

# Venetian Tonic

## Sacred and Secular Music from Venice's Golden Age

**Claudio Monteverdi**  
(1567-1643)

**Dixit Dominus** for 6 voices and basso continuo  
*Reliquiae sacrorum concertuum...* (Nuremberg, 1615)

**Laetatus sum** for 6 voices, bc  
*Vespro della Beata Vergine* (Venice, 1610)

**Salve Regina** for 2 sopranos, bc  
*Selve Morale e Spirituale* (Venice, 1640/1641)

**Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber**  
(1644 -1704)

**Nisi Dominus** for violin, bass and bc  
*(Salzburg, late 17th century)*

**Monteverdi**

**Lauda Jerusalem** for 5 voices, bc  
*Messa a Quattro voci, et salmi* (Venice, 1649)

**Biber**

**"Crucifixion", Sonata X**  
*Mystery Sonatas / Rosenkranz-Sonaten* (Salzburg 1676)

### *Interval*

**Monteverdi**

**De la bellezza** for 6 voices, 2 vs, bc  
*Scherzi Musicali a tre voci* (Venice, 1607)

**Zefiro torna** for 5 voices, bc  
*Il sesto Libro de Madrigali a cinque voci* (Venice 1614)

**Giovanni Pandolfi Mealli**  
(ca.1620-1669)

**Sonata quarta "Biancuccia"** for violin and bc  
*Sonate a violino solo, opus 4* (Bologna, 1660)

**Monteverdi**

**A quest'olmo** for 6 voices, 2 vs, bc  
*Concerto. Settimo Libro de Madrigali...* (Venice 1619)

**Lamento della ninfa** for solo soprano, 3 male voices and bc  
*Madrigali Guerrieri et Amorosì, Libro Ottavo* (Venice, 1638)

**Hor che'l ciel** for 6 voices, 2 vs, bc  
*Madrigali Guerrieri et Amorosì, Libro Ottavo* (Venice, 1638)



Lente Louw, Antoinette Blyth & Minette du Toit-Pearce – soprano

Nick de Jager, Chris Mostert & Lance Phillip – tenor

Charles Ainslie – bass-baritone

Antoinette Lohmann, Valentina Vorster – Baroque violin

Hans Huysen – Baroque cello

Andrew Cruickshank – harpsichord, organ

For a concert at a 'Festival of Words' Monteverdi is an eminently suitable composer. Extensive as his musical output is, it contains only vocal compositions. It may well be argued that devising and constantly refining strategies of merging music and language into a unified form of expression was the ongoing preoccupation of his career, irrespective of whether he would compose for the court, the church or the theatre. The radical musical consequences he would draw from his quest, gave rise to one of history's most famous music-theoretical disputes. Defending established Renaissance rules of compositions, and referring them to their time-honoured principles and scholarly traditions, the music theorist Artusi lambasted Monteverdi for the 'imperfections' of his modern music. Judging from the harshness of his criticism he was probably sensing the occurrence of a fundamental shift of values, of which the musical novelties were the messengers. And indeed, instead of defending himself on the level of the attack, Monteverdi's reply refers the matter to a second practice, the famous *seconda pratica*, from which he in turn claims the 'perfections of modern music'. Seen in the context of the period, the rise of humanism and its modes of enquiry, favouring sensory and empirical evidence rather than authoritarian dogmatism, Monteverdi's approach is fully aligned with contemporary musical developments. But much more than that, through its overwhelming quality and compelling artistry, it eventually furnishes the experimental advances with so much weight and credibility as to transform them into a lasting legacy. Arguably the prevailing (romantic, modern?) perception of music as a medium capable of expressing human emotions rests largely on the musical premises shaped by Monteverdi and his contemporaries.

In another response to Artusi, Giulio Cesare Monteverdi, on behalf his brother, wrote *che l'oratione sia padrona dell'armonia e non serva*, "that the oration should be the mistress of the harmony and not its servant". This statement flies in the face of Renaissance perceptions of music and effectively claims that extra-musical considerations and means should determine its inherent musical processes! 'Oration' is to be understood here not only as text, but as speech or persuasion in the wider, rhetorical sense of meaningful, human and interactive communication. The statement indeed aptly summarizes a revolutionary musical approach.

