

THE MUSIC OF THE
FOURTEENTH
CENTURY
VOLUME 1

Two Gentlemen of Verona

JACOPO DA BOLOGNA
GIOVANNI DA FIRENZE

THE ENSEMBLE OF THE
FOURTEENTH CENTURY



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THE ENSEMBLE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

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Alto: Margaret Arnold

Countertenors: Hartley Newnham, Ian McDonald

Tenors: Lloyd Fleming, Geoffrey Cox

Vielle: Ruth Wilkinson

Lute: John Griffiths

1-12 **Jacopo da Bologna**

13-22 **Giovanni da Firenze**

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The Ensemble of the Fourteenth Century is a collective of specialist singers and instrumentalists brought together for the Fourteenth Century Recording Project. The ensemble was initially formed around the leading Australian medieval ensemble La Romanesca, which was expanded to provide the varied instrumental and vocal combinations required by the repertoire.

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Jacopo da Bologna

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Giovanni da Firenze

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TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

When Filippo Villani wrote his account of the origins of the city of Florence and its famous citizens (*Liber de origini civitatis Florentiae et eiusdem famosus civibus*) amongst the musicians mentioned were Giovanni da Cascia (also known as Giovanni da Firenze) and Jacopo da

Bologna. He tells us that they worked under the patronage of Mastino II della Scala, the tyrant of Verona; and that they competed with each other in the composition of “madrigals and other songs of wonderful sweetness and melodies of subtle intricacy”.

Johannes de Cascia cum Mastini della Scala tiranni veronensis atria, questus gratia, frequentaret et cum magistro Jacopo bononiensi artis musice peritissimo de artis excellentia contenderet, tiranno eos muneribus irritante, mandralia plura sonosque multos et ballatas intonuit mire dulcedinis et artificiosissime melodie, in quibus quam magna et quanta doctrina fuerit in arte manifestavit. Rome, Bibl. Apostolica Vaticana, Barberino Latino 2610, fol.70v.

This collection of the works of Giovanni and Jacopo reflects the context of their music, written under the patronage of the della Scala family in Verona and the Visconti family in Milan, and exemplifies the “sweetness and intricacy” of their melodies.

Nothing is known of Italian secular polyphony before this time. The earliest manuscript source of this repertoire, the Rossi codex, now divided between the Vatican library and Ostiglia, contains music for the court of Mastino's elder brother Alberto. Most of the works in this collection are anonymous. Giovanni's *Nascoso el viso* and *La bella stella* appear in this early collection. The next manuscript in which the music survives is the Codex Panciaticiano. This is a Florentine collection, written in the last decades of the fourteenth century. The manuscript was designed as a collection of the works of the famous Florentine composer Francesco Landini; works of other composers who

could be associated with Florence in some way were also included. The performances on this record follow the readings of the Panciaticiano manuscript wherever possible. When a work appears in a significantly different version in other sources, e.g. the London manuscript, these versions are included.

The music of northern Italy in the first half of the fourteenth century frequently reflects the interests of the patron for whom it was written. There are several poems alluding to *Anna*, and a particular tree, the *perlaro*, both typical of texts associated with the della Scala family. Others contain direct references to a *Margherita* and indirect references to the Visconti family by way of heraldic devices (*Fenice fu*, *Aquila altera*). Some references are quite specific: *O in Italia* spells out the birthday of the twin sons of Luchino Visconti; *Lux purpurata* spells out his name in a latin acrostic.

Apart from this internal evidence and the passage in Villani, the most important source which helps us establish the context of this music is a cycle of sonnets by Simone Prudenzani called *Il Saporetto*. The poet gives us an idealized portrait of a Renaissance gentleman (Il Solazzo) with truly remarkable musical talents: he can sing and play the harp with great virtuosity, as well as dance and fence. These skills are displayed during evening entertainments before a cultivated audience in Orvieto. In Sonnet 25, set in the Christmas season, Il Saporetto entertains his audience by performing on a harp. On this occasion, two of the works on this recording are mentioned: *Aquila altera* and *Agnel son bianco*. The currency of these works over fifty

years after their original composition is some measure of the esteem in which Jacopo da Bologna and Giovanni da Firenze continued to be held long after their original patrons had died.

The selection of the works of the two composers has been based on two principles: the works chosen should be representative of the composers' total output, and the selection as a whole should complement existing recordings and avoid unnecessary duplication. It has been policy to perform the works as they appear in one single manuscript source, and to include any idiosyncrasies of that manuscript when these are musically significant. Scribal errors have been corrected. Where the manuscript is clear about the relation of text to music, then the manuscript has been followed in preference to modern editions; where the manuscript is unclear, then clarity of musical declamation and phrasing has determined the placing of syllables. For the most part the works are performed as the manuscript suggests: i.e., when a part is texted, it has been sung. When a part has no text and this has been considered to be of musical significance, the untexted part has been played on an instrument chosen from the documented instrumentarium of the day -- usually vielle, psaltery or lute.

Musica ficta, the unwritten code of pitch inflection so familiar to trained mediaeval singers and so elusive to the modern performer and editor, has been added according to written theory contemporary with the repertoire. The two authorities most relevant to the music of fourteenth-century Italy are Marchetto da Padova and Prosdocimus de Beldamandis. The

principles they suggest are not always clear in practice: there are often many possible ways of interpreting a particular passage. The performances on this recording often differ from the suggestions in the available modern editions. The readings presented make no pretence at being definitive, but do reflect decisions made from a range of possible valid options.

