



(LEMS 8026)

## LOVE LETTERS FROM ITALY

Drew Minter, countertenor

ARTEK – 458 Strings, Gwendolyn Toth, director

Grant Herreid – lute, theorbo, guitar

Astrid Nielsch – harp

Dongsok Shin – organ

Paul Shipper – guitar

Richard Stone – theorbo, archlute,  
violincello

Lisa Terry – viola da gamba,

Gwendolyn Toth, director – harpsichord, virginal, organ

One of the great innovations of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century was the rise of the concept of the “virtuoso” singer and instrumentalist. Before the innovations of the monody, the predominance of polyphony ensured that each voice in a composition was functionally equal to all others. Two reform movements were to effect a great change in the musical environment: the Council of Trent (1542) and the Camerata in Florence between 1573 and 1587. The Council of Trent was a reaction to the textual confusion in sacred music resulting from the polyphonic style of Palestrina then prevalent. The Council issued a proclamation that the words of the liturgy must be intelligible. The

Camerata, primarily a literary and philosophical movement, strove to discover the principles of ancient Greek music. The Camerata came to the conclusion that music should above all express the affect of the text and that this goal was best accomplished in solo vocal writing. Out of this movement came the invention of opera, the style we know as monody, and ultimately the birth of a new style in music history, the baroque style.

The importance of the words in the musical settings of texts had the logical effect of increasing the importance of the solo singer as a poetic declaimer; early texts in the monody style were written by the best poets of the age and are of extremely high quality. With the rise of the importance of the soloist came a new emphasis on solo virtuosity. The first true “divas” of singing were Italian singers such as Vittoria Archilei, Francesco Rasi, Giovanni Gualberto Magli, and others. As the practice of virtuosic singing became widespread, instrumentalists, in imitation of the voice, also began to enjoy a role as soloist of importance.

The music heard on this recording represents a cross-section of styles in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Through-composed music typical of the Florentine Camerata ideal is represented by several works. *Io vidi in terra* is a text by a major Italian poet (Petrarch) set by the composer Marco da Gagliano (1582-1643), who also composed one of the earliest operas, *La Dafne* (1608). *Odi quel rosignuolo* by Sigismondo d’India (ca.1582-1629) is nearly a dictionary of every type of vocal effect possible. The great master Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) is represented by *Lettera amorosa*, an example of *stile recitativo* in which the music goes even further in the direction of sung speech and away from traditional melody, and *Pianto della Madonna*, Monteverdi’s Latin sacred setting of the more famous “*Lamento d’Arianna*” from his lost opera *Arianna*. The Latin setting handily fulfills the admonitions of the Council of Trent; the secular origins of the setting were not considered sacrilegious. *La Madalena ricorre alla lagrime* is a sacred piece set to an Italian text by the composer Domenico Mazzocchi (1592-1665). Mazzocchi uses unusual chromatic harmonies in this lament, venturing into what are considered extremely distant keys for the 17<sup>th</sup> century, to express the anguish and torment of the text.

Vocal music based on existing ground-bass patterns was another favorite form in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Two pieces on this recording are based on various types of the *passacaglia* ground. The *Aria di passacaglia* of Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643) utilizes several different *passacaglia* variations throughout the piece. Giovanni Felice Sances (ca. 1600-1679) is the composer of *Cantata a voce sola il passacaglio*, one of several vocal pieces he wrote based on one of the most famous *passacaglia* patterns, the descending tetrachord (well-known from other works such as Monteverdi’s “*Lamento della Ninfa*” and the final duet, probably by Ferrari, in the opera *L’incoronazione di Poppea*).

Frescobaldi’s *Aria di passacaglia*, Sances’ *Cantata a voce sola sopra il passacaglio*, and d’India’s *Odi quell rosignuolo* are also early examples of the

recitative-aria format that by the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century had become the primary musical form in operatic and vocal chamber music. The cantata *Rimbombava d'intorno* by Antonio Cesti (1623-1669) combines clear-cut recitative, aria, and arioso into a large chamber cantata. Notable is the re-introduction of purer melody in both bass line and vocal line in the arias reflecting the changing musical taste in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Instrumental music heard on this recording utilizes the unique virtuosity of different members of our 458 Strings ensemble. We include two toccatas, the toccata form being the primary instrumental vehicle for virtuosity in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Our arrangement of Frescobaldi's *Toccata per violin e spinettino* (Track 2) shares the solo lines among many different instruments: harp, theorbo, harpsichord, guitar, lute, and viola da gamba. Frescobaldi's *Toccata per liuto* displays the talents of our two lutenists, Richard Stone and Grant Herreid, in a form of musical dialogue, with a bowed bass (viola da gamba) reinforcing the bass line. Lisa Terry performs one of the earliest known solo violincello works, a *Ricercar* for violincello and basso continuo by Domenico Gabrielli (1651-1690). Despite the title of *Ricercar*, usually an archaic fugal form, the piece is actually a violincello sonata in four movements: *Grave*, *Allemande*, *Largo*, and *Presto*. It is an early example of the high baroque dance suite so well-known from the works of J.S. Bach and many others, and calls for a typical early violincello scordatura tuning, C-G-D-G.

