

PHILIPPE VERDELLOT
Madrigals for a Tudor King

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3. Quanto sia lieto il giorno (a,c,
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26. Deh, quant' è dolc' amor (g)
27. Donna leggiadr' et bella (a,c,d,f)
28. Madonna, per voi ardo (a,g)
29. Amor, io sento l'alma (g)
30. Ultimi mei sospiri (a,b,c,d,e,f)

Philippe Verdelot was the most important composer of Italian madrigals in the early 16th century and recognized as the the greatest innovator of the genre. A Frenchman, he occupied several important musical posts in Italy, including the Florentine posts of *maestro di cappella* at the Baptistry of S. Maria del Fiore and the great Duomo itself. In the mid 1520s, during his time in Florence, a set of part-books were assembled, probably under Verdelot's supervision, for the court of Henry VIII. Most, if not all, of the works were composed by Verdelot. This the first recording of the complete madrigals in the collection, which stands not only as the most exceptional of diplomatic musical gifts but is also an important source for the history of the early madrigal.

Recorded in St Michael's Church, Summertown, Oxford

Produced and Engineered by Martin Souter

Performing editions by David Skinner

MADRIGALS FOR A TUDOR KING

Donna che sete fra le donne belle
Quasi fra l' herbe un fiore,
Udite quell, che dir mi face amore.

*Lady, who is among beautiful women
Like a flower among the grasses,
Listen to what love makes me say.*
(Lodovico Martelli)

It has been 35 years since H. Colin Slim's publication of *A Gift of Madrigals and Motets*, a transcription and commentary of music from the so-called Newberry Partbooks. Slim provided a masterful historical study of the manuscripts, showing that the collection was very probably a gift from the city of Florence to Henry VIII in around 1526. However at that time Slim was working from only four of the original five partbooks, the *altus* book then thought to be missing, and accordingly either reconstructed the missing part where necessary, or found it in other sources. While the books probably belonged to the king himself (although there are no markings to suggest that they were part of his royal library), they somehow came into the hands of Francis Tregian the Younger, a Catholic recusant who compiled an anthology from the collection while in the Fleet prison where he died in 1619. The fate of the five books thereafter is unknown until the late nineteenth century, by which time the *altus* book had gone missing. From the hands of William Hayman Cummings, an organist and antiquarian, the four books passed on to Bernard Quaritch, who repeatedly offered them for sale until the Newberry Library in Chicago finally bought them in 1935.

The missing *altus* book, however, had apparently never left England and it was Slim's 1972 publication that caused others to note its existence. As a single manuscript volume, it could only have been preserved for the sake of antiquarian curiosity or of Catholic sentiment, and, as it happens, it was owned by Francis Kerril Amherst, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Northampton, who left it to his old school of St Mary's, Oscott College, in Sutton Coldfield upon his death in 1883. A delighted H. Colin Slim wrote up the find in the pages of *Early Music* (1978), where he provided transcriptions of the missing alto lines.¹ The books were finally reunited (although still physically parted), and now 30 years on this is the first complete recording of the madrigals in the collection.

While England's great musical heritage has its roots in the reign of Henry VIII, many are surprised to find that of the thousands of musical manuscripts that must have circulated during that culturally rich time only a handful have come down to us intact. However, cultural exchange in the early sixteenth century included not only literature and paintings, but the most passionate of all the arts: Music. The Newberry-Oscott partbooks, while assembled on foreign soil, may be ranked among the 'English' sources. The books contain a balanced offering of 30 motets and 30 madrigals. The motets (some of which were recently recorded by the Oxford-based choir 'Magdala' on The Gift of Music label) are typical for the first quarter of the sixteenth, being either Marian devotions, items for the Mass, or texts from the psalter. Two, however, are in tribute to the great kings of France and England: the collection begins with a motet to François I by Sermisy (*Quousque non reverteris pax*), and the

¹ H. Colin Slim, 'A Royal Treasure at Sutton Coldfield', *Early Music* (1978), 57-74.

last motet is one in tribute to Henry VIII (*Nil majus superi vident*). Owing to the inclusion of the Sermisy (the first motet in the collection) it is thought that the books might have originally been intended as a gift to the French, but the later inclusion of the motet to Henry VIII confirms that their final destination was England.

