



Dio Mio! That's Amore!

Drew Minter, countertenor, harp and percussion

Marcia Young, soprano and harp

Mark Rimple, countertenor and lute

Gloria in excelsis	Matteo da Perugia (fl. c. 1350 – 1400)
O Padua, Sidus Preclarum (motet)	Johannes Ciconia (c. 1370 – 1412)
O tu chara scienca musice mie (madrigal)	Giovanni da Fierenze (fl. 1340 - 1350)
Se la nimica mie Fortuna mie (ballata)	Francesco Landini (c. 1325 – 1397)
Sì dolce non sonò (madrigal)	Landini
Donna Liçiadra (ballata)	Bartolino da Padova (fl. c. 1365 – 1405)
Gram piant' agli ochi (ballata)	Landini
Belicha (estampie)	Anonymous (ca. 1390 – 1400)
I' vo' bene (ballata)	Gherardello da Fierenze (ca. 1320/5 – 1362/3)
- <i>Intermission</i> -	
Credo Deus Duorum	Antonio Zacara da Teramo (c. 1350 – 1413)
Rosetta (intabulation)	Anon., Faenza codex, after Zacara da Teramo
Una Panthera (madrigal)	Ciconia
Alba cholumba (ballata)	Bartolino
De bon parole (ballata)	Nucella (fl. ca. 1401 - 1436)
Segugi a corde (caccia)	Anonymous (fl. c. 1340 – 1350)
Ave Regina – Mater Innocencie – [Ite missa est]	Marchetto da Padova (fl. 1319)
Con umil core salutiamo cantando (lauda)	Florentine Laudario (c. 1300)
Benedicamus Domino	Paolo da Fierenze (ca. 1355 – 1436)

Notes:

In the Italian courts and chapels of the fourteenth century Italy, the unbridled love of God, country, women, the hunt, and even music itself burst forth in a flowering of song. While French music explored a largely refined and delicate musical route, Italian composers turned generally towards a more florid and expressive style, one that would require great vocal and instrumental virtuosity to communicate strong passion and emotional depth. The trecento style, then, is the sudden appearance of dazzling technique and direct emotional appeal. Whether Italian musicians wrote about their patron city-state, the Virgin Mary, or the sexual experience, they tended to use similar melodic gestures that bespeak a common cultural bond between sacred and secular art. This afternoon's program is an exploration of the intimate connections between the sacred and secular musical works of the trecento, spanning from the music of the clergy, to the most erudite art music, to the music of the working-class members of the lay confraternities and the music played by the minstrels employed at court. The common thread in this diverse body of repertoire is the Italian fixation upon love.

A decade ago, the American Musicologist Blake Wilson investigated the intimate relationships between the musical activities of lay confraternities in Florence, known as *Laudesi*, and the rise of florid polyphonic song. His research shows that the rise of a florid style of singing in the more complex, soloistic *Laude* such as *Con umil core salutiamo cantando* and secular songs such as *O tu chara scienza* and *Una Panthera* were linked to a similar rise of a florid style of instrumental performance, such as the anonymous *istampier* *Belicha* and the anonymous intabulation of Zacharais' *Rosetta* from the *Faenza* codex. A native, Florentine style of singing seems to have spread across the Italian peninsula in the trecento, interacting and absorbing the rhythmic and textural aspects of the French *ars subtilior* style by the end of the century. Through the examination of documents such as pay records, he was able to connect clerical composers, some known for their polyphonic works, with the *Laudesi* companies. Similar investigations by Cyrilla Barr helped to establish the importance of professional musicians, especially instrumentalists, in the *Lauda* tradition.

Viva la Musica!