Two temperaments were used in the performance of these pieces. The earlier 17<sup>th</sup> century works by Frescobaldi, Monteverdi, d'India, Gagliano, and Sances are performed in 1/4-comma meantone. In this tuning, the Mazzocchi lament would require the famous 19-note keyboard of Zarlino to accommodate all the chromatic notes; therefore, necessity demanded we use 1/5-comma meantone. The Cesti cantata and the Gabrieli *Ricercar* also clearly require a tuning system able to handle all keys, and thus they were performed in 1/5-comma meantone.

#### TRACKS:

1. *Arie musicali* Bk.1 No.16, *Così mi disprezzate*, aria di 2. *Passacaglia* for solo voice - 2:56
2. *Toccata* - 4:33
3. *Odi quel rosignuolo*, for voice & continuo in 2 parts (*Le musiche*, Book 4) - 5:57
4. *Io vidi in terra* - 2:57
5. *Toccata per liuto* - 2:20
6. *Se i languidi miei sguardi* (*Lettera amorosa*), madrigal for soprano (from Book 7), SV 141 - 8:25
7. *Cantata a voce sopra la passacaglia* - 6:05
8. *Iam moriar, mi Fili*, motet for soprano (from *Selva morale e spirituale*), SV 288 - 9:39
9. *La Madalena ricorre alle lagrime* - 4:51
10. *Grave* - 1:35
11. (*Allemande*) - 2:46
12. *Largo* - 1:35

13. Presto - 2:25

14. Rimbombava d'intorno (3 versions), cantata for voice & continuo - 12:51

## ARTISTS

Considered among the world's premier countertenors, Drew Minter is also an accomplished stage director. In addition to countless recitals in America and Europe, his engagements have included appearances with the opera companies of Brussels, Boston, Washington, Nice, Marseilles, Toulouse, Wolf Trap, Santa Fe, and Glimmerglass. He has frequented the music festivals of Boston, Edinburgh, Spoleto/USA, Next Wave at BAM, Regensburg, and others. Mr. Minter has often appeared with such renowned early music ensembles as the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Academy of Ancient Music, Handel/Haydn Society of Boston, American Bach Soloists, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Theatre of Voices, Folger Consort, and Les Arts Florissants. He is a founding member of the Newberry Consort and of Ensemble Five/One which he also directs, and he has appeared regularly with ARTEK since its inception in 1986. A specialist in the works of Handel, Mr. Minter has appeared often at the Handel festivals of Gottingen, Halle, Karlsruhe, and Maryland. He is especially well-remembered for his portrayal of Tolomeo in Peter Sellars' production of Giulio Cesare, which was also filmed for Decca/London. His more than forty recordings are to be found on the Harmonia Mundi, Hungaroton, Koch, and others labels. This is his first recording for Lyrichord.

ARTEK is a musical organization reflecting the artistic vision of founding director Gwendolyn Toth. ARTEK began in 1986 with a modest series of chamber music concerts with Ms. Toth and her friends and colleagues. Now ARTEK has grown into one of America's premier early music organizations. ARTEK's yearly series of orchestra, dance, theater, and chamber music events in New York City regularly receives high acclaim from The New York Times, and ARTEK's first compact disc release of Monteverdi's opera Orfeo on the Lyrichord Early Music Series label has garnered rave reviews. Ms. Toth has guided ARTEK to prominence through her unerring ability to create outstanding programs both of well-known masterpieces presented in a fresh, creative setting and rarely heard gems from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, newly presented to 20<sup>th</sup> century audiences. The 458 Strings ensemble is made up of the continuo and bass players of ARTEK. The unique sound of the many plucked instruments, keyboard instruments, and bass instruments is special not only to the 458 Strings but to all ARTEK concerts.

