



Chromatic Renaissance

Continuing programme, 2023-

Introduction

Gesualdo's fervid, harmonically daring music is relatively well-known today, but few people are aware of the decades of research into the chromatic and microtonal possibilities of music that preceded his work. Around 1550, nearly half a century before Gesualdo was writing, composer-theorists such **Vicentino** propounded intricate and sometimes outlandish views on the origins of harmony in Ancient Greek music, leading to the latter's extraordinary microtonal madrigals as well as a wealth of highly chromatic works by composers including **Rore, Lasso, Luzzaschi** and **Marenzio**. This 'researched' music was highly prized for its sophistication by ambitious princes, and on one level can be seen as a sort of hothouse 'musica reservata' – a music reserved for the appreciation of the true cognoscenti – but should also be seen in the context of a more wide-ranging project of progressive composers at the time to dig deeper into music's expressive possibilities and intensify the listener's emotional response, whether a prince or not.

This music is little-known and scarce performed today, but is fascinating, beautiful and as strange to modern ears as to 16th-century ones. Our programme selects some of the most remarkable works from this repertoire, accompanied by modern responses. The programme is introduced by James Weeks in an entertaining and informative way.

Programme may include

Lasso	Prophetiae Sibyllarum (selection); Timor et tremor; Alma nemes; Anna mihi dilecta
Nicolà Vicentino	Musica prisca caput; Hierusalem; madrigal fragments
Cipriano de Rore	Calami sonum ferentes; Da le belle contrade d'oriente
James Weeks	Primo Libro (selection)
Elisabet Dijkstra	here, now
Luzzasco Luzzaschi	Quivi sospiri
Luca Marenzio	O voi che sospirate; Solo e pensoso
Christopher Fox	senso commune
Carlo Gesualdo	Late madrigals (selection)

Performance options

The programme can be presented as a **full-length concert** with 7 voices (SAATTBB) and conductor, or as a **one-hour recital**, either with 7 or 6 voices and conductor.

The concert can be presented with or without Gesualdo as the 'end-point' of chromatic research in the Renaissance. In some ways it is more interesting to uncover this repertoire without his shadow cast over it, but his works are nonetheless a very effective climax to the programme if desired.