

REVOLUTIONARIES REMASTERED

Toblach  
AUSGABE



# GESUALDO RENAISSANCE

THE SINGERS OF  
FERRARA  
CONDUCTED BY  
**ROBERT  
CRAFT**

## Carlo Gesualdo (1566 - 1613)

1	<i>Ardita Zanzaretta</i> (Madrigali libro sesto, No. 5)	2:51
2	<i>Resta di darmi noia</i> (Madrigali libro sesto, No. 19)	2:11
3	<i>Ecco, morirò dunque - Ah, già mi discoloro</i> (Madrigali libro quarto, No. 5)	3:09
4	<i>Sparge la morte al mio Signor nel viso</i> (Madrigali libro quarto, No. 14)	4:27
5	<i>Ardè il mio cor, ed è sì dolce il foco</i> (Madrigali libro quarto, No. 1)	1:35
6	<i>Già piansi nel dolore</i> (Madrigali libro sesto, No. 11)	2:45
7	<i>O Crux benedicta</i> (Sacrae Cantiones I, No. 14)	4:14
8	<i>Non t'amo, o voce ingrata</i> (Madrigali libro terzo, No. 12)	2:47
9	<i>Ardo per te, mio bene</i> (Madrigali libro sesto, No. 6)	2:15
10	<i>Io tacerò, ma nel silenzio mio</i> (Madrigali libro quarto, No. 3) -	2:29
11	<i>In van dunque, o crudele</i> (Madrigali libro quarto, No. 4)	2:19
12	<i>Moro, lasso, al mio duolo</i> (Madrigali libro sesto, No. 15)	2:38
13	<i>Ancide sol la morte</i> (Madrigali libro sesto, No. 3)	2:16
14	<i>O dolorosa gioia</i> (Madrigali libro quinto, No. 11)	3:41
15	<i>Dolcissima mia vita</i> (Madrigali libro quinto, No. 4)	2:34

### The Singers of Ferrara

Grace-Lynn Martin and Marilyn Horne, *sopranos* • Cora Lauridsen,  
*contralto*

Richard Robinson, *tenor* • Charles Scharbach, *bass-baritone*

### Robert Craft, *conductor*

Recorded in 1955, Radio Records, Los Angeles, California

Original recording produced by David Raksin

Reissue produced and remastered for Toblach Ausgabe by Gene Gaudette, Urlicht  
AudioVisual

Cover image: undated portrait of Gesualdo, ca.1600

The scope [of a Gesualdo madrigal], by Wagnerian standards, is small, but it is a measure that we today are able to feel, or at least adjust to perhaps for the first time since the cinquecento.

- Robert Craft, "Expositions and Developments", 1962

**Robert Craft** (20 October 1923 - 10 November 2015), the acclaimed American conductor and author, is mostly remembered for his professional relationship with and extensive championing of composer Igor Stravinsky, as well as his many books about - and recordings of - music by Stravinsky, Edgar Varèse, Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Anton Webern.

Often overlooked, however, was Craft's parallel interest in early music, particularly repertoire of the early and high Baroque era. He first took an interest in the era's masterworks as a student at the Juilliard School, especially the contrapuntally complex and harmonically bold works by Heinrich Schütz, Johann Sebastian Bach, Claudio Monteverdi, and - most notably - **Carlo Gesualdo**, Prince of Venosa and Count of Conza.

Through the first half of the twentieth century, Gesualdo's music was very rarely performed, but familiar to a small but influential cadre of composers and scholars. In the 1920s, Luigi Dallapiccola's interest in Gesualdo was ignited by studies with Antonio Illersberg, and at around the same time, Nadia Boulanger introduced her students to madrigals by Gesualdo, Luca Marenzio, and Claudio Monteverdi, according to Virgil Thomson.

