

Claudio Monteverdi Duets and Solos

1	Chiome d'oro, bel thesoro, SV 143	2:57
2	0 come sei gentile, caro augellino, SV 120	3:42
3	Se pur destina e vole il cielo, SV 142	9:22
4	Non è di gentil core chi non arde, SV 118	3:14
5	Ohimè, dov'è il mio ben?, SV 140	4:41
6	Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria, SV 325:	
	Di misera regina "Lamento di Penelope"	12:09
7	Io son pur vezzosetta pastorella, SV 121	3:27
8	Cantata Domino canticum novum, SV 292	5:24
9	Sancta Maria, succurre miseris,SV 328	3:31
10	Selva morale e spirituale:	
	Laudate Dominum in sanctis eius, SV 287	4:10
11	Venite, sitientes ad aquas, SV 326	4:22
12	Exulta filia Sion, SV 303	4:23
13	O bone Jesu, O piissime Jesu, SV 313	3:34
14	Selva morale e spirituale: Iste confessor, SV 279	3:07

Emma Kirkby (1-5, 7-10, 12-14) & Evelyn Tubb (1-2, 3-11, 13-14), sopranos Consort of Musicke • Anthony Rooley, director

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Monteverdi was delighted to move to Venice in 1613. After a rather unhappy time at the Gonzaga court in Mantua, leading to ignominious dismissal, he was now in the most prestigious musical post in the whole of Italy, as *maestro da cappella* of the Basillca of St Mark. St Mark's lay at the heart of Venetian scared and ceremonial life, and the basilica employed a highly prestigious group of singers and instrumentalists. But there was more to Venice, as Monteverdi made clear in his letters back to Mantua. The city's guilds and confraternities (notably, the six Scuole grandi) provided rich pickings for freelance musicians (including those moonlighting from St. Mark's), while Venetian noble households sponsored musical soirées involving the best singers and players, whether Venetian or foreign; and Venice's reputation as a pleasure-garden of Europe -especially during carnival - made it an essential stop on the tourist trail on the Grand Tour. Countless visitors came to the city to view its architectural splendours and to partake of its visual, aural and sensual delights; music played its part in all three.

Although we know a great deal about Venetian sacred and civic ceremonial - the public image was important - less information survives about private music-making in a city characterised (then as now) by a curious reticence behind the façade. In part, that reflects Venice's political power, but it also emphasises the other side of Venetian life away from the well-trodden path from St. Mark's Square to the Rialto. As many novelists have realised, Venice combines splendid, if fading, grandeur with a world of shadowy mysteries.

Monteverdi's letters and other sources do afford some glimpse of his work for private households and visiting nobility. In Carnival 1624, he provided an evening's entertainment for the Venetian patrician Girolamo Mocenigo that started with madrigals and ended with a semi-staged performance of the *Combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda*. In March 1625, he was working for the chapel and the court of the visiting Prince Wladislaw Sigismund, heir to the Polish throne (indeed, Monteverdi was strongly tempted to move to Poland), and in a letter of 24 July 1627, the composer speaks of: "Having to provide chamber music....for the Most Serene Prince of Neuburg, who is staying incognito in the house of the English ambassador" before rushing to direct for Vespers at the Carmine.

If we seek the music performed on these occasions, we can only turn to Monteverdi's Seventh (1619) and Eighth (1638) Books of madrigals; he published only a handful of small-scale settings in between in anthologies (some edited by his Venetian colleagues). Although the Seventh Book was dedicated to Caterina de'Medici, wife of Duke Ferdinando Gonzaga of Mantua, this music for one or more solo voices and basso continuo divides into categories by poetic texts, such as sonnets (the fourteen-line Petrarchan model), *ottava rima* stanzas (eight eleven-syllable lines rhyming ABABABCC), madrigals (texts in free-

rhyming *versi sciolti* in seven- or eleven-syllable lines) and canzonettas. The last are strophic texts (i.e. in regular stanzas) using a variety of line-lengths (but four-and eight-syllables lines are common). Another genre draws on the theatre, with quasi-operatic monologues (again, in *versi sciolti*) set in musical recitative. And the other poetic forms also have specific musical implications; madrigals are set in a freely declamatory style, with more structured *arioso* serving to highlight important points in the text; and canzonettas are set to tuneful aria-style melodies in duple or triple time, sometimes with *obbligato* instruments. It is rare to find poetic madrigals set as arias or vice versa, although one striking feature of music of the 1620s is the increasing cross-fertilisation of styles and genres that appears to be a sign of artistic experimentation (or confusion, as your prefer).

