

# *Tenshō Shōnen Shisetsu*

## The Italian Tour of Four Japanese Youths in 1585

### **Florence**

Alessandro Striggio  
(1536/7-1592)

O de la bella Etruria  
*Madrigali a cinque voci, primo libro* (1560; repr.  
1585)

All'apparir delle leggiadre figlie  
*Musica de diversi auttori illustri per cantar et sonar in  
concerti... libro primo* (1584)

### **Rome**

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina  
(1525/6-1594)

Tu es Petrus  
*Liber primus motetorum* (1569)

Io son ferito; diminutions by Gio. Battista  
Bovicelli, *Regole, passaggi di musica* (1594) (cornetto  
and continuo)

Tomás Luis de Victoria  
(1548-1611)

Alma redemptoris mater  
*Cantica Beata Virginis vulgo Magnificat* (1581)

### **Ferrara**

Giaches de Wert  
(1535-1596)

Si come' ai freschi matutini rai  
*L'ottavo libro de madrigali a 5* (1586)

Luzzasco Luzzaschi  
(1545-1607)

Ahi, cruda sorte mia  
Se parti i' moro  
*Quinto libro de madrigali a 5* (1595)

Giaches de Wert

Ascendente Iesu in naviculam  
*Modulationum liber primus* (1581)



### **Venezia**

Andrea Gabrieli  
(c.1533-1585)

Deus qui beatum Marcum  
*Concerti di Andrea, e di Gio. Gabrieli continenti musica  
di chiesa, madrigali, & altro* (1587)

Giovanni Gabrieli  
(1554/57-1612)

Domine Dominus  
*Sacrae symphoniae ... tam vocibus, quam instrumentis,  
edition nova* (1597)

Giovanni Croce  
(1557-1609)

Il gioco dell'Occa  
*Triaca musicale nella quale vi sono diversi Caprici (1595)*

### Vicenza

Leone Leoni  
(c.1560-1627)

Dolci baci, soavi  
*Bell' Alba: quinto libro dei madrigali a 5 voci (1602)*  
(diminutions for cornetto,  
dulcian and continuo)

### Mantua

Guglielmo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua  
(1538-1587)

Padre, che'l ciel, la terra e'l tutto reggi  
*Madrigali a cinque voci, novamente posti in luce (anon.)*  
(1583)

Benedetto Pallavicino  
(c.1551-1601)

Ond'avviene che t'io amo: dialogo a 8  
*Il terzo libro di madrigali a 5 (1585)*

Claudio Monteverdi  
(1567-1643)

Anima mia, perdona  
*Il quarto libro de madrigali (1603)*

### Towards Spain

Mateo Flecha  
(1481-1553)

El fuego: Ensalada  
*Las ensaladas de Flecha (1581)*



## I FAGIOLINI

directed by

ROBERT HOLLINGWORTH

ANNA CROOKES (soprano)  
RACHAEL ELLIOTT (soprano)  
CLARE WILKINSON (mezzo-soprano)  
ROBERT HOLLINGWORTH (alto)  
NICHOLAS HURNDALL SMITH (tenor)  
CHRISTOPHER BOWEN (tenor)  
EAMONN DOUGAN (baritone)  
CHARLES GIBBS (bass)  
DAVID HATCHER (dulcian)  
GAWAIN GLENTON (cornetto)  
CATHERINE PIERRON (organ)

## Prologue to the programme

The event that we remember today - the European visit of four young noble Japanese converts to Christianity - was the brain child of that indefatigable Jesuit **Alessandro Valignano**, who entered the Society of Jesus in 1566. His exceptional administrative talents were soon recognised, for at the age of thirty four he was appointed Visitor to the Jesuit missions in Asia. Valignano arrived in Japan in 1579, on the first of his three visits to that country. There he found a thriving Christian community. Missionary work had begun with the visit of the Jesuit priest Francis Xavier and two companions in 1549. At that time no central control existed in Japan, which was divided into fiefs ruled by regional *daimyo* or lords. The missionaries had converted several *daimyo* of Kyushu, who had then encouraged their subjects to embrace Christianity. In due course Nagasaki, where a Portuguese trading ship docked from 1571 on, would become to all extent and purpose a Christian city.

Valignano introduced innovative reforms into the Jesuit mission, insisting, for example, that its members follow his example of studying the Japanese language and customs. "More than any other people on the earth", he wrote, "the Japanese observe an exact and detailed ceremonial in their costume, eating habits, relations with servant, organisation of the house, the greeting of guests, and in all these displays, according to social classes". Valignano was convinced that conversion to the faith would require the integration of the Jesuit priests into the Japanese community. He was so successful that a Spanish visitor to Japan would write of the Jesuits in 1596 that "they so imitate the Japanese that they wear their clothes, speak their language, eat like them on the floor without cloths, tables or napkins. Nor do they use their hands but eat with a small stick, observing the same ceremonies as the Japanese do themselves". As a result, the rate of conversion improved considerably, and it is said that by 1582 there were some 150,000 believers.

