

Cape Consort

CELEBRATING CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI'S 450TH ANNIVERSARY

LOVE STRUCK



A Tribute to Monteverdi

Wednesday, 21 June, 19:30

LUTHERAN CHURCH, 98 STRAND ST, CAPE TOWN

Thursday, 22 June, 19:30

ERASMUS LOUW SAAL, PJ OLIVIER ART CENTRE,
3 BLOM ROAD, STELLENBOSCH

Tickets: www.quicket.co.za and at the door

R 120 / R 100 pensioners / R 80 students

enquiries: aeblyth@gmail.com



The SAEMT presents two concerts commemorating Monteverdi's 450th anniversary

Wednesday, 21 June, 19:30 Evangelical Lutheran Church, 98 Strand Street, Cape Town
Thursday, 22 June, 19:30 Erasmus Louw Saal, PJ Olivier Art Centre, 3 Blom Road, Stellenbosch

LoveStruck

Tribute to Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

in stile molle...

Amor che deggio far	SSTB, 2 vn & bc	(SV 144, Book 7)
Gira il nemico	TTB & bc	(SV 148, Book 8)
Io son pur vezzosetta	SS & bc	(SV 121, Book 7)
Augellin che la voce al canto	TTB & bc	(SV 133, Book 7)
Misero Alceo	SSTTB & bc	(SV 114, Book 6)

in stile temperato...

A quest'olmo [<i>Concerto A Sei Voci. Et Istromenti</i>]	SSATTB, 2vn & bc	(SV 119, Book 7)
Qui rise o Tirsi	SSTTB & bc	(SV 113, Book 6)
Quel augellin che canta	SSTTB	(SV 87, Book 4)
Dolcissimo uscignolo [<i>alla Francese</i>]	SSTTB & bc	(SV 161, Book 8)
Vago augelletto	SSATTB, 2vn & bc	(SV 156, Book 8)

in stile concitato...

Hor ch'el ciel e la terra	SSATTB, 2vn & bc	(SV 147, Book 8)
Tu dormi	SATB & bc	(SV 137, Book 7)
Si dolce è'l tormento	T & bc	(SV 332, AV 1624)
Altri canti d'Amor	SSATTB, 2vn & bc	(SV 146, Book 8)
Altri canti di Marte	SSATTB, 2vn & bc	(SV 155, Book 8)

Book 4: *Il quarto libro de madrigali a cinque voci*, 1603
Book 6: *Il sesto libro de madrigali a cinque voci*, 1614
Book 7: *Concerto. Settimo libro di madrigal*, 1619
AV: *Ariose vaghezze*, 1624

Book 8: *Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi con alcuni opuscoli in genere rappresentativo, che saranno per brevi episodi fra i canti senza gesto*, 1638

**Cape
Consort**

Elsabé Richter, Antoinette Blyth – soprano
Nick de Jager – alto
Willem Bester, Xander Kritzinger – tenor
Patrick Cordery – bass
Paul van Zuilenburg, Jan-Hendrik Harley – violin
Vera Vukovic – lute, theorbo
Erik Dippenaar – virginal
Hans Huysen – Baroque cello & direction

Programme notes

Madrigals first appear in Italy in the 14th century, disappear in the 15th century and reappear in the 16th. However, except for the name the early Trecento Madrigal has nothing in common with the later Renaissance and early Baroque Madrigal, which is the genre represented in this concert.

The origin of the term 'madrigal' (with variants *madriale*, *matricale*, *madregal*, *marigalis*) seems to be unclear. One suggestion is that it derives from *mandra* – 'flock', thereby referring to the genre of pastoral poetry underlying most madrigal compositions. Another links it to the Latin *matricale* – 'in the mother tongue' (here meaning Italian, not Latin). In this sense it also refers to a flourishing form of 14th-century vernacular poetry, which – from a literary perspective – played an important role in the advent of the Italian Renaissance. Yet another explanation refers to *materialis*, designating a poem without a definite form, in contrast to *formalis*, poetry cast into a fixed scheme.

