



Co'l dolce suono

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[American Record Guide](#) (Catherine Moore - 2019.01.01)

Please keep on reading even though I'll begin this review by telling you that this disc is the result of an academic research project. No, that doesn't mean that it's "dry" or "theoretical". In this case the research project at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis and the Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz brought together musicians, instrument makers, art historians, musicologists, and others to reconstruct three new viols to play old music.

Using new information about early 16th-Century instruments, especially about their inner construction, the new viols were built without a bass bar or sound post. The instruments' "dolce suono profoundly alters the sound balance and blendability between the different instrumental groups" and their "fast response [facilitates] a clear and transparent execution of the diminutions".

In this repertoire—often based on vocal music—instrumental players are expected to invent highly intricate melodic figurations called diminutions. Members of Ensemble Arcimboldo play with sensitivity, creative improvisation, deft touch, and mastery of the style. The composer and interpreter create new works together.

Soprano Ulrike Hofbauer sings 7 of the 23 pieces with varied color and tone to complement the shadowed, sweet, and slightly bitter edge characteristic of viols. Texts are also supplied for two of the instrumental versions (De Layolle's 'Lasciar' Il Velo' played here by viols and Willaert's 'Amor Mi Fa Morire' where diminutions are played on recorder). Having texts for these helps the listener hear how players interpret words in their phrasing, gesture, and timbre.

The pieces are taken from several published collections from 1539–1562, and the booklet contains two essays about the research project with drawings and photos of the instruments. Texts in Italian.

Virtuosic Venetian Renaissance
 Ganassi, Arcadelt, Willaert, others
 Ulrike Hofbauer, s. Andreas Hobbin, rec; Ensemble Arcimboldo/Thilo Hirsch
 Audite 97731—58 minutes

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