SOURCES AND EDITIONS

The principal source used in the preparation of this recording has been the manuscript *Panciaticchi 26* from the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence (facsimile reprint ed. F. Alberto Gallo, Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1981.) Readings are based from this source unless otherwise indicated in the commentary. Other sources used are: Rome, Vatican Library, Rossi 215 (fac. reprint ed. Giuseppe Vecchi, *Monumenta Lyrica Medii Aevi Italica III: Mensurabilia*, Bologna: Università degli Studi, 1966) and London, British Museum, Add. 29987 (fac. reprint ed. Gilbert Reaney, *Musicological Studies and Documents 13*, [n.p.]: American Institute of Musicology, 1965.) Transcriptions of the works recorded are found in *Italian Secular Music by Magister Piero, Giovanni da Firenze and Jacopo da Bologna*, ed. W. Thomas Marrocco, *Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century*, Vol. VI (Monaco: Editions de L'Oiseau-Lyre, 1967), and *The Music of Fourteenth Century Italy*, ed. Nino Pirrotta, *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae 8*, ([n.p.]: American Institute of Musicology, 1964). Text editions used are: G. Corsi (ed.), *Poesie Musicali del Trecento*, (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1970); G. C. Galletti (ed.), *Philippi Villani Liber de Origine Civitatis Florentiae et Eiusdem Famosis Civibus*

(Florence: 1847); and S. Debenedetti (ed.), *Il 'Sollazzo'. Contributi alla Storia della Novella, della Poesia Musicale e del Costume del Trecento* (Turin: Bocca, 1922).

THE MUSIC

Jacopo da Bologna and Giovanni da Firenze are the most prolific representatives of the first known generation of Italian polyphonic composition. Rather than merely reflecting a tradition in its infancy, the elegance and sophistication of their music exudes the confidence of already accomplished maturity. The starting point for the appreciation of their music is the poetry they set. Not only are the musical structures determined by poetic form, but the individuality of each work is directly related to the poetic imagery and content. To ignore the texts is to deny an essential part of the music; the senses are dulled by listening without participating in the literary dimension.

For this first generation, the *madrigale* was the most preferred poetic form set to music. It served as a vehicle for diverse literary themes. Twenty-nine of Jacopo's thirty-four surviving works are madrigals, as are sixteen of Giovanni's nineteen. Two-, sometimes three-tercet stanzas and a concluding couplet, or *ritornello*, constitute its form. Musical settings consisted of two corresponding sections, each repeated according to the number of tercets and the form of the *ritornello*. The most common musical setting of the madrigal was for two voices, a florid cantus and supporting tenor. A small number of works add a second cantus or contratenor. Texts were usually set to allow simultaneous declamation by both voices. Stylistic features of madrigal settings

include the melismatic extension of the first and penultimate syllables of each verse, and a change in metre to mark the transition from the tercets to the *ritornello*. The tonal centre of the works appears to be the note upon which the stanza concludes. In many cases, this is also the concluding pitch of the *ritornello*, but in numerous cases, the strongly reinforced centre of the first section is playfully avoided at the end. The increased explicitness of the *ritornello* text is subtly humoured, or made seemingly more nonchalant by the tonal digression of its musical setting.

With the exception of Jacopo's motet *Lux purpurata*, and his *lauda*, *Nel mio parlar*, the remaining pieces by both composers are *caccia*. The *caccia*, literally 'hunt', is set as a canon for two voices, normally with an accompanying tenor line, presumably intended for an instrument. The texts are graphic with frequent exclamations, and usually are set as hunting scenes, although the hunt is usually a metaphor for a hunt of love. Some *caccia* take the form of the madrigal, while others are composed more freely with irregular verses of varying length.

In the melismatic extensions of the various text lines, the stylistic individuality of the two composers is more clearly perceived than elsewhere. Jacopo's melismas are, in general terms, shorter than those by Giovanni. His texts therefore appear to achieve greater coherence in their musical setting, while Giovanni's tend to abstract the textual message. Giovanni also uses these sections to indulge in feats of technical virtuosity: he frequently includes hockets, triplets in otherwise duple passages and sequential repetition of motives.

John Stinson and John Griffiths

TEXTS, TRANSLATIONS AND COMMENTARY

JACOPO DA BOLOGNA

1 & 2. *Si chome al canto Madrigal*

1. (3-part version): Ian McDonald, Hartley Newnham (countertenors); Lloyd Fleming (tenor)

2. (2-part version): Hartley Newnham (countertenor); Lloyd Fleming (tenor)

*Sì come al canto de la bella Iguana
Obliò suo cammin più tempo el greco,
Prendendo suo piacer con forma umana,*

*Così per esser, donna, sempre teco
Faresti la mia voglia esser lontana
Da ogn' altro piacer, sendo 'l tuo meco;*

*Però che se' d'ogni virtute unita,
Tu se' perfetta gemma Margherita.*

*As, enthralled by the beautiful Circe's song,
The Greek forgot his journey for a long time,
Taking his pleasure with the nymph in her
human form,*

*In your case also, o woman. To be with you
always, my desire
Would be turned away from every other
pleasure,
If your pleasure were simply to be with me.*

*Being endowed with every virtue,
You are a perfect gemstone Pearl.*

Two versions have been recorded for this collection. The first is a three part setting

with two cantus parts and a tenor, as the work appears in the Panciatichiano manuscript. The second version is without the contratenor. The anonymous Panciatichiano scribe has added after the contratenor part the words *musica mia*, suggesting that, despite the perfect stylistic integration, the third part may not be of Jacopo's invention. A two-voiced version of the piece is also found in the London manuscript.