Trecento madrigals were simply constructed two-part compositions, often rather stodgy inventions, without much popular appeal. Renaissance madrigals, on the other hand, were immensely popular songs, produced in large number and disseminated widely, as numerous prints and reprints testify. The genre represented the highest level of artistry with respect to both the literary quality of the chosen lyrics, as well as the compositional proficiency, with which these were set to music. Madrigals would usually be scored for three to six voices. Though through-composed, they would sport well-balanced forms, apart from demonstrating masterful employment of counterpoint, inventive word painting and other means of musical rhetoric.

All indications are that madrigal compositions counted as the most important form of secular music in 16th century Italy. In Thomas Morley's words: '*The best kind of music is termed Madrigal... made upon songs and sonnets such as Petrarch and many poets of our time have excelled in. It is, next unto the Motet, the most artificial and, to men of understanding, most delightful.*'

It is therefore not surprising that Monteverdi resorted to this genre with his very first compositions and kept on returning to it throughout his life. His first book of madrigals was published in 1587, when he was 20; the eighth book appeared more than half a century later, in 1638 when he was 71. (A ninth book was published posthumously, but it contains much earlier pieces that predate those published in Book Eight.) In these 50 years he thoroughly transformed the genre – from innocently serene miniatures reminiscing about Arcadian idylls, to intensely dramatic Baroque scenes, vividly realized through several musical innovations. Monteverdi's madrigals, a body of ca. 160 works, clearly trace – if not drive – the stylistic transition from Renaissance to Baroque, from *prima prattica* to *seconda prattica*. His last works represent the final culmination of madrigal composition, bringing to an end the genre's century-long predominance.

Monteverdi crosses the border between the old and the new style in his fifth Book of Madrigals, a collection of works written around the turn of the century and published in 1605. In what may indeed be perceived as a landmark publication on the threshold between antique and modern music, he introduces several musical novelties that would for ever change the course of music: the liberal use of expressive dissonances, the deliberate employment of musical and textural contrasts as a formal device, adding separate instrumental parts to the vocal texture, and the grouping of single movements into extended dramatic scenes.

Further, an instrumental *basso continuo* is added to the last six madrigals of the volume. This then, is not just another accompaniment, but in fact serves an indispensable structural function of providing a continuous bass line and, by that token, defining the harmonic progression. It grants the composer unprecedented flexibility in structuring the texture of the vocal parts, as it allows him to abandon the traditional 5-part polyphony and instead introduce a variety of individual voice groupings to facilitate dialogues, reflections from different perspectives, oppositional positions, or just generally vary the sonic and dramatic intensity. As it were, the *basso continuo* frees the voices from mere structural obligations and thereby liberates them to focus exclusively on the expression of affects, the articulation of texts, in other words on the conveyance of human emotions by musical means.

The significance of this shift of focus – from music conceived according to conventional rules, to music intended to express specific affects – can hardly be overemphasized. It provides the very foundation for what we take for granted nowadays: that music is an affective medium, capable of expressing and conveying emotions. The significance of this anniversary lies in honouring the musician who, as one of the first, transferred humanist thinking to music. By inviting the realm of human feelings into music, he became one of the principal facilitators of marrying musical with emotional expression – in short, of making music a matter of the heart.

The preface to the eighth book of Madrigals offers some interesting insights on Monteverdi's thinking on this topic:

I consider the principal passions of the soul to be three, namely anger, serenity, and humility. The best philosophers affirm this, the very nature of our voice, with its high, low and middle ranges, shows it; and the art of music clearly manifests it in these three terms: agitated, soft and moderate.

He further claims that, while musical examples of the soft and moderate kind abounded, he could not find a single instance of agitated music in the works of past composers. Therefore he set himself "with no little study and zeal to rediscover this style." Following Plato's image of a "harmony that would fittingly describe the brave man going to war" and reverting to the pyrrhic tempo used for agitated and war-like dances in ancient Greece, he comes up with the simple but effective device of subdividing the semibreve into its smallest components, in other words breaking it up into rapid beats that are to be repeated for the duration of the parent note. In effect he simply

introduces passages of repeated notes, percussive and not melodic. Highly pleased with this “method of depicting anger” he now frequently employs it in both sacred and secular works and finds it favourably received by other composers – so much so, “that they not only *spoke* their praise but, to my great joy and honour, *wrote* it by imitating my work. (Concluding that the new addition was “necessary to the art of music” as with only the two previous styles it was “imperfect”, he does stress the point that the invention is his.)

