CIRCA 1500

Emily Van Evera, soprano
Nancy Hadden, flute
Erin Headley, viola da gamba, lute
Christopher Wilson, lute, guitar
Robert Meunier, lute

CIRCA 1500 is a mixed consort devoted, as its name suggests, to performing the music of the Renaissance, especially that of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The members of CIRCA 1500 are all specialists in the field of early music. Their individual knowledge and performing experience has enabled the group to develop a polished and exuberant style which is based on a study of historical sources and instruments. Since the group began in 1982 they have been active as a touring and recording ensemble, with numerous engagements in Europe and North America.

© 1984 Chandos Records Ltd.
© 1984 Chandos Records Ltd.
CHANDOS RECORDS LTD, LONDON, ENGLAND
Printed and made in West Germany: Imprimé en Allemagne
The Compact Disc Digital Audio System offers the best possible sound reproduction - on a small, convenient sound-carrier unit. The Compact Disc's superior performance is the result of laser-optical scanning combined with digital playback, and is independent of the technology used in making the original recording. This recording technology is identified on the back cover by a three-letter code.

DDD = digital tape recorder used during session recording, mixing and mastering (transcription).

ADD = analogue tape recorder used during session recording, digital tape recorder used during subsequent mixing and mastering (transcription).

AAD = analogue tape recorder used during session recording and subsequent mixing and mastering (transcription).

In storing and handling the Compact Disc, you should apply the same care as with conventional records. No further cleaning will be necessary if the Compact Disc is always held by the edge and is replaced in the case directly after playing. Should the Compact Disc become soiled by fingerprints, dust or dirt, it can be wiped (always in a straight line from centre to edge) with a clean lint-free, soft, dry cloth. No solvent or abrasive cleaner should ever be used on the disc.

If you follow these suggestions, the Compact Disc will provide a lifetime of pure listening enjoyment.

WARNING: Copyright subsists in all recordings issued under this label. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom, licences for the sale of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd., 33-34 obert Street, London W1X 8AB.

Recording Producer: Kevin Couzens, Sound Engineer: Ralph Coulson, Mixing Engineer: Bill Todd


Sound Design: Master Studio London, Pressed and made in West Germany - Import on Attacassa.

The arrival in 1490 of Isabella d'Este (1474-1539) at the court of Mantua as the bride of Francesco Gonzaga (1466-1519) marked the awakening of a new era in Italian music. Whereas the musical life at Mantua and other courts of northern Italy had previously reflected the prevailing taste for Franco-Flemish music, Isabella commissioned both poetry and music by native Italians, resulting in a musical idiom whose roots lay in the popular performing practice of declaiming poetry to the accompaniment of a lute, guitar or vielle. The poetic and musical life created by her patronage furnished the development of the madrigal, a genre of Italian song that flourished during the decades either side of 1500. The musical developments at Mantua spread to other courts, and those composers and performers who evolved in the new style were much sought after throughout the north of Italy.

Mochetto Cara and Bartolomeo Tromboncino, two of the most highly esteemed musicians of their day, are known to us as the outstanding composers of frottola. Tromboncino (c.1470-c.1535) was the most prolific of the frottola composers. He was in service at Mantua from 1491 until sometime between 1502 and 1506, travelling often to other courts. He was greatly valued by Isabella and Francesco, in spite of his stormy nature. His most notorious act was that of murdering his wife, Amalia, with great cruelty, for having found her at home alone in a room with Zanamaria de' Tronzo, another woman to which Isabella responded by importing Francesco to have mercy. He fled Mantua at least twice without permission. After one such flight in 1501, Francesco wrote angrily that Tromboncino had left despite having been given much and having been given much more favours, liberties than any other of our courtiers'. Yet they chose to overlook such offences, perhaps because of Tromboncino's invaluable contribution to the musical life — and thereby the prestige — of the Mantuan court. He entertained the service of Lucrezia Borgia at Ferrara in 1506, where he remained until his death in 1513, after which little is known of him. His epitaph contains the following lines:

A LAUDES VIGENTIS IMPERATORUM

UT MANTUAE IMPERATORUM

TENEBRAS CLARENTIAM

UT LUX UMBRAS NOSTRAS
“Who will now sing to us with a divine voice?  
Who will compose with such celestial notes?  
Who will play with such a sonorous lira?”