There is little doubt that Gesualdo's reputation in the early and mid-20th century was greatly influenced by the most notorious events in the composer's life, particularly the events surrounding the death of his wife and her lover, ordered killed by the then-young Count upon his discovery that his wife was committing adultery. In the context of the era, this would not have been an unexpected incident; nevertheless, the prevalent view of Gesualdo was perhaps best encapsulated in this sentence from the 1942 edition of "The Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia of Recorded Music":

Eccentric, murderer, and violent modernist, Carlo Gesualdo was one of the most original talents of the late Renaissance in Italy.

Craft's first encounter with the music of Gesualdo occurred in the early 1950s, when he discovered a master's degree thesis on the composer's "Aestimatus sum" written by Ruth Adams.

At that time, Craft learned that copies of Gesualdo's works were extremely hard to locate. He managed to obtain a microfilm copy of a complete 1613 score edition of the six books of Gesualdo's madrigals from the Library of Congress, and together with Lawrence Martin re-scored works in modern readable notation. In a 1961 article for *High Fidelity* magazine, Craft described the process:

[D]uring a period of about a year, "transcribing" Gesualdo became a suspense-charged late-night diversion.

By this time, Craft was no stranger to the recording studio. He had already made two recordings of Stravinsky's music for Dial Records during the earliest years of the LP format. In 1954 he had begun to record the complete works with opus number of Anton Webern, a project that would take over two years to complete, culminating in the release of a four-LP set on Columbia Records that remains one of the most daring and artistically influential achievements of the LP era.

Craft had recruited some of the finest musicians in Los Angeles for his Webern project, and was similarly selective with his first recording of Gesualdo's music in 1955 - not for Columbia, but for the independent Hollywood-based label Sunset Records, which specialized in jazz and popular music. The artists were billed as "The Singers of Ferrara" - though they were not named individually on the LP release, they were some of Craft's favorite "go-to" vocalists in both concert and studio: sopranos Grace-Lynn Martin and Marilyn (then spelled "Marilynn") Horne, contralto Cora Lauridsen, tenor Richard Robinson, and bass-baritone Charles Scharbach. The recording, made at Radio Records (one of the busiest LA-based studios at that time), was produced by film composer David Raskin (both he and his younger brother Rudy were closely involved with production, supervision, and conducting for many of Sunset's releases).

Perhaps the most idiosyncratic and interesting facet of the LP release was the authorship of the liner notes by none other than Aldous Huxley. As several music historians and authors have observed, this may be the first example of the liner notes writer gracing the cover of a record album. The notes, while thoroughgoing and entertaining, do reflect the attitude of the time toward the more audacious and seamy aspects of Gesualdo's life, and several of Huxley's assertions have been superseded by scholarly investigation in the succeeding decades. Our own due diligence indicated that the notes (as opposed to the recording) may still be under copyright, but resourceful listeners should be able to track them down online.

Another issue that must be mentioned is the process of realizing "modern" performing editions of Gesualdo's works from original sources in the decade after World War II that was not by any means perfect, As Glenn Watkins writes in his book, *The Gesualdo Hex*:

[A]t the very time that Craft recorded two Gesualdo responsoria [for Columbia Records], "Aestimatus sum" and "Tristis est anima mea," an edition of the complete set of twenty-seven responses, begun as early as 1954 but published in 1959, had just gone to press with Ugrino of Hamburg. When I saw Craft's disk, I purchased it at once, checked the performance of the two responses against my own scorings, and was fascinated to find errors of transcription in both of them. I immediately wrote to Craft through Columbia Records, which forwarded my communication to him. His response, dated 7 April 1959, Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, came quickly and gratefully, even as he expressed surprise that someone had already completed an edition of the entire cycle of holy week responses. He then allowed that "the mistakes in 'Aestimatus sum' really surprise me."

Nevertheless, this early recording, with its startlingly bold, evocative singing that emphasizes the narrative and displays Gesualdo's daring harmonic complexities and modulations, leaves a powerful impression - and paved the way for an emerging generation of artists and scholars to undertake study and performance of some of the most challenging music of any era.