There are many works in the Middle Ages that attest to the love of Music. Music had a philosophical meaning beyond the act of music making, being one of the four ancient mathematical arts of the quadrivium. While the quadrivium was eclipsed by studies of Aristotle, Law, and Canon law (Theology), an Arts Master from Paris or Padua would have earned the right to teach the quadrivial books of Boethius, both of which treat music as the science numerical comparison using integer ratios. Such ratios as 2:1 (which creates a musical interval, the octave) or 3:2 (the fifth) were believed to exist in the soul of the world since creation, a belief inherited from Plato's *Timaeus*, one of the central ancient texts known in the early and high Middle Ages. Medieval poets and composers often invoked *celestial music* (Boethius' *musica mundana*) which is also reflected in our own bodies (*musica humana*). To be attuned to actual music (*musica instrumentalis*) was to excite these innate, divine ratios, and to partake of the essences of the cosmos and the mind of God. In *O tu chara scienza*, melody is revealed as the handmaid of "music", which refers to the music of our souls and the heavenly spheres – like music therapy, the healing art of melody should "tune" a corrupt soul back to health. The composer, Giovanni da Firenze, seems to have been a rival of the younger composer Jacopo da Bologna. The power of music to create effects in listeners and to move both men and gods was a commonplace in medieval literature, and is an important poetic device in the works of William Shakespeare centuries later. A catalogue of music's effects in Greek antiquity is heard in Landini's *Si dolce non sonò*; here the downside of music for such important figures as Orpheus, Philomela, and Marsyas – who was skinned for daring to win a musical contest with Apollo – find a contrast in the final strophe of the madrigal, which speaks of Amphion's construction of the walls of ancient Thebes using the power of music alone.

Love of Country

Marchetto da Padova was one of the true musical scholars of the age, writing two influential and often copied treatises from the illustrious university of Padua, a center of musical and medical learning. Johannes Ciconia's *O Padua* is an excellent anthem of praise for this "university town" and military power. Law, art, philosophy, and poetry are praised as ornaments of this beautiful land, and the composer slyly manages to inscribe his musical signature into the work's ending. Padua also supported Bartolino, an unrivalled master of the florid style; his works delight in the most complex ornamentation and are clearly models for

Ciconia's madrigals. *Alba columba* is in contrast to his normally spasmodic style, and is an example of the natural madrigal style which evoked images of flora and fauna. In addition, the symbol of a white dove could be a reference to the Visconti victory over Padua in 1388. Ciconia's madrigal *Una Panthera* is another emblematic "national anthem" based on the chivalric device for the city of Lucca; unlike the rich polyphony of O Padua, it is driven by the virtuosity of the florid madrigal style.

Courtly Love and the Cult of the Virgin

In the late twelfth century, Andreas Capellanus penned the rules of courtly love known to those in the Provençal court of Eleanor of Aquitaine. Quoting Ovid, he speaks of the lure of forbidden love, the high goal of lovesickness, and describes how a lover may approach the art much as a monk sequesters himself in a cloister: "...a true lover would rather be deprived of all his money and of everything that the human mind can imagine as indispensable to life rather than be without love, either hoped for or attained." Praise of one's love-object, the highborn noble lady, was institutionalized in the songs of the troubadours and their Northern counterparts, the trouvères. By the turn of the fourteenth century, the lady had acquired an almost sacred status. No doubt the elevation of the beloved woman was greatly affected by the cult of the Virgin Mary and the various extra liturgical devotions accorded to her. In Italy, the *Laudesi* and *Disciplinati* were two such groups who dedicated feasts and songs to her in the vernacular tongue. Dante treated the art of courtly love poetry in *La Vita Nuova*, in which he coins new terms for the two poetic languages of France (the *Lingue d'Oc* and *Lingue d'Oueil*) and establishes his art of Italian vernacular love poetry through a wonderfully frank mélange of autobiographical and poetical self-analysis. Like Machaut's low self-esteem in the face of his lady in the *Remede de Fortune*, Dante finds his beloved Beatrice almost an impossible standard to live up to: "...it seemed to me that I had undertaken too lofty a theme for my powers, so much so that I was afraid to enter upon it; and so I remained for several days desiring to write and afraid to begin."

