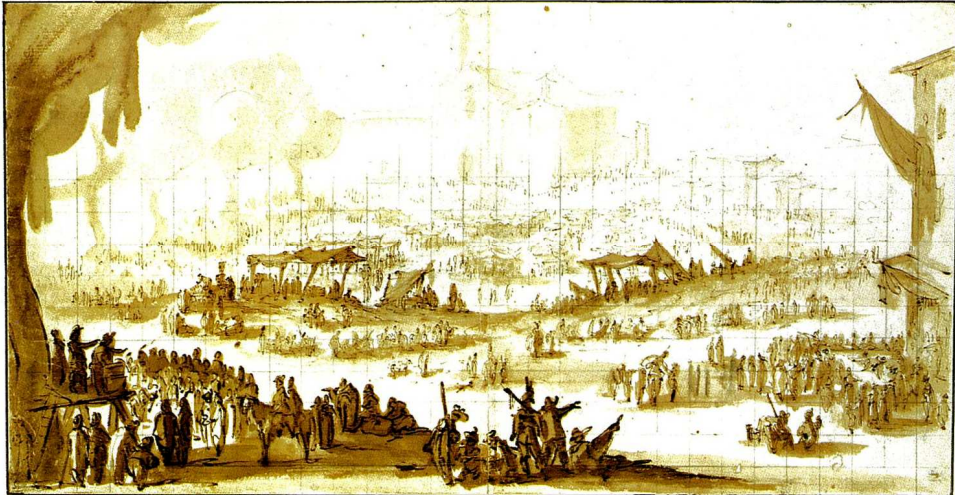


LE POÈME HARMONIQUE

Vincent Dumestre



Combattimenti – Fiera di Farfa

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MUSICAL REALISM IN TRAGEDY AND FARCE
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Marc Mauillon : baritone

Claire Lefilliâtre : soprano

Isabelle Druet : mezzo soprano

Bruno Le Levreur, Jean-François Lombard : altos

Jan Van Elsacker, Serge Goubioud, Hugues Primard : tenors

Benoit Arnould : bass

Mira Glodeanu , Tami Troman : violins

Lucas Peres : lirone

Isabelle Saint-Yves : viola da gamba

Françoise Enock : violone

Nanja Breedijk : harp

Frédéric Rivoal : harpsichord

Massimo Moscardo : lute

Vincent Dumestre : guitar, theorbo and conductor

(The cast given above is indicative.)

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The Christian crusader Tancredi finds himself fighting in single combat with a mysterious Saracen. Mortally wounded by his sword, his opponent forgives him and asks to be baptised. Tancredi, to his grief, discovers only belatedly that he has killed Clorinda, the woman he loves. Clorinda dies in a state of grace.

This truly revolutionary work, a manifesto of the *stile rappresentativo*, was first performed in 1624, in Venice. Fourteen years later it was included in Monteverdi's Eighth Book of Madrigals, *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*. *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* is one of the finest 'madrigals of war', and a perfect illustration of the principles put forward by the composer in his famous preface. With *Il Combattimento*, Monteverdi (1567-1643) gave music an important theatrical dimension. The spatialisation of sound, the striking musical imitation of the text, the presence of a narrator (an enigmatic character, who is both part of and exterior to the action, a virtuoso commentator, who has to strike a balance between his own emotions and the necessary distance he must keep from the other two characters) all make this work basically unclassifiable. With this 'dramatic cantata', conveying perfectly through music the conflict between passion and duty and the fulfilment in death of absolute love, Monteverdi established for centuries to come the model of the 'representative' genre, the theatre of the human passions.

Contrasting with that noble and tragic work, the other piece in this programme, *La Fiera di Farfa* by Marco Marazzoli (c1605-1662) takes the *stile rappresentativo* towards a fusion of comedy with credible representations of real life. Written as a burlesque intermedio to the opera *Chi soffre speri* by Virgilio Mazzocchi, with a libretto by Giulio Rospigliosi and sets by Lorenzo Bernini, it was performed in Rome for the Barberini family in 1639, a year after the publication of *Il Combattimento*. *La Fiera di Farfa* includes an extraordinarily realistic evocation of an Italian fair, with local merchants and mountebanks hawking their wares, folksongs and dances. There is a skilful intermingling of vendors, operatic characters and, for the first time in opera, recognisable *commedia dell'arte* personalities (Zanni, Coviello and others), and the work culminates with a musical parody of *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*! In a colourful whirl of music – instrumental, vocal (solos and polyphony), and even sound effects, including birdsong – it explores the descriptive potentialities of the new language with relish, and shows that, even when its intention is figurative, the art of music immediately inspires an abstract and poetical view of the world.

PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)*

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Claudio Monteverdi (1567 – 1643)
Hor che'l ciel
Il Lamento della Ninfa
Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda

Marco Marazzoli (c1605 – 1662)
La Fiera di Farfa

*may be subject to modification
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