Valignano founded two seminaries for Christian boys: one near Kyoto and the other in Kyushu. Here they were taught Japanese letters and literature, Latin and Portuguese. The more talented also learnt European music, painting and engraving. Emphasis was placed on exercises in Christian piety, in the hope that the students would enter religious life. But the expense of maintaining these schools, along with some two hundred churches, twenty Jesuit residences and about eighty priests and brothers, was crushing. Valignano believed that if the mission were better known in Europe some aid might be forthcoming. At the same time, he thought it necessary that the Japanese should know of the "glory and greatness of Christianity, and of the greatness and wealth of our kingdoms and cities, and of the honour in which our religion is held, and the power that it possesses in them", so that they would no longer think of the Jesuit missionaries as poor people, of little consequence in their own countries, who came to Japan as a desperate measure to seek their fortunes in that distant land.

Thus Valignano conceived the bold and imaginative plan of a Japanese mission to Europe: a small legation sent by the three Christian *daimyo* of Kyushu. It comprised two young nobles: Mancio Itō, related to Francis, Re di Bungo, and Michele, related to Ōmura and Arima. Two other youths of noble birth - Martino and Giuliano - were chosen as their companions. All four were pupils of the Jesuit seminary in Kyushu. The boys would be accompanied by the youthful Jesuit priest Diego de Mesquita as guide, mentor, interpreter and guardian, as well as a Japanese Jesuit priest who would tutor them in the Japanese language and literature, and two young boys as their personal servants.

Valignano chose boys of tender age for his mission (aged between 13 and 14), because he considered that their youth would help them better bear the hardships of the long voyage; then, being of an impressionable age, they would be all the more overwhelmed by the splendours of Europe. Moreover, they might enjoy many years of life back in their own countries in which to tell of its glories. Their families were reluctant to let them go, but were eventually convinced by Valignano. With a hastily assembled wardrobe of European dress for every day, wear, two fine sets of ceremonial Japanese robes for each, some gifts (including screens of great artistic value for the Pope), and letters from the Christian *daimyo* addressed to the Pope, the King of Spain and other persons of importance, the party boarded a Portuguese ship at Nagasaki on 20 February 1582 and set sail for Europe.

We will not give here an account of their infinitely long and dangerous voyage, during which illness, the occasional shortage of food and water, and sometimes dire peril (the threat of shipwreck and attack from pirates) added to their already considerable discomfort. Some relief from tedium was obtained by the hours passed with Latin lessons from Mesquita, their studies in the Japanese language and literature, and daily practise on their musical instruments. Fishing from the boat offered both a relaxation and a welcome addition to the diet on board. Daily prayers were said, and the Divine Office recited during the day.

After a long and stressful journey via Macao and Cochin, the party reached Goa safely in October of 1583. Here, Valignano, to his chagrin, found that he would not be able to accompany the boys to Rome, since he had just been appointed Jesuit Superior in India. So he compiled a list of fifty-five instructions for the Rector of the College in Goa who would replace him. Amongst these were the order that the gifts prepared by

the legate (including the valuable screens), should be carefully preserved, and, since they were destined for the Pope, always in their possession. The boys should wear European dress while on their journey, but wear their Japanese robes when meeting dignitaries. They should not be allowed to walk in Japanese dress, but always be on horseback or in carriages. They must be shown all the riches of Europe - the most imposing palaces, gardens, monasteries, churches, holy relics - but nothing which might upset their sense of propriety. They should always be accompanied by a Jesuit priest who must guard them from anything unedifying, because they must return home with full esteem for the Christian faith. In particular, they must not have contact with anyone who might bring scandal to their ears regarding the church (such as the success of Protestantism in the north). They should keep a detailed written account of all that impressed them. Notwithstanding his promotion, Valignano's disappointment was keen; as a great administrator, he was fully in control.

From Goa, the legation reached Lisbon on 10 August of 1584, a long two years, five months and twenty days after their departure from Japan.

With regard to the boys' reception in Europe, Valignano had requested that they be always accommodated in the Jesuit residences of the cities that they visited, and that they be given "few demonstrations of honour, but many of affection". Solemn and public receptions should not be organised; everything should be kept on an intimate scale. His request was not respected. Already in Evora they were met by a welcome usually reserved for the highest dignitaries of church and state. In Madrid, Philip of Spain received them with great ceremony and showered them with every attention. The cities and the courts of Italy could hardly receive them with less pomp than the King of Spain, or the Pope in Rome, who accorded them the formal honours due to ambassadors of state, rather than a modest legation bringing the homage of some Christian *daimyo* in Japan. Letters then flew between the cities and courts. A Florentine courtier, Cavalier Vinto, sent to Mantua an account of their arrival in Livorno and their stay in Pisa. The Mantuan ambassador in Rome, Camillo Capilupi, wrote to the Duke of Mantua that he had visited the legate, and forwarded his invitation to Mantua, which they accepted with pleasure (he also passed on a message from the Cardinal of Mondevi warning that if the boys were to swim in the cold waters of Mantua, as did Prince Vincenzo, it would be deleterious for their health and fertility). The Florentine ambassador in Ferrara wrote to the Grand Duke of Tuscany saying that Duke Alfonso II and Don Alfonso d'Este wished to know everything about their appearance, clothes, customs and spoken languages; and above all, what they had most admired amongst the wonders of Florence. The Venetian ambassador in Rome, Lorenzo Priuli, at first sceptical of the status of the legation, wrote later to the Senate saying they should be well received, in order to please the newly elected Pope. The competition had begun...

**Kathryn Bosi**

This concert was dedicated to the memory of

**Shona Kelly Wray**

Fellow of Villa I Tatti 2011-2012

esteemed scholar  
beloved colleague