It is the madrigals, however, that raise the collection's status as one of the most important secular sources of the early sixteenth century. The entire collection seems to have been compiled under the supervision of the French-born Florentine composer Philippe Verdelot. The composer arrived in Florence in May of 1521, and he is known to have circulated with Machiavelli and other republican intellectuals. During his time in the City he held the most prestigious musical positions there: *maestro di cappella* at the Baptistery of S. Maria del Fiore (from 24 March 1522 at the latest to 7 September 1525) and at the cathedral (2 April 1523 to 28 June 1527). Verdelot is famous for having pioneered the Italian madrigal, and was certainly the most important composer of that genre before Jacob Archadelt. He brought musical life to the texts of Petrarch, Martello, Machiavelli and others, and very likely composed all 30 madrigals in the books (the majority are ascribed to Verdelot, and those few that lack an inscription are generally assumed to be by him).

Verdelot here set his music to a variety of poetic forms such as the canzona (absorbing just over half the collection) the ballad, sonnet and their derivatives. The style, dictated by the poetry, is highly declamatory expressed by close imitative counterpoint or homophonic chordal passages, often alternating in the same setting. Cadential formulae are clearly mapped out, and provide the necessary musical punctuation to emphasize the text. Still many passages are heavily influenced by the sombre 'church' style of composition which very much dominated this period: these were very early days for the madrigal, but Verdelot was central in shaping and influencing the form as it developed throughout the rest of the sixteenth century.

The performing forces for this recording have been selected in order to provide some variation to the programme: some are for a consort of solo voices, others arranged for lute and voice, while others still are reserved for solo lutes; indeed many of Verdelot's madrigals survive in versions for lute and voice or lute solo (including some curious examples where the bass line – rather than the top – is taken by the soloist, and the rest by the lute). Full texts and translations for all 30 works are here provided, and make essential reading while listening.

David Skinner

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TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

The texts are happy to remain very much within the conventions of love-poetry of the time. The authors characteristically sew together amalgams of phrases from Petrarch, probably taking them from easily available compendia or dictionaries or else simply picking them up as normal poetic usage. In most texts, traces of contemporary Florentine usage or other dialects creep in now and then. Usually the texts make sense, but the syntax can be fairly free. With very few exceptions (some of the Machiavelli perhaps) the writers were not aiming at individuality and novelty or even at poetic grandeur, but rather to supply variations on commonplaces that they and their listeners and readers found endlessly fascinating and enjoyable.

Peter Hainsworth

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1 Italia mia

Canzona by Petrarch

Italia mia, bench' el parlar' sia indarno
A le piaghe mortali
Che nel' bel corpo tuo sì spesse veggio,
Piacem' almen' ch' e' mia sospir' sien quail
Sper' il Tever' et l' Arno
E 'l Po dove doglioso et grave hor' seggio.
down.
Rector' del' ciel', io cheggio
Che la pietà che ti condusse in terra
Ti volgha al tuo dilect' almo paese:
Vedi, Signor' cortese,
Di che levi cagion che crudel guerra,
Marte superb' et fero,
and holds fast;
Apri tu, padr', e 'ntenerisci et snoda;
Ivi fa ch' el tuo vero,
Qual' io mi sia per la mia linigua s' oda.

My Italy, though words are useless
to heal the mortal words
which I see in such numbers in your beautiful body,
I am glad that at least my laments are such
as the Tiber and the Arno hope for,
and the Po too, where I now sit, sorrowful and weighed
down.
Ruler of Heaven, I beg
that the compassion which brought you down to earth
may turn your eyes to your beloved, divine country.
See gracious Lord,
how cruel a war has sprung from such slight causes,
and see the hearts which proud and fierce Mars hardens
open them, Father, soften them and unknot them;
there let your truth
(no matter who I am) be heard from my tongue.

2 Con l'angelico riso

Canzona by Lodovico Martelli

Con l'angelico riso
A me negasti i dolci baci sancti;
Et coi penosi pianti
Benignamente mi basciasti el viso.
Sol' il cor lieta da pietà diviso,
Havete a vostra voglia, et sola pia,
Sete ne l'aspra noia.
Da le lacrime gioia
Hebb', et dal riso acerba pena ria.
O lassi, o lassi amant', in seme prema

With an angelic smile
you denied me your sweet, sacred kisses,
and with painful tears
you graciously kissed my face.
You alone, happily have at your command a heart,
deprived of compassion, and you alone are kindly
to me in my harsh distress.
From my tears I gained joy
and from laughter I gained bitter pain.
O unhappy, O unhappy lovers, may

Sempr' a vo' il cor, ohmè, speranza et tema.
hearts.

together hope and fear always, alas, weigh upon your

3 Quanto sia lieto il giorno

Canzona by Niccolò Machiavelli

Quanto sia lieto il giorno
Nel qual le cose antiche
Sono hor da voi dimostre et celebrate,
Si vede, perch' intorno
Tutte le gente amiche
Si sono in questa parte ragunate.
Noi, che la nostra etate
Ne' bosch' et nelle selve consumiamo,
Venuti anchor' qui siamo,
Io nympha, et noi pastori,
Et giam cantando insieme e nostri amori.

