

La Venexiana and Claudio Cavina complete their 'Monteverdi Edition' on Glossa

"I really do not think that there is one composer who can be rightly compared to this genius."



In completing their masterful Monteverdi Edition, Claudio Cavina and La Venexiana have returned to the beginning – to the *Madrigali a cinque voci... Libro primo* – of Monteverdi's exploration of the madrigalian art form, a journey which was to occupy the composer for more than 50 years of his life across his staying in the cities of Cremona, Mantua and Venice. In this *First Book*, published in 1587 when the composer was barely 20 years old yet demonstrably showing clear evidence of his approaching maturity, La Venexiana's performances are again faithful to Monteverdi's passion for the written word – above all to the weight theme of love. In this final release in the Monteverdi Edition Cavina adds a twist in the tail by including on this new CD the madrigals from the posthumous *Libro Nono* put together by the composer's Venetian publisher. With the rerelease of La Venexiana's recording of *Il Terzo Libro* (complete with a new essay penned by Stefano Russomanno), eight volumes now comprise Glossa's Monteverdi Edition, all available within the attractively and imaginatively unified design style which has become the hallmark of the label.

The Monteverdi Edition by no means represents the entirety of Claudio Cavina and La Venexiana's contribution to the music of the Cremona-born composer (nor to their survey of other music from the time – Carlo Gesualdo remains a firm favourite of Cavina). 2007, as well as marking the 400th anniversary of the first performance of the "favola in musica" that is *L'Orfeo* saw Cavina take his musical and dramatic vision "on the road" criss-crossing Europe from London to Bruges, from Regensburg to Jerez de la Frontera (and very definitely with Italian performances too). The view of these early music experts was committed to disc (issued as one of Glossa's striking "Ediciones Singulares" book-cum-disc presentations) and received as strong praise as the live performances did. In the UK, for example, both *Gramophone* magazine and BBC Radio 3's "Building a Library" from its CD Review programme demonstrated their approval. With the completion of not eight but nine books of madrigals La Venexiana are in the mood for more Monteverdi. Claudio Cavina indicates in this latest interview his appreciation of and his appetite for the sacred music.

Having now completed recording all of Monteverdi's madrigals, what is your opinion about the quality of the composer's inspiration across the half century of their composition?

One of the characteristics that identify Monteverdi as a composer was his continual willingness to experiment. From his *First Book of Madrigals* onwards, Monteverdi was wanting to identify the practice of what he would regard as being suitable for a "good composer". To that end, he went through several stylistic evolutions, employing a great number of musical ideas in order to find his own special direction. Poetry was most assuredly a very important element for him to be able to explore the world of the madrigal: from Petrarch to Battista Guarini to Torquato Tasso, Monteverdi sought to find a "filling", a contact between music and text. When we perform the *Fourth*, *Fifth* and *Sixth Books of Madrigals*, we taste the essence of Monteverdi's madrigalian style, but with the *Seventh* and *Eighth Books* Monteverdi's new ideas concerning the use of the *basso continuo* and solo voices inspire a freedom and a scent of the operatic world that was to come. Given the trajectory covered by Monteverdi during his career, I really do not think that there is one composer who can be rightly compared to this genius.

The *First Book* was published when Monteverdi was only 20 years old. In what ways does this collection of madrigals demonstrate the genius of the composer?

Indeed, the *First Book* is the work of a very young composer, but it is nonetheless possible to find in it some madrigals which indicate that there is a little genius here at work. I am thinking here of *Baci soavi e cari* and the tripartite *Ardo, si, ma non t'amo*. Additionally, if the Monteverdi of the *First Book* does reflect a very youthful style it is clear that it is one that is progressing and in a state of development. The *Second Book of Madrigals* – and it is remarkable that this appeared only a mere three years after the first – will present extraordinarily beautiful pieces such as *Non si levava ancor l'alba novella*, *Non m'è grave il morire* and *Ecco mormorar l'onde*.

From amongst all the madrigals is there one which gives you special pleasure as a performer?

