 and 1593 she composed her motets which were published that year at age 18. A question remains, when did Ercole Pasquini take over the instruction of keyboard instruments and music theory from Allesandro Milleville? On 1 May 1592, Ercole da Ferrara (Pasquini) became organist to Count Mario Bevilacqua in Verona. While in Verona, he wrote and published a literary work entitled *I fidi amanti* in 1593 in preparation for the marriage of Don Carlo Gesualdo to Eleonora d'Este which took place the following year in Ferrara. In the dedication to Eleonora, he addresses her as his patroness. Bevilacqua died 1 August 1593, and it appears that Pasquini returned to Ferrara, where he succeeded Luzzasco Luzzaschi as organist at the Accademia della Morte. He was succeeded by Luzzaschi's pupil Girolamo Frescobaldi. In turn when he moved to Rome in 1597 where he became the organist at St. Peter's. Raffaella, in

her letter of dedication to the *Sacre Canziones*, mentions only Ercole Pasquini as her teacher.

In his treatise *L'Artusi overo delle imperfettioni della modena musica*, Giovanni Maria Artusi, describes a performance of a concerto at San Vito given in November 1598 before Margaret of Austria who was accompanied by her cousin Archduke Albert on the way to her marriage with King Philip III of Spain. On that occasion, they heard a concerto of instruments consisting of cornetts, trombones, violins, viola

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bastarda, double harps, lutes, cornamuses, flutes, harpsichords at the same time with “such smoothness and sweetness of harmony that it really was as though it were Mount Parnassus, and Paradise itself had opened, and not something human.” A later account of this same visit by Marc’Antonio Guarini, nephew of the poet G. B. Guarini, published in 1621, identifies several members of the concerto:

“Among the said nuns were excellent composers, the smoothest voices, and instrumentalists of rare quality, such as Catabene de’ Catabeni and Cassandra Pigna, good tenors; Alfonsa Trotti with a singular bass voice; and the astonishing Claudia Manfredi and Bartolomea Sorianti, very delicate sopranos; Raffaella de’Magnifici and another Catabene, excellent players of the Cornetto, also playing every other sort of instrument. Olimpia Leoni, at present still living, plays with great agility a tenor viola, and sings contralto with great aptitude and excellent voice. And the most outstanding of all, and without equal in playing the organ, is Raffaella Aleotti, called l’Argenta, who is also expert in music theory; she has published various highly regarded motets and madrigals.”

In the letter of dedication to *Ghirlanda de Madrigali* of Vittoria Aleotti (to use her secular name), her father stated that he had asked the poet Giovanni Battista Guarini to provide some of the texts. Guarini was noted for his pastoral drama *Il pastor fido* (pub. 1590), an important source of madrigal texts set by many noted mad-

rigalists including Luca Marenzio and Claudio Monteverdi. A number of Guarini’s poems had been in circulation, but it was not until 1598 that an attempt was made to collect and publish them. Only four of the poems in this collection were set by Vittoria: “T’amo mia vita”, “Ch’io non t’ami cor mio”, “O dolc’anima mia”, and “Baciai per aver vita”. In addition, some of the anonymous texts appearing for the first time in *Ghirlanda* may also have been written by Guarini. Only one other poet has been identified, Annibale Pocaterra, a minor Ferrarese poet whose poems were published in 1611 including “In v’amo vita mia”. The concluding work is a *madrigali spirituali*, a setting of the sonnet “Se del tuo corpo hoggi le stampa horrenda”. As is customary in setting a sonnet, it is divided into two parts, the first part a setting of the *ottava* (rhyme scheme abba, abba), and the second of the *sestina* (cde, cde).

Considering that the madrigals were probably composed in her early teens while under the tutelage of Ercole Pasquini, they show that Vittoria was a competent composer. She takes full advantage of textural possibilities allowable within the limitations of four voices portraying , in particular, the contrasting affections in the longer hendecasyllabic lines. Each line of text, or half line, is given its own musical characterization relating to the various affections of the text. Her treatment of melody and dissonance, with few exceptions, is reflective of the older ideals of sixteenth-century counterpoint. One of these exception is encountered in the madrigal “Io v’amo vita mia” on the

words “ch’i miei martire” (but of my sufferings). Reduced to a three voice texture, the top voice moves continually upward stepwise on the weak beat to form a suspension to the two lower voices moving upward in thirds on the strong beat, creating the highest tension on the word “martire” (suffering). This technique is fully exploited on one of Ercole Pasquini’s composition for organ, a *Durezza e ligature*. This style of composition, emphasizing the use of dissonance and suspensions. for organ was described by Girolamo Diruta in his *Il Transilvano* (1593) as being appropriate for playing during the elevation of the mass. It was often associated with the disposition from the cross. It was a style that was fully exploited in the Seventeenth Century, and the earliest examples known are those by Pasquini. Vittoria obviously picked up on this technique from her teacher. Vittoria’s approach toward rhythm and harmony anticipates much that will become standard practice in the next century, again the influence of Pasquini.