How happy is the day
on which things of past ages
are now revealed and extolled by you, can now be seen,
because on every side
all friendly people
are gathered here.
We who spend our years
in the woods and the forests,
we, too, have come here:
I, a nymph, and we, shepherds,
are now singing together about our loves.

4 Lasso, che se creduto

Canzona

Lasso, che se creduto
Havesi a qualche amante,
Che già tanto senti d' amor dolersi,
Non harei hor' perduto
Le mia fatiche tante;
Et manco mi dorria
Ch' a laudar' tropp' amor' le labia apersi.
Ma hor' che nella pria
Libertà son tornato et vivo sciolto,
Scoprirò le sua fraud' in modo tale
Ch' in breve li fia tolto
L archo, li strali, la pharetra, et l' ale.

Alas, if I had believed
certain lovers
whom I heard complain so much of love,
I would not have wasted
all of my labours;
and it would pain me less
that I opened my lips to praise love too much.
But now that I have returned
to my former freedom and live unshackled,
I shall reveal love's dissembling
so that soon he will be deprived of
his bows, his arrows, his quiver and his wings.

5 O dolce nocte

Canzona by Niccolò Machiavelli

O dolce nocte, o sanct'
Hore nocturn' et quete,
Ch' i desiosi amanti accompagnate;
In voi s' adunan tante
Letitie, onde voi sete
Sole cagion di far l' alme beate.
Voi, i giusti premii date
A l' amorose schiere, a voi amiche,

O sweet night, O blessed
nocturnal and still hours
that wait on ardent lovers;
in you so many
delights are joined
that you alone make souls feel blessed.
You bestow
upon the companies of lovers, friends of yours,

Delle lunge fatiche;
Voi fat', o felice hore,
Ogni gelato pect' arder d' amore.

due rewards for long trials.
You, O happy hours, make
every frozen breast burn with love.

6 Madonna, qual certeça

Ballata-madrigal by Dragonetto Bonifazio

Madonna, qual certeça
Haver' si può maggior' del mio gran foco,
Che veder' consumarmi a poco a poco?
Ahymè, non conoscete
Che per mirarvi fiso
Son' col pensier' da me tanto diviso,
Che transformarmi sent' in quel' che sete?
Lasso, non v' accorgete
Che poscia ch' io fu pres' al vostro laccio?
Arross' impalledisco ard' et agiaccio?
Dunque, se ciò vedete,
Madonna, qual certeça
Haver' si può maggior' del mio gran foco,
Che veder' consumarmi a poco a poco?

My lady, what greater certainty
of the great fire burning me can be had
than to see me gradually being burnt away?
Ah me, do you not know
that because of my fixedly gazing at you
I am so estranged from myself
that I feel myself transformed into what you are?
Alas, do you not realise
that since I have fallen into your snare
I blush, I blanch, I burn and I freeze?
Then, if you see this,
my lady, what greater certainty
of the great fire burning me can be had
than to see me gradually being burnt away?

7 Afflicti spirti mei

Ballata

Afflicti spirti mei,
Non sperate già mai d'haver' più pace,
Poi ch' a madonna sì il vostro mal piace.
Ben' vi credesti gioir ne' primi anni,
Ch' amor la cara libertà vi tolse
Sì far dolci li inganni
E i lacci al cor' s' advolse,
Fin' che l' ingrato scoprìr li volse.
Piangete, dunque, I vostri gravi danni,
Da ch' a chi sola ne porria dar pace,
S' il vostro mal' afflicti spirti pace.

O my tormented spirits,
never hope to have peace again,
because your suffering so pleases my lady.
In the first years you really thought to be joyful
when love deprived you of that cherished freedom
so as to render deceptions sweet,
and trapped your heart in snares
until the ingrate decided to uncover them.
Weep, then, for your grievous woes,
since the only one who might give you peace
takes such pleasure in your tormented spirits.