Grant Herreid, in addition to performing with ARTEK, is a member of the early music quartet Ex Umbris and Pifaro (Philadelphia Renaissance Wind Band), and is a regular guest with Hesperus and LiveOak & Co. he has been music director for many productions of the Mannes Camerata, and has arranged and composed music for several of the comedies of William Shakespeare.

Astrid Nielsch concertizes regularly in Europe and America as a specialist on medieval, renaissance, and baroque harps. She has performed on the Fringe

series of the Utrecht Early Music Festival, Tage Alte Musik Berlin, and at the World Harp Congress in Copenhagen. She is currently studying for her doctorate in musicology at the Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht in the Netherlands.

Paul Shipper performs as an actor, singer, and instrumentalist. In addition to performing with ARTEK he is a member of New York's Ensemble for Early Music, Nottingham Fair, the Mannes Camerata, New York Alta Band, and is a founding member of Ex Umbris. He has also performed and recorded with Pomerium, the Baltimore Consort, Smithsonian Chamber Players, and others. His discography includes recordings on BMG, Harmonia Mundi, Musical Heritage Society, Newport Classic, and Lyrichord.

Richard Stone has performed with the Taverner Players, Consort of Musicke, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, ARTEK, and Glimmerglass Opera. His solo performance of German baroque lute repertoire won him a prize at the 1990 Early Music Competition at the Festival of Flanders in Bruges. In 1995 he made his operatic directorial debut in the Orlando Opera Company production of Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, which he led from the theorbo. Recording credits include Deutsche Grammophon, Lyrichord, Musical Heritage Society, Bridge, National Public Radio and BBC, as well as a debut solo CD on the Titanic label of lute music by Silvius Leopold Weiss.

Lisa Terry enjoys an active career as a viola da gambist and baroque cellist. She performs regularly with Concert Royal, Parthenia, New York Consort of Viols, Dryden Ensemble, Four Nations, and Grande Bande, in addition to ARTEK. She is a founding member of the viol consort Oriana. Currently she is on the music faculty of Columbia University.

Gwendolyn Toth is recognized as one of America's leading early music conductors and keyboard performers. She has won prizes in the Magnum Opus Harpsichord competition and in American Guild of Organist competitions, and she was selected as an "Outstanding Young Conductor" by Opera News in 1989. She has been heard in concert throughout North America, Europe, and the Far East, and on radio networks in Holland, Germany, France, and America's National Public Radio. Currently she is preparing a recording of solo organ works of Heinrich Scheidemann, recorded on the meantone organ in Zeerijp, Holland.

#### Words and Translations

1. Aria di passacaglia Primo libro d'arie musicali per cantarsi (Florence, 1630)

Così mi disprezzate?

Così voi mi burlate?

Tempo verra ch'Amore

Fara di vostro core  
Quel, che fate del mio  
Non piu parole, addio.  
Datemi pur martiri,  
Burlate miei sospiri,  
Negate mi mercede,  
Oltraggiate mia fede,  
Ch'in voi vedrete poi  
Quel che mi fate voi.  
Belta sempre non regna,  
E s'ella pur v'insegna  
A dispreggiar mia fe,  
Che s'oggi m'ancidete,  
Credete pur a me,  
Doman vi pentirete.  
Non nego gia ch'in voi  
Amor ha I pregi suoi,  
Ma so ch'il tempo cassa  
Belta, che fugge e passa,  
Se non volete amare,  
Io non voglio penare.  
Il vostro biondo  
crine,  
Le guance purpurine,  
Veloci piu che

maggio  
Tosto faran passaggio,

Prezzategli pur voi,

Ch'io ridero ben  
poi.

#### ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Do you despise me so much?

Do you find me so laughable?

A time will come when Love

will make of your heart

what you have made of mine.

Enough said: good-bye.

Yet do, do cause me pain,

Do mock my sad sighs,

Deny my compassion,

be false to my fidelity;

for then you will see in yourself

What you have done to me.

Beauty does not reign forever,

and although it may teach you

to despise my devotion,

do believe me:

if you torment me today,

tomorrow you will repent.

I don't deny that in you

Love has lodged its best excellences;  
but I know that time shatters  
beauty, which passes, which vanishes;  
if you will not love,  
I will not struggle.  
Your blond hair,  
your rosy cheeks  
will vanish more quickly than springtime;  
soon they will be gone –  
relish them now,  
and later on I'll have my laughs.

