

Co' l dolce suono

Ulrike Hofbauer

ensemble arcimboldo | Thilo Hirsch

JACQUES ARCADELT (~1507-1568) | **ANTON FRANCESCO DONI** (1513-1574)

Il bianco e dolce cigno 2:35

Anton Francesco Doni, *Dialogo della musica*, Venedig 1544

Text: Cavalier Cassola, Diminutionen*: T. Hirsch

FRANCESCO DE LAYOLLE (1492-~1540)

Lasciar' il velo 3:04

Giovanni Camillo Maffei, *Delle lettere*, [...], Neapel 1562

Text: Francesco Petrarca, Diminutionen: G. C. Maffei 1562

ADRIANO WILLAERT (~1490-1562)

Amor mi fa morire 3:06

Il secondo Libro de Madrigali di Verdelotto, Venedig 1537

Text: Bonifacio Dragonetti, Diminutionen*: A. Böhlen

SILVESTRO GANASSI (1492-~1565)

Recercar Primo 0:52

Silvestro Ganassi, *Letzione Seconda pur della Pratica di Sonare il Violone d'Arco da Tasti*, Venedig 1543

Recercar quarto 1:15

Silvestro Ganassi, *Regola Rubertina, Regola che insegna sonar de viola d'archo tastada de Silvestro Ganassi dal fontego*, Venedig 1542

GIULIO SEGNI (1498-1561)

Ricerchare XV 5:58

Musica nova accomodata per cantar et sonar sopra organi; et altri strumenti, Venedig 1540, Diminutionen*: A. Böhlen

SILVESTRO GANASSI

Madrigal 2:29

Silvestro Ganassi, *Letzione Seconda*, Venedig 1543

GIACOMO FOGLIANO (1468-1548)

Io vorrei Dio d'amore 2:09

Silvestro Ganassi, *Letzione Seconda*, Venedig 1543, Diminutionen*: T. Hirsch

GIACOMO FOGLIANO

Recercada 1:30

Intavolature manuscritte per organo,

Archivio della parrocchia di Castell'Arquato

ADRIANO WILLAERT

Ricercar X 5:09

Musica nova [...], Venedig 1540

Diminutionen*: Félix Verry

SILVESTRO GANASSI

Recercar Secondo 0:47

Silvestro Ganassi, Lettione Seconda, Venedig 1543

SILVESTRO GANASSI

Recerchar primo 0:47

Silvestro Ganassi, Regola Rubertina, Venedig 1542

JACQUES ARCADELT

Quando co'l dolce suono 2:42

Il primo libro di Madrigali d'Arcadelt [...], Venedig 1539

Diminutionen*: T. Hirsch

JACQUET DE BERCHEM (~1505-~1565)

O amorse mamelle 3:12

Le dotte et eccellente [...] Madrigali a cinque voci [...], Venedig 1540

Diminutionen*: T. Hirsch

SILVESTRO GANASSI

Recerchar terzo 1:09

Regola Rubertina, Venedig 1542

GIACOMO FOGLIANO

A la mia grave pen 3:43

Constantio Festa, Primo libro di madrigali, Venedig 1556

Diminutionen*: Caroline Ritchie

ADRIANO WILLAERT

Un giorno mi pregò una vedovella 2:17

Canzone Villanesche alla Napolitana, Venedig 1545, Diminutionen*: T. Hirsch

ENRÌQUEZ DE VALDERRÁBANO (~1500-1557)

Pavana ternera 2:49

Enrìquez de Valderrábano, *Silva de Sirenas*, Valladolid 1547

DIEGO ORTIZ (~1510~1570)

Recercada ottava 1:42

Diego Ortiz, *Tratado de Glosas [...]*, Rom 1553

JACQUES ARCADELT

O felici occhi miei 1:43

Il primo libro di Madrigali d'Arcadelt [...], Venedig 1539,

Diminutionen*: T. Hirsch

O felici occhi miei 1:42

Diego Ortiz, *Tratado de Glosas [...]*, Rom 1553, Diminutionen: D. Ortiz

GIULIO SEGNI

Tiento quarto tono 3:55

Luis Venegas de Henestrosa, *Libro de cifra nueva para tecla, harpa y vihuela*, 1557