8 Dentr' al mio cor'

Canzona

Dentr' al mio cor, si sierra
Una dolceça tale
Quando, Madonna, li occhi vostri sguardo;
Nè credo mai in terra
Fussi belleça equale.

Within my heart is enclosed
such a sweetness
my lady, when I look into your eyes;
I do not think ever on earth
was a like beauty.

Et se non ch' à me stesso pur riguardo,
Già ben direi io ardo
Sì come Apollo suole.
Così la vostra luce
Che cieco mi conduce
La dov' amor' comandar puote et vole,
Dov' ogni cor gentile
Non cura di servir signor' si vile.

And if I only think of myself
I would say that I burn
as Apollo always does.
Thus it is your beacon
that leads me, a blind man,
where Love can and does command,
where each noble heart
does not mind serving such a miserable master.

9 Quando nascesti, Amore?

Sonnet by Pamfilo Sasso

Quando nascesti, Amore? Quando la terra
Si riveste di verd' et bel colore.
Al' hor' di che nascesti? D' un ardore
Ch' otio et lascivia in se richiud' et serra.
themselves.
Che ti constringe a farne tanta guerra?
Calda speranza et gelido timore.
In cui fai la tua stanza? In gentil core
Che sotto el mio valor tosto s' atterra.
Chi fu la tua nutrice? Giovineça.
Et le serve che furno a lei dintorno?
Vanità, gelosia, pomp' et belleça.
Di che ti pasci? D'un parlar' adorno.
Offendeti la mort' o' la vechieça?
No, ch' io rinasco mille volt' il giorno.

When were you born, Love? When the earth
decks itself in green and lovely colours.
Of what were you born then? Of ardour
that leisure and wantonness enclose and clasp within
themselves.
What forces you into such conflict?
Warm hope and frozen fear.
Where is your abode? In a noble heart
that by my prowess is soon vanquished.
Who was your nurse? Youth.
And the maid-servants who surrounded her?
Vanity, jealousy, pride, and beauty.
On what are you nourished? On fine talk.
Can death or old age affect you?
No, for I am reborn a thousand times a day.

10 Piove da li occhi

Canzona

Piove da li occhi della donna mia
Una tanta beltate,
Et con epsa fiammell' in compagnia
Di spirito animate,
Et d' ardor infiammate,
Che chi li mira un pocho
Forç' è che pruovi l' amoroso foco.

There rains from my lady's eyes
such beauty
and with it flickering flames,
alive with spiritual power
and aflame with ardour,
that whoever gazes at them for a little while
must experience the amorous fire.

11 Pur troppo, donna

Madrigal

Pur troppo, donna, in van tant' ho sperato
Deh non giunger torment' al mio gran duolo.
Non poss' io dir' quell che si vede aperto?

(*He:*) Alas, my lady, vain were my high hopes.
(*She:*) Ah, do not add torment to my great suffering.
(*He:*) May I not say what is so clear to see?

Si ved' aperto ch' io t' habbi lassato.
A che, lasso, il direi?
Anç' io ben' questo vie più dir dovrei.
Che e' non è forse quell ch' io dico certo?
Non fu, nè sarà mai.
Io vorrei almen' veder' ne un segno solo.
Prest' il vedrai, ma sotto obscuro velo,
Chè senç' ale non può volarsi al cielo.

(*Sbe:*) It is clear to see that I have left you.
(*He:*) To what end, alas, should I say it?
(*Sbe:*) Indeed, I should say it even more.
(*He:*) For is not what I say a certainty?
(*Sbe:*) It was not, nor will it ever be.
(*He:*) I would like to see at least one single sign of it.
(*Sbe:*) Soon you'll see, but darkly,
because without wings one cannot fly to heaven.

12 I vostri acuti dardi

Ballata-madrigal

I vostri acuti dardi
Mì fan', ahy, ahymè, madonna, si languire,
Ch' io son giunt' al morire.
Non più veloci son ma ben' si tardi
I pasti ch' aquetavane el mio core;
Ond' io, lasso, son fore
Da' desiati vostri dolci sguardi.
Et pur, convien ch' io guardi
Il duol, eh Dio, ch' io sento,
Chè mai sarò contento.