2. Toccata Il primo libro delle canzone (Rome, 1628)

3. Odi quell rosignuolo Le Musiche...libro IV (Venice, 1621)

Odi quell rosignuolo che dolcemente canta  
E che forse ti credi  
Che gli dia tanto spirto e tanta voce  
In si picciola  
favil  
E che gl'insegni spira e musico suono;  
Hor lunghissimo, hor tronco,  
Hora raccolto, hor sparso,  
Odi come gl'accenti, hora promote, hor gli nega,  
Hor gl'intreccia, hor gli lega, hor gli, discioglie.



Mormora seco al quanto e  
spiega,  
Poi repente il canto,

Hor chiaro, hor pieno,

Hor grave, hora sottile, hor molle,

Hor l'inalza, hor li cade,

Hor la sostiene, hor al spiega, hor la vibra,

Hor l'inaspra, hor la temprà, hor  
l'ammolise.

E il maestro e solo Amore.

Io vidi in terra (Petrarch) Musiche (Venice, 1615)

Io vidi in terra angelici costume

E celesti bellezze al mondo  
sole

Tal che di rememrar mi giova e dole

Che quanto io miro par sogni, ombre, e fumi;

E vidi lagrimar que' due bei lumi

Ch'an fatto mille volte invidia al sole

Et udi sospirando dir parole

Che faran gir i monti e star i  
fiumi.

Amor, Senno, Valor, Pietate e Doglia

Facean piangendo un piu dolce  
concento

D'ogni altro che nel mondo udir si soglia

Ed era il Ciel a l'armonia si intent

Tanta dolcezza havea pien l'aere e'l  
vento.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Listen to the nightingale who sings so sweetly,  
and who, perhaps you may think,  
gives him so much spirit and voice  
in such little sparks  
and teaches him musical expression and sound-  
now long, now short;  
now gathered, now dispersed.

Hear his accents-now he promises them, then  
denies them;

now he intertwines them, then binds them,  
then dissolves them.

He murmurs to himself a while and then takes flight

and suddenly breaks out in song

now light, now full,

now solemn , now subtle, now soft;

now he raises it, now he lets it fall;

now he sustains it, now he shows it off,

then lets it vibrate;

Now he sharpens it, now he tempers it,

then softens it.

And his master is Love alone.

I have seen on earth

angelic habits and celestial beauties unique in this world

which gladden and pain my memory in  
so much that all else I look at seems like dreams, shadows and smoke;

and I have seen tears from those two

beautiful eyes

that have made the sun envious a

thousand times.

And I have heard sighing words that were

so moving

That they would displace mountains and

hold back floods.

Love, Wisdom, Courage, Pity and Pain

joined, weeping, in a sweeter concert

than any that has been heard in the world;

and Heaven was so intent upon this harmony

that not a leaf could be seen moving in the

branches

so full of sweetness was the air and the breeze.

5. Toccata per liuto Il primo libro delle canzone (Rome, 1628)

6. Lettera amorosa Libro VII di madrigal (Venice, 1619)

Se I languid miei sguardi,

Se I sospir interotti,

Se le tronche parole non han sin hor potuto,

O bel idolo mio,

Farvi della mia fiamma intera fede,  
Leggete queste note,  
Credete a questa carta in cui  
Sotto forma d'inchostro il cor  
stillai  
Qui sotto scorgerete quell'interni pensieri  
Che con passi d'amore scoron l'anima mia,  
Anzi avvampar vedrete come in sua propria sfera  
Nelle vostre bellezze il foco mio.  
Non e gia parto in voi che con forza  
Invisibile d'amore tutto a se non mi tragga,  
Altro gia non son io che di vostra belta  
A voi mi volgo, o chiome,  
Cari mieri lacci d'oro  
Deh! come mai potea scamper sicuro  
Se come lacci l'anima  
legaste,  
Com'oro la compraste?  
Voi pur, voi dunque sete della mia liberta  
Catene e  
prezzo.  
Stami miei preziosi bionde fila divine  
Con voi l'eterna parca sovra il fuso fatal  
Mia vita torce.  
Voi capelli d'oro, voi pur sete di lei  
Che tutto foco mio raggi e  
faville.  
Ma, se faville sete onde avvien ch'ad agn'ora

Contro l'uso del foco in giù  
scendete?

Ah ch'a voi per salir scender conviene

Ch'a la maggior celeste ov'aspirate,

O sfera degli ardori, o paradise  
e

Posto in quel bel viso.

Cara mia selva  
d'oro,  
Ricchissimi capelli

In voi quel labirinto amor  
intese  
Ond'uscir non sapra l'anima mia

Tronchi pur morte i rami del prezioso bosco

E della fragil carne scuota pur lo mio spirto,

Che tra fronde si belle anco reciso

Rimarro prigioniero fatto gelida polve

Ed ombra ignuda.