Yet Monteverdi was no fervent revolutionary, but rather apparently a most tolerant liberal. As composer he was a master in both styles and continuously employed methods of both *prima* and *seconda pratica* interchangeably throughout his career. Accordingly tonight's program also contains works in both styles, chosen from a wide array of different publications and genres. Compiled to display the rich diversity of Baroque forms, it further hinges on other obvious binaries – sacred-secular, vocal-instrumental, consort-solo. Yet on closer scrutiny these are complementary positions, rather than oppositional approaches. The far more interesting distinction pertains to whether the work is written in the ancient or modern style. From this vantage point the three Psalm settings (in typical *prima pratica* imitative counterpoint in an ensemble of equally important voices) are more closely related to *Zefiro torna* (madrigalism and word paintings merged into the contrapuntal texture), but fully contrast with the 'Salve Regina', which, set for solo voices and basso continuo and is thus closely akin to the *Lamento della Ninfa* as another example of emotionally charged and highly dramatic *seconda pratica*. Though dealing with similar topics (the adoration of beauty and its threat of luring the appreciative observer into a state of unrequited love...), the secular works employ greatly differing strategies. While *Zefiro* and *A quest'olmo* to a large extent still rely on detailed metaphorical analogies evoked by single musical figures, *Hor che'l ciel* uses much more generalized means: musical – notably instrumental – figures are used to evoke the three 'principal passions of the soul', *concite* (agitated), *molle* (soft) and *temperato* (moderate). Here generically symbolic references replace individual metaphors and thereby open the scope for much larger musical forms. *De la bellezza* is written in the style of a courtly dance and the text at first seems to succumb fully to the symmetrically strophic form and instrumental interludes. However it unexpectedly resurfaces in the very gesture of ritualistic offering (with which it is concerned), effectively manifesting in the music's ceremonious habitus. It is only after this level of 'interpreting the text by replacing it' has been reached that autonomous and purely instrumental music becomes conceivable. Now that instrumental music has learned to 'speak', works such as the highly 'expressive' violin sonatas by Biber and Pandolfi become possible.

Making a claim for a *historically informed performance*, we obviously use period instruments and corresponding stylistic approaches. Yet we trust that *hip* might in this case mean even more. Perhaps the occasion of staging these rarely performed works in the current context succeeds in reframing a prevailing question, now just as pressing and enigmatic as it was during Monteverdi's time: Does music speak more strongly when it conveys something more than just itself? Or does the message (whatever it is) come over best, when music speaks for itself? Does music speak at all? Is it a language on its own or only so in combination with text? Important questions indeed – and surely worth asking at a 'Woordfees'.

## Texts & Translations

**Dixit Dominus** Domino meo:

Sede ad dextris meis.

Donec ponam inimicos tuos, scabellum pedum tuorum.

Virgam virtutis tuae emittet Dominus ex Sion:

Dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.

Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae

In splendoribus sanctorum:

ex utero ante luciferum genui te.

Iuravit Dominus, et non paenitebit eum:

Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.

Dominus a dextris tuis, confregit

in die irae suae reges.

Iudicabit in nationibus, implebit ruinas;

conquassabit capita in terra multorum.

De torrente in via bibet:

Propterea exaltabit caput.

*Psalm 110*

Gloria Patri et filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,

Et in saecula saeculorum, Amen.

**Laetatus sum** in his quae dicta sunt mihi:

In domum Domini ibimus.

Stantes erant pedes nostri, in atriis tuis Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, quae aedificatur ut civitas:

Cuius participatio eius in idipsum.

Illuc enim ascenderunt tribus, tribus Domini:

Testimonium Israel,

ad confitendum nomini Domini.

Quia illic sederunt sedes in iudicio,

sedes super domum David.

Rogate quae ad pacem sunt Jerusalem:

Et abundantia diligentibus te.

Fiat pax in virtute tua:

Et abundantia in turribus tuis.

Propter fratres meos et proximos meos,

loquebar pacem de te:

Propter domum Domini Dei nostrum,

quaesivi bona tibi.