Your sharp arrows,
make me, ah, ah me, my lady, so faint
that I have come to the point of dying.
No longer swift, but O, so slow are
the viands that satisfy my heart.
Alas, I am denied
your longed-for, gentle glances;
and yet, I must contemplate
the pain, O God, which I suffer,
because I shall never be happy.

13 Chi non fa prove, amore

Canzona by Niccolò Machiavelli

Chi non fa prove, amore,
Della tua gran possança, indarno spera
Di far mai fede vera
Qual sia del ciel' il più alto valore;
Nè sa come e' si vive insieme, et more,
Come si segue il danno e 'l ben' si fugge,
Come s' ama se stesso
Men' d' altrui, come spesso
Paur' et speme i cori agiaccia et strugge;
Nè sa come ugualmente homini et dei
Paventan l' arme di che armato sei.

He who has not experienced, Love,
your great power, hopes in vain
truly to experience
what is the highest power of heaven;
nor does he know how one lives and dies together,
how one seeks the bad and flees the good,
how one loves oneself
less than another, how often
fear and hope freeze and melt hearts;
nor does he know how men and gods equally
dread the weapons with which you are armed.

14 Liet' è madonn' et io pur

Canzon-madrigal by Biagio Bonaccorsi

Liet' è madonn' et io pur, come soglio,
Vo provand' ogn' hor' nuovo dolore,
Perch' el misero scoglio
Del l' antico suo ardore,

My lady is content, and yet I, as usual,
continually undergo new sufferings,
because the wretched obstacle
of her old love

Con più forç' et vigore
Tutto si incende dentr', adragm' adragma.
Et io del suo contento
Quel piacer' prendo et sento,
Che si ricerca a desiata fiamma,
Si ch' in breve momento
Cangio stat' et voler sença merçede.
Et lei s' el sa che dentr' al cor' mi sede.

with greater force and vigour
is little by little catching fire within her.
And I, from her contentment,
take and feel that pleasure
which one seeks from a longed-for love,
so that in an instant
my desires and condition change without reward.
And she knows it, being enshrined in my heart.

15 Con lacrim' et sospir' negando porge

Madrigal

Con lacrim' et sospir' negando porge,
Madonn' i desiati baci al core.
Et perchè tropp' ardore
Dentr' al mio pecto scorge,
Si dona benchè mest' al nostr' amore,
O grato et dolce nodo
Ov' io si lieto in servitù mi godo.

Denying me with tears and sighs,
my lady proffers the desired kisses to my heart.
And because too much ardour
she discerns within my breast,
she gives herself, though sad, to our love;
how welcome and sweet is the bond
where I take such delight in servitude.

16 Donna, se fera stella

Canzona

Donna, se fera stella
Mi fe da voi lontan' per tormi pace,
Stata v' è sempr' ancella
L' alma a cui fuor' di voi null' altro piace.
Però, lasso, mi spiace
De l' altrui colp' haver' la pena el danno,
Et che novello amante
Del mio mal ghoda. Ahy, vostre luci sancte,
Ch' in vit' alt' et gentil' tenuto m' hanno,
Così morir' mi fanno.

Lady, if some cruel star
placed me far from you to rob me of peace,
you have always had a handmaiden
in my soul, which delights in you alone.
Still, alas, I am grieved
to suffer pain and harm from other's faults,
and grieved that a new lover
have joy from my sufferings. Ah, your blessed eyes,
that kept me alive so nobly and so kindly,
thus make me die.

17 Ognun si duol' d' amore

Canzona-madrigal

Ognun si duol' d' amore: io me ne lodo,
Chè poi ch' io son' dentr' ai toi lacci entrato
Più ch' altro innamorato,
Col mio bel sol mi godo;
Et s' alcun pianger odo,
Dico felice a me che in sì bel stato
Vivo più ch' altro, felice et beato.

Everyone complains about love: I praise it,
for since I have been trapped by your snares,
more than any other lover,
I enjoy my beautiful sun.
And if I hear someone weeping,
I say, "O happy me," for in such a wonderful condition
do I live, more than anyone else, fortunate and blessed.

18 Altro non è el mio amor'

Altro non è el mio amor' ch' el proprio inferno,
 Perchè l' inferno è sol vedersi privo
 Di contemplar' in ciel un' sol dio vivo.
 Nè altro duol' non v' è nel foco eterno.
 Adunque, il proprio infern' è l' amor' mio,
 Ch' in tutto privo di veder' sono io,
 love,
 Quel' dolce ben' che sol veder' desio.
 Ahy, possança d' amor, quanto sei forte,
 Che fai ghustar' l' infern' ançi la morte.