Dolcissimi legami, belle mie piogge  
d'oro,

Qual hor sciolte cadete da quelle ricche nubi

Onde raccolte sete e cadendo formate

Preziose procelle,

Onde con onde d'or bagnando andate

Scogli di latte e rive d'alabastro

More subitamente

O miracolo eterno d'amoroso desio

Fra si belle tempest arsi il cor mio

Ma gia l'ora m'invita, o degli affetti miei  
Nunzia fedele, cara cart'amorosa che dalla  
Penna ti dividi omai.  
Vanne! e s'amor e'l cielo cortese ti  
Concede che da begl'occhi non t'accende  
Il raggio, ricovra entro il bel seno  
Chi sa che tu non gionga da si felice loco  
Per sentieri di neve a un cor di foco

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

If my languid looks,  
if my faltering sighs,  
if my broken words haven't yet been able,  
oh beautiful, adored one,  
to convince you of the flame of my love,  
read this note:  
believe this letter which  
I wrote with the drops of my heart's blood.  
Here perceive those internal thoughts  
which with steps of love run through my soul;  
and you'll even see how my ardor in its  
own sphere burns from your loveliness.  
Not only does the invisible force of love

draw me to you;  
before your beauty I am none other than  
your victim and trophy.  
to you I wish to turn, oh tresses,  
my dear chains of gold;  
ah! could I be safe,  
if like chains you bound my soul  
and like gold you bought it?  
You are, therefore, of my liberty  
both the chains and the price.  
My precious blond divine threads  
around the fatal spindle:  
eternal fate has wound my life with you.  
You, golden tresses, are her sparks  
which have ignited all my fire.  
But if you are sparks, why do you fall downwards  
and not ascend like fire?  
Ah, in order to ascend you must first fall,  
to aspire to the highest skies,  
to the orb of love, to paradise, the destination:  
your beautiful face.  
Oh dear forests of gold,  
richest locks of hair from whose labyrinth  
my soul knows no exit;

only death can burst the borders of this precious  
wood and stir my spirit from the frail body,  
that among such gorgeous branches  
I shall remain a prisoner until transformed to  
cold dust and naked shade.

Sweetest bonds, beautiful showers of gold,  
which now untied fall from those rich clouds  
where you are gathered, and, falling, form  
precious storms;

wave upon golden wave you drench  
smooth milky rocks and shores of alabaster.

It dies suddenly,  
oh eternal miracle of amorous desire,  
among such beautiful tempests my heart burned.

But now the hour invites, oh faithful herald  
of my affections, dear love letter,  
that you should part from my pen.

now go, and if love and heaven consent to keep  
spite from rising to her eyes,  
then, find shelter in her breast;  
who knows, you may reach, from that happy place,  
Through snowy paths, a heart of fire.

7. Cantata a voce sola sopra il passacaglio Cantade...libro second, parte primo (Venice, 1633)



Usurpator tiranno  
Della tua liberta  
sia Lilla altrui  
che da gl'imperi sui  
non riceve il mio amor  
perdita o danno.  
Faccia'l geloso amante  
che non t'oda ben mio  
che non ti miri.  
Saranno i miei sospiri  
a suo dispetto  
d'amator costante.  
Procuri pur ch'io sia  
esule dal tuo affetto  
che non fara  
e dal tuo core,  
d'amore  
abandoni gia mai  
l'anima mia.  
Disdegno in fra gl'ardori  
armi la voce  
a stratii miei rivolto;  
non potra far il stolto,  
che se ben tu non m'ami  
io non t'adori.

Ma che val ch' il rival  
non mi possa impeder  
ch' io non ti brami,  
se per far ch' io no ami  
l' adorar giova  
poco amar non vale.  
Meta de tuoi diletta  
fatto e novo amator  
vago e felice  
a cui concede e lice  
il tuo voler del cor  
gl' ultimi accenti.  
Seguane cio che vuole;  
adorer com' adurai  
il tuo nome,  
le luce tue, le chiome  
saranno del mio cor  
catena e sole.  
Sii pur Lilla crudele  
tenti per tormentarmi  
angosce e affanni  
non mi daranno gl' anni  
altro titolo mai  
che di fedele.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Tyrannous usurper

Of your freedom let Lilla be another's

By his command unable to receive my proffered love.

Let him be the

Jealous lover

and prevent me from

hearing

or seeing you.

My sighs shall be

despite him,

the sighs of a

constant lover.

