



**Penn**  
**Arts & Sciences**  
Department of Music

presents

**The Power of Affections:  
Vocal Music from  
Seventeenth-Century Italy**

Wednesday, November 12, 2014

7:30PM

Class of 1978 Pavilion, Kislak Center

Van Pelt Library, 6th floor

Philadelphia, PA

## PROGRAM

<i>Sinfonia</i> from “Tempro la cetra” ( <i>Settimo libro di madrigali</i> , 1619)	Claudio Monteverdi
“Musica dolce” ( <i>Gli Amori d’Apollo e di Dafne</i> , 1640)	Francesco Cavalli
“Ardo, sospiro e pianto” ( <i>Artemisia</i> , 1657)	
“Piangete, sospirate” ( <i>La Calisto</i> , 1651)	Francesco Cavalli
“Stral che vola” ( <i>Artemisia</i> , 1657)	
<i>Balletto IV e Corrente a tre</i> ( <i>Opera VIII</i> , 1629)	Biagio Marini
“Delizie d’Amore” ( <i>Elena</i> , 1659)	Francesco Cavalli
“Luci belle” ( <i>Elena</i> , 1659)	
Sonata sopra ‘La Monica’ ( <i>Opera VIII</i> , 1629)	Biagio Marini
“Lucidissima face” ( <i>La Calisto</i> , 1651)	Francesco Cavalli
“Dell’antro magico” ( <i>Giasone</i> , 1649)	
“Addio Roma” ( <i>L’incoronazione di Poppea</i> , 1643)	Claudio Monteverdi
“Lasciate averno, o pene, e me seguite” ( <i>Orfeo</i> , 1647)	Luigi Rossi
Ciaccona ( <i>Canzoni ovvero sonate concertate per chiesa e camera</i> , 1637)	Tarquinio Merula
“Accenti queruli” ( <i>Cantate a voce sola. Libro secondo</i> , 1633)	Giovanni Felice Sances

Julianne Baird, *soprano*  
 Rebecca Harris, *violin*  
 Mandy Wolman, *violin*  
 Rebecca Cypess, *harpsichord and clavictherium*  
 Christa Patton, *harp*  
 Richard Stone, *theorbo*

## PROGRAM NOTES

by Carlo Lanfossi

The seventeenth-century stage was quite a busy one. Gods, machinery, clunky sets, *comici*, animals, and dancers surrounded actor-singers. It is no surprise that in most of their early attempts at building a genre crafted on dramatic singing on stage, composers had to ensure singers were heard loud and clear. Quite literally so, as Claudio Monteverdi wrote in a letter on December 9, 1616:

I shall say first of all in general that music wishes to be mistress of the air, not only of the water; I mean (in my terminology) that the ensembles described in that play [*Le Nozze di Tetide*] are all low-pitched and near to the earth, an enormous drawback to beautiful harmony since the continuo instruments will be placed among the bigger creatures at the back of the set—difficult for everyone to hear, and difficult to perform within the set. (Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, 149)

The description is revelatory of the agenda behind the development of early opera. To be moved is not only an inner feeling, it is also the result of practical and material external forces. In 1677, the philosopher Baruch Spinoza would claim that affects consist in “the affections of the body whereby the body’s power of acting is increased or diminished ... together with the ideas of these affections” (*Ethics*, part 3).

Affections directly affect the power of the body. “The power of the affections” is the expression used by Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni (*Trattato della bellezza della volgar poesia*, 1700), one of the leaders of a new generation of Italian poets, the Academy of Arcadia. Looking back at the legacy of mid-seventeenth-century librettos (such as Cicognini’s *Giasone*, 1649), he claimed that

the series of those short meters, commonly called *arietta*, which with a generous hand are sprinkled over the scenes, and the overwhelming impropriety of having characters speak in song, completely removed from the compositions the power of the affections, and the means of moving them in the listeners. (Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 275)

Even in the eighteenth century, moving the listener’s emotions was still the first requirement for a successful opera. The difference with the previous generation of poets lay in how exactly they achieved this. The program of this concert displays a variety of affections, quite diverse in terms of chronology, emotional content, and provenance. By putting together instrumental music and vocal material (both the mentioned *ariette* and larger monologues), the program is in itself an experiment in the power of affections.