Following Monteverdi’s explication, this program consists of three sections that each focus on one of the emotional states respectively. The first five pieces feature the *stile molle*, the soft style, which by implication is also warm, intimate and can be quite intense. It ideally depicts the emotions of a subject very much in touch with itself, such as in a state of infatuation, confusion or marvel. Typically, the frustrating mix of all these sentiments at the same time has to be dealt with (*Amor che deggio far*). Men might be alarmed at feeling beleaguered, busy themselves at trying to escape but eventually resign at being conquered (*Gira il nemico*). Women may instead bask in their seductive dominance and hide their disappointment, if the one that matters most, nevertheless escapes them (*Io son pur vezzosetta*). Finding it difficult to speak for themselves, men might revert to sending a messenger, in an attempt to relieve the suffering on both sides (*Augellin che la voce canto*), yet the section comes to a close with a final break-up and separation, poignantly sad for the underlying longing that can still be felt (*Misero Alceo*). In a striking example of musical rhetoric, Monteverdi consistently sets the words ‘*anzi un sol cor*’ in unison (on a single pitch), only to tear it apart into separate voices with a dissonant suspension on ‘*diviso*’. Far more than just setting or expressing the text, the music actually becomes what the text is expressing.

The recurrent theme of the second section is that of sweet and happy memories. Natural images of great serenity abound and accordingly the moderate *stile temperato* determines the mood. The locations of erstwhile love-nests evoke sweet memories, in which the singer can now indulge without the earlier torment. The sadness about past love has been replaced by calm (*A quest’olmo*) and, in fact, happiness in remembering the good times. (*Qui rise* contains the memorably beautiful refrain: *O memoria felice, o lieto giorno*.)

This is also the moment to remember Monteverdi’s earlier work in the *stile antico*, represented here by the *capella* rendition of *Quel augellin*. In stark contrast to all other works in the program, this single Renaissance madrigal stands out for its unemotionally innocent reflection on the nature of birdsong as an elatedly happy expression of love and, at the same time, effective manner of calling a mate. Since birds lack souls their songs are presumably untainted by any trace of pain.

The following songs (*Dolcissimo uscignolo*, *Vago augelletto*) clearly demonstrate the vastly different Baroque take on the same topic. Again the birdsong stands unperturbed – depicted here by one of the most charming musical inventions from Monteverdi’s pen. However, that charm is deliberately interrupted and contrasted with moments of painful reflection, revealing the singer’s envy at the bird’s blissful ignorance and the torment about the futility of his own singing, which clearly does not reach its intended recipient.

In the third and final section the inherent conflict of unfeeling nature harbouring sentient beings occasionally flares up in highly dramatic scenes, in which the newly invented *stile concitato* now comes to its right. *Hor ch’el ciel* opens with what must count as one of the most remarkable depictions of the absolute calm of night, only harshly to be contrasted with the turmoil of a mind plagued by burning restlessness, maddening insomnia, circling thoughts and other symptoms of undoing. The pain arises from the inherent antagonism of experiencing the bitter in the sweet, of being trapped in the catch that the only person that can bring peace is also the one responsible for the suffering in the first place. A seemingly eternal martyrdom follows from this viscous circle of a thousand deaths followed by as many births. Once again it is worth pointing out a poignant musico-rhetorical interpretation at this point: Monteverdi expands the single word ‘*lunge*’ (implying the distance of the singer from any chance of salvation) horizontally to stretch over an eight-bar phrase and vertically to expand to the breaking point of three octaves plus a fifth between bass and soprano at the final cadence – both instances marking dimensions of absolute maxima that can be imposed on human voices in terms of length of breath and extremes of pitch.