Madrigal by Luigi Cassola

My love is nothing other than hell itself;
 for hell is only being unable to see
 one living god in heaven.
 Nor is there greater suffering in the eternal fire.
 Therefore, hell itself is my own love
 because I am completely bereft of the sight of my sweet
 the only one I long to see.
 Ah, power of love, how strong you are,
 Who makes us taste hell before death.

19 Madonna, io v' amo et taccio

Madonna, io v' amo et taccio
 Vel può giurar' amore
 Che tanto foco è in me quanto è in voi giaccio
 Et s' io non oso dire
 L' intenso mio martire,
 No so per salvar' me ma il vostro honore.
 Io vi porto nel core;
 Da voi vien' l' alta spem', e 'l gran desire;
 Et merçe vostra vivo in fiamm' acceso.
 Vorrei sença parlar' esser' inteso.

Madrigal by Luigi Cassola?

My lady, I love you and keep silent;
 Love may well swear to you
 that there is as much fire in me as ice in you.
 And if I dare not recount
 the severity of my suffering,
 I do not save myself, but your honour.
 I bear you in my heart,
 from you comes high hope and great desire;
 and thanks to you, I live on fire with ardent passion.
 I would – without speaking – be understood.

20 Si suave è l' inghanno

Si suave è l' inghanno
 Al fin conduct' immaginato et caro,
 Ch' altrui spoglia d' affanno,
 Et dolce face ogni gustato amaro.
 O remedio alto et raro,
 Tu mostr' il dritto call' a l' alme erranti;
 Tu, col tuo gran valore,
 Nel far' beato altrui, fai ricco, amore;
 Tu vinci, sol coi tuoi consigli sancti,
 Pietre, veneni e 'ncanti.

Canzona by Niccolò Machiavelli

How sweet is the deceit,
 which attains its imagined, cherished goal,
 which removes one's suffering
 and sweetens every bitterness one has tasted.
 O lofty and rare remedy,
 you show the straight path to errant souls;
 you with your great prowess
 in making a person blissful, make him rich, O Love;
 you vanquish, solely with your blessed counsel,
 magical stones, poisons and spells.

21 Se ben' li occhi

Madrigal

Se ben' li occhi mia infermi al mirar' voi
Non son, Madonna, sì prompti et alteri
Come forse li altrui assai presti et leggieri,
Pò vedersi girar' nel vostro aspetto
Non perciò dentr' al pecto
Sento ch' e' manchi amore,
Ma per degno respecto
Di non monstrar' di fore
Qual si sia dentro l' affannosa guerra,
Volto per mancho mal quelli alla terra.

22 Cortese alma gentile

Cortese alma gentile,
Che in sì pietose membra
Accolse lieto con sua mani amore,
Se ben' mio basso stile,
Et con duol mi rimembra
Non sorgersi che farti possa honore,
Come vorrebb' il core,
Ch' ad hor' ad hor' mi sforça
A dir' tua leggiadr' opre,
Et quant' humiltà quopre
In sè tua vagh' et pargoletta scorça.
Pur dirò con quell çelo,
Ch' amor' mi spirerà dal terzo cielo.

23 Quanta dolceça amore

Quanta dolceça amore,
Arrechì seco il tuo dolce veneno;
Se non è gentil core
Nol può sentir' non che ritrarl' a pieno,
Ch' un sol sguardo sereno
Seco ha tanto di bene,
Ch' e' ristora mille onte et mille pene.

24 Donna che sete fra le donne belle

Donna che sete fra le donne belle
Quasi fra l' herbe un fiore,
Udite quel, che dir mi face amore.

Though my languishing eyes, when looking at you,
are not, my lady, so quick and proud,
as those so fast and fleet of others
can be seen to turn toward you,
it is not because I feel that
love dwells not with my breast,
but out of dignity and respect,
not to show outwardly
the crippling strife within,
for the lesser ill I cast down my eyes.

Canzona

Gracious, noble soul,
who so sympathetically
stretched welcoming hands to love,
though my inferior style
(and I recall it with sorrow)
cannot rise high enough to honour you
as my heart would wish,
which constantly forces me
to tell of your charming ways
and of what humility dwells within
your adorable youthful exterior,
still will I speak with that zeal
which love will inspire in me from the third heaven.