Let him arrange

therefore

that I be exiled from

your affections,

and from your heart

will my soul

by love.

Disdain within

desire

let him arm his

voice;

against my  
suffering  
he shall not play the  
proud one  
if you didn't love me  
I wouldn't adore you.  
But what does it  
Matter?  
The rival cannot keep me  
From adoring you.  
He tries to keep me  
from loving,  
but it is not  
worthy enough to enjoy  
Loving but little.  
The goal of your beauty  
if made for a new love  
loving and pleasing  
to whom you may concede  
from the will of your heart  
your final word.  
Follow what may,  
I shall adore your name;  
as I have adored your name,

Your eyes, your hair  
Shall be the sunlight and chains of my heart.  
So, Lilla be cruel;  
try and torment me  
with anguish and suffering;  
the years will not give me  
any other title but that of  
a faithful lover.

8. Pianto della Madonna Selva morale e spiritual (Venice, 1640)

Iam moriar mi fili  
Quis nam poterit matrem consolare  
In hoc fero dolore  
In hoc tam duro tormento.  
Iam moriar mi fili.  
Mi Jesu, O Jesu mi sponse,  
Dilecte mi, mea spes, mea vita,  
Me deferis heu vulnus cordis mei.  
Respice Jesu mi, precor,  
Respice matrem tuam quae gemendo pro te  
Pallidas languet atque in morte funesto  
In hac tam dura et tam immani cruce  
Tecum petit affigi.

Mi Jesu, o potens homo, o Deus,  
En inspectoris heu tanti doloris  
Quo torquetur Maria Miserere gementis  
Tecum quae extinta sit quae per te vixit.  
Sed promptus ex hac vita discedis o mi fili,  
Et ego hic ploro.  
Tu confringes infernum hoste victo superbo  
Et ego relinquer preda doloris solitaria et mesta.  
  
Te Pater almus, te que fons amoris  
Suscipiant laeti  
Et ego te non videbo o Pater, o mi sponse.  
  
Haec sunt promissae Arcangeli Gabrielis  
  
Haec illa excels sedes antique patris David,  
Sunt haec regalia certa quae tibi cingant crines  
Haec ne sunt aurea scepra  
Et fine regnum affigi duro ligno  
  
Et clavis laniari atque corona.  
Ah, Jesu mi en mihi dulce mori  
Ecce plorando, ecce clamando rogat  
Te misera Maria  
Nam tecum mori est ille gloria et vita.  
Heu fili non respondes,

Heu surdus es ad flectus atque querelas.  
O mors, o culpa, o inferno  
Esse sponsus meus mersus in undis velox,  
  
O terrae centrum aperite profundum  
Et cum dilecto meo me quoque absconde.  
Quid loquor? Heu quid spero misera?  
O Jesu mi, non sit quid volo  
Sed fiat quod tibi placet,  
Vivat maestrum cor meum pleno dolore  
Pascere fili mi Matris amore.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Just let me die, my son.  
For who could console a mother  
In this cruel pain,  
In such harsh torment?  
Just let me die,  
My son.  
My Jesus, oh  
Jesus my bridegroom,  
My beloved, my hope,  
My life  
You inflict a wound, alas, in my heart.  
Look down upon  
Your mother, who lamenting you

Withers wanly, and begs to  
Be joined with you  
In woeful death,  
On this so stern and  
so immense a cross.  
My Jesus, oh powerful incarnate Lord,  
Behold! Have mercy on  
Such overt anguish  
As that which tortures Mary,  
Who groans with you,  
Who would die for you, who lived for you  
Resolute, you will part with this life,  
Oh my son,  
And this I bewail.  
You will break into pieces  
Hell itself, defeated  
Insolent enemy,  
And I am seft behind,  
Overtaken with grief,  
Alone and dejected.  
The gentle Father and the blessed ones  
Will receive you as the Father of love  
And I will not see you again, Oh Father,  
My bridegroom.



These are the things promised by the Archangel Gabriel,  
The exalted throne of the  
Ancient house of David,  
The royal garland  
That should crown your head;  
These are not the golden scepters,  
And the royal power is in the  
end affixed to the  
hardwood, with mangling nails and crown.  
Ah, my Jesus, behold, how  
Sweet it would be for me to die.  
Behold how, weeping and crying aloud,  
woeful Mary appeals to you,  
for to die with you would be  
her pride and life.  
Alas, my Son, you do not answer,  
Alas, you are deaf to my weeping  
And my grievance.  
Oh death, oh sin, oh Hell!  
Let my bridegroom be swiftly immersed  
In the waters;  
Oh, open the deep abyss  
At the center of the Earth  
And conceal me together with my beloved.