The text is developed from the legend of Odysseus, the Greek whose return home was delayed by the blandishments of the sorceress Circe. She is translated into contemporary terms as an *Eguana* (or *Iguana*), a name given to water nymphs in many northern Italian poems, and whose etymology is probably connected with the northern word *aigua*, 'water'. The reference to the legend becomes increasingly explicit as the poem unfolds until the poet's own Circe is revealed by clever word play. *Margherita*, 'pearl', is used simultaneously as a *senhal*, possibly a reference to an illegitimate daughter of Mastino II della Scala, or to Margherita Pusterla, a lover of Luchino Visconti, lord of Milan. Another setting of the text by Maestro Piero may indicate some form of musical or other rivalry between the two composers. Jacopo uses the same *senhal* in another madrigal, *Lucida petra, Margherita cara*.

3. *Fenice fu' Madrigal*

Margo Adelson (soprano); Hartley Newnham (countertenor)

*Fenice fu' e vissi pura e morbida,
E or sun trasmutata in una tortora*

Che volo con amor per le bele ortora.

Arbore secho [mai nè] aqua torbida
No me deleta; mai per questo dubito:
Vane la state, 'l verno ven de subito.

Tal vissi et tal me vivo e posso scrivere
Ch'a dona non è piu che onesta vivere.

Once, when a phoenix, my life was pure and
tender,
This hour transmuted to a turtledove
Who flies lovelorn through the beautiful
orchards.

I can never be pleased by a withered tree
Or muddied water. On account of these
qualms:
Summer goes, and winter comes at once.

Thus I lived and thus I live, and I can write
That nothing is better for a woman than an
honest life.

The two bird images with which this beautiful
work begins are derived from heraldic
devices associated with the della Scala and
Visconti families. The text probably refers
to the wedding of Gian Galeazzo Visconti to
Isabelle of France in 1360. This marriage of the
ambitious lords of Milan into the royal house
of France seems to have been the occasion
for Gian Galeazzo's aunt, Regina della Scala,
whose emblem was the Phoenix, to adopt
the dove, one of the emblems of her husband
Bernabò Visconti. Thus the text is advice from
an elder relative of the family to the young
French bride.

Particularly interesting in this piece is the
sophisticated inter-relationship of the two

voices. In place of the usual decorative
cantus with supporting tenor, Jacopo
enhances the texture through the use of
imitation, giving the tenor part a more equal
role in performance. It is one of the earliest
occurrences of this musical device.

4. In su bei fiori

Madrigal

Hartley Newnham (countertenor); Lloyd
Fleming (tenor)

In su' be' fiori, in su la verde fronda,
Sotto novi arboretti spessi e lunghi
Pasturella trovai, che cogliea funghi.

In panni bigi alzati a la ritonda
Per un boschetto se ne giva sola:
Chiama' la a me per dirle una parola.

Del grembo un fior che ell'avea le tolsi:
Sì fu zentil, che ma' più bel non colsi.

Among fair flowers and green foliage,
Under young saplings, thick and long,
I found a shepherdess plucking mushrooms.

Her grey homespun tucked up around her
waist,
She walked through a thicket all alone:
I called her to me to have a word with her.

I stole a flower she had in her bosom:
So delicate, I never plucked its equal in
beauty.

The attractive setting is typical of Italian
musical style of the period: simultaneous
declamation with florid extensions of the first
and penultimate syllable of each verse in the

cantus. The text belongs to the *pastorella* genre
of Provençal origin. The best known Italian
example is *In un boschetto trova' pasturella* by
Guido Cavalcanti (1255? - 1300). The overt
eroticism of the text is not uncommon in
the Italian song repertory, in contrast to the
unrequited passion that predominates in
contemporary French style.

5. Giunge 'l bel tempo de la primavera

Caccia

Margo Adelson, Cathy Cameron (sopranos).

Giunge 'l bel tempo de la primavera,
Che nov'erbette dà, fior e viole;
Cresce beato amor dov'esser vuole.

A' dolci versi d'uselletti fuora
Van donne pe' ghirland'in compagnia,
Seguendo lor amor drei tuttavia.

Ed ogni frutto del piacer germoglia,
Chè sol consiglio fan d'amar di voglia.

The lovely springtime has arrived,
Sprouting fresh grass, flowers and violets;
Love burgeons to prosper wherever it wishes.

Outdoors, amid sweet birdsong,
A company of women sallies forth for
garlands,
Pursuing their loves just the same.

And every fruit of pleasure bursts in bud,
Because their sole counsel is to love willingly.

There are strong affinities between this
madrigal and a sonnet by Matteo Frescobaldi
(1297? - 1348) *Io veggio il tempo de la primavera*;
also with some stanzas from *Il Dittamondo* (III,

xvii, 1-12) by Fazio degli Uberti (1300 - 1367?). The madrigal text is set here as a *caccia*, a canon for two unaccompanied voices without the normal supporting tenor. In the *ritornello*, the voices return to the normal manner of simultaneous declamation with some melodic cross-referencing, particularly in the melisma of the closing bars.

