

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program

Wednesday, November 4, 2015

The Beginning of Joy: Italian Music of the Late Middle Ages

CWRU Collegium Musicum

Ross W. Duffin, director

Performers

Cynthia Black, vielle
Margaret Carpenter Haigh, soprano
Karin Cuellar, vielle, rebec
Alice Culin-Ellison, vielle, rebec
Nicolas Haigh, keyboards
Eva Lymenstull, vielle

Program

Anon. ca. 1400 (BL 29987)

Chominciamento di gioia

Francesco Landini (c. 1325–1397)

Non avrà ma pieta
(ornamentation: Faenza Codex)

Ludovico da Rimini (fl. 1450)

Salve, cara Deo tellus sanctissima
(Trent Codex 87, after Petrarch)

(continued on reverse)

Giovanni Ambrosio (c. 1420–1484) *Petit vriers*
Domenico da Piacenza (c. 1400–1476) *Leoncello*
Domenico *Verçeppe*

Arranged by Duffin

Lorenzo Masini da Firenze (d. 1372/3) *A Poste Messe*

Johannes Ciconia (c. 1370–1412) *Con lagreme bagnandome*
(ornamentation: Buxheimer Codex)

Antonio Zacara da Teramo
(fl. late 14th century) *Rosetta*
(ornamentation by Cynthia Black:
Mancini Codex, Faenza Codex, and F-PN 4917)
Ciconia *O Rosa Bella*

Guillaume Dufay (c. 1397–1474) *Passato e il tempo omai*
L'alta bellezza

Anon. ca. 1400 (BL 29987) *Lamento di Tristano e Rotta*
Zacara *Ciaramella, me dolce Ciaramella*

Notes on the Program

Tonight's program of music is inspired by the colorful musical life in 14th- and 15th-century Italy and the sounds of several vielles alongside voice, rebec, organ, and dulce melos. We explore many dimensions of music from this time including canons, virtuosic ornamentation, dance, and song and invoke the lively dynamics of the Italian Trecento and Quattrocento era.

Opening the concert is *Chominciamento di gioia*, which comes from an Italian manuscript from the turn of the 15th century. This monophonic dance represents a largely un-notated improvisational tradition of music for dancing, an important social pastime during the Middle Ages. Even popular song forms from this time can be traced to dance: the *rondeau* to the round dance, *ballata* meaning "to dance," and the *virelai* originating from the word *virer*, "to twist." We feature it as a "big-band" opener as we take turns playing melody as the others improvise accompaniments underneath. The consistent return of the coda acts as the familiar refrain to listeners and performers alike, inviting a tutti approach, which contrasts the new melodies, or *puncti*, showcased by different members of the group.

The next few pieces all showcase virtuosic ornamentation made possible by new developments in Italian notation during the latter half of the fourteenth century. Dividing the breve anywhere from two to twelve notes allowed for a newfound rhythmic complexity displayed by stunningly detailed notational system that used different shaped noteheads, flags, and tails. You will begin to hear the contrasting duple and triple rhythms both juxtaposed and woven into the texture, or even atop each other between voices. Landini's *Non avrà ma pieta* is performed on the dulce melos, a keyboard instrument rarely heard today. Using a system of bridges to divide the strings into three octaves, this instrument takes up very little room and produces sounds by a row of hammers. One might note its similarity to the hammered dulcimer. Especially stunning is Francesco da Rimini's setting of Petrarch's *Salve, cara Deo tellus sanctissima*, thought to have been written upon his return to Italy. Petrarch's exaltation of his homeland and palpable descriptions of Italy's landscape are illustrated by the song's virtuosic lyricism.

Among the dance music performed tonight are several shorter pieces that have been arranged by Ross Duffin. These dances are originally *balli* tunes that have been preserved in dance treatises with choreographies. What you hear tonight is a written-out version of what may have been improvised in the 15th century. Though miniature in size, these pieces feature tempo and meter changes that enhance moments of drama in the dance choreographies. These lively dances give us a glimpse into how evening entertainment might have sounded and looked at the courts of Northern Italy!

A Poste Messe is a caccia by Lorenzo Masini da Firenze, performed as a three-voice canon at the unison that depicts the sounds of the hunt, typical for this genre. The onomatopoeic text voices the noises of barking dogs and horns evoking the sounds of the hunting scene, another popular pastime for Italian noblemen. We have enjoyed taking advantage of how the overlapping repetition of the poem's sounds is contrasted with passages of slower lyricism.

