

Carnevale veneziano

(a night on the piles)

Giovanni Croce
(ca.1557-1609)

Mascarata di lenguazi
(*Mascarate piacevoli et ridicolose*, 1590)

Adriano Banchieri
(1568-1634)

Barca da Venetia per Padova
(1623), n.s 1-IV

Orazio Vecchi
(1550-1605)

L'Amfiparnaso (1597)
Act I, 3; Act II, 1; Act II, 2

Giulio Cesare Barbetta
(ca.1540-ca.1603)

Moresca, detta le Forze
(*Intavolatura de liuto*, 1585)

Giovanni Croce

Il gioco dell'Occa
(*Triaca musicale*, 1595)

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Claudio Monteverdi
(1567-1643)

Si dolci è il tormento
(Carlo Milanuzzi, *Quarto scherzo delle ariose vaghezze*, 1624)

Giovanni Croce

Mascarata da Furlani
(*Mascarate piacevoli et ridicolose*, 1590)

Giulio Cesare Barbetta

Moresca, detta il Mattaccino
(*Intavolatura de liuto*, 1585)

Clement Janequin
(ca. 1485-1558)

La chasse
(*Les Chansons de la Guerre, la Chasse*, 1537)

Giovanni Croce

Canzon da contadini
(*Triaca musicale*, 1595)

I FAGIOLINI

directed by

ROBERT HOLLINGWORTH

ANNA CROOKES, soprano
CLARE WILKINSON, mezzo-soprano
WILLIAM PUREFOY, countertenor
ROBERT HOLLINGWORTH, countertenor
MATTHEW LONG, tenor
NICHOLAS HURNDALL SMITH, tenor
EAMONN DOUGAN, baritone
CHARLES GIBBS, bass

with

LYNDA SAYCE, lute and guitar
CATHERINE PIERRON, harpsichord

Staging of *L'Amfiparnaso* and *Barca di Venetia per Padova* by

Peter Wilson MBE

English texts for *L'Amfiparnaso* by Timothy Knapman

Mask coaching - Toby Wilsher

Masks - Ca'Macana, Venice

Painted props - Barbara Flores

**FAREWELL CONCERT FOR PROFESSOR LINO PERTILE,
DIRECTOR OF VILLA I TATTI, 2010-2015**

Carnevale veneziano

(a night on the piles)

Today's programme brings to our ears an echo of the music heard within the city of Venice in the early modern age during carnival: the music of the *calli*, the *piazze* and *palazzi*, in that place which the intrepid English traveller Thomas Coryate, in the "slender and naked narration" of his travels, proclaimed in 1611 "the most glorious, peereless, and mayden Citie". Set on the crossroads of east and west, Venice was a cosmopolitan port, in whose *piazze* could be seen, according to Coryate, "Polonians, Slavonians, Persians, Grecians, Turks, Jewes, Christians of all the famousest regions of Christendome, and each nation distinguished from another by their proper and peculiar habits". The carnival entertainments of Venice were legendary, and drew countless visitors in the period between December 26 - the feast of Saint Stephen - and Shrove Tuesday, when the city on the lagoon became a pullulating hive of revelry and license. Festivities began on St Stephen's Day with the *liston* - the parade of aristocratic masked revellers - followed by the Doge's ceremonial visit to the burial place of the saint in the church of San Giorgio Maggiore, crossing the lagoon on a bridge of boats lashed together. From then until *martedì grasso*, the city became an immense urban theater, offering for its revellers the most extraordinary spectacles: bull hunts, battles on bridges, acrobatic displays such as the 'Flight of the Turk', or 'the Angel'¹ and the human pyramids known as the 'Labours of Hercules' for the feast of *giovedì grasso*, the never-ending parade of *maschere* (mummers escorted by musicians), the *regate*, the musicians performing on gondolas, and even elaborately constructed mobile theaters floating down the canals. The streets and squares were full of strolling players who entertained the crowds on improvised stages, always accompanied by music - both vocal and instrumental, as Coryate has testified. The mountebanks of Venice, who made use of music to sell their wares, drew his particular approval, so that he declared that there were more of them "in Venice then else where, and that of the better sort ... most eloquent fellows... who sell oyles, soveraigne waters, amorous songs printed, apothecary drugs and a common-wealthe of other trifles" (citing later the charismatic snake handlers depicted by Giacomo Franco in his engraving of Venetian mountebanks in 1610, seen on the facing page). Coryate also recorded for posterity a blind *cantastorie* who performed every day in piazza San Marco: "a singular

¹ Acrobatic feats performed on *giovedì grasso*: the ascent (or descent) on a rope attached to the top of the bell tower of San Marco, which was connected to some sustaining element in the piazza, or even perhaps on a boat on the canal. We can read on page 55 the description of an extraordinary event which took place in 1680, when a certain Santo da Cà reached the bell tower of San Marco on the back of a live horse: our sympathies lie entirely with the poor horse, and we trust that he managed to return safely to *terra ferma* after such a horrid experience (to be honest, we don't much care about what happened to that Santo).

fellow for singing extemporal songs” (perhaps the famed Paolo Britti, *il cieco di Venezia*, whose prints of *canzonette ridicolose* could be bought at San Salvador in the calle de’ Frari, or in the calle de’ Fabri). During the carnival season countless balls were held in private *palazzii*; gambling in public was permitted; sumptuary laws were suspended; modest acts of civic violence, such as the throwing of ‘ovi odoriferi’, were tolerated. Civic excitement was provided by the dramatic entertainments performed throughout the city – both in the *piazzee* and *palazzii* – by professional groups of *comici dell’Arte*, who arrived in Venice in time for carnival and dispersed when it was over.

Today’s programme offers some of the lighter forms of musical entertainments from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: masquerades, musical games, madrigal comedies and other *bizzarrie*, which were performed as diversions at banquets, between the acts of plays, at gatherings of academies, and in the streets and *piazzee* during the long Venetian carnival season. Since most of these forms exploit humour in its various guises, this programme also explores the concept of comedy within the context of Italian music of the late Renaissance. And to complement this repertoire, our notes offer, as an appendix, a *theriaca* of writings about carnival in Venice: observations of travellers who visited the city during this hectic season, and have left their impressions for posterity.

This concert honours Professor Lino Pertile, distinguished Dante scholar, and Director of Villa I Tatti from 2010-2015. We have not taken our point of departure for this occasion from Dante and his *Divina commedia*, as might well have been anticipated, because so very few tangible traces have been left of a related musical repertoire. We have chosen, instead, to celebrate through music Lino’s enchanting sense of humour, which has enlivened many a staff meeting, set many a table guest at their ease, and delighted the members of our community on an infinite number of occasions. We have called, for this purpose, an ensemble with whom we are proud to have collaborated for all of twenty-three years: first engaging them – as a group of young Oxford musicians - for a concert to raise funds for the restoration of the city of Dubrovnik after the bombings of 1991, and today, after more than two decades of felicitous collaboration, to perform for us that repertoire for which they are now justly famous world-wide: *commedia nella musica rinascimentale italiana*. We warn our gentle public that - as is consistent with the anarchy associated with the carnival season - our musicians might very well decide to produce for us a surprise or two. So we humbly beg your indulgence, through the words of an author who knew a great deal about comic characters, and included them in his plays:

*If we shadows have offended,
think but this, and all is mended,
that you have but slumber'd here
while these visions did appear...*

Buon divertimento!

Kathryn Bosi