6. Aquila altera - Uccel di Dio - Creatura gentil Madrigal

Ian McDonald, Hartley Newnham (countertenors); Lloyd Fleming (tenor).

Aquila altera, ferma in su la vetta
De l'alta mente l'occhio valoroso,
Dove tuo vita prende suo riposo.
Là è 'l parer e là l'esser beato.

Uccel di Dio, insegna di giustizia,
Tu hai principalmente chiara gloria,
Perchè nelle grand'opre è tua vittoria.
Là vidi l'ombra e là la vera essenza.

Creatura gentil, animal degno,
Salire in alto e rimirare 'l sole.
Singularmente tuo natura vole.
Là è l'immagine e la perfezione.

Haughty eagle, turn your heroic eye
To the summit of the lofty mind [God]
Where your life takes its repose.
There the state of bliss both seems and is.

Bird of God, symbol of justice,
Your glory is prized above all,
Because your great deeds are crowned by
victory.
There you see the shadow, and there the true
essence.

Gentle creature, noble animal,
Singlemindedly your nature wants
To rise high and to contemplate the sun.
There is the image and the perfection.

The madrigal brings together the eagle as an imperial emblem (possibly on the occasion of the visit of Charles IV to the Visconti in 1355) with the complex allegory of the "bird of God" found in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The notion that the eagle could look directly at the sun is found in medieval commentaries on Chapters 9 and 26 of the Book of Job by Gregorius Magnus and Rupert von Deutz. It is explained as a symbol of the soul's aspiration towards salvation. Once more cast in the form of the madrigal, this work shows considerable individuality. Each of the three stanzas (tercet plus *ritornello*) is assigned in the manuscript to one voice. The resultant motet-like polytextuality is unique among the madrigals of this generation. The two upper parts commence with six bars of canon reminiscent of the technique of the *caccia*. In terms of narrative logic, the three simultaneously declaimed stanzas are presented above in the order of the text sung by the cantus, tenor and contratenor respectively. This interpretation is based on the contrast in the first two of the qualities of appearance and substance. These come together only when the soul is capable of rising directly to God. The opposition of *ombra*, 'shadow', and *vera essenza*, 'true substance', is found also in *Se premio di virtù*, set to music by Bartolino da Padova, expressing the concept that great deeds without virtue are but a shadow, and that the mind which attends only to appearances is turned away from its true essence.

7. O in Italia felice Liguria

Madrigal

Hartley Newnham (countertenor); Lloyd Fleming (tenor).

O in Italia felice Liguria,
E proprio tu, Milan, Dio lauda e gloria
De' dui nati signor, che'l ciel t'aguria.

Segno fo ben che fo di gran vittoria,
Ch' un' aquila li trasse a cristianesimo
E Parma a lor donò da po'el batesmo.

Un venere tra sesta [e] terza nacquero
Luca e Zuane a chi lor nome piaquero.

Quaranta sei un emme cum tri ci
Corea e fo d'agosto al quarto di.

O in Italy, happy Liguria!
And especially you, Milan, praise and glory
be to God
For your two new-born lords whom Heaven
presages.

It was a sign of great victory
That an eagle should lead them to Christianity
And afterwards Parma gave them the
baptism.

Born on a Friday between mid-morning and
noon,
Their well-found names were Luke and John.

It was 1346 (forty-six, an M with three C's)
At the time and the fourth day of August.

The birth of Luchino Visconti and Isabella Fieschi's twin sons Luchino and Giovanni in 1346 is celebrated in this madrigal. Isabella's

family came from Genoa in Liguria and is a probable explanation of why Liguria is joined to Milan in the poem. One year earlier, the Visconti had ended a victorious campaign against Pisa, which was obliged to pay 800,000 florins in tribute. Earlier in 1346, Parma had been ceded to them by the Este of Ferrara. The music is the quintessence of Jacopo's style; a madrigal joyous in conveying its message.

8 & 9. Oselletto selvagio

8. *Caccia*: Margo Adelson, Cathy Cameron (sopranos); John Griffiths (lute)

9. *Madrigal*: Margo Adelson (soprano); Hartley Newnham (countertenor)

Oselletto selvagio per stagione
Dolci versetti canta con bel modo:
Tal e tal grida forte, ch'i' non l'odo.

Per gridar forte non si canta bene,
Ma con soave'e dolce melodia
Si fa bel canto, e ciò vuol maestria.

Pochi l'hanno e tutti si fan maestri,
Fan ballate madrigal'e mottetti
Tutt'en Fioran, Filippotti e Marchetti.

Si è piena la terra di magistrolì,
Che loco più non trovano discepolì.

A woodbird in season
Sings sweet verses in elegant style:
But such and such squawk so loud I cannot
praise them.

By squawking loudly one cannot sing well,
But with sweet and charming melody
One can make a beautiful song, and this

requires mastery.

Few possess it, yet they all claim to be
masters,
Composing ballads, madrigals and motets,
They are all Florians, Filippottos and
Marchettos.

The land is so filled with little masters
That there is no room for disciples.