The Italian musician-poets of the trecento inherited their *koiné* from giants such as Dante, Petrarch, whose life spans the length of the trecento style, and Boccaccio, the great fabulist. Boccaccio's company of young nobles in his *Decameron*, escaping from the city during the Black Death, entertain themselves after dinner by playing on the lute and other instruments, dancing, and singing canzonets, a generic term for sung poetry. Emilia sings to the accompaniment of Dioneo's lute at the conclusion of the first night's festivities, and on the sixth night, they sing the tale of Troilus and Cressida. Another member of the company improvises a poem to the general delight of his peers. Clearly, the love of music and poetry was an indulgence taken along with dancing, feasting, and story telling, and was a welcome escapist pleasure in times of great tribulation.

An important manuscript of trecento compositions now housed in the British Museum contains a series of monophonic works with evocative titles and no text. These *istampitas* (Fr: *estampies*) are often quite virtuosic. Relatively few of these works survive, and virtually nothing is known about their performance other than their probable use in social gatherings, mentioned often in the works of poets such as Boccaccio and Machaut. The *istampita* is divided into points (*puncti*), each of which has a pair of endings, open and closed. Each point begins discursively and ends somewhere in the middle of the phrase of the previous point. We are performing a lengthy excerpt from *Belicha*, which shares many of its melodic features with several other works in the same manuscript. Monophonic instrumental music in the West may have disappeared with the medieval period, but it survives in most non-Western cultures; it is instructive to compare the melodic writing and effect of works like *Belicha* with such music, including the Turkish café music of the late 19th century, the Oud improvisations of the Middle East, or the Koto music of Japan.

In the same manuscript as *Belicha*, we find a number of works by the preeminent composer of his age, Francesco Landini. Landini was blind from smallpox, and a virtuoso on several instruments including the organ. He has one of the largest bodies of work in his generation, and his works were disseminated in several manuscripts, and was associated with the church of San Lorenzo in Florence. *Se la nimica* partakes of more syncopation and polyrhythm than many works of his contemporaries, perhaps showing a slight fascination with French music. His love of musical complexity (isorhythmic composition, hocket, etc.) is clearly in evidence in *Si dolce non sonò*, and the elegance of his three-part writing is nowhere better demonstrated than in *Gram piant' agli ochi*.

The lust for the hunt was a common euphemism for the pursuit of love; in *Segugi a corde* the sound of the hunt – the hounds, the trumpeting, the calls of the hunters and the spying of prey – are pretty obvious metaphors. Such *caccie*, or hunt-songs, proceed with two higher voices in canon accompanied by a free tenor part which functions mainly to “harmonize” the canon. They almost always revel in onomatopoeia and sound-effects. This caccia was once attributed to Magister Piero, one of the earliest trecento composers, but is now thought to be anonymous.

Landini’s pupil Antonio Squarcialupi owned a large volume of trecento music, which was already somewhat out of date by the early fifteenth century (Italian trecento notation had gone out of practice, as lamented in by the Paduan theorist Prosdocimo de Beldomandis). Organists continued to set trecento works in overly florid intabulations into the fifteenth century, including the works of Jacopo and Zachara da Teramo; examples of their works are found in the Faenza codex, which mixes the French and Italian works in an international melting pot of ornamentation. As in the time of J.S. Bach, the melding of two national styles into one was one of the most important developments that led the way for the later fifteenth century composers who would eventually inaugurate a much different international musical language. *Rosetta* is a typical concoction – the original, slower tenor line was retained, while the upper voice was created anew saving little from the original and forming fascinating arabesques to connect the clear cadences and clauses of the original music. Momentary fixations, such as descending fifth leaps, often assert themselves freely, sometimes with reference to the original work but often out of sheer creativity. The ability to create a new work from preexisting material was the sine qua non of the medieval musician.