All these styles are genres are represented in the Seventh Book: *Chioma d'oro* is a canzonetta with two obbligato violins; *O come sei gentile, Non e di gentil core* and lo son pur vezzosetta are madrigals; Ohime, dov'è il mio ben, dov'è il mio core is an ottava rima with each couplet set over a repeating bass; and Se pur destina et vole is a partenza amorosa as the lover takes leave of her beloved in a quasi-operatic scena. The notion of taking real operatic scenes and performing them in the chamber, as with Penelope's lament Di misera Regina from Monteverdi's first Venetian opera Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria (1640) is not implausible; Monteverdi did the same with the set-piece Lamento d'Arianna from his (now lost) Mantuan opera Arianna of 1608, and Penelope's grief on the absence or her beloved (Ulysses) is emotionally and musically close to Ariadne's. What is more striking in all this music, however, is Monteverdi's preference in favour of the duet rather than the more ostensibly modern solo settings with which contemporary composers were filling their songbooks; he seems to have preferred a texture that was both more musically challenging and (given the potential for dissonant writing between the voices) more expressive.

The settings of sacred Latin texts included here would seem to inhabit a different world. *Cantate Domino canticum novum* was published in Giovanni Battista Bonometti's *Parnassus musicus Ferndindard-aeus* (1615), *Sancta Maria succurre* miseris in Giovanni Battista Ala's *Primo libro delli concerti ecclesiastici* (1618), *O bone Jesu, o piissime Jesu* in Johann Donfrid's *Promptuarii musici...pars prima* (1622), *Venite sitientes ad aquas* in Lorenzo Calvi's *Seconda raccolta de sacri canti* (1624), *Exulta filia Sion* in Calvi's *Quarta raccolta de sacri canti* (1629), and *Laudate Dominium in sanctis eius* and *Iste confessor* in Monteverdi's retrospective collection of sacred music, the *Selva morale e spirituale* (1641). Some of these texts would appear to be liturgical - *Sancta Maria succurre miseris* is a litany and Iste confessor is a hymn - and the psalm settings *Cantate Domino novum* and *Laudate Dominium in sanctus eius* could also be used within a church service. So, too, might the other motets, albeit in some less informal way.

But these settings for solo voice or duet could also find their place within private

devotional contexts, and hence in the domestic music-making that provided one environment for Monteverdi's secular music. "Sacred" and "profane" were not as far apart then as we tend to assume in today's secular age: witness the fact that the jolly canzonetta *Chioma d'oro* with its *ostinato* bass, was to be reworked in a larger-scale psalm setting in the *Selva morale e spirituale*, *Beatus vir qui timet Dominum*. Similarly, these pieces are just as modern, perhaps even more so, than his madrigals and canzonettas; sacred music was by no means conservative or reactionary. The present selection provides a unique insight into Monteverdi's musical development through his years in Venice as he explores all the melodic, harmonic and textural techniques that mark the formalisation of the Baroque style. It also provides some truly wonderful music.

- Tim Carter

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Originally, **Emma Kirkby** had no expectations of becoming a professional singer. As a classics student at Oxford and then a school teacher she sang for pleasure in choirs and small groups, always feeling most at home in Renaissance and Baroque repertoire, she joined the Taverner Choir in 1971 and in 1973 began her long association with the Consort of Musicke. Emma took part on the early Decca Florilegium recordings with both the Consort of Musicke and the Academy of Ancient Music, at a time when most college-trained sopranos were not seeking a sound appropriate for early instruments. She therefore had to find her own approach, which she has done most successfully, with enormous help from Jessica Cash in London, and from the directors, fellow-singers and instrumentalists with whom she has worked over the years. To date, she has made well over a hundred recordings of all kinds, from sequences of Hildegard of Bingen to madrigals of the Italian and English Renaissance, cantatas and oratorios of the Baroque, and works of Mozart and Haydn. Her most recent recordings include Handel's newly-discovered "Gloria" and two programmes with the London Baroque, one of Handel motets, and one of Christmas music by Scarlatti, Bach and others, all for BIS; also "Handel-Opera Arias and Overtures" for Hyperion, Bach wedding cantatas for Decca, and Cantatas 82a and 199 for Carus.

In 1999, Emma was voted Artist of the Year by Classic FM Radio listeners, and in November 2000, she received the O.B.E. Emma still prefers live concerts, especially the pleasure of repeating programmes with colleagues, as every occasion, every venue and every audience will combine to create something new from this wonderful repertoire.

Evelyn Tubb has become one of the major names in the happy army of musicians who have been seeking out the lost treasures of earlier times, and trying to restore the colours on some of the better-known "Masters". Her journey began at the Guildhall School of Music and she is now admired around the world

as an expressive and influential interpreter who combines period style with the use of gesture and dramatic characterisation in echoes of the renowned singing actresses of the past. She stretches herself to find deeper connections with the sentiments expressed in those more hidden, deeper layers of texts.