Two quite different settings of this madrigal survive among Jacopo's works. The first setting presented takes the form of a *caccia* whose canonic voices are accompanied by an untexted tenor. The second is in Jacopo's usual two-part madrigal style. The nature of the text suggests that it could be of his own authorship, and if not, it certainly must have been found attractive by him to have set it twice in such different guises. Particularly in the *caccia* version, the depiction of the text content is indeed graphic. A sentiment similar to that expressed in Jacopo's madrigal is found in Franco Sacchetti's poem *Ben s'affatica invan chi fa or versi*: "Some write ballads who cannot spell at all and want them to be set to music at once. The same is true of singing: I see a thousand untalented Marchettos all over the place." Like Sacchetti, Jacopo also chooses the theorist Marchettus of Padua as his point of comparison. The further references to other musicians, Florian and Filippotto, are less identifiable, but among candidates are Floriano da Rimini and Philippe de Vitry.

10. Lux purpurata - Diligite iusticiam - tenor *Motet*

Margaret Arnold (alto), Hartley Newnham (countertenor), Lloyd Fleming (tenor).

Triplum:
Lux purpurata radiis
Venti fugare tenebras,
Clementi vigens principe.

Honoris namque claritas
Ipsius toti seculo
Numen acquirit celebre
Virtutis atque gratie.

Servator rei publicae,
Virtutum cultor optimus,
Verus amator efficax,
Constans in omni studio,
Et nil permittens irritum,
Clemens et iustus dominus,
Onustus arrogantibus,
Misericors egentibus
Emittit lumen omnibus
Salutis atque premii.

Motetus:
Diligite iustitiam
Qui iudicatis machinam.
Prodesse cunctis discite,
Obesse nulli querite.
Hoc proprium est principis,
Ut sit exutum viciis.
Solicitudine presuli
Sit comes, ut pacifice
Quiescant ejus populi.

Triplum:
Light, flourishing under the rule
Of the clement prince, comes adorned
With rays to chase away darkness.

His honour and brilliance
Acquire throughout the whole age
Renowned authority
Of virtue and grace.

Saviour of the state,
The greatest cultivator of virtue,
Effective and true lover,
Constant in all study,
Enemy of all vanity,
Clement and just lord,
Hard on the arrogant,
Compassionate to the poor,
Who irradiates for all a light
Of salvation and reward.

Motetus:

Choose justice
You who judge the machine [of the state].
Learn to help all men,
Seek to harm no one.
This is worthy of a prince,
That he may be without vice.
May solicitude be
The companion of the protector,
So that his people may rest peacefully.

An event of some social significance must have motivated Jacopo to compose his only known motet, in accordance with the contemporary French custom of reserving this genre for commentary on political events. A connection with Luchino Visconti (d.1349) is confirmed by the appearance of the Latin form of his name LUCHINUS VUCE [=vice] COMES as an acrostic in the triplum text. Pirrotta has speculated that either the suspension of the papal inderdict against the Visconti in 1341, or the visit of a papal legate in 1343 may have been the occasions that prompted its composition. Texturally, the motet resembles works of French origin, although its sonorities and cadential patterns are decidedly Italian, and the freely composed tenor is more in keeping with a writer adept in the art of the *caccia*. No traces of French

isorhythm are evident. The superb passage of hocket that brings the music to its conclusion is, however, an obviously French gesture, and evidence of Italian awareness of Gallic practice.

The initial words of the motet are an adaptation of the beginning of the Book of Wisdom (1:1) *Diligite justitiam qui judicatis terram*. In Canto 18 of *Paradise*, Dante imagines this phrase to be spelled out, letter by letter, by the blessed souls of just princes who then proceed to arrange themselves in the shape of the imperial eagle. The work counsels Luchino that greatness is achieved through the pursuit of truth and the exercise of prudent justice.

11. 11. O cieco mondo

Madrigal

Margo Adelson (soprano); Hartley Newnham (countertenor).

O cieco mondo, di lusinghe pieno,
Mortal veleno in ciascun tuo diletto
Fallace, pien d'inganni e con sospetto.

Folle è colui ch'a te diriza'l freno,
Quando per men che nulla quel ben perde,
Che sopra ogn' altro amor luce e sta verde.

Però già mai di te colui non curi,
Che'l frutto vuol gustar di dolci fiori.

O blind world full of blandishments,
With deadly poison in every pleasure you offer,
False, full of deceit and suspicion;

He is a fool who turns toward you,
Thereupon losing, for less than nothing, that good
Which shines above every other love and remains green.

Thus whoever wishes to taste the fruit of sweet flowers
Ought never to care about you.

Conforming to Jacopo's most typical manner of madrigal setting, the most noteworthy musical feature of this piece of unbridled pessimism is the high level of motivic integration of the cantus line, due to some twenty-seven reiterations of a simple four-note cell over the course of the work. Fourteen of these begin on the same pitch. This device also aids the reinforcement of the D tonality of the stanza, sustained through the *ritornello* before making a sudden turn to make a final cadence on C, perhaps in keeping with the contrasting image of the *dolci fiori* and a sudden rush of optimism.

The poem has been wrongly attributed to Guido Cavalcanti. However, it shows strong affinities to various poems by Sacchetti, for example, Sonnet 27: "*O cieca età, d'ogni mal fatta erede*"; Sonnet 43: "*O mondo più che mai pien d'animali/ senza ragion, senza sensibil mente*"; and Frottola 249, "*O mondo immondo*".

