



## Gesualdo: Cruel Ecstasy

### Continuing programme, 2023-

#### Introduction

The later madrigals of Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, exert a strange and enduring fascination on the modern musical imagination. Listening today to these extraordinary messages of anguish and ecstasy, we are drawn back to his flame like lovers who can't let go, into the warp of chromatic harmony, the emotional hyper-intensity and mysterious otherness of this most tantalising early Baroque figure.

EXAUDI has been exploring these enigmatic and challenging works for more than a decade, honing an approach which combines rigorous stylistic understanding and tonal beauty with an overriding focus on the music's extreme expressive vision.

**Gesualdo: Cruel Ecstasy** showcases EXAUDI's revelatory performances of this music as well as their pre-eminence in contemporary repertoire, placing alongside the Gesualdos a selection of recent commissions, including selections from cycles by Finnissy and Fox.

In 2020 we began commissioning works from female composers as a modern response to Gesualdo's highly masculine viewpoint. Two works, by Sylvia Lim and Joanna Ward, have so far been performed and we hope to add more in future concerts.

#### Programme

Carlo Gesualdo (1566-1613): Madrigals from Book V and VI

*coupled with (selection)*

Michael Finnissy (\*1946): Gesualdo: Libro Sesto (selections)

Christopher Fox (\*1955): Canti del carcere

Patrick Hegarty (\*1996): Recitation

Sylvia Lim: (\*1992): Burst flood wound

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#### Performance options

The contemporary portion of the concert can be enlarged or diminished as required and we are happy to consider other repertoire choices to those proposed, including bespoke commissions.

**Gesualdo: Cruel Ecstasy** may be presented either as a full-length concert or 60-minute recital.