As the sounds of several bowed instruments permeate tonight's concerts, you might wonder what these less-familiar, but violin-like, instruments are. The vielle, also known as the medieval fiddle, and the rebec, the smaller pear-shaped instrument, are often recognized as predecessors to the violin as we know it today. Iconography of the vielle indicates its function as an instrument of the arm and of the leg, and often the bridge on these instruments is somewhat flatter than later examples. This feature allows more ease in chordal and drone playing but still gives flexibility for melodic playing as well.

Tonight's version of *Con lagreme bagnandome* is a compilation of ornaments from several keyboard versions of this two-voice ballata from the *Buxheimer Codex*. Composed by Ciconia, the sheer rhythmic complexity of the upper line combined with the overlapping hands at the keyboard make this piece a virtuosic challenge. This type of virtuosity is also demonstrated by two vielles in *Rosetta*, in which the top voice plays a heavily ornamented version of the song, inspired by and imitated from examples in the *Faenza Codex*, *Mancini Codex*, and F-PN 4917. The rhythmic play between these voices is playful,

and these ornamentations found in three different manuscripts showcase the brilliance of this time period and its notational system. In contrast, we hear Ciconia's lyrical side in *O Rosa Bella*.

Also heard tonight are two Italian chansons by Dufay, a well-known composer from the Low Countries. Having spent some time in Italy, these three chansons show an Italian influence in the extended phrases of syncopated play between the voices alongside alternation between duple and triple minims in the cantus voice. The use of brief moments of imitation is a prominent feature in his music, and this offers great fun in interaction between performers.

The last set of tonight's concert begins with the *Lamento di Tristano* which turns into a celebratory *rotta*. This pairing of a slow and fast dance has given us opportunities to experiment with different types of improvised accompaniment, whether reducing the melody to its barest essence, adding and changing drones, or energizing with rhythmic interjections. Found in the same Italian manuscript as our opening piece, it evokes a different soundscape of 14th-century Italy, one influenced by Middle Eastern musicians and instruments. We end with raunchy song called *Ciaramella, me dolce Ciaramella* which makes a pun on the lady's name, which also refers to a shawm-like instrument. With a catchy syllabic setting of the text, this rousing song brings our program to a close.

About the Artists

Cynthia Black, from Dallas, Texas, is a fourth-year DMA student in Historical Performance at CWRU. She studies baroque violin and viola with Julie Andrijeski and is looking forward to presenting a final lecture recital on 18th-century string quartet ornamentation practices.

Soprano **Margaret Carpenter Haigh**, from Charlotte, North Carolina, is a second-year DMA student at CWRU in Historical Performance studying with Ellen Hargis, Aaron Sheehan, and Joan Ellison. She will be presenting her first lecture recital on ornamentation practice in French *airs* of the 17th century.

A native of Bolivia, **Karin Cuellar** is a second-year Master's student at CWRU in historical performance where she studies baroque violin with Julie Andrijeski. She looks forward to presenting a lecture recital about the music of Pisendel and his influence on 18th-century violin technique.

Originally from Louisville, Kentucky, **Alice Culin-Ellison** is a second-year DMA student at CWRU in historical performance where she studies baroque violin with Julie Andrijeski.

Born in Reading, UK, **Nicolas Haigh** is a first-year DMA student at CWRU in Historical Performance studying harpsichord with Lisa Crawford.

Eva Lymenstull, from Michigan, is a first-year DMA student at CWRU in historical performance where she studies baroque cello and viola da gamba with René Schiffer and Catharina Meints. Her research interests include the influence of the Paris Conservatoire on the development of cello technique at the beginning of the 19th century.