A particularly special for us is the *Lamento della Ninfa* (an "opuscolo in genere rappresentativo" from the *Eighth Book*). In this madrigal Monteverdi employs a new form where the three men's voices sing with "hand" tempo whilst the soprano sings with a free tempo. In La Venexiana we perform it live as a jazz piece and every time the audience's reaction is fascination and huge enthusiasm. This way of performing early music began with Monteverdi but we find reference to it in the literature some considerable time later when, in a very important 18th-century treatise, *Opinioni de' cantori antichi e moderni*, Pier Francesco Tosi wrote that "rubato" is very good in a slow piece and yet better in ternary tempo. The best singer will be the one who after exercising *rubato* will be able to return to the good – as in original –

tempo." Clearly – and this treatise was published in 1723 – this was a practice common in baroque music and Monteverdi was indeed a precursor of a musical idea which was used across the 18th century (and later, of course!).

A large part of your performing time last year was spent with *L'Orfeo* (as well as releasing a recording of the work). What did all these performances tell you about Monteverdi's dramatic art?

L'Orfeo constitutes a complete performance in itself of Monteverdi's music as a whole. Within it you can find instrumental pieces, five-part madrigals, recitativos, canzonettas, concertatos, dances, duos and more! Thus, from this point of view, all the different styles of Monteverdi, from his *Second* to his *Eighth Books of Madrigals* can be identified in *L'Orfeo*. The drama is in the poetry, and Monteverdi is a *maestro* in finding each contrast, each characteristic and each human sensibility. Each and every time that we performed *L'Orfeo* last year we felt shivers running down our spines and tears welling up inside us. For me *L'Orfeo* is as dramatic an opera as any by Puccini.

Your interest in Monteverdi's compositions also extends to his sacred music. What does your experience of performing the madrigals (and other secular works) bring to the sacred music?

When, as La Venexiana, we perform the *Vespro della Beata Vergine* or the *Selva morale* we are always made profoundly aware that Monteverdi has initially been a composer of madrigals and it is an easy process to locate in his sacred works all the musical precepts of his secular music. Of course, we know that the sacred music was composed for religious celebrations but the church in this period – and, in my opinion, in all periods of human history – acts as a big – a sacred – theatre, in which the role of music was as an important way of celebrating the glory of God, and the power of the Church. In that way the 1610 *Audi coelum* is not so distant from *Orfeo's Rosa del ciel*, nor does *Ave maris stella* represent a huge mental jump from *Ecco mormorar l'onde*.

GCD 920921
New release information



Primo & Nono Libri dei Madrigali
Claudio Monteverdi

La Venexiana
Roberta Mameli, Nadia Ragni, Francesca Cassinari, Claudio Cavina, Raffaele Giordani, Giuseppe Maletto, Matteo Bellotto, Gabriele Palomba, Marta Graziolino, Anna Fontana
Claudio Cavina, director

Glossa Monteverdi Edition 01
GCD 920921 – new release

Programme

I. Primo Libro dei Madrigali, 1587

Ch'ami la vita mia – Se per avervi, ohimè – A che tormi il ben mio – Amor, per tua mercé – Baci soavi e cari – Se pur non mi consenti – Filli cara ed amata – Poiché del mio dolore – Fumia la pastorella – Se nel partir da voi – Tra mille fiamme – Usciam, ninfe, omái – Questa ordì il laccio – La vaga pastorella – Amor s'il tuo ferire – Donna s'io miro voi – Ardo, sì, ma non tanto

II. Nono Libro dei Madrigali, 1651

Bel pastor – Zefiro torna – Alcun non mi consigli – Di far sempre gioire Amor – Quando dentro al tuo seno – Non voglio amare – Com'è dolce oggi l'auretta – Alle danze, alle gioie – Perché se m'odiavi – Sì, sì, ch'io v'amo – Su, su, pastorelli vezzosi – O mio bene, o mia vita