What do I say? Alas, wretched  
Me, what do I hope?  
Oh my Jesus, let it be  
Not as I wish  
But be according to Thy will;  
My grieving heart will live on,  
Full of sorrow to nourish my Son with  
The love of a Mother.

9. La Madalena ricorre all lagrime (Ubaldo) Dialoghi, e sonetti (Rome, 1638)

Lagrime amare all'anima che langue  
Soccorrete pietose il dente rio  
Gia v'impresse d'inferno if crude langue  
E mortifera piaga ohime v'aprio.  
Ben vuol sanarla il Redentore esangue  
Ma indarno sparso il pretioso rio  
Sara per lei di quell beato sangue  
Senza il doglioso humor del pianto mio.  
Su dunque amare lagrime correte  
A gl'occhi ognor da questo cor pentito  
Versate pur, che di voi sole ho sete.  
Se tanto il liquor vostro e in Ciel gradito  
Diro di voi che voi quell' acque sete  
Ch'uscir col sangue da Giesu ferito.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Tears, bitter to the languishing soul,  
And me in pity, for with harsh fang  
The cruel asp of Hell  
Already has bitten,  
And alas has opened a mortal wound.  
The bleeding Redeemer  
Would heal it,  
But in vain would the precious  
flow of that blessed blood be shed for you  
Without sadness of my grief.  
Oh then, bitter tears flow  
To my eyes from  
Repentant heart,  
Pour out then, for I thirst  
For you alone.  
And if your liquid is so  
Pleasing to Heaven  
Then I will say of you that  
Yours are those waters that flowed  
With the blood of Jesus.

10. – 13. Ricercar (Bologna, 1689)

14. Rimbombava d'intorno (Apolloni) (ms. second half of 17<sup>th</sup> century)

Niobe, queen of Thebes, was the daughter of Tantalus and wife of the famous musician Amphion, with whom she had fourteen children – seven sons and seven daughters. Excessively proud of her offspring, she one day called off the festival honoring Latona, divine mother to Apollo and Diana, claiming that she had as much right to be celebrated as the goddess. Latona's children retaliated by killing Niobe's sons one by one as they were sporting. When Niobe still refused to be repentant, eve after her husband had killed himself in grief, her daughters were in turn murdered by the darts of Apollo and Diana. Finally her sorrow turned her to stone. – Drew Minter

Recitative

Rimbombava d'intorno

al suon di mille trombe

per la reggia di Tebe eco guerriera.

Di Niobe e d'Anfion la prole altera

gia matura d'orgoglio,

e d'anni acerba,

minicciava superb fuor

delle regie porte

sovr'alati corsier battaglia e morte.

In folgorante soglio

cinta di regi'amanti,

de' figli trionfanti

a dispetto del ciel Niobe godea,

quando l'invita dea,

sorella al re del lume,

per vendicar l'offese

d'un oltraggiato nume,

chiusa da fosco e nubiloso velo,

non scese, no:  
precipito dal cielo.  
Vibro dall'arc eterno strali di morte,  
e tutti con saette improvise  
del impero di Tebe i figli uccise.  
Disperato Anfion  
Col proprio ferro sanguinosa  
l'uscita all'alma aperse;  
quindi Niobe converse,  
piu per forza del duolo  
che per opra del ciel,  
le membra in sasso.  
Ma pria che l'alma a volo  
abbandonasse l'impetrato seno,  
sciolte le bionde trecchie e l'auree  
bande,  
  
tutta rabbia e veleno  
quest'al ciel fulmino bestemmie orrende.  
Aria  
Falsi numi d'Olimpo, havete vinto!  
Ecco in breve recinto  
Del mio sangue real l'empio macelo;  
Ecco privo d'avello  
Il monarca di Tebe a terra estinto.

Falsi numi d'Olimpo, havete vinto!

Recitative

Dimmi, dimmi, iniquo tonante,  
barbara deita, nume bugiardo,  
idolo senza legge e senza fede,  
qual riposo, qual sede  
dopo cotanti mali sperar ponno i mortali,  
se dal senato eterno si mandan regi  
a popolar l'inferno?

Anima d'Anfione, che disperato intanto  
alla spoglia real anco t'aggiri,  
contro i rapidi giri delle nemiche sfere  
sprona de figli tuoi l'anime altieri  
e trionfante a questa reggia  
in via catenata Giunone  
o Giove avvinto.