(als Ricercar XI in: *Musica nova [...]*, Venedig 1540)

Diminutionen*: Elizabeth Rumsey

ADRIANO WILLAERT

Passa la nave 3:34

Musica Nova, Venedig 1559, Text: Francesco Petrarca, Diminutionen*: T. Hirsch

* Alle Diminutionen nach Modellen aus: Silvestro Ganassi, *Fontegara*, Venedig 1535, Diego Ortiz, *Tratado de Glosas*, Rom 1553 und Camillo Maffei, *Delle lettere*, Neapel 1562



ensemble arcimboldo • Leitung: Thilo Hirsch

**Ulrike Hofbauer, Sopran • Andreas Böhlen, Blockflöten • Félix Verry: Renaissance-Violine
Thilo Hirsch: Renaissance-Viola da gamba / Vihuela de arco • Caroline Ritchie: Renaissance-Viola da gamba
Jessica Horsley: Renaissance-Viola da gamba / Violone • Julian Behr: Renaissance-Laute / Vihuela de mano**



**“Il dolce suono” –
The Transformation of String Instruments during the Early 16th Century**

Between 2011 and 2015 a research project at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis/FHNW, funded by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation and the Swiss National Science Foundation, was dedicated to the transformation of string instruments in early sixteenth century Italy. The interdisciplinary research carried out by musicologists, art historians and musicians, studying textual, musical, iconographic and organological sources, in conjunction with instrument builders, acousticians and materials researchers, led to new hypotheses regarding the reconstruction of string instruments from the first half of the sixteenth century which were also put into practice. This CD recorded by ensemble arcimboldo represents the sonic documentation of the research project.

From the last quarter of the fifteenth century, also Italy had seen instrumental repertoire extend downwards, leading to the development of “viole da gamba”: string instruments which, due to their size, were supported between the player’s legs or on the floor. The earliest known Italian depiction of such string instruments held “da gamba” can be found in Bologna, on a 1497 altarpiece by Lorenzo Costa.

The new viole da gamba spread throughout Italy, especially at princely courts, with such speed that the first virtuosos as well as manuals for a broader public appeared relatively soon. An important example of the latter are Silvestro Ganassi’s *Regola Rubertina* and *Letitione Seconda*, published in Venice in 1542 and 1543 respectively, which deal extensively with all aspects of playing the viol and are supplemented by Ganassi’s own compositions and woodcuts. [Fig. 1: Silvestro Ganassi: *Regola Rubertina*. Venice, 1542, cover picture.]

In order to perform the works of Ganassi and his Venetian colleagues correctly, one would ideally utilise Venetian viols from the first half of the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, however, there is not one surviving larger stringed instrument from before the late sixteenth century which was not converted or repaired to such a great extent that it could serve as a model for a reconstruction. The instruments used so far by historically informed performers are often based on doubtful models and also feature an internal sound post and bass bar construction which is not documented until 1594. (The sound post is a small wooden stick which is held in place under the treble foot of the bridge, between the top and back plates. The bass bar is a wooden brace running along the inside of the top plate, underneath the bass foot of the bridge.)



Since Ganassi, in his treatises, depicts several viols with great precision, it seemed obvious to use these illustrations as iconographic models for a reconstruction. [Fig. 2: Silvestro Ganassi: *Letzione Seconda*. Venice, 1543, plate illustrating the positioning of frets.] Its particular contours, featuring drawn-in upper and lower bouts, are probably inspired by the ancient lyre, the instrument favoured by Orpheus, Apollo and Arion. Possibly the player of such a “lyra da gamba” was thus to be stylised as a new Orpheus. [Fig. 3: Lyre form and outline of the viola da gamba after Ganassi. Drawing by T. Hirsch.]