*Psalm 122*

Gloria Patri et filio, etc.

The Lord said unto my lord:

"Sit at my right hand.

Until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion:

You will rule in the midst of your enemies

Your rule is the foundation in the day of your power

Amongst the splendour of holiness,

I have brought you from the womb before the morning star.

The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind:

"You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedech."

The Lord at your right hand will crush kings

On the day of His wrath.

He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead

And crushing the rulers of the whole earth.

He shall drink from a torrent beside the way:

Therefore he shall lift up his head.

Glory to the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning and is now,

And shall be for all ages, Amen.

I rejoiced with those who said to me,

"Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Our feet stand in your gates, Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is built like a city:

That is closely compact together.

That is where the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord,

To praise the name of the Lord

According to the statute given to Israel.

There the thrones for judgment stand

The thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

"May those who love you be secure.

May there be peace within your walls

And abundance within your towers."

For the sake of my brothers and friends,

I will ask for peace for you:

For the sake of the house of the Lord our God

I will seek blessings for you.

Glory to the Father and Son, etc.

**Salve Regina**, Mater misericordiae,  
Vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve.  
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevae,  
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes  
In hac lacrimarum valle.

Eia, ergo, o advocata nostra,  
Illos tuos misericordis oculos ad nos converte.  
Et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui,  
Nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.  
O Clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria.

*Marian Anthem*

**Nisi Dominus** aedificaverit domum:  
In vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam.  
Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem:  
Frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.  
Vanum est vobis ante lucem surgere:  
Surgite post quam sederitis,  
qui manducatis panem doloris  
Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum.  
Ecce, Haereditas Domini filii:  
merces, fructus ventris.  
Sicut sagittae in manu potentis:  
ita filii excussorum.  
Beatus vir qui implevit desiderium suum ex ipsis:  
Non confundetur inimicos suis in porta.

*Psalm 127*

Gloria Patri et filio, etc.

**Lauda Jerusalem** Dominum:  
Lauda Deum tuum Sion.  
Quoniam confortavit seras portarum tuarum:  
Benedixit filiis tuis in te.  
Qui posuit fines tuos pacem:  
Et adipe frumenti satiat te.  
Qui emittit eloquium suum terrae:  
Velociter currit sermo eius.  
Qui dat nivem sicut lanam:  
Nebulam, sicut cinerem spargit.  
Mittet cristallum suum sicut bucellas:  
Ante faciem frigoris eius quis sustinebit?  
Emitet verbum suum, et lique faciet ea:  
Flabit Spiritus eius, et fluent aquae.  
Qui annuntiat verbum suum Jacob:  
Iustitias et iuditia sua Israel.  
Non fecit taliter omnia nationi:  
Et iuditia sua non manifestavit eis.

*Psalm 147: 12-20*

Gloria Patri et filio, etc.

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy;  
Our life, our sweetness and our hope, all hail.  
To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve,  
To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning  
And weeping in this valley of tears.

Turn then, most gracious advocate,  
Thine eyes of mercy toward us,  
And after this our exile show unto us  
The blessed fruit of the womb, Jesus.  
O clement, o loving, o sweet Virgin Mary.

Unless the Lord builds the house,  
its builders labor in vain  
Unless the Lord watches over the city,  
The watchmen stand guard in vain.  
It is vain for you that rise up before dawn:  
Rise when you have sat down,  
You who eat the bread of sorrow.  
For so he gives unto his beloved sleep.  
Behold, children are a heritage of the Lord,  
A reward, the fruit of the womb.  
As arrows in the hand of the mighty,  
so are the children of the vigorous.  
Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them:  
He shall not be confound, when dealing with his  
enemies.

Gloria to the Father and Son, etc.

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem:  
Praise your God, O Zion.  
For he has strengthened the bars of your gates:  
He has blessed the children within you.  
He made peace in your borders:  
He fills you with the finest of the wheat.  
He sends out his commandments upon earth:  
His words run very swiftly.  
He gives snow like wool:  
He scatters the clouds like ashes  
He casts forth his ice like morsels:  
Who can stand before his cold?  
He sends out his word, and melts them:  
He stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow.  
He shows his word to Jacob:  
His statutes and judgments unto Israel.  
He has not dealt so with any nation:  
And he has not shown his judgments to them.