Aria reprise

Falsi numi d'Olimpo...

Recitative

Anfione adorato  
ch'al suon dell'auree corde  
desti il senso all'rupi immote e sorde,  
torna, rendilo a me cui l'empio fato  
forma di pietra il seno!

Deh, ti commove almeno trafitti  
Rimirare a un tempo solo quei dal ciel,  
te dal ferro, e me dal duolo.  
Voltate, hor qui volate  
Dalla citta del pianto anime tormentate,  
e rimirando queste,  
dite se mai vedeste  
nel regno de' tormenti  
tragedie piu dolente e piu funeste!  
Aria  
O voi dell'Erebo, Erinni squallide,  
con ombre pallid velate il sol!  
Vinta, vinta dal duol,  
Niobe implacabile piu miserabile,  
la morte impietra.  
Tebe, figli, Anfione,  
io son di pietra.  
Misera Niobe, colma d'ingiurie  
Piu delle furie tormenti havro.  
Mio cor spero scettro piu nobile,  
hor fatta immobile,  
qui fermo il passo.  
Tebe, figli, Anfione,  
io son di sasso.

Recitative

Volea piu dir,

Ma intanto si congelaro

i sensi entro le labia

e nell'arida sabbia

resto donna impietrata:

senza spirit, senz'alm, e senza vita.

Arioso

Con mortal castigo

acerbo l'empio fasto

e'l cor superbo d'una reina

ancor Giove riprende.

Cosi punisce it ciel

chi il cielo offende.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

RECITATIVE

A warring echo to the sound of a thousand

Trumpets resounded through the kingdom of Thebes.

The offspring of Niobe and Amphion

Full pride, yet young in years,

Riding winged steeds outside the royal gates,

Haughtily threatened death and destruction

Seated on a radiant throne and surrounded by her royal court

And her triumphant offspring,



Niobe presided in defiance of Heaven  
When the invincible goddess (sister of the King of Light)  
In order to avenge the injuries of an offended god,  
enclosed in a dark and cloudy veil, did not descend,  
but fell from the sky.  
She shot lethal darts from the eternal bow,  
And with sudden arrows killed the heirs to the Empire of Thebes.  
In despair,  
Amphion opened with his own weapon  
a bloody wound to release his soul;  
whereupon Niobe more through force of grief  
than the will of Heaven turned her limbs stone.  
Before her soul took flight from her stony bosom,  
Her blond tresses and golden headband all in disarray,  
All rage and venom she hurled horrible blasphemies at Heaven.

#### ARIA

False gods of Olympus, you have won!  
Behold the pitiless slaughter of my royal house;  
Behold the Theban monarch, tombless, dead upon the ground.  
False gods of Olympus, you have have won!

#### RECITATIVE

Tell me, unjust thunderer, barbarous deity,  
deceitful god, lawless, faithless idol, what restful place  
What can mortals hope for after such misfortunes,

When sovereigns are sent by eternal tribune to populate Hell?  
Soul of Amphion, in despair still circling the royal remains,  
Arouse the proud souls of your offspring against  
The gyrations of the hostile sheres,  
And send in triumph to this realm Juno in chains  
Or vanquished love.

ARIA REPRISE

False gods of Olympus...

RECETATIVE

Beloved Amphion  
who by sounding the golden strings  
gave feeling to the motionless mute rocks,  
return to me, for a cruel fate turns my breast to stone!  
Alas, be moved by at least the sight of thoses pierced by Heaven,  
You yourself by steel, and me by grief  
Fly away now from the city of tears, tortured souls,  
and beholding this declare whether even were seen in the realms  
of torment  
sadder and more grievous sights!

ARIA

Oh you, grim furies of Hell,  
Veil the sun vanquished by grief, inconsolable Niobe  
Is made more wretched through being turned to stone  
In death.

Thebes, children, Amphion,

I am of rock.

Wretched Niobe, overflowing with grief,

Shall have more torments than the Furies.

My heart hoped for a more noble scepter,

Now I am held fast, my footsteps stop here.

Thebes, children, Amphion,

I am of rock.

RECITATIVE

She would say more, but her senses had congealed

Within her lips and in the arid sand she remained

A woman of stone:

Without spirit, soul, or life.

ARIOSO

A deadly punishment

On the wicked pomp and arrogant heart of a queen

Is again imposed by Jove.

So does Heaven punish those who offend Heaven.

CREDITS:

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Italian harpsichord & organ courtesy of Edward Brewer

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