12. Sotto l'imperio del possente prince

Madrigal

Margo Adelson (soprano); Hartley Newnham (countertenor).

Sotto l'imperio del possente prinze
che nel suo nom ha le dorate ale

regna la biscia il cui morso mi vinze
sì che da lei fuggir nulla mi vale.
La me persegue e 'l cor mio signoreza
poi come donna istessa si vagheza.

Come che io la miro più s'acorge,
gli occhi donneschi chiud' e via s'en fuge;
poi come serpe tossicosa porge
di fuoco fiamma che m'uccid' e struge.
L'anim' ha crudo e sí aspra la scorza
ch'amor in lei per me non ha più forza.

Costei mi fe' già lume più che 'l sole;
com più ciò mi ricordo più mi dole.

Under the dominion of the powerful prince
Whose very name has wings of gold
The she-snake rules whose bite defeats me
So that it is useless to flee from her.
She pursues me and lords it over my heart
Then, woman-like, makes herself beautiful.

As she realizes I look at her,
Her womanly eyes close and away she flees;
Then as a poisonous snake she offers
A fiery flame to blind and melt me.
So cruel her soul and so thick her skin
That her love for me loses its strength over
her.

At one time she gave me more light than the
sun;
So the more I remember, the more I am sad.

This virtuosic madrigal in three voices is one
of a series of texts comparing the woman
object of the poet's love to a snake. Similar
pieces by Jacopo are *Posando sopra un'aqua* and
Nel bel zardino che l'Atice cinge as well as *Donna
già fu* by Giovanni. It is possible that the text
of *Sotto l'imperio* is a veiled reference to the

alleged poisoning of Luchino Visconti by his
wife Isabella Fieschi, disguised by developing
it into a general reference to the fickleness
of women's love and their treachery. The
rhythmic density and rapid declamation of
the musical setting in a three-voice context is
reminiscent of the *caccia*. Jacopo also departs
from his customary technique of synchronous
text setting.

GIOVANNI DA FIRENZE

13. Più non mi curo

Madrigal

Margo Adelson (soprano); Hartley Newnham
(countertenor).

Più non mi curo della tua rampogna
Amor che lungamente m'hai beffato,
E'l bianco per lo perso dimostrato.

Onde ben mi contenta el non servire,
Poi che per te non si teme vergogna
Falso, crudel e pien d'ogni menzogna.

Così ti fida in Amor come in monico.
Credilo a me che tutto 'l dì ne romico.

No longer do I care about your rebukes,
O Love, since for so long you have ridiculed
me
And proved that black is white.

Therefore I am well satisfied to serve you no
longer,
Who taught me to be shameless, being
yourself
False, cruel and full of every deceit.

One should no more trust in Love than in a
monk.
Believe me, my mind is engrossed with it all
day.

The stylistic difference between Giovanni
and Jacopo is immediately distinguished
in this work, otherwise of a very similar
tradition the amatory madrigals of Jacopo.
These differences appear to be a product
of Giovanni's concern with melodic and
rhythmic technique. Sequence is used to
extend melismas, and distinct rhythmic
patterns distinguish each new line of text
from the preceding one. The use of three
repetitions of a tenor figure [A-G-F-G-A] to
underline the final melisma of the *ritornello* is
another unusual feature.

Within the general theme of
untrustworthiness, the association of love
and monks in the *ritornello* is less odd than
it may appear at first sight. That clergy are
often lecherous and deceitful is a common
theme of medieval anticlericalism. A trigger
for the association may be line 6, which is
similar to line 144 from Canto 23 of Dante's
Inferno: "ch'elli `e bugiardo e padre di menzogna".
There, the biblical description of the devil as
"father of all lies" (John 8:44) is associated
with hypocrites condemned to wear leaden
monks' habits.

14. O perlaro gentil

Madrigal

Ian McDonald (countertenor); Lloyd Fleming
(tenor).

O perlaro gentil, se dispogliato
Se' per l'inverno ch'ogni fior nasconde,

Nel tempo novo dolc' e 'nnamorato

Ritorneranno li fiori e le fronde,
Ma io dolente quanto più vo innanzo
Nell' amor di costei più disavanzo.

Ahi, lasso a me, non vol più ANNAmorarmi
La bianca man che pur solea toccarmi.

O gentle Persian lilac, though stripped bare
Because winter has hidden all your flowers,
Yet in the new sweet season of Love

Your flowers and your leaves will return,
But I am grieving because the more I go on
The more, in this woman's love, I lose ground.

Alas! the white hand which used to touch me
Is no longer willing to ANNimate me.

This is one of a number of madrigals mentioning the *perlaro*, an ornamental tree [*celtis australis*] growing in the Po valley and the Veneto region, as an emblem of ever-renewing love. The other related songs are *Sovra un fiume regale* and *All'ombra d'un perlaro* by Maestro Piero, Jacopo's *O dolce appress'un bel perlaro fiume*, and *Appress'un fiume chiaro* by Giovanni. The *senhal* ANNA is a common feature of all the poems in the "perlaro" cycle, and is concealed in both Giovanni's settings through modification of the verb *innamorare* "to fall in love" to *ANNAmorare*. The pungent exclamation that begins the *ritornello* shows a consciousness of affective text setting, and the stuttering "Anna, Anna, Annamorarme" of the same line makes the *senhal* patently obvious. The reading presented here is based upon the London manuscript.