Gloria to the Father and Son, etc.

**De la bellezza** le dovute lodi  
Celebriam con lieto canto,  
E tu Ciprigna intanto  
De' tuoi pregi altera godi.

Godi pur ch'alta vittoria  
Si prepara a meriti tuoi,  
Onde chiara oggi fra noi  
Splenderai per nova gloria.

E la bellezza un raggio  
De la celeste luce,  
Che quasi un sol di maggio  
Temprato ardor n'adduce.  
Quinci nel nostro core  
Nascono i fiori d'Amore.

Chi di tal lume  
Non splende ornato  
Dirsi beato  
Invan presume.  
Che vil tesoro  
Son gemme e oro  
E valor cade  
Contra beltade.

Ben fallo Alcide il forte  
Da duo begli occhi vinto,  
Quantunque avvinto traesse  
Il Can de le tartaree porte.  
E sallo il Dio de l'arme,  
Se l'ira e del furore,  
Quando la Dea d'amore  
Gl'impon che si disarmi.  
Ond'ei cangiato stile,  
Mansueto ed humile,  
Mirando il suo bel volto  
La spada obliata tra belle braccia accolto.

Dunque a lei che di beltade  
Ottien il pregio e'l vanto,  
Quest'altre anime beate  
Concordi al nostro canto  
Guidano in queste valli  
Per far l'honor  
Quest'amorosi balli.

For beauty's due praises  
Let us offer with a happy song,  
And you, Aphrodite,  
May meanwhile enjoy this esteem.

Rejoice in the highest victory  
You deserve today,  
As your splendour  
Shines among us with new glory.

Beauty is a ray  
Of celestial light,  
Which, like the sun in May  
Brings new-found warmth;  
So that in our hearts  
Love's flowers may bud.

Those who say that light  
Does not splendidly embellish  
Claim that beauty  
Fails to impress.  
Yet how mean a treasure  
Are jewels and gold  
As their value falls  
Against that of beauty.

Hercules the strong soon fell,  
Defeated by two beautiful eyes,  
Although he had bound and dragged  
The dog from the gates of Tartarus.  
And the god of weapons,  
Wrath and frenzy feels its power,  
When the goddess of Love  
Commands him to disarm,  
His manner changes  
To meek humility  
And, gazing at her fair face,  
The sword is forgotten in her welcoming arms.

And so let them that say,  
That beauty deserves merit and glory,  
Let all these happy souls  
Join in with our song,  
Sounding through the valleys  
To pay homage  
With these adorable dances.

*Ferdinando Gonzaga?*

**Zefiro torna** e'l bel tempo rimena  
E i fiori e l'herbe, sua dolce famiglia,  
E garrir Progne e piagner Filomena,  
E Primavera candida e vermiglia.

Ridono i prati e'l ciel si rasserena,  
Giove s'allegra di mirar sua figlia,  
L'aria s l'acqua e la terra è d'amor piena,  
Ogni animal d'amar si racconsiglia.  
Ma per me, lasso, tornano i più gravi  
Sospir che dal cor profondo tragge  
Quella ch'al Ciel se ne portò le chiavi;

E cantar augelletti, e fiorir piagge,  
E 'n belle donne honeste atti soavi  
Sono un deserto e fere aspre e selvaggie.

*Francesco Petrarca*

**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 erbetto intorno e fiori,  
ovunque o fermi il guardo o mova il piede,  
dell'antiche dolcezze ancor gli odori.

*Giambattista Marino*

### **Lamento della ninfa**

No havea Febo ancora  
recato al mondo il dì  
ch'una donzella fuora  
del proprio albergo uscì.

Sul pallidetto volto  
scorgeasi il suo dolor,  
spesso gli veniva sciolto  
un gran sospir dal cor.

Zephyr returns and the sweet season once again brings  
Flowers and herbs, his gentle companions,  
And warbling swallows and lamenting nightingales  
And the innocence and blushing of spring.