Our first piece, the *Sinfonia* from “*Tempo la cetra*,” is already a good example of contrast in affect. Monteverdi opens his seventh book of madrigals (1619) with this piece, whose text by Giambattista Marino, possibly the most

representative Italian baroque poet, is an invocation to sing and make music. A prologue-madrigal, as musicologists Gary Tomlinson and Mauro Calcagno have noted, this piece is framed by the instrumental *Sinfonia*, interspersed with dance rhythms and military musical gestures.

The next four arias also acknowledge the power of music. In Francesco Cavalli's *Gli Amori di Apollo e Dafne* (1640; libretto by Giovanni Francesco Busenello)—the second opera written by the pupil of Claudio Monteverdi—at the end of a long scene (I.4), the nymph Daphne praises music for its celestial power (“Musica dolce”). In a rather free-form style, this piece “takes the listener into an entirely different sonic world, one in which earthly pleasures are a reflection of heavenly delights, one in which the music of the spheres is given full reign” (Wendy Heller). Two subsequent arias are from a much later opera by Cavalli, *Artemisia* (1657; libretto by Nicolò Minato). Not only do they follow a more rigorous and conventional musical structure, they also portray two opposite visions of the world. On one side, “Ardo sospiro e piango” is a lament scene in which the singer’s heartbreaking lines are constantly supported by the string ensemble. On the opposite side, “Stral che vola” is a strophic tune on love’s ephemerality sung by Eurillo, Queen Artemisia’s musician. Typical of a mid-century aria, “Stral che vola” features the same virtuosic vocal line and an instrumental ritornello at the end of each stanza. With “Piangete, sospirate” (*La Calisto*, 1651; libretto by Giovanni Faustini) we return to another nymph, Callisto. While still strophic, this musical piece features little virtuosic style, instead focusing on slow chromatic bits of melody, which mirror Callisto’s dramatic discovery of the complexities of love and worship.

Biagio Marini’s *Balletto IV e Corrente a tre* is part of the *Sonate, Sinfonie, Canzoni, Passemezzi, Balletti, Correnti, Gagliarde & Ritornelli a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6 voci per ogni sorte di strumenti Opera VIII* (1629). This is one of the most important collection of early seventeenth-century instrumental music specifically designed “to be played on any sort of instruments” (violin, cornet, recorder, trombone, bassoon, viola da gamba, organ). Marini was a virtuoso violinist who spent his life travelling all over Europe and developing skills that would lead to some techniques still used today (e.g. double and triple stops, *tremolo*, *scordatura*). Instrumental music of this period was mainly based on dance patterns, and this *Balletto e Corrente* is no exception. What is fascinating is that the two sections of this piece (a short introduction in duple meter, and a longer section in triple meter) are based on the same musical material in terms of melody, texture, and harmonic pattern. The *corrente* (a dance in triple meter with an upbeat start) is thus a “prolongation” of the balletto.

The two arias that follow are from Francesco Cavalli’s *Elena* (1659; libretto by Nicolò Minato after Giovanni Faustini), an opera featuring the abduction of Helen of Troy by Theseus and her subsequent marriage to Menelaus. “Delizie d’amore” is Helen’s introductory aria, in which she longs for pleasure and sings of love’s primacy over any other emotion. The lyrics noticeably resemble those that Giacinto Andrea Cicognini wrote for another entrance aria, “Delizie, contenti,” from one of Cavalli’s earlier operas, *Il Giasone* (1649), and it probably is an explicit quotation. Helen’s initial feelings for Theseus are depicted in “Luci belle,” an aria written in a sort of ostinato triple meter.