In 1597, Alfonso d’Este II, duke of Ferrara died without heir. The effort to replace him by his nephew Cesare d’Este failed. Pope Clement VIII refused to recognize the legitimacy of Cesare as the Duke of Ferrara, and claimed the duchy as a Papal fiefdom. Cesare withdrew to Modena taking with him the valuable Estenese Library, now preserved in the Biblioteca Estense in Modena. The brilliant court in Ferrara came to an end, but the Convent of San Vito continued its musical activities through the remainder of Raffaella’s life. In her later years Raffaella was hon-

ored by the dedication of two publications of Motets, the first by Giovanni Battista Chinelli (1637) and the second by Don Lorenzo Agnelli (1638). In his dedication Agnelli describes Raffaella as a Ferrarese of the greatest merit, prioress of the San Vito Monastery in Ferrara, and the most gracious organist. Raffaella held the post of prioress from 1 Jun 1636 until the end of May 1639. The last mention of her name in the records at San Vito is dated 2 August 1640.

- W. Richard Shindle, Ph.D.,
Professor Emeritus, Kent State University

LOVE SONGS BY AN ITALIAN TEENAGER

As far as we know, the madrigals of Vittoria Aleotti have not been performed outside of academic settings. Recordings exist of only a few of them – Cappella Clausura’s being one. As the whole collection is so like a box of chocolates - the same on the outside, different centers, some of them surprising - we thought it was time to sing (eat?) the whole box. “Hor che la vaga aurora” is the opening madrigal in Vittoria’s book, and is singular in its subject matter: it’s not about love, but rather fittingly about music. Latona’s son is Apollo, the god of, among other things, music. Greco-Roman mythology also inspires “Io, dal sofferto” referencing Cupid, the Cyprian archer, so called because his mother Venus was said to have emerged from the sea at Cyprus. But for the opening and closing madrigals, the collection plumbs the depths of love’s pains and passions, in the style of the day, oftentimes in bluntly sexual

terms, such as “ma, morte s' gradita”, or “morir ne bramo”, or “baciando, il cor mi fu rapido, e tolto.” The final work in the collection, as Dr Shindle says, is a *madrigali spirituali*. Aleotti, in this piece, turns her attention to a new lover, a divine one, and “pentita de' miei mal spesi anni”, she becomes the nun, Raffaella.

Dr. Ann Carruthers transcribed these pieces while a doctoral student of Dr. Richard Shindle. We are using her transcriptions to which I have added expression and tempi as befit each madrigal. Dr. Carruthers posits that Vittoria was “only the second woman to have printed a volume of music devoted exclusively to her compositions.” (Madalena Casulana was the first known, publishing 4 madrigals in a diverse collection in 1566, and three volumes of madrigals in 1568, 1570 and 1583). Carruthers also suggests that a publication of this sort should not lead us to believe that life for women in Aleotti's world was improved in any way. The famous *concerto delle donne*, a trio of female singers in the court of Duke Alfonso of Ferrara, was the first such group of its kind, and paved the way for women to be accepted as singers in the privacy of the courts. Despite this, they were still badly treated as women. Dr. Carruthers states that, because these recitals were private, and by invitation only, their existence would not have translated to Vittoria's world. I suggest that indeed, because this new fashion of having female singers in one's court spread to many other duchys, and because many powerful men enjoyed their singing,

women did indeed make some inroads into the world of performing, thus opening a crack in the door to composing, which most singers did anyway, and finally to publishing as musicians, beginning in this very period of history. Still, it is nothing short of extraordinary that a young girl of perhaps the age of 14 composed these well-crafted and delightful candies for our enjoyment, and how fortunate for us that her father had them published. - *Amelia LeClair*

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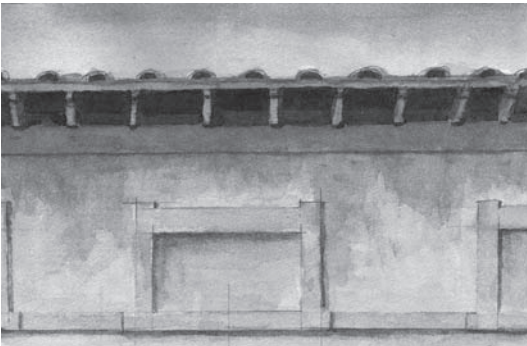
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