Marchetto Cara (1465-1525) “following in the footsteps of Josquin, taught the world how to compose music.” Cara enjoyed a long and stable career at Mantua, beginning his service there in 1494 and remaining throughout his life. In addition to his responsibilities as maestro di cappella, he performed as a singer and harpist at courts throughout the north of Italy, often with his wife, the singer Giovanna Moreschi. We learn something of Cara’s musical nature in a passage from Baldassare Castiglione’s Il Cortegiano (1528):

“Consider music, the harmonies of which are now solemn and slow, now very fast and novel in mood and manner. And yet all are good pleasure, although for different reasons, as is seen in Bidone’s manner of singing which is so full of artifice, so quick, vehement, impassioned and has such various melodies that the spirits of his listeners are stirred and catch fire, and are so entranced that they seem to be lifted upwards to heaven. No less moving in his singing is our Marchetto Cara, only with a softer harmony, for in a manner serene and full of pleasant sweetness he touches and enters our souls, gently impressing a delightful passion upon them.”

The music of the floridists reflected the aims of contemporary humanism in its attentiveness to poetic form and rhythm. It was believed that the classical Greeks had attained a perfect unity of poetry and music, and thus the Italians also sought to achieve. Of the Italian poetic forms set to music the ballata was most favored, and other forms included the strophon, ada, cappello, sonnet and canzona. The poetry ranges from Petrarch’s inspired and exquisite verse to delicately fashioned and numerous texts and songs among the laudi. Lauds were composed to devotional texts, often in Latin, sung on feast days or as part of religious plays.

The origins of the two anonymous vocal works, each highly distinctive, can only be speculated upon. Se mi piace piangere is unique in both musical style and subject. A dramatic evocation of the passion of Christ, it may have been sung as part of a sacred play. Chiude il mio cor, however, is one of four pieces printed in Petrarch’s Italia, Libro Sesto (1505) which are striking for their highly melismatic vocal lines and cadential dissonances. The two are set by the renowned poet-improviser Leonardo Guinizzelli (c.1383-1446) and Chiude il mio cor by the composer, perhaps, the same artist...

The rise of the florid style was due in large part to the enterprising efforts of the Venetian publisher Ottaviano Petrucci. His first book of florid music was offered to the public in 1504, followed by nine more books in rapid succession until 1514. Royal publishers in Rome, Siena and Naples followed Petrucci’s lead with fifteen collections of florid music written between 1510 and 1513, spreading the wealth of new music to all parts of Italy.

The variety of instrumentation represented in pictorial and musical sources suggests that the florid style was popular in many different ways. Petrucci published arrangements for voice and lute (1509, 1511, 1520) and arrangements for solo keyboard and for lute were also published. Mixed consorts of two lutes, bowed strings and recorders were often depicted in Italian paintings of the period, and accounts of musical evenings at the fama di Cornaro palaces affirm that the Italians enjoyed a wide spectrum of instrumental combinations, ranging from solo singing accompanied by a single lute or lira da braccio to consorts, both lute and mixed of violins and strings. Of special interest on this recording is the use of the lira, a larger relative of the seven-stringed lira da braccio. The lira is distinguished from the lira da braccio not only by its larger size but also by its greater number of strings and unique tuning which allows the bowing of full sustained chords. The lira is accompanied by a lute which the post-improviser Andrea Magisteri described in a letter to Francesco Gonsalvi in 1505:

“With my modest ability I am introducing a new, unheard and unknown method of playing with a new and unknown type of...”
RENAISSANCE MUSIC
from the Courts of Mantua and Ferrara

Mal un muta per effecto

Niente, niente per effecto;
El suo proprio naturale.
Non ha ragione per più male.
Ogni suo modo e suo dispetto.

Mal un muta per effecto
El suo proprio naturale.
Ogni suo modo e suo dispetto.
Niente, niente per effecto;
El suo proprio naturale.

Muterino

La storia di Polifemo

Niente, niente per effecto;
El suo proprio naturale.