Canzona

How much sweetness, Love,
your sweet venom brings with itself,
none but the noble heart
may feel, though not fully express,
because a single serene glance
contains such goodness,
that it heals a thousand affronts and a thousand pains.

Ballata by Lodovico Martelli

Lady, who is among beautiful women
like a flower among the grasses,
listen to what love makes me say.

Se voi fuste da Dio facta sì bella,
Che per voi il mondo piace,
Non siate tanto di merçe rubella;
Chè togliendomi pace
Mi diate quel, che più che morte spiace.
Non ha pena chi muore
Ma chi consum' in pianto e giorn' et l' hore.

25 La bella donna

La bella donna a cui donaste il core,
La qual fu sì cortese,
Che per sì caro don' vi die se stessa,
Hor, che novellament' al ciel è gita,
Sciolta di quella spoglia,
Che fu refugio et sol delli occhi vostri,
Si volge a dietr' et sent' il duro pianto,
Che si fa in terr', onde sospira et dice:

È questo il lacrimar del mio Signore?
Queste parole accese
Son pur la voce, che nel cuor m' è impressa?
Egli si lagna de la mia partita,
La qual par, che discioglie
Tutto quell ben, che havea dali occhi nostri.
Certo m' incresce del suo pianger, tanto,
Che talhor non mi lascia esser felice.

Dunque Signor, se per lo vostro ardore
Il suo morir v' offese
Tanto, che 'l pianger vostro unqua non cessa,
Pensate come ella è nel ciel gradita;
E se desir v' invoglia
Di sua bellezza, oprate i cari inchiostri,
E celebrate lei con dolce canto,
Che fu sola fra noi vera Fenice.

26 Deh, quant' è dolc' amor
Molza

Deh, quant' è dolc' amor ch'a tanti è noia,
Che m' ha nel mio bel stato anchor concesso
Mirando l' idol mio veder' me stesso,

If God makes you so beautiful
that because of you the world is pleasing,
don't be so ungenerous with your favours,
because in taking away my peace
you give me what is more unpleasant than death.
He who dies feels no pain,
but not so one who consumes days and hours in tears.

Canzona with *stanza continua* by Giovanni Giorgio Trissino

The beautiful lady to whom you gave your heart,
who was so kind
that in return for such a precious gift she gave you herself,
now that she has lately returned to heaven,
divested of that body
which was the refuge and sun of your eyes,
she looks back and hears the pitiful lament
which comes from earth, wherefore she sighs and says:

Are these the tears of my Lord?
Are these words of fire
indeed the voice impressed upon my heart?
He bewails my departure,
which seems to undo
all the good he received from my eyes.
I am so affected by his weeping
that at times it does not let me enjoy bliss.

Therefore, my Lord, if your passionate love
was so hurt by her death
that your weeping never ceases,
think how welcome she is in heaven
and, if you feel desire
for her beauty, load your pen with ink
and celebrate in sweet song one
who alone was a true Phoenix among us here.

Ballata-madrigal by Claudio Tolomei or Francesco Maria

Ah, how sweet is love which is to many painful;
in my fine state, it has still granted me,
gazing on my idol, to see myself;

Ivi parmi seder pien' d'ogni gioia,
Con amor', col mio sol', et con mia vita,
Et ragionar' insieme
Di lei, di sua beltate, et di mia speme.
O dolceça infinita,
Poi ch' ella doppiamente mi conforta,
Chè me nelli occhi et mia salute porta.

27 Donna leggiadr' et bella

Donna leggiadr' et bella,
Che con le vostre luci m'accendeste
Il dì che la mia stella
Mi conduss' a veder' l' altere honeste
Vostre belleçe: poi chè la mia sorte
M' ha facto vostro, non mi date morte.

28 Madonna, per voi ardo

Madonna, per voi ardo,
Et voi non lo credete,
Perchè non pia quanto bella sete.
Ogn' hora io miro et guardo.
Se tanta crudeltà cangiar' volete,
Donna, non v' accorgete
Che per voi moro et ardo?
Et per mirar vostra beltà infinita
Et voi sola servir bramo la vita.

29 Amor, io sento l' alma

Amor, io sento l' alma
Tornar' nel foco ov' io
Fu liet' et più che mai d' arder desio.
S' tu mi raccend' il core,
Et io ne son contenta
Et ritorn' humilment' al giogh' antico,
Opra ch' el mio signore
Parte del foco senta
Ov' io dolc' ardo e i mei pensier' nutrico;
Fa che ponga in oblio
Mia fugh' e dilli el mio novo desio.