– Audra Fendrick



The opening bars of "Ardita zanzaretta" from the 1613 edition of Carlo Gesualdo's Sixth Book of Madrigals in Five Parts

*All texts anonymous, adapted by Carlo Gesualdo, unless otherwise noted.*

**Ardita zanzaretta**

morde colei che il mio cor strugge e tiene  
in così crude pene;  
fugge poi, e rivola  
in quel bel seno  
che il mio cor invola,  
indi la prende e stringe e le dà morte  
per sua felice sorte.  
Ti morderò ancor io,  
dolce amato ben mio,  
e se mi prendi e stringi,  
ahi, verrò meno  
provando in quel bel sen dolce veleno.

– Illuminato Perazzoli

**Resta di darmi noia,**

Pensier crudo e falace,  
Ch'esser non può già mai quel che a te piace!  
Morta è per me la gioia,  
Onde sperar non lice  
D'esser mai più felice.

**Ecco, morirò dunque!**

Né fia che pur rimire  
Tu ch'ancidi mirando  
il mio morire.

**Ahi, già mi discoloro,**

Oimè vien meno  
La luce a gli occhi miei,  
La voce, al seno!

O che morte gradita  
Se almen potessi dir:  
"Moro, mia vita!"

**Sparge la morte al mio Signor nel viso**

Tra squallidi pallori  
Pietosissimi horrori,  
Poi lo rimira e ne divien pietosa;  
Geme, sospira,  
e più ferir non osa.  
Ei, che temer la mira,  
Inchina il capo, asconde il viso, e spira.

**Arde il mio cor ed è sì dolce il foco**

Che vive nell'ardore  
Onde lieto si more.  
O mia felice sorte,  
O dolce, o strana morte!

A bold little mosquito  
Bites her for whom my heart yearns and holds it  
In such cruel pain;  
it then flees, and flies back  
into that beautiful breast  
that has stolen my heart,  
Then she takes it, squeezes and gives it death  
Which is its lucky fate.  
I too shall bite you,  
my sweet beloved,  
and if you capture and squeeze me,  
alas, I will faint  
tasting sweet poison in that beautiful breast.

Stop troubling me,  
Crude and deceitful thought,  
That which you want can never be!  
Joy is dead for me,  
And so I am allowed no hope  
Of ever becoming happier.

Behold, I shall die!  
You can't help but laugh,  
You who kills while gazing,  
At the manner in which I die.

Ah, I'm already discolored,  
Alas, thus dims  
The light coming to my eyes,  
The voice, at the breast!

Oh, what a welcome death  
If at least I could say:  
"I die, my life!"

Death floods my Lord's face,  
Over its bleak pallor,  
The most heartbreaking shade,  
Then [Death] looks at him and is moved to pity;  
He groans, sighs,  
and dares not to wound him again.  
But he who sees [Death] shrinking back  
Bows his head, hides his face, and dies.

My heart burns, and the fire is so sweet  
That it lives within the blaze,  
And so it dies joyfully.  
O my blissful fate!  
O sweet, O strange death!

**Già piansi nel dolóre;**  
ór gioisce il mio còre  
perché dice il ben mio:  
"Ardo per te ancor io."  
Fuggan dunque le nòie  
e'l tristo pianto  
omai si cangi  
in dolce e lieto canto.

**O crux benedicta!**

Quae sola fuisti digna,  
portare Regem coelorum,  
et Dominum,  
defende nos omni malo.

**"Non t'amo", o voce ingrata,**

la mia donna mi disse;  
e con pungente strale  
di duol e di martir, l'alma trafisse.  
Lasso, ben sù la piaga aspra e mortale,  
pur vissi e vivo  
ahi, non si può morire  
di duol e di martire.

**Ardo per te, mio bene,** ma l'ardore  
spira dolce aura al core.  
Moro per te, mia vita, ma il morire  
gioia divien, dolcissimo il languire.  
Felice sorte ancor ch'io arda e moia:  
l'ardor divien dolce aura, e 'l morir gioia.

**Io tacerò, ma nel silenzio mio**

Le lagrime e i sospiri  
Diranno i miei martiri.  
Ma s'avverrà ch'io mora,  
Griderà poi per me la morte ancora.  
dà la voce al silenzio ed a la morte.