Production details

Playing time: 73'00
 Recorded at Chiesa di San Carlo, Modena (Italy), in July 2006
 Engineered by Roberto Meo
 Produced by Sigrid Lee & La Venexiana
 Executive producer: Carlos Céster
 Art direction: Valentín Iglesias (00:03:00)
 Booklet essay: Stefano Russomanno
 English Français Deutsch Español Italiano



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Claudio Monteverdi Primo & Nono Libri dei Madrigali

NOTES (ENG)

In bringing together the *First* and *Ninth Books of Madrigals* by Claudio Monteverdi it is tempting to ask the question whether some common denominator exists which is capable of encircling the entire range of ideas expressed by this journey, the duration of which lasted for over half a century. Monteverdi himself offered a clue to this question in a letter dated December 1616, where he wrote: "How will I be able to imitate the conversing of the winds if they speak not? And across them, will I be able to stir the emotions?" It is precisely his passion for the written word which guided the composer all through his career. Themes such as the world, feelings, the entirety of life, are revealed in a constant stream of words that are sung, cried, whispered, hushed and dreamt. Their rhythm, sonority and colour represent, for Monteverdi, direct proof of the mobility of the emotions, the primary material on which the composer needs to work.

Published in 1587 in Venice by Angelo Gardano, the *Madrigali a cinque voci... Libro primo* acts as the departure point of an exploration which was to change the face of the genre over the following decades, voyaging towards new horizons in which not only music but the actual vision of the world itself was to become irrevocably altered.

The Monteverdian voyage with the madrigal concludes with a posthumous (albeit detachable) chapter. Published by Alessandro Vincenti in 1651, the *Libro Nono* was conceived without the involvement of the composer, who had died some eight years previously. The project was born from Vincenti's desire to exploit the pull which the composer's name was still exerting....

NOTES (FRA)

Rassembler dans un seul volume le *Premier Livre de Madrigaux de Monteverdi et le Neuvième*, peut poser la question de savoir s'il existe un dénominateur commun capable d'enclaver, dans toute son extension, un tel périple, dont la durée dépasse le demi-siècle. Monteverdi nous offre d'ailleurs une piste possible dans une lettre datée de décembre 1616 : « ... comment pourrai-je imiter le parler des vents s'ils ne parlent pas ? Et comment pourrai-je, par eux, susciter les émotions ? » L'amour pour le mot est précisément ce qui guide le compositeur au long de sa trajectoire. Le monde, les sentiments, la vie entière, se révèlent comme un flux continu de mots chantés, criés, murmurés, tus ou rêvés. Leurs rythmes, leurs sonorités et leurs couleurs sont, pour Monteverdi, la manifestation directe de la fluctuation des émotions, cette matière première que le musicien doit travailler.

Publié en 1587 à Venise par Angelo Gardano, le *Premier Livre de Madrigaux à cinq voix* est le point de départ d'une exploration qui devait changer, dans les décennies à venir, le caractère de ce genre musical, en transitant par des horizons nouveaux où non seulement la musique mais encore la vision du monde allaient se modifier irrémédiablement.

Le voyage monteverdien dans le monde du madrigal s'achève par un chapitre posthume et, sous certains aspects, postiche. Publié par Alessandro Vincenti en 1651, le *Neuvième Livre* a été élaboré, bien évidemment, sans l'aval du compositeur, décédé huit ans auparavant ! L'idée de cette publication se devait au désir de Vincenti d'exploiter la force d'attraction que possédait encore le nom du musicien...

NOTAS (ESP)

Al reunir el primero y el último libro de los madrigales monteverdianos, uno se pregunta si existe un denominador común capaz de abarcar en toda su extensión semejante periplo, cuya duración rebasa el medio siglo. El propio Monteverdi nos ofrece tal vez una pista en una carta fechada en diciembre de 1616, donde escribe: «¿Cómo podré imitar yo el dialogar de los vientos si no hablan?, ¿cómo podré yo a través de ellos mover los afectos?». El amor a la palabra es lo que guía precisamente al compositor a lo largo de su trayectoria. El mundo, los sentimientos, la vida entera, se revelan como un flujo continuo de palabras cantadas, gritadas, murmuradas, silenciadas o soñadas. Su ritmo, sonoridad y color son, para él, manifestación directa de la movilidad de afectos y emociones, materia prima sobre la que el músico ha de trabajar.