I seem, filled with all delights, to be seated
with my love, my sun, and my life,
and to discourse together
about her, her beauty, and my hope.
O, infinite sweetness,
for she comforts me twice over,
because she bears me and my well-being in her eyes.

Canzona-madrigal by Giovanni Brevio

Delicate and beautiful lady,
who with your eyes set me afire,
the day my star
led me to see your proud chaste
beauty; since my fate
has made me yours, do not condemn me to death.

Madrigal

My lady, I burn with love for you
and you do not believe it,
for you are not as kind as you are beautiful.
I look at you and admire you constantly.
If you wish to change this great cruelty,
Lady, are you unaware
that for you I die and burn?
And in order to admire your infinite beauty
and to serve you alone, I desire life.

Ballata by Niccolò Machiavelli

Love, I feel my soul
return to the fire where I
was joyful and more than ever want to burn.
If you rekindle my heart,
and I am happy about it,
and I return humbly to the former yoke,
let it be that my lord
feels part of the flame
in which I sweetly burn and feed my thoughts.
And have him forget
my flight and tell him of my renewed desire.

Ultimi mei sospiri,
 Che mi lassate fredd' et sença vita,
 Contate i mei martiri
 A chi morir' mi ved' et non m' aita.
 Dite, o beltà infinita,
 Dal tuo fedel' ne caccia empio martire.
 Et se questo gli è grato,
 Gitene ratt' in ciel' a miglior' stato.
 Ma se pietà le porg' il vostro dire,
 Tornat' in me, ch' io non vorrò morire.

My dying sighs,
 which leave me cold and lifeless,
 recount my sufferings
 to one who sees me perishing and does not help me.
 Speak, O infinite beauty,
 release your faithful lover from his horrid torments.
 And if these please her,
 go swiftly to heaven and a better state.
 But if your words arouse her pity,
 return to me, for I shall not want to die.

ALAMIRE

Founded by David Skinner in 2005, **Alamire** is made up of some of the finest consort singers in the UK and exist in order to explore and promote the compositional processes behind the great masterworks, and lesser-known works, of the late medieval and early modern periods. Other recordings on the Obsidian label include the *Missa D'ung aultre amer*, motets and chansons by Josquin Desprez with Andrew Lawrence-King, and a recording of the church and chamber music of Thomas Tomkins with the Choir of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and the viol consort Fretwork. Other projects include sound installations for art galleries and soundtracks for television and film.

Clare Wilkinson, mezzo soprano (a)

Steven Harrold, tenor (b)

Christopher Watson, tenor (c)

William Unwin, tenor (d)

Timothy Scott Whiteley, bass (e)

Robert Macdonald, bass (f)

www.alamire.co.uk

David Skinner is known primarily for his combined role as a researcher and performer of early music, and is Fellow and Director of Music at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and an Affiliated Lecturer in the Faculty of Music. He teaches historical and practical topics from the medieval and renaissance periods. From 1997 to 2001 he was a Postdoctoral Fellow of the British Academy at Christ Church, Oxford (where he was a Choral Scholar from 1989 to 1994), and was the Lecturer in Music at Magdalen College, Oxford, from 2001 to 2006. At Cambridge he conducts the Choir of Sidney Sussex College, with whom he has toured and made professional recordings. He has published widely on music and musicians of early Tudor England, and his most recent projects include the collected works of Nicholas Ludford (Early English Church Music, 2003 & 2005) and The Arundel Choirbook (Duke of Norfolk: Roxburghe Club, 2003). He is currently editing the Latin church music of John Sheppard for publication in 2008, and co-authoring a book on music and the English Reformation.

Lynda Sayce is one of the UK's leading lutenists, and is noted both as a performer and as a musical scholar with a strong interest in history, literature and the visual arts. She studied at St Hugh's College, Oxford, where she matriculated in History and graduated in Music. She then studied lute with Jakob Lindberg at the Royal College of Music, and also took continuo classes with Nigel North. She holds a Ph.D for her research on the history of the theorbo, and has contributed articles to *Early Music*, the *Revised New Grove Dictionary of Music*, and the art journal *Apollo*, and has edited many music publications. She performs regularly with leading period instrument ensembles, including The King's Consort, the Academy of Ancient Music, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and the Musicians of the Globe