The meadows smile and the heavens are serene again,  
Jupiter rejoices to see his daughter,  
Air, water and earth are filled with love,  
All creatures turn to courtship.  
But for me, come the heaviest sighs  
Which, from my heart draws,  
She who takes the keys of my heart to heaven;

So that the sweet charms of birdsong and blossoming hill  
And the subtle gestures of a charming woman,  
Are a desert to me with wild and merciless beasts.

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.

### **Lament of the Nymph**

The sun had not yet  
returned the day to the world  
when a young girl  
stepped from her house.

Sorrow was plainly painted  
on her pale face,  
and she sighed  
from the depths of her heart.

Sì calpestando fiori  
errava hor qua or là,  
i suoi perduti amori  
così piangendo va:

"Amor," dicea,  
il ciel mirando il piè fermo.  
"Dov'e, dov'e la fe'  
che'l traditor giurò?"

Miserella, ah più, no, no,  
tanto gel soffrir non può.

"Fa che ritorni il mio  
amor, com'ei pur fu,  
o tu m'ancidi, ch'io  
non mi tormenti piu."

"Non vo' più ch'ei sospiro  
se non lontan da me.  
No, no, che i martiri  
piu non dirammi affe!"

"Perchè di lui mi struggo,  
tutt'orgoglioso sta,  
che sì, se 'l fuggo,  
ancor mi pregherà."

"Se ciglio ha più sereno  
colei, che 'l mio non è,  
già non rinchiude in seno  
Amor si bella fè."

"Ne mai si dolci baci  
da quella bocca havrai  
ne più soavi... ah, taci,  
taci, che troppo il sa!"

Si tra sdegnosi pianti  
spargean le voci al ciel:  
così ne' cori amanti  
mesce amor fiamma e gel.

Trampling on flowers,  
she paced back and forth  
bemoaning her lost love  
as follows:

"Oh Love," she cried,  
stopping short and gazing at the heavens,  
"Where, where is the fidelity  
the traitor promised me?"

Poor girl! Ah no, no longer  
can she bear such rejection.

"Make my love return to me  
as he was before,  
or kill me, so that I should  
no longer torment myself.

"I no longer want these sighs.  
unless they are far away.  
and neither have this suffering  
afflict me any more!

"If I torture myself for his sake,  
he remains all proud  
so maybe, if I eschew him,  
he will want me back.

"That other woman  
may have a fairer brow than me,  
but she cannot possibly love him  
more sincerely.

"Never will he receive kisses  
from her lips, as sweet and tender as...  
ah, hush, say no more,  
for he knows it all too well!"

Through bitter tears and sobs,  
her cries rise to the skies.  
Thus in the hearts of lovers  
love mixes fire with ice.

*Ottavio Rinuccini*

**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,

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,

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.

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.

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

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

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

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.

*Francesco Petrarca*

# Cape Consort

The **Cape Consort** – a vocal ensemble with basso continuo – is fast establishing itself as the country's leading Early Music Ensemble by virtue of introducing exciting new (or rather, early...) repertoire to South African audiences as well as embracing an approach of informed and contextualized performance practice on period instruments. Concert highlights have been performances of Monteverdi's six-part Vespers, an all Purcell programme in collaboration with a consort of viols, the first South African performances of Neapolitan composer Caresana's Nativity Cantatas, as well as collaborations with the soprano Mandie de Villiers-Schutte and the renowned Dutch Baroque violinist Antoinette Lohmann.

Having been offered a veritable period performance platform at the 2011 Oudtshoorn *Klein Karoo Klassique*, the consort presented three different programmes of Early Music, which were enthusiastically received by festival audiences. For a concert at the *Odeion Musik Fest* in Bloemfontein the group joined forces with *Furor Musicus* (Amsterdam).

With a highly successful debut at the Fugard Theatre the *Cape Consort* has just recently embarked on its *Monteverdi Project*. Planned as a series of connected concerts to be developed over a long term, the project aims at exploring the musical developments in the work of Monteverdi and his contemporaries, with a specific focus on the emergence of music-dramatic elements, leading up to the invention of opera.