Muterino

La storia di Polifemo

Niente, niente per effecto;
El suo proprio naturale.

Muterino

La storia di Polifemo

Niente, niente per effecto;
El suo proprio naturale.

Muterino

La storia di Polifemo

Niente, niente per effecto;
El suo proprio naturale.

Muterino

La storia di Polifemo

Niente, niente per effecto;
El suo proprio naturale.
Vale diva, vale in pace

A pig lives in a nasty
And that is in proper place.
I am always gone in the rain
Despite Thomas' changing face.
One cannot smile...

Mille preve la gia fiacar smu

In conio d'amor ver pura

Luna che ti pensa mio

Per volta che ci riviva,

E nel mondo faccia diva

Del mio tuo amato amato

Ma nel mal e nel trionfo

San Pietro e in pace

Vale diva, vale in pace...

Poi che volse la mia stella

Quante volte alla dolce ombre

Duro abbono un fiato un pino

Chiuso il fiume, che speranze

Suo crudele e fata destino

Dai suoi se il martirio

Ho voluto con favore:

Che la luna ne...
**Aimè, ch'io moro**  
(Scambotto)

**Bona dies, bona sera**  
(Barzelletta)

Mentre per le oscuro valli  
Gli occhi verdi si fermarono  
Mentre i liquidi crepsi  
Oh! di mordere acerba  
Mai i tre spiriti non sospirano  
Sembra che le voci col vento  
Che fa la renaic...  

As long as birds sing  
In the shady vale  
As long as crystal streams  
Spill down the vogue  
My spirit will never live of singing  
With all my heart  
How does my little one...  

**O mia cieca e dura sorte**  
(Barzelletta)

O mia cieca e dura sorte  
Di dote semplice e buona  
Questa è mia vita  
Tristo annuncio a la mia morte.  
Pur dolaro piu infelice  
Son che abbe che viva in terra.  
La speranza che il volto aterra  
Poeti inaf,sensa non 'nhado.  
Vero è ben quel che se dice  
Che un mal va chi il malia sorte.  
O mia cieca e dura sorte...  

La canzone del tuo male  
E l'armonia al crudo senso  
Puoi sempre che non s'erde  
Servirti con fed le marmotte.  
La quale storca ha l'inde  
Il bracchiale del tuo dente.  
O mia cieca e dura sorte...  

Pare che un vecchio e grave  
Giustizia e dure seppia  
Finir voglio in piang e pene  
Come in scogliera la nave  
Ch'ei ti speri in corpo viso vivo  
Poeti inaf, senza non 'nhado  
O mia cieca e dura sorte...  

Riguardar-mi spero che venga  
Sussurri in mia cieca e dura  
Se non è sol di natura  
Morto son per troppolede  
Per me non s'erde mercade  
Per la chiuse le porte.  
O mia cieca e dura sorte...  

**O my blind and cruel fate.**  
Even exhorted by my grief  
O wretchedness that is my life.  
Sad passage of my death.  
I suffer more and am more wretched  
Than any living creature amongst us.  
I am the sea the winds down  
Because it has no shore.  
Truly as he saying goes,  
It goes ill for him upon whom fortune spares.  
O my blind and cruel fate...  

Fair and cruel love  
Are the cause of so much grief.  
For with a good heart  
And with faithful constancy I loved  
Her who cut my wings  
And banished me from every soul  
O my blind and cruel fate...  

As my life is hard and bitter  
Such will be my death.  
And I must end in tears and torment  
As a ship that is wrecked upon a rock  
When every beam is broken  
Because it will not yield.  
O my blind and cruel fate...  