The *Sonata sopra 'La Monica'* is another composition from Marini's *Opera VIII*. It is a trio sonata (two violins and continuo) in the form of variations on a famous Italian folk tune ("Madre non mi far monaca"—"Mother, don't make me become a nun") that was also popular in Germany, France, the Low Countries, and England. Marini is more interested in retaining the original harmonic pattern of the song than in literally quoting the melody.

"Lucidissima face" is another aria from Cavalli's *Calisto*. And just like "Piangete, sospirate," it is addressed to Diana. Endymion, the shepherd/astronomer, gazes into the sky, longing for the moon/Diana. It is a slow, lament-like bipartite aria, in which the string ensemble never ceases tenderly to counterpoint the singer's melodic line. On the opposite side of the spectrum of affections, "Dell'antro magico" (from Cavalli's *Giasone*) is Medea's dreadful invocation of the Underworld to protect her lover Jason as he goes to seek the Golden Fleece. A threefold repetition of imperious chords leads to Medea's hypnotic chant. Cavalli and his librettist accomplish this by using *versi sdruccioli* (lines that end with two unaccented syllables) and a chordal accompaniment that supports the peculiar meter of this scene.

With Monteverdi's "Addio Roma," (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*, 1643; libretto by Giovanni Francesco Busenello) the concert reaches its climax in terms of the variety of affects. Octavia's desperation after being exiled from Rome and repudiated by the emperor Nero is portrayed in a dramatic monologue characterized by a superlative use of *recitar cantando* (acting-singing). Ottavia's inability to contain her tears is depicted with the broken repetition of the vowel "A-...a-...a-...addio Roma," followed by a sequence of increasingly dramatic lines that close with the repetition of the word "addio" (Farewell)—her last, proud address to a cruel society.

Luigi Rossi's *Orfeo* (1647; libretto by Francesco Buti) is one of the many seventeenth-century musical settings of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Written at the request of Cardinal Mazarin for the French court, *Orfeo* is somewhat less dramatically sound than Monteverdi's homonymous masterpiece. "Lasciate averno" depicts Orpheus' misery after he loses Eurydice for the second time, in a sort of lullaby-like style. Louis XIV's stage was no place for uncontrolled desperation.

The last piece is something that today we would call a 'mashup'—a combination of two popular songs. Both Giovanni Felice Sances' "Accenti queruli" (*Cantate a voce sola. Libro secondo*, 1633) and Tarquinio Merula's Ciaccona (*Canzoni overo sonate concertate per chiesa e camera*, 1637) are based on the same ground bass, a C major dance in triple meter that likely arrived in Europe from the New World. The power of affections, after all, knows no geographical boundaries.

Tonight's concert will also be the occasion to introduce the audience to a rare musical instrument. The painting on the cover page of these program notes depicts the composer and castrato Marc'Antonio Pasqualini playing a so-called *clavicytherium*. It is a specific kind of harpsichord in which the soundboard and strings are mounted vertically. Designed to save space, the *clavicytherium* also features a quite distinctive sound that is the result of different mechanics than a normal harpsichord.

Musicologist and performer Rebecca Cypess, who is playing in tonight's concert, describes the *clavicytherium* as follows:

Sacchi's painting, executed in 1641, shows Apollo placing a laurel wreath upon the head of the Roman composer-singer Marc'Antonio Pasqualini, who stands at an upright harpsichord, or *clavicytherium*. No exemplars of an instrument like this one survive from the 17th century, but the modern builder Steven Sorli, based in Amherst, Massachusetts, has designed his own imagining of this instrument based on Sacchi's painting. Although Sorli's *clavicytherium* does not have a full-length soundboard, it projects a rich, resonant sound with a clear articulation. Pasqualini is shown in Sacchi's painting playing this unusual instrument, suggesting that in some instances he might have accompanied his own vocal performances.