While the pain caused by rejection can easily be blamed on the cruel behaviour of the beloved (*Tu dormi*), it may also be observed that the crueler the rejection, the stronger the devotion may become (*Si dolce e’l tormento*), hence the ultimate sweetness is that of unbearable suffering. These conflicting, yet overlapping and paradoxically constitutive sentiments, give rise to the final allegory of love as war. Disdainfully turning his back on the world of empty promises, unrequited longing and false truces, he leaves it to others to continue singing about love (*Altri canti d’amor*) and instead reverts his praises to the domain of war, where warriors may at least proudly engage in real battles – only to find himself confronted by love as fully real ‘warriress’, armed with deadly weapons (eyes) and snares (locks of hair), afflicting mortal wounds and proving to be an invincible enemy (*Altri canti di Marte*). There remains only a single escape: If love cannot be lived, as its ultimate price is death, it should at least give life to music. Although packaged into Arcadian poetic imagery, the humanist tenets on the nature of music nevertheless stand clear: Musical expression is the result of emotional processing; emotions, especially the painful ones, justify song; music is intrinsically linked to emotional struggles; as long as humans feel there will be music.

Monteverdi’s musical expressions of these reflections constitute a remarkable case of a super-powerful, self-referential feedback loop: A strong underlying tenet (about the nature of music) is corroborated by a most convincing proof (the music itself), thereby in turn reinforcing the basic tenet, which further strengthens the music – and so on, in further reciprocal boosts of musical practice and musical perception. This might be one of the reasons, why this music can sound as fresh today, as it must have sounded some 400 years ago.

Hans Huyssen

Texts & Translations

Amor che deggio far

Se non mi giova amar con pura fede?
Servir non vo' così,
Piangendo notte e dì per chi no'l crede!

E non si può veder
L'amoroso pensier da l'occhio umano?
Dunque un fido amator
Dovrà nel suo dolor languir invano?

Intesi pur talor
Che ne la fronte il cor si porta scritto;
Or, come a me non val
Scoprir l'interno mal nel volto afflitto?

Ingiustissimo Re,
Perché la vera fé nota non fai?
Perché lasci perir
Voci, sguardi e sospir, se'l vedi e'l sai?

Oh come saria pur
Amor dolce e sicur se'l cor s'aprisse!
Non soffrirebbe già
Donna senza pietà ch'altrui morisse.

E dunque sotto il ciel
Non v'è d'alma fedel segno verace?
Ahi fato, ah pena, ah duol!
Or credami chi vuol, ch'io mi dò pace.

Anonymous

Gira il nemico insidioso amore

La rocca del mio core.
Su presto ch'egli qui poco lontano
Armi, armi alla mano.

Noi lasciamo accostar ch'egli non saglia
Sulla fiacca muraglia,
Ma facciam fuor una sortita bella,
Butta, butta la sella.

Armi false non son ch'ei s'avvicina
Col grosso la cortina.
Su presto, ch'egli qui poco discosto
Tutti, tutti al suo posto.

Vuol degl'occhi attaccar il baloardo
Con impeto gagliardo.
Su presto ch'egli qui senz'alcun fallo
Tutti, tutti a cavallo.

Non è più tempo ohimé, ch'egli ad un tratto
Del cor padron s'è fatto,
A gambe, a salvo chi si può salvare,
All'andare, all'andare.

Cor mio non val fuggir, sei morto e servo
D'un tiranno protervo
Ch'el vincitor che già dentro alla piazza
Grida foco, ammazza.

Giulio Strozzi

Io son pur vezzosetta pastorella

Che le guance ho di rose e gelsomini,
E questa fronte e questi aurati crini
Mi fanno altrui parer Driada novella.

Di Flora non vi è qui nobil donzella
O schiera di pomposi cittadini
Che, quando lor m'incontro e faccio inchini,
Il titol non mi dian de la più bella.

E se il giorno di festa io vado al ballo,
Mi porta ogni pastor, perch'io l'inviti,
Specchi, fior, frutti o vezzi di corallo.