15. Per larghi prati

Caccia

Hartley Newnham, Ian McDonald
(countertenors); Ruth Wilkinson (vielle).

Per larghi prati e per gran boschi folti,
Leggiadre donne e vaghe donzelle,
Vestite strette e coi capelli sciolti,
Con archi, con turcassi e con saette,
E con levrieri a man correa cacciando
Uccidendo e pigliando,
Cervi, caprioli, cinghiali e lupi,
Entrando sole ne' luoghi più cupi
Per riposarsi all'ombra.

Through broad meadows and through great
thick woods

Graceful women and pretty girls,
Dresses tight and hair loose,
With bows, with quivers and with arrows
And with greyhounds in hand ran hunting
Slaughtering and capturing
Deer, roebucks, boars and wolves,
Entering alone into the darkest hollows
To rest in the shade.

Only two *caccie* by Giovanni have been preserved. Unlike most other *caccie*, *Per larghi prati* is not in the form of a madrigal. It is through-composed, with the hunt canon ceasing for the final two lines where the text declamation becomes virtually synchronous, and where games of *hocket* predominate in the *melismas*. The text abounds with typical hunting imagery, and is set with passages of pater-like rapidity, but it is obvious that the motif of the hunt serves as a metaphor for the love pursuit.

16 & 17 Nascoso el viso

Madrigal

16. Rossi version: Ian McDonald
(countertenor); Geoffrey Cox (tenor).
17. Panciatichiano version: Margaret Arnold
(alto); Lloyd Fleming (tenor).

Nascoso el viso stava fra le fronde
D'un bel zardino: appresso a mi guardava
Sopra una fonte dove se pescava.

E vedea donne vermigliete e bionde,
Lizadre al modo che solea le Eguane
Trovarse al bosco, e quando a le fontane.

Qual era scalza e qual com' ela nacque.
Più non vol dir quanto quel di me piacque.

I stood in a beautiful garden,
The foliage hid my face, looking
Across a nearby spring where folk used to
fish.

And saw blonde and rosycheeked women
Lissom as were Eguane the nymphs
Once found in woods or sometimes in
streams.

Some were barefoot, and some as they were
born.
I am unwilling to say more of how that day
delighted me.

Manuscripts preserve three different readings of *Nascoso el viso*, a two-part madrigal that displays many of the customary devices of Giovanni's style. All versions differ at least in matters of detail of ornamentation and rhythm. Two versions are presented here; the version from the Rossi manuscript that

is marginally the least decorated, and the interesting version in the Panciatichiano manuscript that gives the entire *ritornello* a whole tone lower than the other sources. The differences of decoration support the theory that the music of this generation is elaborated upon a much simpler contrapuntal framework than is immediately obvious. Given the reliability of the Panciatichiano manuscript, there is a case for taking the apparently deviant version of the *ritornello* seriously, as a realistic alternative for performance, rather than dismissing it as a product of scribal misinterpretation. The voyeuristic text is of the same tradition as Jacopo's *In su bei fiori*, and makes reference to the same *Euguane* as *Si come al canto*.

18. Agnel son bianco

Madrigal

Hartley Newnham (countertenor); Lloyd Fleming (tenor).

Agnel son bianco, e vo' belando, bè,
E per ingiuria di capra superba
Belar convegno, e perdo un boccon d'erba.

Il danno è di colui, i' dico in fè,
Che grasso mi de' aver con lana bionda,
Se capra turba che non m'abbi tonda.

Or non so bene che di me serà,
Ma pur giusto signor men mal vorrà.

I am a white lamb and go bleating, baa!
Obliged by the insults of an overbearing goat
To bleat and lose a mouthful of grass.

His is the loss, I say in truth,
Who should have me fattened and with fair

wool,
If the goat so disturbs things that he may not
have me shorn.

Now I cannot well say what will happen,
But surely a just lord will want less
wickedness.

In the section of the lavishly decorated Squarcialupi codex dedicated to the works of Giovanni, *Agnel son bianco* takes pride of place as the first work to be presented. In the case of several other composers represented in that compilation, the opening work of each composer group appears to be selected because of some direct reference in the work to its author. Landini's *Musica son* is such a work. The madrigal may refer to a situation in Giovanni's own employment, where the composer, an undernourished but potentially high-yielding lamb is in the service of an unappreciative goat. There is an effective and conscious attempt to disguise the provocative intent beneath the humorous depiction of the lamb's bleating, achieved by a witty use of hocket.

19. O tu cara scienza

Madrigal

Ian McDonald (countertenor); Lloyd Fleming (tenor).

O tu, cara scienza mia musica,
O dolce melodia, con vaghi canti,
Che fa rinnovellar tuttor gli amanti;

E io son corda di tua consonanzia,
Che 'mmaginar solea tuo bel trovato:
Or son procuratore et avvocato.

Però ritorno a te, musica cara,
Ch'ogni atto bel d'amor da te s'appara.

O Music, dear science of mine,
O sweet melody which, through lovely songs,
Makes lovers renew again their love.

And I who, as a string in your consonance,
Used to recreate your beautiful inventiveness:
Am now your proxy and your advocate.

That's why I return to you, dear Music,
Because every fine deed of love is learned
from you.