Publicado en 1587 en Venecia por Angelo Gardano, el *Primer libro de madrigales a cinco voces* constituye el punto de partida de una exploración que cambiaría en las décadas siguientes la cara del género, transitando por horizontes nuevos en los que no sólo la música sino la misma visión del mundo quedaría modificada de manera irremediable.

El viaje monteverdiano por el madrigal se termina con un capítulo póstumo y, en algunos aspectos, postizo. Publicado por Alessandro Vincenti en 1651, el *Noveno libro* se gestó fuera del control del compositor, fallecido ocho años antes. La iniciativa nació del deseo del propio Vincenti de explotar el tirón que el nombre del músico aún podía ofrecer...

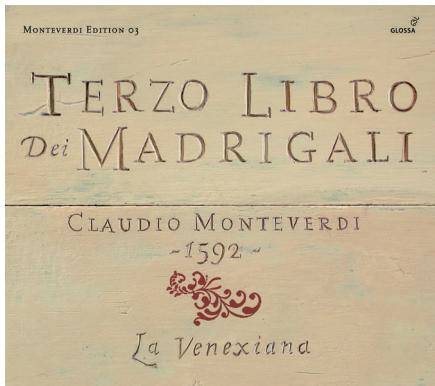
NOTIZEN (DEU)

Wenn man Monteverdis *Erstes und Neuntes Madrigalbuch* auf einer einzigen Aufnahme zusammenfasst, muss man sich die Frage stellen, ob es einen gemeinsamen Nenner gibt, der den Anfangs- und den Endpunkt dieser weiten Reise verbindet, die über ein halbes Jahrhundert lang dauerte. Monteverdi selbst liefert hierfür in einem Brief vom Dezember 1616 einen Anhaltspunkt: »... wie könnte ich die Sprache der Winde nachahmen, wenn sie nicht sprechen können? Und wie könnte ich dadurch Gefühle herauftschwören?« Es ist genau diese Liebe zum Wort, die den Komponisten auf seinem langen Weg begleitete. Die Welt, die Gefühle, das gesamte Leben enthüllen sich ihm wie ein immerwährender Fluss aus Worten, gesungenen, geschrienen, gemurmelten, verschwiegenden oder nur geträumten Wörtern. Ihre Rhythmen, ihre Klänge und Farben sind für Monteverdi die Offenbarung der immer wechselhaften Gefühle, sie sind das Ausgangsmaterial, mit dem der Musiker arbeiten muss.

Das *Erste Madrigalbuch für fünf Stimmen* wurde 1587 in Venedig von Angelo Gardano veröffentlicht. Es ist der Anfang einer Forschungsreise, die in den kommenden Jahrzehnten den Charakter dieser musikalischen Gattung veränderte, indem sie sich zu neuen Horizonten aufmachte. Dadurch wurde nicht nur die Musik, sondern die gesamte Sicht auf die Welt unumkehrbar verändert.

Monteverdis Reise durch die Welt des Madrigals endet mit einem posthumen und unter gewissen Aspekten gefälschten Kapitel. Das *Neunte Madrigalbuch* wurde von Alessandro Vincenti im Jahr 1651 gedruckt und offensichtlich ohne die Mitarbeit des Komponisten zusammengestellt, der ja bereits acht Jahre zuvor gestorben war. Die Idee zu diesem Druck entstammt dem Streben Vincentis, sich die Anziehungskraft zunutze zu machen, die der Name Monteverdis noch immer besaß...