E non saranno a te punto graditi,
Caro Lidio, i miei sguardi?
E sempre in fallo ti pregherò,
Crudel, che tu m'aiuti?

Anonymous

Love, what am I to do,
If I gain nothing by loving with pure constancy?
I do not relish my servitude,
Weeping night and day for one who does not believe me.

And since no loving thought
Can be seen by the human eye,
Why must a faithful lover
Languish in vain?

I did understand that
The heart can often be read in the brow;
But then, why does my inner woe
Not show on my afflicted face?

Most unjust King
Why do you not reveal true constancy?
Why do you allow to perish
Words, looks and sighs, that you know to be true?

O how could pure and sweet love,
Show itself truly!
Merciless lady, you could not care less
If another would die.

Is there then under the Heaven
No true sign of a faithful soul?
Ah fate, ah pain, ah woe!
Believe me or not, I want to give myself peace.

The enemy, insidious love, encircles
The fortress of my heart.
Quickly, act, for he is not far from here,
Take up arms!

Don't allow him to approach, nor leap
Onto the weak rampart,
But rather let us sally forth boldly,
Bring the saddles!

Those are not fake weapons, he is nearing
The gate with his forces.
Quickly, act, for he is not distant,
Everyone to his post!

He wants to attack the bastion of my eyes
With an impetuous charge.
Quickly, act, for he is here and no mistake,
Everyone to his horse!

There is no more time, alas, for at a stroke
He has become the master of my heart.
On your feet, save yourselves if you can,
Run, run!

My heart, you cannot flee, you are dead
And the servant of an arrogant tyrant,
For the conqueror, already inside the court,
Cries: "fire, slaughter!"

I am a pretty young shepherdess,
With cheeks of rose and jasmine,
My brow and my golden locks
Likens me to a new-found dryad.

There is no noble maiden here,
Nor any of a crowd of fine gentlemen,
Who, when I meet them and curtsy
Would not grant that I am the fairest flower.

And, when on feast days I go to the dance,
Every shepherd, hoping I may invite him,
Brings me mirrors, flowers, fruit and strings of coral.

Yet you, dear Lydius, do you
Not welcome my glances?
And shall I forever implore you in vain,
Cruel man, to help me?

Augellin che la voce al canto spieghi,
Per pietà del mio duolo
Deh spargi l'ali a volo:
Indi vanne a Madonna, anzi al mio sole,
E con dogliosi accenti
Dille queste parole:

«O soave cagion d'aspri tormenti,
Soffrirete voi sempre
Che in pianto chi v'adora si distempra?»

Giovanni Guarini

Misero Alceo, del caro albergo fore
Gir pur convienti, e ch'al partir t'apresti.
'Ecco Lidia, ti lascio, e lascio questi
Poggi beati, e lascio teco il core.

Tu, se di pari laccio e pari ardore
Meco legata fosti e meco ardesti,
Fa' che ne' duo talor giri celesti
S'annidi e posi, ov'egli vive e more.

Sì, mentre lieto il cor staratti a canto,
Gli occhi lontani da soave riso,
Mi daran vita con l'umor del pianto.'

Così disse il pastor dolente in viso.
La ninfa udillo, e fu in due parti intanto
L'un cor da l'altro, anzi un cor sol, diviso.

Gian Battista Marino

A quest'olmo, a quest'ombre ed a quest'onde
ove per uso ancor torno sovente,
eterno i' deggio, ed avrò sempre in mente,
quest'antro, questa selva e queste fronde.

In voi sol, felici acque, amiche sponde,
il mio passato ben quasi presente
Amor mi mostra, e del mio foco ardente
tra le vostre fresch'aure i semi asconde.

Qui di quel lieto dì soave riede
la rimembranza, allor che la mia
Clori tutta in dono se stessa e'l cor mi diede;

Già spirar sento erbette intorno e fiori,
ovunque o fermi il guardo o mova il piede,
dell'antiche dolcezze ancor gli odori.