As a member of the Consort, or in her partnership with guitarist/lutenist Michael Fields, Evelyn has made dozens of recordings and given concerts and broadcasts throughout the world. She sings regularly in oratorio with leading conductors, and has made TV programmes for Dutch, Swiss and Italian broadcasters, as well as British. She has ranged from Hildegard von Bingen via Monteverdi and Purcell to Maxwell Davies, and recently created the title role of Semele for Mayfield Opera, in the setting by John Eccles in 1707.

Evelyn has always been an eclectic musician, enjoying rock, jazz and folk music, where she says much of her own style was born. Her background in dance, and more recently, in Tai-Chi and the inner dance with spirit, has brought her in contact with many inspiring teachers. Her own teaching has become recognised over the years, and she is much in demand for courses and colleges world-wide, including the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis and Dartington International Summer School.

The Consort of Musicke was founded in 1969 by its director, Anthony Rooley. Over the years the Consort has gone from strength to strength. After the first 10 years, the Guardian said: 'Few have done as much to revive the sensibility and thereby the stature of early English music as Anthony Rooley and his Consort of Musicke'. Since then the accolades have continued, not only for performances of English works but also for the Italian repertoire they have so consistently championed: 'They could have no better opportunity to demonstrate their skill than in the magnificent madrigals by Claudio Monteverdi. Attention to clarity of pronunciation and the natural rhythmic movement of the Italian language ... has always been a strength of the group' (Early Music News). Whatever the repertoire, there has been times in this performance when the group seemed to be turning the hinges of revelation' (Sydney Morning Herald).

The Consort of Musicke is always keen to expand its repertoire by involving additional instrumentalists. One such project was a co-operation with the BBC, in which the group was joined by the City Waites and the Purcell Symphony. They created a reworking of Cervantes' novel Don Quixote, with music by Henry Purcell and his London contemporaries. On this particular evening of Monteverdi duets Emma, Evelyn and Anthony are joined by Tom Finucane (lute), Christopher Wilson (chitarrone), Frances Kelly (harp), Peter and Rosalind Harris (violins), Erin Headley (viol and lirone) and Alan Wilson (organ). The Consort has also seen the production of their first film, Banquet of the Senses, a recreation of Monteverdi's Madrigali erotici e spirituali set in the beautiful Palazzo Te in Mantua. The group's enthusiasm for exploring new territory and desire for further artistic growth show no sign of diminishing in the future.

The Consort of Musicke, founded in 1969 by Anthony Rooley, continues to be one of the chief vehicles for his inspiration, though many other activities and interests crowd in. He has been appointed as York Early Music Festival Vice President, as well as Visiting Professor at York University, an appointment that allows exploration and exchange, and he continues as Visiting Professor at the "Schola Cantorum Basiliensis". Having travelled the world for thirty years, playing the lute to an amazing variety of audiences, Anthony Rooley could lay claim to being a seasoned modern-day minstrel. The pace of travel (at the speed of a donkey for John Dowland in 1597!) might have changed, but the love of communicating to a live audience remains fresh. Jetting the world to deliver exquisitely contemplative music is a wonderful irony and paradox, which continues to amuse Rooley. There is frustration: continuous travelling is not conducive to research, which feeds the new repertoire. Therefore, plans for the future include more time for writing. More recently, work on Daniel Purcell and John Eccles has been astonishingly fruitful, and the early 18th Century begins to beckon. Anthony Rooley's most recent passion, possibly providing the next fulllength book, is for the songs created for Mrs. Anne Bracegirdle, the singing actress of the 1690's who took the London audiences by storm.

With new projects fizzing continually, modern day minstrelsy will have to be redefined!

Alto ALC1060

894640001608

Recorded in 1986 at Forde Abbey, Somerset

Producer: Morten Winding
Engineer: Anthony Howells
Reissue producer: Robin Vaughan

2025 digital edition produced by Gene Gaudette, Urlicht AudioVisual

Cover photo: Lucy Slater

Back photo: Claudio Monteverdi, first bars of "Lamento d'Arianna" in manuscript, scanned by the Austrian National Library, courtesy IMSLP.org

®&© 2010, Musical Concepts. All rights reserved.

Digital edition ®&© 2010, 2025, Musical Concepts. All rights reserved.

Released under license from Olympia CD

No part of this sound recording and its component audio, text, or graphics files may be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, or shared electronically in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, file sharing, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, contact the publisher, using the subject line "Attention: Permissions Coordinator," at the address below.

Musical Concepts c/o ALTO Distribution Magnus House 8 Ashfield Rd Cheadle SK81BB, UK

alto