GCD 920923
New release information



Terzo Libro dei Madrigali
Claudio Monteverdi

La Venexiana
Rossana Bertini, Valentina Coladonato,
Nadia Ragni, Paola Reggiani,
Claudio Cavina, Giuseppe Maletto,
Sandro Naglia, Daniele Carnovich
Claudio Cavina, director

Glossa Monteverdi Edition 03
GCD 920923 – reissue

Programme

Terzo Libro dei Madrigali, 1592

La giovinetta pianta – O come è gran martire
– Sovra tenere erbette – O dolce anima mia –
Stracciami pur il core – O rossignuol – Se per
estremo ardore – Vattene pur crudel – O
primavera – Perfidissimo volto – Ch’io non t’ami
cor mio – Occhi un tempo mia vita – Vivrò fra
i miei tormenti – Lumi miei cari – Rimanti in
pace

Production details

Playing time: 62'35
Recorded in Corsica (Auditorium di Pigna) in
September 2001
Engineered by Davide Ficco
Produced by Sigrid Lee & La Venexiana
Executive producer: Carlos Céster
Art direction: Valentín Iglesias (00:03:00)
Booklet essay: Stefano Russomanno
English Français Deutsch Español Italiano



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Claudio Monteverdi

Terzo Libro dei Madrigali

NOTES (ENG)

The dedication of the *Terzo Libro di Madrigali a cinque voci*, published in Venice in 1592 by Ricciardo Amadino, represents the first documentary evidence that we have of Monteverdi's stay in Mantua, where the composer had been working since 1590 as an instrumentalist playing the viola at the court of Vincenzo Gonzaga. Being connected to one of the era's most flourishing and active cultural centres could not but exert a profound influence on the composer's stylistic and aesthetic principles. Indeed, this new collection from Monteverdi appears in many ways to reflect the ambience alive in Mantua. Two names stand out in the selection of literary texts employed by Monteverdi: Giovanni Battista Guarini and Torquato Tasso, both poets at the Ferrara court who nevertheless maintained close ties with Mantua. But it is in the change of expressive registers above all where the most significant innovations are to be best appreciated...

The *Third Book of Madrigals* stands as a landmark in the Monteverdian exploration of the internal life of the word, which the music picks up and amplifies with renewed sensitivity and force. On the other hand, the contrapuntal fullness of episodes such as found at the start of *Se per estremo ardore* prompts us to see in this collection also the culmination of a certain "classicism", a brilliant and final affirmation of the possibilities of the *prima pratica*. This miraculous balance between tradition and innovation perhaps may be the reason for the extraordinary success of the publication. Five reprintings in less than two decades bear witness to the recognition which the composer's own contemporaries rendered to the exceptional nature of the *Third Book*.

NOTES (FRA)

La dédicace du *Troisième Livre de Madrigaux*, publié à Venise en 1592 par Ricciardo Amadino, constitue la première preuve documentaire du séjour de Monteverdi à Mantoue, où le musicien était, depuis 1590, *suonatore di vivuola* [joueur de viole] à la cour de Vincent Gonzague. Le lien avec l'un des centres culturels les plus actifs et florissants de l'époque ne pouvait qu'exercer une profonde influence sur les tendances stylistiques et esthétiques du compositeur. Cette nouvelle collection monteverdienne se présente en effet, sous de nombreux aspects, comme un reflet de l'ambiance mantouane : par exemple dans le choix des textes littéraires, où prévalent les noms de Giovan Battista Guarini et di Tasse, poètes de la cour de Ferrare, qui entretenaient néanmoins des relations privilégiées avec Mantoue. Mais c'est surtout le changement de registre expressif qui révèle les nouveautés les plus significatives...

Le *Troisième Livre de Madrigaux* apparaît comme une pierre de touche dans l'exploration monteverdienne de la vie intérieure du mot, que la musique capte et amplifie avec une sensibilité et une force renouvelées. D'autre part, la plénitude contrapuntique des épisodes comme celui qui ouvre *Se per estremo ardor* induit à considérer aussi cette collection comme la culmination d'un certain « classicisme », affirmation fulgurante et ultime des possibilités de la *prima pratica*. Dans cet équilibre miraculeux entre tradition et innovation, réside sans doute la raison de l'extraordinaire succès de la publication. Cinq réimpressions en moins de vingt ans témoignent en effet de la façon dont les contemporains du compositeur surent reconnaître le caractère exceptionnel du *Troisième Livre*.