Gian Battista Marino

Qui rise, o Tirsi, e qui ver me rivolse
Le due stelle d'Amor la bella Clori;
Qui per ornarmi il crin, de' più bei fiori
Al suon de le mie canne un grembo colse.

O memoria felice, o lieto giorno.

Qui l'angelica voce e le parole,
C'humiliari i più superbi Tori;
Qui le Grazie scherzar vidi, e gli Amori
Quando le chiome d'or sparte raccolse.

O memoria felice, o lieto giorno.

Qui con meco s'assise, e qui mi cinse
Del caro braccio il fianco, e dolce intorno
Stringendomi la man, l'alma mi strinse.
Qui d'un bacio ferimmi, e 'l viso adorno
Di bel vermiglio vergognando tinsse.

O memoria felice, o lieto giorno.

Gian Battista Marino

Quell'augellin, che canta

Sì dolcemente, e lascivetto vola
Or dall'abete al faggio,
Ed or dal faggio al mirto,
S'avess' umano spirto,
Direbb', "Ardo d'amor, ardo d'amore",

Ma ben arde nel core,
E chiam' il suo desio
Che li rispond', "Ardo d'amor anch'io".
Che sii tu benedetto,
Amoroso gentil, vago augelletto!

Giovanni Guarini (from Il Pastor fido)

Little bird, who unfurls song with your voice,
In pity of my sorrow,
Ah, spread your wings in flight:
Come to my Lady, to my sun,
And with sad inflection,
Tell her these words:

'Oh sweet cause of bitter torments,
Will you grieve forever
While he who loves you in tears dissolves?'

Unhappy Alceus, from this dear retreat
You must go, and must prepare to depart!
Now I leave you, Lydia, and I leave
These blessed hills, and I leave my heart with you.

If you are bound to me by the same ties
And burn with the same passion,
Then let my heart in those two heavenly orbs
Make its nest, to live there and die.

While close to you this heart should die happy,
Far away from your sweet smile, my eyes
Must sustain me with the dew of tears.

Thus spoke the shepherd, his face expressing sadness.
The nymph listened to him; and thus were two hearts
Separated, or rather one heart was divided into two.

To this elm, this shade and these waters,
To which I often return again,
I owe eternal gratitude, and shall always remember
This cave, this wood and this verdure.

In you alone, happy waters, friendly shores,
Love shows me my past, as if it were still present,
While it conceals the seeds of my ardent fire,
Amongst your fresh breezes.

Here, from that happy day with sweet laughter
The memory returns when my Cloris,
Gave herself and her heart to me;

I still feel radiating from the herbs and the flowers,
Wherever I rest my glance or place my step,
The fragrance of erstwhile sweetnesses.

Here fair Clori smiled, O Thyriss, and here
She turned upon me those two stars of Love;
Here, to the sound of my pipes, she picked
A lapful of pretty flowers to bedeck my hair.

Oh happy memory, oh joyful day!

Here spoke the angelic voice and the words
That tamed the fiercest bulls;
Here I saw the Graces sport, and the Cherubs,
When she bound her long golden hair.

Oh happy memory, oh joyful day!

Here she sat with me, and here about my waist
She put her dear arms, and when she gently
Pressed my hand, it was my heart she pressed.
Here with a kiss she wounded me, and confusion
Brought a charming blush to her fair cheek.

Oh happy memory, oh joyful day!

That little bird which sings
So sweetly and lascivously flies
Now from fir to beech
And now from beech to myrtle,
If he had a human soul
Would say "I burn with love!"

In fact his heart burns
And he calls to his heart's desire
Who answers him "I too burn with love!"
May you be blessed
Kind, loving little bird.

Dolcissimo uscignolo,

Tu chiami la tua cara compagnia
Cantando: «Vieni, vieni, anima mia».
A me canto non vale,
E non ho come tu da volar ale.

O felice augelletto,
Come nel tuo diletto
Ti ricompensa ben l'anima natura:
Se ti negò saver, ti diè ventura.