**In van dunque,** o crudele,  
vuoi che'l mio duol  
e'l tuo rigor si cele,  
poi che mia cruda sorte.

**Moro, lasso, al mio duolo,**  
e chi può darmi vita,  
ahi, che m'ancide e non vuol darmi aita!  
O dolorosa sorte,  
chi dar vita mi può,  
ahi, mi dà morte!

I've already cried in great pain;  
now my heart rejoices  
because my beloved says:  
"I still burn with love for you."  
Let therefore my hardships be gone  
and let sad tears  
be turned hereafter  
into sweet and happy song.

O blessed Cross,  
which alone was worthy  
to bear the King of heaven,  
And Lord,  
defend us from all evil.

"I don't love you", oh ungrateful voice,  
my woman told me;  
and with a stinging arrow  
of pain and martyrdom, she pierced the soul.  
Yet despite the harsh and deadly wound,  
I lived and am still alive.  
Alas, one cannot die  
of grief and of martyr.

I burn for you, my love, but my passion  
Floats sweet breezes on my heart.  
I die for you, my life, but my dying  
Becomes a joy, so sweet the languishing.  
Happy fate, even as I burn and die:  
Passion becomes a soft breeze, and dying a joy.

I will remain quiet, yet in my silence  
the tears and sighs  
shall tell of my martyrdom.  
But if I should die  
Then Death shall cry out for me once again  
giving voice to silence and death.

Therefore in vain, oh cruel one,  
you yearn for my pain  
and your harshness to be hidden  
because my cruel fate

I die, alas, in my suffering,  
And she who could give me life,  
Alas, kills me and does not wish to help me.  
O dolorous fate,  
She who could give me life,  
Alas, gives me death.

**Ancide sol la Morte,**  
e tu, mio core, che la vita sei,  
uccider non mi puoi  
col dolce colpo  
de' begli occhi tuoi.  
Io, morendo per te, lieto morrei  
se ferita mortale  
uscir potesse  
da beltà vitale.

**O dolorosa gioia,**  
o soave dolore,  
per cui quest'alma  
è mesta e lieta more!  
O miei cari sospiri,  
miei graditi martiri,  
del vostro duol non mi lasciate privo  
poiché sì dolce mi  
fa morto e vivo.

**Dolcissima mia vita,**  
a che tardate la bramata aita?  
Credete forse  
che'l bel foco ond' ardo,  
sia per finir perché torcete il guardo?  
Ahi, non fia mai, ché brama il mio desire  
o d'amarti, o morire.

Only Death can kill,  
and you, my heart, who are life,  
cannot kill me  
with the gentle blow  
of your beautiful eyes.  
Were I to die for you, I would die happy  
if the mortal wound  
could be dealt  
by life-imparting beauty.

Oh sorrowful joy,  
oh sweet suffering,  
which makes this spirit sad,  
yet causes it to die happy!  
Oh my treasured sighs,  
my welcome torment,  
do not free me from the pain you confer;  
for it so sweetly makes me feel  
at once dead and alive.

My life's sweet beloved,  
why do you deny me the relief I crave?  
Perhaps you believe  
that my burning desire will end,  
because you turn away whenever I see you?  
Alas, this will never be,  
For I must either love you or die.

**Toblach Ausgabe TOB54911**

**766234848022**

©&© 2023, Toblach Ausgabe and Urlicht Rights Management

Digital edition © 2023, Toblach Ausgabe and Urlicht Rights Management.

All rights reserved.

No part of this sound recording and its component audio, text, or graphics files may be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, or shared electronically in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, file sharing, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, contact the publisher, using the subject line “Attention: Permissions Coordinator,” at the address below.

**Toblach Ausgabe** is distributed internationally by

**Alto Distribution**

**Magnus House**

**8 Ashfield Rd**

**Cheadle SK81BB, UK**

The logo for Toblach Ausgabe features the word "Toblach" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a horizontal line above it. Below "Toblach" is the word "AUSGABE" in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. The entire logo is white on a black background.

**Toblach**  
**AUSGABE**