NOTAS (ESP)

La dedicatoria del *Tercer Libro de Madrigales*, publicado en Venecia en 1592 por Ricciardo Amadino, constituye la primera confirmación documental de la estancia de Monteverdi en Mantua, donde el músico trabajaba desde 1590 como instrumentista de viola en la corte de Vincenzo Gonzaga. En muchos aspectos, esta nueva colección monteverdiana viene a ser un reflejo del ambiente cultural mantuano y de los gustos de su patrón. En la elección de los textos literarios, por ejemplo, prevalecen los nombres de Giovan Battista Guarini y Torquato Tasso, poetas de la corte de Ferrara que mantenían profundas vinculaciones con Mantua. Sin embargo, las novedades más significativas con respecto al pasado se aprecian sobre todo en la entonación expresiva de la escritura madrigalística...

El *Tercer Libro de Madrigales* marca un hito en la exploración monteverdiana de la vida interior de la palabra, que la música capta y amplifica con una sensibilidad y una fuerza renovadas. Por otra parte, la plenitud contrapuntística de episodios como el que da inicio a *Se per estremo ardor* induce también a ver en esta colección la culminación de un cierto «clasicismo», fulgurante y postrera afirmación de las posibilidades de la *prima pratica*. Este milagroso equilibrio entre tradición e innovación tal vez sea la razón del extraordinario éxito de la publicación. Cinco reimpresiones en menos de dos décadas atestiguan sin duda el reconocimiento que los propios contemporáneos del compositor rindieron a la excepcionalidad del *Tercer Libro*.

NOTIZEN (DEU)

Die Widmung des *Dritten Madrigalbuches*, das in Venedig im Jahr 1592 von Ricciardo Amadino veröffentlicht wurde, stellt den ersten dokumentarischen Nachweis von Monteverdis Aufenthalt in Mantua dar, wo sich der Musiker seit 1590 als *suonatore di vivuola* (Violenspieler) am Hofe Vincenzo Gonzagas aufhielt. Mantua war zu dieser Zeit ein blühendes und sehr einflussreiches Kulturzentrum, und die Verbindung Monteverdis zu Mantua hatte zwangsläufig einen starken Einfluss auf die stilistischen und ästhetischen Ansichten des Komponisten. Diese neue Monteverdi-Sammlung wirkt tatsächlich unter zahlreichen Aspekten wie ein Widerschein des Milieus von Mantua, beispielsweise was die Auswahl der Texte betrifft, bei denen Namen wie Giovan Battista Guarini und Torquato Tasso vorherrschen. Diese waren zwar Dichter am Hof von Ferrara, aber sie unterhielten dennoch sehr enge Beziehungen zum Hof von Mantua. Aber vor allem auf dem Gebiet der Expressivität kommt es zu bedeutsamen Neuerungen...

Das *Dritte Madrigalbuch* ist für Monteverdi ein Meilenstein in der Erforschung des Innenlebens der Worte, das von der Musik aufgegriffen und mit einer neuen Kraft und Empfindsamkeit erweitert wird. Andererseits aber spricht die kontrapunktische Fülle einzelner Abschnitte (wie etwa der Beginn von *Se per estremo ardor*) dafür, diese Sammlung als Höhepunkt eines gewissen Klassizismus' zu begreifen, als die brillante letzte Bestätigung der Möglichkeiten der *prima pratica*. In diesem wunderbaren Gleichgewicht zwischen Tradition und Innovation liegt sicher der Grund für den außerordentlichen Erfolg dieser Veröffentlichung. Fünf Neudrucke in weniger als zwanzig Jahren bezeugen, wie sehr Monteverdis Zeitgenossen die Außergewöhnlichkeit des *Dritten Madrigalbuches* zu schätzen wussten.