Giovanni Guarini

Vago augelletto che cantando vai,
Over piangendo, il tuo tempo passato,
Vedendoti la notte e 'l verno a lato
E 'l dì dopo le spalle e i mesi gai,

Se, come i tuoi gravosi affanni sai,
Così sapessi il mio simile stato,
Verresti in grembo a questo sconcolato
A partir seco i dolorosi guai

Francesco Petrarca

Hor che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace
E le fere e gli augelli il sonno affrena,
Notte il carro stellate in giro mena
E nel suo letto il mar senz'onda giace,

Voglio, penso, ardo, piango e chi mi sface
Sempre m'è innanzi per mia dolce pena.
Guerra è il mio stato, d'ira e di duol piena,
E sol di lei pensando ho qualche pace.

Così sol d'una Chiara fonte viva
Move il dolce e l'amaro ond'io mi pasco.
Una man sola mi risana e punge.

E perchè il mio martir non giunga a riva,
Mille volte il dì moro e mille nasco,
Tanto dalla salute mia son lunge.

Francesco Petrarca

Tu dormi? Ahi, crudo core,
tu puoi dormir, perch'in te dorme amore.
Io piango, e le mie voci lagrimose
a te, che sorda sei,
portano invano, ahimé, l'aure pietose.
Ah, ben i pianti miei
pon far pietosi i venti:
ma te fan più crudele i miei lamenti.

Anonymous

Si dolce è'l tormento

Ch'in seno mi sta,
Ch'io vivo contento
Per cruda beltà.
Nel ciel di bellezza
S'accreschi fierezza
Et manchi pietà:
Che sempre qual scoglio
All'onda d'orgoglio
Mia fede sarà.

La speme fallace
Rivolgam' il piè.
Diletto ne pace
Non scendano a me.
E l'empia ch'adoro
Mi nieghi ristoro
Di buona mercè:
Tra doglia infinita,
Tra speme tradita
Vivrà la mia fè

Per foco e per gelo
riposo non hò.
Nel porto del cielo
riposo avrò.
Se colpo mortale
con rigido strale
Il cor m'impiegò,
cangiando mia sorte
Col dardo di morte
Il cor sanerò.

Carlo Milanuzzi

Sweetest nightingale,
You call to your dear companion
Singing 'Come to me my love'.
As for me, my song is of no value,
Nor do I have wings to fly like you.

Happy little bird,
In your pleasure
Kind Nature rewards you well:
If she denied you knowledge, she gave you fortune.

Little wandering bird that goes singing
Your time gone by, with weeping notes,
Seeing the night and the winter near,
And the day and all the joyful months behind,

If, knowing your own heavy sorrows,
You could know of my state like your own,
You would fly to this disconsolate breast
To share your grievous sadness with me.

Now that heaven and earth and the wind are silent
And beasts and birds are restrained by sleep,
Night leads its starry chariot in a circle
And in its bed the sea lies without waves,

I awake, I think, I burn, I weep; and she who undoes me
Is always before me to my sweet pain.
War is my state, full of rage and grief,
And only when thinking of her do I have some peace.

Thus from a single clear and living fountain
Spring the sweetness and bitterness on which I thrive.
A single hand cures and stabs me.

And so that my martyrdom may never end,
A thousand times a day I die, a thousand times I'm born,
So far am I from my salvation.

Are you sleeping? Ah, cruel heart,
Indeed you will sleep, now that Love has fallen asleep.
I cry and my sorrowful voice,
Ah, is carried in vain by pitiful winds
To you, who are deaf,
Ah, my pleas
Could move the winds:
But my laments only make you more cruel.

So sweet is the torment
That lies in my heart,
That I live happily
Because of its cruel beauty.
May beauty's fury
Grow wide in the sky
Without compassion;
For my devotion shall hold
Like a rock against
Pride's unrelenting wave.

False hope,
Keep me wandering!
Let no peace
Nor pleasure befall me!
Evil woman, whom I adore,
Deny me the rest
That compassion would give;
Amidst infinite pain,
Amidst broken hopes
Shall survive my devotion.