Clerkly Love –Adoration of the Divine vs. Base Desire

Apart from Marchetto, the earliest known composer on our program is probably Gherardello da Fierenze, who Wilson notes was paid for unknown contributions to Laudesi in Florence. His ornate style in *I’ vo’ bene* can be compared to that of the anonymous, florid lauda *Con umil core salutiamo cantando*, likely composed just before the turn of the fourteenth century. Gherardello’s composition has the benefit of mensural (rhythmic) notation, while the relatively few surviving laudas exist in a rhythmically neutral chant notation. However, in both works there is a fluid mixture of syllabic and melismatic writing. Both compositions are monophonic, though we know from payment records that instrumentalists were engaged, usually in pairs, to augment the performances of Laudesi companies such as that of Orsanmichele. The petition for the Mary’s intercession for the poet-singer in *Con umil core salutiamo cantando* can easily read as thanks by a professional musician for the Blessed Virgin’s patronage, inspiration and protection. By contrast, the pious cleric Gherardello’s ballata is thoroughly carnal. Clearly there was nothing like Puritanism to drive a rift between the sacred and secular in terms of social expression, even for those involved deeply in religious life. A more representative sacred work of the trecento period is the *Benedicamus* of Paolo, known as “tenorista” – he was a book lover who owned copies of Boethius’ musical work and perhaps compiled the famous Squarcialupi codex of trecento music. The *Benedicamus* is typical of the trecento style, with hocket passages and two highly active upper parts over a slow moving tenor.

The End of the Papal Schism: Towards an International Style

Part of the reason for the demise of trecento notation and its musical style was the strong influence of the French ars subtilior style in the last decades of the trecento. Antonio Zacara da teramo Matteo da Perugia, and Johannes Ciconia are two composers whose works were influenced by this style. The conciliatory movement of the early fifteenth century, part of the movement to end the Papal Schism, brought many clerics from across Europe into contact with each other, and these clerics were often composers or brought composers in their retinues to councils such as that at Constance (1414 – 1418). Even before this event, French-trained composers were found working in courts of England, Spain, Flanders, and Italy, bringing their notation with them. Singers and composers whose fame spread across the continent were often trained at the Papal court of Avignon. The rhythmic complexities of Nucella’s *De bon parole* are the same as found in the music of the ars subtilior and the Papal court. Unlike the trecento tradition, the sense of a modern barline is not clear in these works, which sometimes resemble the rhythm of Eliot Carter more than other medieval repertoires. The breakdown of a regular and predictable metric pulse - ubiquitous in the

Italian trecento style - is one symptom of the spread of French musical ideas (and notation) into Italy at the end of the fourteenth century. The composer is known solely from this single work.

The trecento style of three-part sacred singing can be heard in the anonymous motet *Ave Regina – mater innocencie – [Ite Missa Est]*. In this motet, one hears major chords as oddly dissonant, striving for the more perfect consonances of the cadences; the tuning, following Marchettus, was a peculiar form of Pythagorean intonation which demanded that sharp notes be raised $\frac{4}{5}$ of a tone at a cadence. Such a style of singing is clearly out of place in the later, conciliar works of Matteo da Perugia and even more so in the strikingly modern and consonant music of Johannes Ciconia, in which more imperfect consonances (thirds and sixths) occur in stable contexts, and which demand a more pure method of tuning these new consonances. In general, secular music outweighed sacred music in the trecento, and two-voice works outnumber three-voice works until late in the fourteenth century.

By the second quarter of the fifteenth century, the differences between French and Italian music began to be outweighed by their similarities. Both national styles adopted the same notation and similar genres. Composers such as Dufay and later Josquin des Prez traveled between Italy and France, and the demands of such travel had a huge impact on the style of European art music in the early Renaissance. By the turn of the sixteenth century, the music printer Petrucci would immortalize the last vestiges of the *formes fixes*, now without their poetry and form, in the *Odhecaton*; this best-selling series of Franco-Flemish works was printed in Venice, and the international style, dominated by French innovations, finally vanquished the eloquent musical medievalism of Bartolino, Gherardello, the Laudesi, and their contemporaries. By a strange twist of fate, however, the very first lute volumes printed by Petrucci contained a florid style of ornamentation that would continue on into the Baroque; the seeds of the vocalism of Handel and Hasse were contained in these division works, and their direct antecedents were Wilson's trio of styles: the Lauda, the solo secular style of the balata and madrigal, and the florid instrumental music of the Istanpittas and intabulations.

Mark Rimple