Given the highly personal nature of the reverence and affection for music expressed in the text, it is reasonable to suppose that *O tu, cara scienza* was written by the composer himself, as is the case with Landini's *Musica son*. Longer melismas at the beginning and end of each line of text, and the use of virtually all available rhythmic permutations in the construction of the cantus melody translate the textual imagery into musical language. The work is thus significantly longer in performance time than any other of Giovanni's madrigals of the same poetic structure. The healing powers of music are also mentioned in contemporary medical texts. The study of music was included in the medical curriculum of the university of Padua, a city under Scaligeri rule.

20. Fra mille corvi

Madrigal

Cathy Cameron (soprano); Margaret Arnold (alto).

Fra mille corvi una cornachia bianca

Fa che ciascun si tiene un pappagallo,
Ben che le verdi penne e'l becco manca.

.
.
.

Vivesi ad arte e cosí el mondo regna.

A white crow among a thousand ravens
Makes everyone feel like a parrot,
Though the green feathers and the beak are
lacking.

.
.
.

One lives by cunning and thus the world is
governed.

After commencing with decoration of a prolonged unison between the two voices, *Fra mille corvi* unfolds using a more highly integrated texture than is usual in Giovanni's music, a product of the tenor line's more rapid and agile movement, and greater rhythmic interaction. Unless seen as an attempt to mirror the tumult of a flock of crows, there is no apparent extra-musical reason for this stylistic variant.

The significance of the incomplete text (one tercet is missing) can perhaps be clarified by consideration of other related madrigal settings. Its bird imagery, with the crow representing deceit and the parrots the common herd, seems to relate it to *Nel mezo a sei pa[gl]on*, also by Giovanni, where the whiteness of feather is an emblem of distinction. The poem's conclusion may suggest that the crow's apparent whiteness is not genuine distinction, but a hoax that

ultimately succeeds in deceiving the parrots. Two other works, *Io mi son un* and *Vestise la cornacchia d'altrui pen[n]e* by Jacopo da Bologna, both refer to Aesop's fable of the crow's deception, while *Oselletto selvagio*, together with the aforementioned works, are described by Pirrotta as pieces "in which Jacopo assumes an attitude of boisterous and scornful superiority towards his fellow musicians". If in fact these other 'bird pieces' relate to the theme of the artist's superiority among his peers, then as Von Fischer has argued, *Fra mille corvi* may well represent an aspect of the Veronese competition between Giovanni and Jacopo that Villani alludes to.

21. La bella stella Madrigal

Lloyd Fleming (tenor); John Griffiths (lute).

La bella stella che sua fiamma tene
Accesa sempre nel la mente mia
Lucida chiara zà del monte uscia.

Quando me parv' en sonno esser condotto
Per un gran sire in bel zardino adorno
Di bianchi zigli de sotto e d'entorno.

E per uno che di sopra biancheggiaiva,
Fiso mirai: mutossi in una rosa
Bianca e vermiglia sopr' ogni altra cosa.

Maraviglia'mi assai, ma 'l signor grande
Disse: "Nostra vertù tal acqua spande".

The beautiful star whose flame lasts
Always alight in my mind
Came out, shiny and brilliant, from behind a
mountain.

Then it seemed to me an impure dream
occurred
For a great lord in a beautiful garden, ornate
With lilies entwined all around;

One of which, arisen and grown whiter,
I attentively watched develop into a rosebud,
White and scarlet, above everything else,

Amplly amazing me, but the great lord
Said: "Our potency makes such water spurt."

The version recorded here differs in the detail of the cantus line in the two standard editions of *La bella stella* as it is here based entirely on the version from the Panciatichiano manuscript. As the cantus line alone survives in the older Rossi manuscript, it has been conflated in the published editions with the tenor from the Panciatichiano manuscript. The untexted tenor line is performed on the lute in this recording.

The text describes a mysterious erotic dream whose phallic images are explicitly stated. The Panciatichiano version, however, uses the word *condutto* in line 4 rather than *poluto* found in other sources, out of keeping with the phallic metaphors of the third tercet and the *ritornello*.

22. De' come dolcemente Madrigal

Margo Adelson (soprano); Hartley Newnham
(countertenor).

Deh, come dolcemente m'abbracciava,
Stando nel letto con la donna mia,
Quando la madre mi disse: Va' via!

Quando la figlia intese tal novella,
Volsesi a lei con gran malinconia;
Disse: Fuor, vecchia, di camera mia!

- Or taci, figlia; non ci far più motto.
Ch' i' me ne vado e staròmi di sotto.

I was being tenderly embraced
While in bed with my woman
When her mother said to me: "Go away!"

When the daughter took in this news
She turned to her, most melancholy,
And said: "Out, old woman, out of my room!"

"Now be quiet, daughter; not another word
from you.
I am going and will remain downstairs."

The music of *De' come dolcemente* is one of Giovanni's most direct settings. He appears to be less concerned with devices of melodic extension and rhythm, so as not to impede the pace of delivery of the humorous poem. It is one of a number of poems on the theme of the old chaperon or *duenna*, usually the mother, interfering with a young girl's loves. See, for example, *Ellera non s'avvitola* by Alessio Donati, the madrigal *Un cane, un' oca ed una vecchia pazza* of Donato da Cascia, and *Una smaniosa e insensata vecchia*, once attributed to Donato.

John Stinson John Griffiths and Giovanni Carsaniga

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