There is no rest for me
In the warmth or the cold.
Only in heaven
Shall I find rest.
If the deadly strike
Of an arrow injured my heart,
My heart will heal
By changing my destiny
By that same
Arrow of death.

Altri canti d'Amor, tenero arciero,
I dolci vezzi e i sospirati baci,
Narri gli sdegni e le bramate paci
quand'unise due alme un sol pensiero.

Di Marte io canto furibondo e fiero
I duri incontri e le battaglie audaci.
Strider le spade e bombeggiar le faci
Fo, nel mio canto bellicose e fiero.

Anonymos (parody of Marino)

Altri canti di Marte, e di sua schiera
Gli arditi assalti, e l'honorate imprese,
Le sanguigne vittorie, e le contese,
I trionfi di morte horrida, e fera.

Io canto, Amor, da questa tua guerriera
Quant'hebbi a sostener mortali offese,
Com'un guardo mi vinse, un crin mi prese:
Historia miserabile, ma vera.

Due begli occhi fur l'armi, onde traffitta
Giacque, e di sangue invece amaro pianto
Sparse lunga stagion l'anima afflitta.

Tu, per lo cui valor la palma, e'l vanto
hebbe di me la mia nemica invitta,
Se desti morte al cor, dà vita al canto.

Gian Battista Marino

Damigella
Tutta bella,
Versa, versa quel bel vino
Fa che cada
La rugiada
Distillata di rubino.

Ho nel seno
Rio veneno,
Che vi sparse Amor profondo;
Ma gittarlo
E lasciarlo
Vo' sommerso in questo fondo.

Damigella
Tutta bella,
Di quel vin tu non mi satii,
Fa che cada
La rugiada
Distillata da Topatii

Ah, che spento
Io non sento
Il furor de gl'ardor miei,
Men cocenti,
Meno ardenti
Sono, ohimè, gli incendi Etnai.

Nova fiamma
Più m'infiamma,
Arde il cor foco novello:
Se mia vita
Non s'aita,
Ah! ch'io vengo un Montibello.

Gabriello Chiabrera

Let others sing of Cupid, the youthful archer,
Of his sweet embraces, yearned-for kisses;
Let them relate the disdain and hoped-for truces
Uniting two souls through a single thought.

I sing of Mars furious and fierce,
Of the harsh encounters and bold battles.
I make the swords clash and the torches explode.
In my proudly belligerent song.

Let others sing of Mars, and of his legions
The ardent assaults, and their famous deeds,
The bloody and victorious battles,
And the triumphs of Death, horrid and violent,

I sing, Love, of this your warrior
Of how I sustained mortal wounds
Of how a glance conquered me, of how a lock of hair ensnared me:
A most pitiful but true story.

Two beautiful eyes were the weapons that felled me,
Pierced my afflicted soul, which instead of blood
Has ever since shed bitter tears.

You, whose strength gained the laurels,
Allowing my invincible enemy to boast,
If you give death to my heart, give life to my song!

Maiden,
All-beautiful,
Pour out, pour out that sweet wine;
Make fall
The dew
Distilled from rubies.

I have in my breast
An evil poison
That Love has implanted;
He cast it
And left it
And I'm immersed in it.

Maiden,
All-beautiful,
With that wine you do not satisfy me;
Instead let
Dew flow
Distilled from topaz.

Ah, douse me
That I should not feel
the rage of my ardour.
Less burning,
Less ardent,
Alas, are the fires of Mount Etna.

This new blaze
inflames me even more,
Setting my heart on fire anew;
If my life
Is not consumed,
I will be very fortunate.

Upcoming Concerts

Bach, Bach, Bach & Bach

Motets by Joh. Sebastian, Joh. Michael, Joh. Ludwig and Joh. Christoph Bach

Sunday, 24 September 2017, 12:00 (tbc) Lutheran Church, 98 Strand Street, Cape Town

Reformation Concert

Music by Schütz, JS Bach and Huyssen commemorating the 500th anniversary of Luther's Reformation

Sunday, 5 November 2017, 16:00 Lutheran Church, 98 Strand Street, Cape Town