Alongside the outer, “visible” characteristics, such as contours and rib height, it is most notably the inner construction that determines the sound of a stringed instrument. Ganassi refers to this only indirectly when he comments that the bridge can be moved, according to the pitch. Such a flexible bridge position alone indicates that the use of a sound post in the immediate vicinity of the treble foot of the bridge would be improbable. Further sources relating to the inner construction of early stringed instruments can be found in iconographic depictions. A very detailed viola da gamba in Raphael’s *Estasi di Santa Cecilia* (1514), for instance, reveals the extreme thickness of the top plate near the bass sound hole which, in turn, makes the additional use of a bass bar extremely unlikely. [Fig. 4: Raphael, *The Ecstasy of St Cecilia*, c. 1514, Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale, inv. no 577, detail.]

Entirely new evidence relating to the inner construction of early stringed instruments without a bass bar or sound post was brought to light following an examination of several surviving string instruments by the Venetian viol maker Ventura Linarolo. Although his instruments, preserved in several European museums, were not made until the end of the sixteenth century, they still display extreme asymmetrical top plate thicknesses close to the bass foot of the bridge. Discovering these asymmetrical top plate thicknesses was a pivotal point in the research project as now, alongside computer simulations carried out at the Vienna Institute of Music Acoustics (Wiener Klangstil), it was possible to prove for the first time how an acoustically efficient interior construction was viable without a sound post or bass bar. In order to put this into practice as well, three instrument makers – Stephan Schürch (Switzerland), Günter Mark (Germany) and Judith Kraft (France) – were ultimately commissioned to produce replicas.

Even the initial trials in December 2012 of the first prototypes showed how well this “new” viol works. [Fig. 5: Thilo Hirsch and the first viol after Ganassi by Stephan Schürch; photo: Abril Padilla] In contrast to previous attempts playing instruments without a sound post or a bass bar, there were no “wolf notes” hampering the instruments’ response. The



clear, singing high register benefits Ganassi's range going up to high E (e''). In the lower register, however, the intensity decreases somewhat, which is partly due to the exclusive use of gut strings. (The lowest string does not appear to have played a central role for Ganassi. This is what comments in his *Regola Rubertina* and his *Letzione Seconda* seem to indicate, stating that many viol players transpose everything up a fourth and therefore only use the five upper strings.)

The voluminous surviving Italian repertoire from the first half of the sixteenth century, alongside the descriptions of musical practices in Venice, especially by Ganassi and Anton Francesco Doni (*Dialogo della musica*; Venice, 1544), enabled the "new" viols to perform both as solo instruments and also together with the Renaissance lute, recorder, violin and voice. The other objective was to make use of Ganassi's unusual and virtuosic ornaments (noted down in his 1535 recorder and diminution manual, *Fontegara*), both soloistically and within an ensemble. In this context, the fast response of the three viols, facilitating a clear and transparent execution of the diminutions, proved successful.

In contrast to previous listening expectations for Italian Renaissance music, often influenced by the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the sound presented here is lighter overall, less dominated by fundamental tones. The string instruments' "dolce suono" profoundly alters the sound balance and blendability between the different instrumental groups, opening up a new sound world for the music of the early Italian Renaissance.

Thilo Hirsch

Translation: Viola Scheffel



Music for Silvestro Ganassi's "violone d'arco da tasti"

In the dedication of the second part of his treatise for "violone d'arco da tasti", published in Venice in 1543 as the *Letzione Seconda* of his *Regola Rubertina* (1542), Silvestro Ganassi (1492-c. 1565) humbly asks for his work to be favourably accepted by the "sacred and divine council which resides with eternal glory with you in this venerable city". The dedicatee and host of this "sacro & divino collegio" is the Florentine banker Neri Capponi (1504-1594) who, alongside his cousin and friend Ruberto Strozzi (c.1512-1566), dedicatee of Ganassi's eponymous *Regola Rubertina*, had been banished from Florence by the Medici and therefore lived in exile in Venice. There they ran an exclusive musical academy, engaging Venice's leading musician, Adrian Willaert (c. 1490-1562), *maestro di cappella* at St Mark's, as artistic director. Capponi and Strozzi apparently took viol lessons with Ganassi, who seems to have taken part in the musical meetings held at Capponi's home. In addition, they commissioned Willaert, the "principe" of their musical academy, to set certain texts to music. Precisely this context represents the ideal framework for the viol, as described in great detail by Ganassi – and for the programme presented here.