Song Texts and Translations

Salve, cara Deo tellus sanctissima

Salve, cara Deo tellus sanctissima, salve
tellus tuta bonis,
tellus metuenda superbis,
tellus nobilibus multum generosior oris,
fertilior cunctis,
terra formosior omni,
cincta mari gemino, famoso splendida monte,
armorum legumque eadem veneranda sacrarum
Pyeridumque domus auroque opulenta virisque,
cuius ad eximios ars et natura favores
incubere simul mundoque dedere magistram.
Ad te nunc cupide post tempora longa revertor
incola perpetuus:
tu diversoria vitae
grata dabis fessae, tu quantam pallida tandem
membra tegant prestabis humum.
Te laetus ab alto
Italiam video frondentis colle Gebennae.
Nubila post tergum remanent;
ferit ora serenus spiritus
et blandis assurgens motibus aer excipit.
Agnosco patriam gaudensque saluto:
Salve, pulcra parens, terrarum gloria, salve.

Hail, land most holy dear to God, hail!
A land of safety to the good,
a land to be feared by the proud,
Land much nobler than other famous shores,
More fertile than the rest,
more beautiful than any other country,
Bound by twin seas, shining with famous mountains,
Revered for arms and holy laws,
Home of the Pierian Muses, rich in gold and men.
Art and nature together courted your exceptional favors
And gave a teacher to the world.
Now after a long time I return to you eagerly,
A permanent resident.
You will give a welcome resting place
To my tired life, and in the end you will supply enough
Earth to cover my pale bones.
How happy I am to see you,
Italy, from the high mountain of leafy Montgenèvre.
The clouds stay behind my back.
A clear breeze strikes my face,
and the air rises to meet me with gentle motions.
I recognize my homeland and rejoicing I greet it.
Hail, beautiful mother, glory of the earth, hail.

A Poste Messe

A poste messe, veltri e gran mastini,
Te', te', Vilan! te', te',
Baril! chiamando Ciof, ciof, qui, qui ciof!
Bracchi e segugi per bosch'aizando! Eccola, eccola!
Guarda, guarda qua! Lassa, lassa lassa!
O tu, o tu, o tu! Passa, passa, passa!
La cerbia uscì al grido ed a l'abaio,
Bianca lattata, col collar di vaio.
A ricolta bu, bu, bu, senza corno
Tatin tintin tatin titon, tatin tintin,
sonava per iscornò no no nono.

All in their places, greyhounds, and great mastiffs,
hey, hey, Vilan! hey, hey,
Baril! calling woof, woof, here, here woof!
Beagles and hounds to the woodlands! Here it is, here it is!
Look, look here! Let 'em go, loose loose!
Hey you, or you, or you! Go, go, go!
The doe came out to the shouting and the barking,
milky white, with neck of speckled grey.
To rally bu, bu, bu, without horn
Tatin, tintin tatin,
sounded as if in scorn, no no.

Song Texts and Translations (continued)

O Rosa bella

O Rosa bella, o dolçe anima mia,
Non mi lassar morire in cortesia.
Ay, lassa me dolente deço finire
Per ben servire e lealmente amare.
Socorrimi, ormay del mio languire
Cor del cor mio non mi lassar penare.
Oy dio d'amore che pena è questa amare,
Vide che io mor' tuto hora
per questa iudea.
O Rosa bella...

O lovely rose, o my sweet soul,
Don't let me die, for pity's sake!
Alas, my sorrow will be my end,
In true service and loving loyalty.
Help me now as I languish
O heart of my body, don't let me die!
O God of Love, who punishes me with this love,
I'm dying a little more every hour
because of that Jewish girl.
O lovely rose...

Ciaramella

Ciaramella, me dolçe Ciaramella!
O tu che porti Fra Maçante sotto,
Polito e bello con la chiercha raça;
Poi che'l martello to' dà si gran botto,
Tosto m'abbrazza strengi e pur ma baça.
Chè'n questa terra de me n'è più bella.

Ciaramella ...

O tu che dolcemente sette volte
Quel fatto fai a non ussir hachetta.
Fa' che me vegni con le brache sciolte,
Che non bisogna dicere "aspetta."
Per far più tosto nostra giornatella.

Ciaramella ...

Ciaramella, my sweet Ciaramella!
O you who carry Brother Maçante down,
Pure and beautiful on his shaved head;
Since the hammer gives such a hard blow,
Embrace me, hold tight just to kiss me,
As there is nothing on earth more beautiful to me.

Ciaramella ...

O you, who sweetly seven times
The thing you do to not take out the hatchet.
Make me come with my pants undone
So we needn't say "wait",
And can sooner have our morning fun.

Ciaramella ...

—tr. Adam & Rotem Gilbert