Take heed of ill you catch a word  
These words upon my heartbreast.  
For I have left the world  
And died for love  
For me there was no pin.  
Mercy closed her doors to me  
O my blind and cruel fate...
**Dolores mortis**  (Lauda)

**Virgine bella**  (Lauda)

**Ostinato vo' seguire**  (Barzelletta)

**Chii dice non l'amare**  (Barzelletta)
Se mai per maraviglia
(Capitolio)

Se mai per maraviglia al mondo d’io
Al di là del pensiero, in questa gente,
A quel vero ignoto di paradiso.
Volgi gli occhi in qua, che ve presenti
Non quell’onna formata, non quel dolce
Che contemplato gli occhi de la mente.
Piangere il giorno universale dolore
Piangere l’aspra morte e il trade affanno
Se sperandi pieni si purghe il core.
Per liberar da l’antico ingrano
Pende come vedere al di sopra
E per salvar dal perpetuo aima.
Dolce canto, soave auro pegno,
Fid chiastra, la propria vita, estrin il sangue
Per cui Tad di vederlo non fu degn
Ecco che loro dimostro il volto esanque
Le chiose locente, al capo basso
Come rosa dismesa in tema lanare
Qual furon esser porto di pianger lasso
Penetrand a tal suplente e a tal morte
Seben’ haveressi tronc, un di corso
Gia la femina minacci, condit de porto
Dei finitimi piangere grondoni piange
E spirar se la brace non scisse

Hor vendut’ho la speranza
(Barzelletta)

Hor vendut’ho la speranza
Che si corre al commercio
E se tienne no cessar assai
Pasticci che gli è usanza.

Ogni mente vol ventura,
To be in questa venturato
Roma non per più cercar
In sospirato mio mercato.
Ogni desio ho pagato
E ancor credo in avanza.

Hor vendut’ho la speranza
Se col credo che ho anch’io
Pia mia secon der consenso.
De speranza compresa in tanti
D’ogni cosa era a panto
Sono il mal mio per un tardo
Più appresso che ignoranza.

Hor vendut’ho la speranza
O tormento insieme amaro
Vede sempre tu sente
De speranza grand mancato
Al consiglio non attendente
In speranza non spendere
Che di inganno è propriata.

Hor vendut’ho la speranza
Quanti falsi desioi
Buochi ch’amore parole
Dolci speron son l’occhi
De chi spera vendere sublino.
Hor ne compri mi ch’io vole
Che si per me compri osanna.

Hor vendut’ho la speranza
Every market is risky
And in this venture I was unlucky
I shall hence be more prudent
In all my other dealings.
I have paid all my debts
And I have credit to spare.
I have just sold hope...

If with that credit I still have
I should make another contract.
I shall always avouch hope
From every new agreement.
For a while it was my good luck
To have more ambition than sense.
I have just sold hope...

Olessly blind love.
You who are such
Great mariners of hope.
Now listen to my counsel.
Do not trust in hope
For its value is always false.
I have just sold hope...

Those false despairers
Mourned words and tender glances
Are negociators
For those who wish to sell
Now you can but see if you wish.
For my part, shall buy consents.
I have just sold hope...

Translations Peggy Florence, 0184, London
RENAISSANCE MUSIC
from the Courts of Mantua and Ferrara

1. Mal un muta per effetto (3:08)
2. Vale diva, vale in pace (4:35)
3. Saltarello, Baxela un tratto (0:48)
4. Bona dies, bona sera (1:10)
5. Ricercare (1:17)
6. O mia cieca e dura sorte (7:11)
7. Calata (1:55)
8. Aime, chi lo moro (3:27)
9. Poi che volse la mia stella (3:56)
10. Dolores mortis (1:39)
11. Virgine bella (4:04)
12. Se mat per maraviglia (6:34)
13. Saltarello, El marchese di Saluzzo (1:40)
14. Cantus cum sence (1:40)
15. Chui dicea non l'amare (2:58)
16. Osmato vo seguire (2:42)
17. Pavana, La cornetta (2:11)
18. Hoc vendut ho la speranza (2:57)

Marchetto Cara (1465-1525)
Bartolomeo Tromboncino (c.1470-c.1535)
Anonymous
Marchetto Cara
Francesco Spinacino (fl. c.1507)
Marchetto Cara
Anonymous
Marchetto Cara
Bartolomeo Tromboncino
Dionysius (fl. c.1508)
Bartolomeo Tromboncino
Anonymous
Marchetto Cara
Anonymous
Eustachio Romano (fl. c.1500-1525)
Anonymous
Bartolomeo Tromboncino
Anonymous
Marchetto Cara

TT = 55:10

© 1984 Chandos Records Ltd.
printed and made in West Germany / impräntet in Deutschland