Further information about these musical meetings can be found in the writings of Anton Francesco Doni (1513-1574), in particular in his *Dialogo della musica* (Venice, 1544), where he writes about a female singer whom he had heard at such an occasion: "One evening, I heard a concert of 'violoni' and voices where she, in the company of other outstanding souls, played and sang." This impressive singer was Polissena Pecorina, described by Doni as a cultured "gentil donna", and therefore was surely no "cortegiana" or courtesan, also known to have been in existence in Venice. Of particular interest is his mention of the combination of "un concerto di violoni, et di voci", i.e. a harmonious interaction between several viols and voices, pointing towards an established performance practice of originally vocally conceived madrigals. Polissena Pecorina presumably sang the top line, whilst the remaining parts were played by viols.

In his treatise, Ganassi also describes the possibility of performing the lower parts together on only one viol ("il modo di sonare piu parte con il violone unito con la voce"). By way of example, he includes an intabulated madrigal, "Io vorrei Dio d'amore" [8] by Giacomo Fogliano (1468-1548) and recommends adapting the lower parts to practical requirements but leaving the singing part as noted down, only adding common ornaments.

Doni goes on to emphasise that Polissena Pecorina was a very good lute player and able to sing from music, indicating that she was musically trained. However, not only was she an ideal interpreter of Willaert's music, but she also became the subject of madrigals, as



for instance in “Quando co’l dolce suono” [13] by Jacques Arcadelt (1507-1568) in which she is explicitly mentioned. Amongst their contemporaries, both Strozzi and Capponi were known to be passionate collectors and commissioners of musical works which they treasured with great care. Doni refers to Capponi as an “enthusiasm and lover of these divine compositions” (i.e. Willaert’s madrigals), who would spend hundreds of ducats each year on this passion of his, and not even share his acquired music with his father. The example of Willaert’s printed *Musica Nova* volume (1559) reveals the material value of such a collection: it belonged exclusively to Polissena Pecorina who sold it, as a type of life insurance, to the Duke of Ferrara in 1554 at the steep price of fifty *scudi d’oro* per year. From this collection, two pieces have been recorded for this album: a sophisticated setting of a sonnet by Francesco Petrarca, “Passa la nave” [23], and a rather more rustic number, the villanesca “Un giorno mi pregò una vedovella” [17], showing that Willaert mastered the more rumbustious as well as the literary and musically refined style.

Included in Doni’s fictitious *Dialogo* is the music played between the conversations, such as Arcadelt’s “Il bianco e dolce cigno” [1], recorded here: possibly the composer’s most famous work. Doni, however, does not provide the original but instead a sort of quodlibet, using only the top line from Arcadelt and combining it with new lower parts. One participant of the *Dialogo* is especially taken by this allusive “bizzaria”.

In his treatises, Ganassi allows a lot of scope for ornamentation – at that time practised almost intuitively – in particular diminution, which can be heard in nearly all the pieces recorded here. As he explains in the title of his recorder and diminution manual *Fontegara* (Venice, 1535), adding ornaments in the form of diminutions or “passaggi” (passing notes) was a must for all instruments and singers. A few years later, a treatise by Diego Ortiz (c. 1510-c. 1570) was published which taught the ornamentation of cadences and other forms of diminution in viol music (*Glose sopra le cadenze et altre sorte de punti in la musica del violone*, Rome, 1553). By way of example Ortiz uses a madrigal by Arcadelt, “O felici occhi” [21].

Doni closes his account of the unforgettable evening at Capponi’s home by stating ecstatically: “I admit that before this evening I had no concept of the meaning of harmony.” This refers to the singer Polissena Pecorina, the admired compositions by Willaert – and presumably also to Silvestro Ganassi’s gamba ensemble.

Prof Dr Martin Kirnbauer

Head of Research Department at Schola Cantorum Basiliensis

Translation: Viola Scheffel



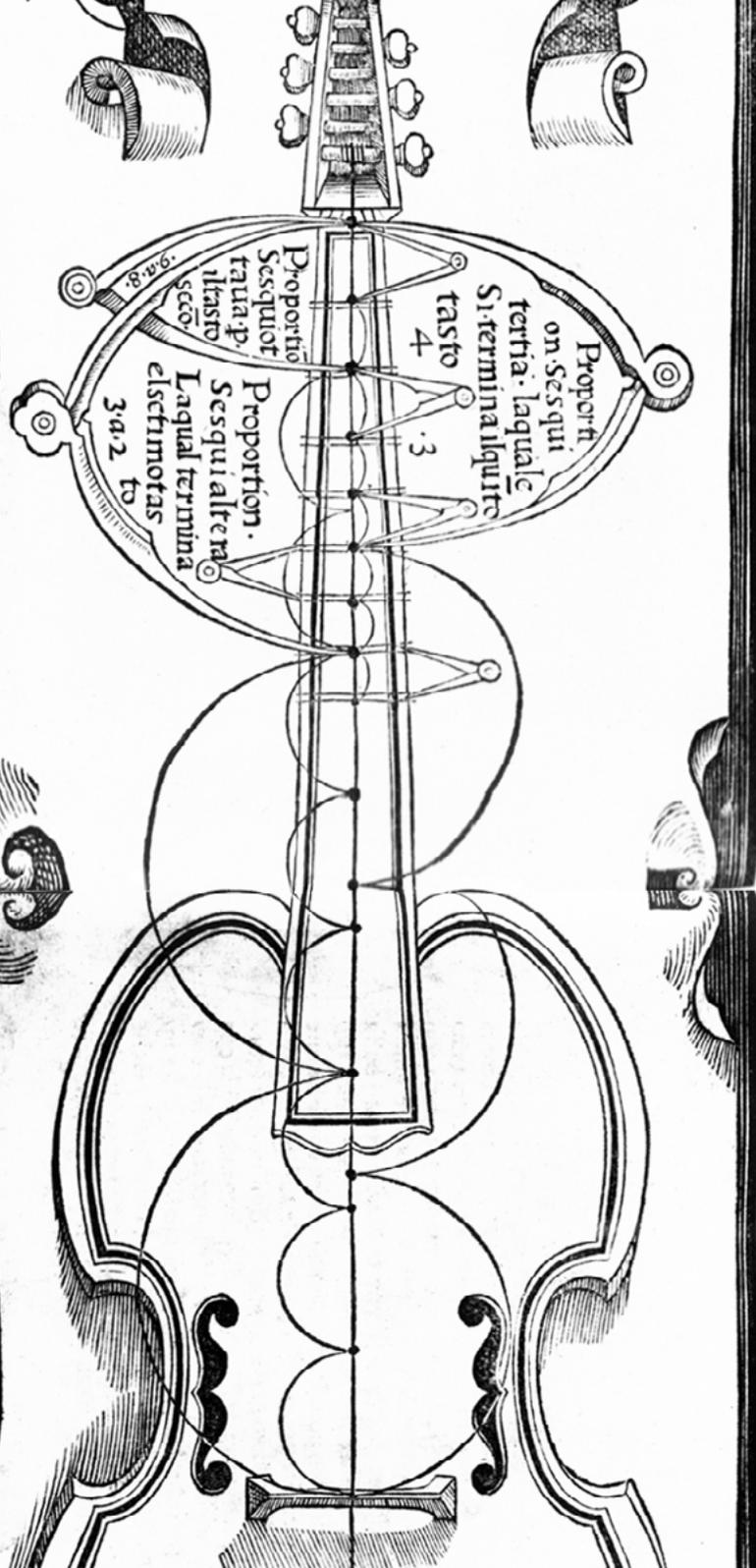
**ULRIKE
HOFBAUER**

Ulrike Hofbauer studied singing and vocal pedagogy at the music universities of Würzburg and Salzburg as well as at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. Significant teachers included Sabine Schütz, Evelyn Tubb and Anthony Rooley. As a soloist, she has performed with international ensembles including Singer Pur, Collegium Vocale Gent, L'Arpeggiata, La Chapelle Rhénane, L'Orfeo Barockorchester and Cantus Cölln, working alongside Howard Arman, Andrew Parrott, Philippe Herreweghe, Christina Pluhar, Andrea Marcon, Gustav Leonhardt, Manfred Cordes, Hans-Christoph Rademann, Rudolf Lutz and Jörg-Andreas Bötticher.

She has sung at Basel and Bern Theatres. In 2013 she was invited to perform at the Boston Early Music Festival. Alongside radio recordings and live performances for radio, numerous CD and film releases document her vocal versatility.

She is particularly interested in the study of musical rhetoric, ornamentation and the “recitar cantando” style. She is also devoted to discovering new repertoire from all periods and styles.

In October 2014 Ulrike Hofbauer became Professor of Baroque Singing at the Institute for Early Music at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg. Since 2017 she has also held regular workshops at the Conservatoire and the Music Academy in Strasbourg.



ENSEMBLE ARCIMBOLDO

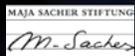
The ensemble arcimboldo (Basel) was founded by Thilo Hirsch in 1991. The name of the Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo, chiefly known for his fruit and flower portraits, represents the ensemble's guiding principle of merging various elements into a new astonishing whole. The success of this concept is reflected in outstanding reviews, numerous concert engagements, and frequent invitations to such European festivals as the Festival do Atlântico (Madeira), Barockfest Münster, Festival Fränkischer Sommer, Telemann Festtage (Magdeburg), and EkhoF Festival (Gotha). Alongside radio recordings for WDR (West German Radio), BR (Bavarian Radio) and SFR (Swiss Radio), discographic highlights of the ensemble include a recording of Valentin Rathgeber's *Messe von Muri* (aud. 92.559), a work rediscovered by Thilo Hirsch, *La musique de la Grande Écurie & des Gardes Suisses* and *Bogenhauser Künstlerkapelle – Forgotten Avant-Garde of Early Music* (aud. 97.730). In addition, ensemble arcimboldo regularly commissions works from contemporary composers. All members of the ensemble have studied at renowned early music academies and are specialists in their fields who share a passion for unfamiliar sounds, instruments and rediscovering new soundworlds.



THILO HIRSCH

Thilo Hirsch attended the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (SCB), where he studied viola da gamba with Christophe Coin and singing with Richard Levitt and Kurt Widmer. Solo engagements with numerous international ensembles for concerts as well as CD and radio recordings have taken him across Europe, to North Africa, North and South America, and to Japan. Since 1991 he has been artistic director of ensemble arcimboldo (Basel), with whom he has recorded several CDs. His interest in historically informed performance practice, especially at the crossroads of musicological theory and instrumental practice, prompted him to research the tromba marina (see also aud. 92.559 and aud. 97.730). Between 2007 and 2015 Thilo Hirsch was co-director of several SCB research projects, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, devoted to reconstructing historical instruments in connection with their repertoire („La Grande Écurie – research and reconstruction of instruments and their repertoire at the courts of Louis XIV and Louis XV“ / Transformation of string instruments during the early sixteenth century). The “audible” results of these research projects were documented in concerts as well as on CDs recorded by ensemble arcimboldo. Since 2015, Hirsch has been working on the evidence-based reconstruction of the *vihuela de arco*, a Spanish Renaissance instrument, and its playing technique.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis / Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz and the Maja Sacher-Stiftung for their kind support of this project.



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executive producer:

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Pio Fedi, Il Ratto di Polissena, 1865. Photograph: © Martin Vegas

photos:

Ulrike Hofbauer: Markus Hofbauer

Thilo Hirsch: Susanna Drescher

ensemble arcimboldo: Manuela Vonwiller/ZAXAPH

further reading:

“Transformationen der Klanglichkeit – Die Viola da gamba im frühen 16. Jahrhundert am Beispiel Silvestro Ganassis” (with contributions from Thomas Drescher, Thilo Hirsch, Martin Kirnbauer, Martina Papiro and Vasileios Chatziioannou), in: Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis 35/36 (2011/2012), pp. 187-290.

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